

# Stressless Week Focus Group - 5/11/18

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- 11 students have participated in a focus group aimed at facilitating an open conversation on the Union's provisions during Stressless Week;
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- Participants were animated by the topic, with the focus group running for 1 hour and 20 minutes – 20% over the initial time allocated to the activities;
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- The conversation had included insights in:
  - The main stress factors for students;
  - The main ways of relieving stress;
  - The ways in which the Union can aid the above, through the provision of items and the organising of events.
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# Did you participate in Stressless Week?

- I haven't been to any Stressless Week activities due to the fact that they are timetabled similar to uni timetable or part time work (5);
- I have been to Stressless Week for the farm experience (3);
- Queueing time too long – causes stress rather than relieving it (3);
- I haven't been – wasn't present on that day. My friends went and enjoyed themselves (1);
- I didn't know about it (1);

# Think about the factors that cause you stress – what are these?

- Stress is not contained to assessment & exam period;
- Compiling CVs, looking for jobs, attending interviews (8);
- University work/exams (5);
- Balancing working to earn money, exams, social activities (5);
- Societies/sports clubs – attending them & running them (in the context of balancing these with part-time work & University commitments);
- (Lack of) money (3)
- Close deadlines for assessments and exams (2);
- Being homesick (2);
- Not getting enough sleep (1);
- Failure in any test/exam (1);
- Managing my time (1);
- Lack of social communication (due to work schedule) (1).

- Sports/ Exercise (8);
- Food (4);
- Travelling/ Day trips/ Discovering new places (even if in Portsmouth) (3);
- Social activity / being with friends (2);
- Going home (when possible);
- Partying (2);
- Arts & crafts (2);
- Cooking/baking (2);
- Sleeping (2);
- Study groups (2);
- Having everything organised in as much detail as possible (2);
- Listening to music (2);
- Watching the TV (2);
- A 'cathartic' cry (1).

# What do you think the Union can do to aid your wellbeing?: Overview

- Regardless of the event, students should have the opportunity to **sign up** for it **online** (and, depending on the type of event, book a time slot). Participants believe this would considerably reduce queueing times, which have been identified as the main reason for not participating in Stressless Week.
- Participants argue that Stressless Week events must be part of a **year-long initiative**, where the Union provides online resources (as explored in more depth below) which are widely (and always!) accessible, and organises events throughout the two assessment periods (both in TB1 and TB2), for as long as the assessment period lasts. They strongly believe that this would allow more to participate, and would thus increase the impact of the initiative.
- Students think there should be a **wide range of activities**, with these being both individual and social in nature. Nevertheless, participants have stressed that they do not appreciate the Union's initiatives in forcing interaction between strangers, and think that this is often more difficult during stressful times. Nevertheless, they appreciate being able to attend the aforementioned events along with their friends
- Ultimately, participants strongly believe that all activities associated with Stressless should be better promoted as **Facebook events** (rather than Twitter, for virtually no student uses the platform regularly), as unawareness is often a reason for lack of participation

# What do you think the Union can do to aid your wellbeing?: Sports and Physical Exercise

- Generally, **more sports sessions**, scheduled on different days of the week and at different times for the convenience of those who attend lectures;
- More promotion of the **Get Active, Stay Active initiative**;
- Obstacle course;
- Archery;
- Jogging/track;
- Free, one-off gym sessions;
- Yoga – and there should be also an opportunity for students who don't necessarily wish to leave home to practice yoga, perhaps if exercises are compiled in a **video (or multiple videos) and these are promoted on the Union website** (also applicable to other sports);
- For relevant sports (i.e. obstacle course) **mini-competitions** would be appreciated, where a (symbolic) prize is offered to the winner.

# What do you think the Union can do to aid your wellbeing?: **Learning and Revision Skills**

- **No point in organising study skills workshops** – most students would either:
  - be too busy revising to learn something new;
  - feel anxious about learning new skills;
  - know how to revise;
- ...and otherwise, it would be too late to learn these skills during exam period.
- Produce **videos on revision tips**, where Union representatives go around campus and ask random students/lecturers to state their best revision tip;
- Promote **motivational stories**;
- Promote **learning spaces in other UoP buildings** (aside from the University library);
- Promote city libraries;



# What do you think the Union can do to aid your wellbeing?: **Social Events**

- **Cooking classes** – many students find cooking relaxing, but need to be instructed; it's often helpful to learn something new, but unrelated to university work, during intense revision times
- **'Country' Fayres**, where students can engage in games, shop for vintage items etc.
- **Outdoor cinemas**;
- (Small) **Treasure hunts**;
- Discounted **tickets to attractions in Portsmouth** – students often find the exploration of new places to be relaxing;
- **Daytrips**, similar to those provided by the UoP Global Office (which are mainly known/promoted to international students), where students can take a day off and visit somewhere new;
- Parties which do not involve alcohol – in the style of **childhood discos**; these would allow for those who do not drink to engage and take some time off, and eliminate the risk of hangover (and unproductivity) for those who do;

# Are there any items/material goods the Union can provide to aid you?

- **Study materials:**
  - Pens;
  - Flashcards;
  - Highlighters;
  - Post-it notes;
  - Planners and diaries;
  - Wall planners;
- **Snacks** – but bearing in mind where these are distributed (i.e. no crisps in the library – these may not be appreciated by others in silent study)
  - Fruit;
  - Cereal bars;
  - Chocolate bars;
  - Chewing gum – many people find this useful when they are stressed;

## Participants believe that:

- they should be able to **book rooms** in the library for more than 2 hours, since no one would leave home and go to the library for a study session that only lasts so long, particularly during assessment and exam periods. Nevertheless, they do acknowledge there should be a time limit, and they estimate this should be around 3-4 hours, so that people do not 'abuse' the facilities;
- **study spaces** should be organised outside the library during spring/summer, where perhaps waterproof beanbags are enough (albeit students have not identified a need for plugs, sockets and chargers, they deem that they should be able to still access the library Wi-Fi).
- More **water fountains** should be available;
- Students should have **access to hot water for free**, for many cannot afford to buy tea, coffee or hot water, and this can get very expensive during long study sessions (students pay 15p just for hot water in their own reusable cups from the Uni library café, and £1.20 from the dispenser once the café is closed). Whilst they acknowledge kettles may not be approved by the university, students think that dispensers which provide both hot and cold water (and thus also serve as water fountains) would be very useful

- **Stressless Week ought to be a year-long initiative;**
- **Events and activities should be organised in the areas of:**
  - Sports & physical exercise;
  - Learning and revision skills;
  - Social events & activities;
- **Material goods and items to be provided by the Union:**
  - Revision materials;
  - Snacks;