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Stress Interventions for First-Year Undergraduate Students

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STRESS INTERVENTIONS FOR FIRST-YEAR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

by

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Department of Psychology

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree of

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In

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HURON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

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Stress Interventions for First-Year Undergraduate Students

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Abstract

Previous research has found that first-year undergraduate students experience the highest level of academic stress compared to students in upper years. As well, additional research on stress interventions has found that utilizing a cognitive behavioural component and a relaxation technique will result in the lowest levels of stress. The present study provided first-year undergraduate students with a stress intervention where the goal was to reduce their overall academic stress levels. Participants were recruited through an introductory psychology course at Huron University College in London, Ontario. A 2 X 2 design was used in this study with relaxation and video type as the independent variables and stress level as the dependent variable. Contrary to expectations, the results showed that participants who received the stress intervention program with both the cognitive behavioural component and the relaxation technique did not have the lowest stress levels. However, stress was reduced when participants utilized a relaxation technique compared to when they did not. Implications of the findings are discussed.

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Table of Contents

	Page
CERTIFICATE OF EXAMINATION	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	v
Introduction	1
Method	8
Participants	8
Materials	8
Procedure	10
Results	10
Discussion	11
References	18
Appendix I	22
Appendix II	23
Appendix III.....	24
Curriculum Vitae	25

Introduction

Stress is a multifaceted phenomenon. It is everywhere and can affect multiple aspects of one's life. Currently, there is no singular concrete definition of stress. The ambiguity in defining stress was originally recognized by Seyle (1956) who utilized the term stress to describe the effects of anything that impairs homeostasis; keeping our internal settings constant regardless of the changing environment. When we become stressed, it causes our bodies to react and release hormones that arouse the body for action (Orth-Gomer, 2000). Your heart beats quicker, your muscles will constrict, your breathing will accelerate and your blood pressure will rise. These physical changes are a result of the "fight or flight" stress response and serve as a way of protecting itself against danger. Normally, when stress is within your comfort zone it will help you stay focused and aware, and in dangerous situations, it will give you the ability to protect yourself (Gray, 1988). As much as stress can be beneficial, it can also be problematic. If you experience situations that are beyond your comfort and control, stress will no longer be helpful and can act as a major impairment to your body (Segal, Smith, Segal & Robinson, 2015). Stress can be detrimental to both your body and your mind. It can affect your health, your mood and your behaviour. Stress can also cause both physical and mental illness within individuals. Furthermore, it can cause changes in appetite, substance or tobacco use, and social withdrawal (Collingwood, 2007). Given the negative effects of stress, the purpose of the present research is to look at intervention strategies that can help individuals manage their stress.

When faced with a stressful situation, attempting to avoid it is ultimately counterproductive. It is beneficial to humans to face the stressful challenge head on and be aware of how it is affecting them in order to properly tackle the stressful situation (McGonigal, 2013). There are 3 basic classifications of stress that may result in negative effects: acute stress,

episodic stress and chronic stress. *Acute stress* occurs due to the typical daily demands and pressures that a person may experience and, usually only occurs for a short period of time. It can be beneficial to an individual if it results in motivation to complete a task. However, too much acute stress can become exhausting (Miller, Smith & Rothstein, 1994). An abundance of acute stress is known as *episodic stress*, which is usually seen in individuals who live chaotic and busy lives. Lastly, *chronic stress* is the most debilitating, and occurs due to long-term exposure to stressors and can result in serious illness (Gawlik, 2014). Stress can come from both internal and external stimuli. It has been found to affect both the cardiac and gastrointestinal systems in the human body. As well, stress can negatively impact both the individual and their broader system through alcoholism and absenteeism and, has been linked to depression and anxiety (Murphy, 1996). Typical stressors include dysfunctional families, despised careers, economic difficulties and traumatic experiences. Individuals' attitudes towards a situation can affect whether stress occurs and how much stress is experienced. As well, having unrealistic expectations in life and the occurrence of a major life change can result in more stress within an individual. (Orth-Gomer, 2000).

Stress Interventions

Given stress has the ability to produce a multitude of negative consequences, it is evident that solutions to alleviate stress would be helpful to individuals. Research on ways to improve and reduce the stress experience among individuals has looked at stress intervention methods and has found that, in general, they are effective at reducing stress among individuals (Murphy, 1996). The current literature on stress intervention methods has focused on educating the individual about the nature of stress and having them participate in stress management training (Forozandeh & Delaram, 2003). These two tools are imperative in assisting individuals in

understanding the symptoms of stress and helping to reduce the stigma associated with stress. The public stigma of stress is defined as negative stereotypes of individuals who suffer from stress, such as considering them to be weak and blaming them for their own problems (Link, 1987). Most individuals tend to adopt this public view, which can result in a lack of self-esteem and avoidance of growth (Corrigan & Wassel, 2008). Individuals typically view stress in a negative light and, are unable to manage their own stress effectively. However, research has found that if we view our physical reaction to stress, such an increase in heavy breathing and a faster heart rate, in a positive way, we can rise to the challenge and ultimately control and manage our stress (McGonigal, 2013). Therefore, it is important to educate individuals to view stress and the stress reaction more positively and, on how they can effectively reduce their own stress (Cooper & Cartwright, 1997). If individuals begin to view stress in a positive manner, it can assist in reducing the negative stigma associated with stress and will encourage positive help seeking attitudes towards stress, such that high perceptions of stress will not automatically relate to failure and an inability to succeed (Bayer & Peay, 1997).

There are three levels of stress interventions: primary prevention, secondary prevention and tertiary prevention (Kompier & Kristensen, 2001). Primary prevention methods are designed to eliminate or reduce the stressors of an individual, which include educating the participant on the harmful effects of a negative stimulus. Research has found that cognitive behavioural approaches and relaxation techniques are more effective in treating a variety of anxiety, depression and stress related disorders among individuals than the use of medication (Hofmann, Asnaani, Vonk, Sawyer & Fang, 2012). Therefore, a stress intervention method that incorporates either a cognitive behavioural approach, a relaxation technique or both will meet the main objective of primary preventions. Secondary prevention methods are designed to alter the way

individuals respond to a stressor, which include partaking in daily exercise to decrease the risk of disease and to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The focus of a cognitive behavioural approach is that it attempts to alter the cognitions and thoughts of an individual while strengthening their coping skills. This would include teaching the individual new ways to think about stress and giving them potential coping skills in order to manage their stress. In contrast, relaxation techniques focus on physical or mental relaxation as a way of reducing thoughts and feelings associated with stress (Turk, Meichenbaum & Genest, 1983). However, teaching individuals how to participate in a relaxation exercise will alter the way they respond to stressors, as they are likely to attempt to reduce their stress through the means of a relaxation technique rather than suffering through the stressful situation. Lastly, tertiary preventions methods are designed to focus on the treatment of individuals who are currently experiencing stress. An example of a tertiary intervention would be a support group where individuals can speak openly about their current issues. In reference to stress interventions, the implementation of any stress intervention program would target specific individuals who suffer from stress with the ultimate goal of treating and alleviating their overall stress. Previous research suggests that stress reducing intervention programs should incorporate the main goals from all three levels of stress interventions (Quick, Murphy & Hurrell, 1992), and that a multi-method intervention program should be used (Denissen, 2000). When multiple methods are used in an intervention program, it gives the participants more stress reducing methods that they can draw from. Therefore, if one of the methods is not effective for them, they can move on to another method. Combining at least two methods in an intervention is more powerful in alleviating stress than any single method alone (Denissen, 2000). Specifically, the combination of a cognitive behavioural approach and relaxation techniques is the most useful in the reduction of stress (Van Der Klink, Blonk, Schene & Dijk, 2001).

Academic Stress

Recently, research has looked at academic stress among university students. Academic stress occurs due to a number of different reasons, and university students' health and academic performance can be negatively affected depending on the amount of stress experienced (Campbell, Svenson & Jarvis, 1992). Problems such as academic commitments, anxiety, depression, tensions, financial difficulties, inability to keep up with school work, lack of time management and new responsibilities can lead to further stress experienced within the university student population (Yumba, 2008). It has been found that academic demands such as course overload and academic evaluation are perceived as incredibly stressful among university students with examinations provoking the highest level of stress among this cohort of individuals (Arthur, 1994). Academic stress among university students can be harmful in many ways as it affects the individuals' study habits, acquisition of new skills, social life and other areas of academic success (Benson, 1997).

Research has shown that the first year of students' undergraduate studies is the most stressful time period for university students. These students struggle in adapting to the large amount of academic material that they have to learn within a short period of time. They also find it difficult to acquire efficient study habits to learn all of the material required for their courses (Campbell et al., 1992). It has been found that many first-year undergraduate students are unable to handle their academic studies and are surprised at the organization of the university course load compared to their experience when they were in high school which also causes an abundance of stress (Shirom, 1986). First-year undergraduate students also report high levels of academic stress due to major life changes and various types of academic and non-academic conflicts related to adaptation, in addition to the lack of a strong social support network (Yumba,

2008). Lastly, stress is most common among the first-year undergraduate cohorts as they experience difficulties within their interpersonal relationships with their peers and adapting to the social life aspect of university (Shirom, 1986). The adjustment problem among this group of individuals can result in a high level of episodic stress which in turn, can potentially produce anxiety, frustration and depression among these individuals (Keinan & Perlberg, 1986).

Previous studies have looked at the effectiveness of stress intervention methods in a random sample of university students and has found them to be successful in reducing their overall stress levels (Regehr, Glancy & Pitts, 2013). However, current studies that look at academic stress among undergraduate students are limited in that they do not only look at the effects of stress among first-year students (Friedlander, Reid, Shupak & Cribbie, 2007). Past studies on stress interventions have attempted to reduce all undergraduate students academic stress. Examples of prior stress interventions for undergraduate students have utilized breathing meditation, mindfulness-based interventions, biofeedback and stressor identification, and stress coping (Regehr et al., 2013). Extant research has not looked at the effectiveness of stress intervention methods for only first-year undergraduate students, especially one that combines both cognitive behavioural and relaxation techniques. Given that first-year undergraduate students experience the most stress among the university community, it is imperative to look at how their stress can be effectively reduced.

The Present Study

The present study focuses on the effectiveness of intervention methods in reducing perceived academic stress among first-year undergraduate students, and whether or not an intervention that combines a cognitive behavioural approach and relaxation technique is the most effective at doing so. To examine the effectiveness of stress intervention methods, first-year

undergraduate students were asked to participate in a stress reduction intervention that either included a single or multiple intervention methods. In the present study, participants were randomly assigned to watch either an educational video on stress or a video about how stress can be positive. Participants were also randomly assigned to participate in either an autogenic relaxation technique or not.

Past research has shown that videos are effective to utilize in interventions as they provide accurate information to participants without the intimidating presence of multiple confederates and, individuals are able to gain the input of experts who could not attend the session in person (Swenson & Edelman, 2003). In the video condition, participants were required to either watch a TED talk video or an educational video about stress. It was hypothesized that there will be a main effect for video type in that participants who watch the TED talk video will have lower levels of stress than participants who watch the educational video on stress. The TED talk video takes a new positive perspective on stress with its goal being to alter participant's cognitions and provide them with information on coping skills. The educational video was predicted to not produce the same stress reduction results as the TED talk video as its focus is not a cognitively behavioural approach. The autogenic relaxation technique is useful in stress reduction intervention programs, as the relaxation response has been found to stop the stressful experience within an individual and is able to assist in bringing one's body and mind back to a state of balance (Robinson, Droege, Case & Jason, 2015). Therefore, it was expected that there will be a main effect for relaxation technique in that participants who participate in the autogenic relaxation technique will have lower levels of stress than participants who do not participate in the relaxation exercise. It was also expected that more stress reduction will occur in conditions that utilize two approaches compared to one approach, as research has found that a multi-method

intervention program (one that uses multiple methods) is the most effective (Denissen, 2000). Finally, it was predicted that the greatest reduction of academic stress will occur with a multi-method intervention program that includes both the TED talk video and the autogenic relaxation technique. This condition was designed to reduce the current academic stressors of first-year students by trying to change the way they think and handle stress (i.e., that stress can be positive), and treating the individual who is currently experiencing the academic stress (Kompier & Kristensen, 2001).

Method

Participants

Thirty-two students (13 men and 19 women) were recruited from Huron University College, a liberal arts college affiliated with the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario. The participants were all enrolled in a first-year introductory psychology course in which more than 90% of enrolled students were in their first year of university. The study was run in small groups, with a maximum number of five participants per session.

Materials and Procedure

Pre-Intervention Phase. Before the intervention began, a measurement was administered to assess participants' current level of academic stress. Participants were required to complete a baseline assessment that asked them "how academically stressed are you feeling right now?" with responses ranging from 0 (*no stress*) to 4 (*very stressed*) (see Appendix I).

Intervention Phase. Each condition required participants to partake in a different stress intervention. Participants were either assigned to watch a video that talked about how to view stress positively or were required to watch a traditional educational video on stress. As well, participants were required to either engage in a relaxation exercise or not. Therefore, there were

four conditions in the study. The video about viewing stress positively was a TED talk video entitled “How To Make Stress Your Friend” presented by Kelly McGonigal. In this video, she discusses the benefits of stress and why us, as individuals, should be viewing stress in a more positive light. The educational video was a video presented by morethanmedication.ca that discussed why we get stressed, what happens to us when we do get stressed, and how to minimize our overall stress. The relaxation activity that participants were required to partake in was an autogenic relaxation exercise. Participants were instructed on how to partake in the exercise through a 10-minute audio recording from a Youtube video (Inner Health Studio, 2009) where they were told to slowly relax their bodies and control their breathing (https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=117&v=xcaRPOgOrmU).

Post-Intervention Phase. After all participants completed their stress intervention, they were required to complete a modified version of the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; Cohen, 1994). The original scale was modified in the present study to be relevant to the academic domain. This scale assessed participants’ perceived stress levels and asked participants about their feelings and thoughts related to their academic stress during the past month. Sample items include “in the past month, how often have you felt unable to control the important academic things in your life?” with participants indicating the frequency with which they have had these thoughts or feelings with never, almost never, sometimes, fairly often or very often as the response options. Participants were also given two additional worksheets. The first worksheet required participants to write down 3 different coping strategies they learned in the video that could help them reduce their academic stress and to submit their responses to the researcher (see Appendix II). The second worksheet required participants to write down 3 ways that they will use the strategies from the video to reduce their academic stress (see Appendix III). The first worksheet was given

back to the researcher after participants had completed it. The purpose of the first worksheet was to ensure that participants had paid attention to the video and, that they will actually benefit from the information that they were exposed to in the videos. Participants were told to keep the second worksheet so that they are able to remember how to utilize the strategies that they learned during the intervention for any future stressful situations that they may encounter. After completion of all scales, participants were debriefed and were given a debriefing statement with additional readings and information about the study.

Results

Manipulation Check

In order to test the effectiveness of the manipulation, the responses to the first worksheet were used. All of the participants were able to accurately identify at least one coping strategy mentioned in each of the videos. 100% of the participants (N=16) exposed to the TED talk video were able to accurately write down at least one coping strategy mentioned in the video. As well, 100% of the participants (N=16) exposed to the educational video on stress were also able to accurately write down at least one coping strategy.

Baseline Assessment Check

A 2 (video type: positive view of stress vs educational) X 2 (relaxation: yes vs no) between-subjects ANOVA was conducted with baseline stress levels as the dependent variable to see whether stress was equivalent across all of the conditions. There was no significant main effect found for video type, such that there was no difference between the TED talk video ($M = 2.75, SD = .68$) and the educational video ($M = 2.31, SD = .946$), $F(1,32) = 2.21, p = .148$. There was no significant main effect found for the relaxation condition, such that there was no difference in baseline scores between participants who took part in the relaxation exercise ($M =$

2.38, $SD = .806$) and those who did not ($M = 2.69$, $SD = .873$), $F(1,32) = 1.13$, $p = .297$. There was also no significant interaction found between video type and relaxation, $F(1,32) = .406$, $p = .529$.

Primary Analysis

To test the main hypothesis, a 2 (video type: positive view of stress vs educational) X 2 (relaxation: yes vs no) between-subjects ANOVA was conducted with stress level scores from the PSS, measured after exposure to the stress intervention, as the dependent variable. There was no significant main effect found for video type, such that there was no difference in reported stress between those exposed to the TED talk video ($M = 21.75$, $SD = 5.63$) and the educational video ($M = 20.37$, $SD = 6.47$), $F(1,32) = .46$, $p = .503$. However, there was a significant main effect found for the relaxation condition, such that participants who took part in the relaxation exercise ($M = 18.75$, $SD = 5.41$) reported less academic stress than those who did not ($M = 23.37$, $SD = 5.81$), $F(1,32) = 5.20$, $p = .030$. Finally, there was no significant interaction found between video type and relaxation, $F(1,32) = .308$, $p = .584$.

Discussion

It was expected that participants who viewed the TED talk video would have lower levels of academic stress than participants who viewed the educational video. As well, it was also expected that participants who viewed both the TED talk video and participated in the autogenic relaxation technique would have the lowest levels of stress. However, the results illustrated that there was no significant main effect found for video type and, that there was no significant interaction found between video type and relaxation exercise. It was also hypothesized that participants who partook in the autogenic relaxation technique would have lower levels of academic stress than participants who did not. The results showed that there was a significant

main effect for relaxation in that, participants who partook in the autogenic relaxation technique had lower levels of academic stress than those that did not.

Past research suggests that relaxation techniques focus on physical or mental relaxation and, that they are very effective in reducing stress among individuals (Meichenbaum et al., 1983). Therefore, the observed significant main effect of relaxation techniques found in the present study is supported by past findings showing the effectiveness of relaxation techniques. However, literature in the area of stress interventions for first-year undergraduate students' academic stress would have suggested different results for the videos. Videos have been shown to be an effective tool to utilize in interventions (Swenson & Edelman, 2003). However, the present study used two different types of videos: one that focused on educating people about stress and how to manage it, and one the focused on changing people's beliefs about stress (i.e., that stress can be positive). Therefore, it was expected that there would be a main effect for video type in that, participants who viewed the TED talk video would have lower levels of stress than participants who viewed the educational video. The TED talk video took a cognitive behavioural approach whereby, it attempted to alter the cognitions and thoughts of the participants with regards to stress. Given cognitive behavioural approaches have been found to be effective in reducing an individuals stress level, it was presumed that a video that took this approach would be more successful at reducing stress levels among participants than a standardized informative and educational video on what stress is and how to manage it.

With regards to the lack of a significant interaction, literature in the area of stress interventions for first-year undergraduate students would have suggested different results. Research informs us that a multi-method intervention program is the most effective in reducing stress as it gives the participants more stress reducing methods that they can draw from.

Therefore, if one of the methods is not effective for them, they can use a different one (Denissen, 2000). Additionally, literature suggests that all stress intervention programs should combine both a cognitive behavioural approach and a relaxation exercises as, it will result in the lowest levels of stress (Van Der Klink et al., 2001) Given this scenario, it was expected that participants would have the lowest levels of academic stress in the condition where they were required to watch the TED talk video about viewing stress more positively in which the main goal was to change participants' perceptions of stress and when participants had to partake in the autogenic relaxation technique.

Participants were required to complete a worksheet at the end of the study that asked them to write down the coping strategies that they learnt from the videos showed to them during the intervention. This manipulation check confirmed that participants did in fact pay attention to the information provided to them as 100% of the participants in both the TED talk video condition and the educational video condition accurately reported at least one coping strategy from the videos. However, it is possible that while participants attended to the video presentation, they did not apply the learned strategy to their own stress responses. The content of the videos was not specific to academic stress, rather they discussed coping strategies for general stress. Therefore, when the students were asked to apply what they had learnt from the videos to the domain of academic stress, they may have had difficulties in doing so. This could explain why there was a lack of interaction for the videos. It may also be the case that there are significant differences in learning outcomes among first year undergraduate students when they are taught with a passive teaching approach compared to an active teaching approach (Michel, Cater & Varela, 2009). Verbal presentations such as a lecture or a video are passive approaches and these have been found to leave virtually nothing significant or permanent in a student's mind (Strauss & Fulwiler,

1990). Information that is presented in an active nature, such as through a group activity or exercise, may result in an increase in the student's conceptual understanding of the information (Knight & Wood, 2005). Thus, the relaxation exercise that was active in nature allowed the participants to partake in an activity, which could be a reason behind the significant main effect found for the relaxation conditions and for its significant impact on reducing students' academic stress. It is possible that the passive nature of the video was not sufficient to generate an effect for video type. Regardless of the content in the video, students may have not fully processed or reflected on the information provided to them in the TED talk video. In turn, the participants' cognitions may not have been altered and their stress levels would not have been reduced. Additionally, given the passive nature of the video it is possible that participants may not have paid attention to the entire video. Specifically, the TED talk video discussed multiple stress reducing coping strategies towards the beginning and middle of the video. Since all participants were able to accurately report on at least one coping strategy, it is therefore a possibility that participants may have paid attention up until this point of the video but eventually, gotten antsy towards the end of the video. Consequently, participants may have not paid full attention to all of the information being presented to them and may have not completely benefited from the cognitive behavioural aspect of the intervention program.

The different total duration of the videos used in the present study may have contributed to the lack of effects for the video presentation. Half of the participations were required to watch the TED talk video which was approximately 10 minutes longer than the educational video. The TED talk video was 15 minutes in length and the educational video was approximately 5 minutes in length. Additionally, participants who were placed in the condition where they were required to watch both the TED talk video and partake in the autogenic relaxation exercise, would have

been forced to give their undivided attention for 25 minutes. Both of these factors could have contributed to the nonsignificant findings if the participants began to lose their focus.

Participants watched the TED talk video or the educational video and partook in the relaxation technique with the lights off. After completion of the intervention, participants were required to complete the PSS with the lights on. Having the lights off for a significant period of time could have resulted in making the participants more tired and resulted in the information that they filled out in the PSS to differ than, if the lights had been on the entire time.

The baseline assessment of initial levels of stress showed that there were no significant differences between participants in each of the different conditions. However, during the school year there are different times throughout the year when students become more or less stressed, which is typically dependent on their work load. This study was conducted across the span of 5 months. This means that some of the students may have participated in the study during a very hectic time. Given no differences were seen in the baseline assessment, it is unlikely that some participants were more or less stressed out when they came in to the laboratory to participate in the study. Rather, it is possible that their actual participation in the stress intervention could have further reminded them of all of the work that they still need to complete, which could have resulted in increasing rather than decreasing their stress levels. Some of the participants received the intervention in the morning while others received it later in the afternoon. In society, some individuals deem themselves to be morning people whereas others are not. If an individual who is not fully alert in the morning time partook in the intervention in the morning, it may have resulted in them not completely benefiting from what the intervention was offering and therefore, failed to reduce their stress.

The results of the present study contribute to the literature on stress interventions and

inform us that relaxation techniques are an effective method in reducing overall academic stress among first-year undergraduate students. In the future, it would be interesting to see whether or not these results could be replicated with the utilization of a different relaxation technique such as meditation, guided imagery or progressive muscle relaxation. All relaxation techniques are designed to create a relaxation response within an individual and to provide relief from stress. However, it has been found that there is no single relaxation technique that is best for everyone, and when choosing a relaxation technique, it is important to consider individuals needs, preferences, overall lifestyle and the way that they tend to react to stress (Turk et al., 1983). Future research on different types of relaxation techniques would assist researchers in better understanding if a specific type of relaxation technique is better or worse for a specific type of undergraduate student. Future research should also look at differing ways to alter participants' cognitions and on how to best deliver a cognitive behavioural component to undergraduate students in the laboratory for the purposes of an intervention. Utilizing a medium other than a video that discussed the positive side of stress to deliver the cognitive behavioural component may have resulted in significant findings and a reduction in stress levels. Additionally, future studies on stress interventions could be conducted in a more comfortable setting. If participants are given the option to either sit or lie down on a couch or big chair, it could potentially allow them to feel less stressed. Participants in this study were required to sit in desk chairs that surrounded tables which resembled the setting of a typical classroom. This is likely not the best environment to encourage relaxation and the reduction of academic stress among students.

Future research should also examine whether these results could be replicated among a different cohort of students, such as among both graduate school students and professional school students. As well, since this study only targeted first-year undergraduate students, it

would be interesting to see whether or not students in their second, third or fourth year of their undergraduate degree would benefit from an academic stress reducing intervention. Also, conducting additional work on the timing of the intervention and its effects on student grades would benefit both students and researchers. Researchers could see whether or not delivering the intervention to first-year undergraduate students during an overly stressful academic time period such as final exams would significantly reduce students' stress and consequently assist them in achieving a better grade. Further research would assist university students and their professors in better understanding how to reduce students' academic stress and whether stress interventions are truly beneficial to their academic standing.

Overall, the results from this study illustrate that it may be beneficial for first-year undergraduate students to partake in an autogenic relaxation technique when they feel academically stressed. In addition, the findings from this study suggests that a multi-method intervention program may not be the most beneficial in reducing stress levels. Rather, a single method, such as a relaxation technique, may be sufficient in reducing overall academic stress levels among first-year undergraduate students.

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Appendix I:

Baseline Assessment of Current Academic Stress

How academically stressed are you feeling right now? (circle one)

0	1	2	3	4
No Stress	Barely Stressed	Moderate Stress	Fairly Stressed	Very Stressed

Appendix II:

Coping Strategies Worksheet

Write down 3 different coping strategies that you learnt in the video to reduce your academic stress:

(Please submit this handout to the researcher at the end of the study)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Appendix III:
Application of Coping Strategies Worksheet

How will you use the strategies from the video to reduce your academic stress?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Curriculum Vitae

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