



# Resource Package

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**For Staff and Faculty**

Mental Health and Wellness Department  
Yorkville University  
July 2024



# Table of Contents

Mental Health and Wellness Department .....	1
Counsellor Schedules & Locations .....	2
How to Book an Appointment .....	3
Mental Health Resources & Crisis Support.....	4
Managing Homesickness.....	6
Tips for Managing Homesickness .....	7
Cyberbullying .....	9
Taking Action Against Cyberbullying .....	10
Understanding Anxiety .....	12
Strategies to Cope with Anxiety .....	13
Stress Management .....	15
Tips for Stress Management .....	16
An Introduction to Mindfulness .....	18
Wellness .....	20
Tips for Improved Wellness & Self-Care .....	22
Sleep Hygiene .....	23
Academic Success.....	25

# Mental Health and Wellness Department

The Mental Health and Wellness Department is committed to supporting students with their well-being. If a student is experiencing academic stress, relationship concerns, or looking for someone to talk to, students can reach out! Whatever a student chooses to discuss, whether personal or academic, remains confidential. The Mental Health and Wellness Counsellors work collaboratively with students to understand their situation and experiences to support them in their academic journey.

## Services

### One-to-One Mental Health Counselling & Consultations

Free, 30-minute sessions with a Mental Health and Wellness Counsellor. All sessions are confidential and are in no way tied to a student's academic record. **Consultations** are available if students have any questions or require additional information related to mental health and/or wellness.

### Peer-to-Peer Support Groups & Workshops

Virtual support groups and workshops provide students with a platform to learn about mental health and wellness related topics and to share and engage in these topics with other students. Topics vary and ideas are always welcome. Topics have included academic anxiety, stress management, and boundary setting. For information, please refer to the **Events Calendar** ([www.success.yorkvilleu.ca/events-calendar](http://www.success.yorkvilleu.ca/events-calendar)).

### On-Campus Walk-Ins

Students are welcome to drop-by during walk-in hours to speak with a counsellor (please see **Counsellor Schedules & Locations** for more information).

### Mental Health Support Resources

Information tip-sheets and videos that have been curated by the team are available to students via the Student Success Centre. Please visit [www.success.yorkvilleu.ca/wellness](http://www.success.yorkvilleu.ca/wellness).

### Community Resources & Referrals

Supporting students every step along the way is important to us. Whether a student is looking for long-term or additional support, our team can provide the student with a variety of resources available in their community.

## Counsellor Schedules & Locations

Counsellor	Location	Availability
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Bertina Tan</b> btan@torontofilmschool.ca</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ontario</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Steeles Campus</b> (2000 Steeles Avenue, Concord, ON)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Monday, Wednesday, Friday (Virtual, 8AM-4PM EST)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tuesday, Thursday (Steeles Campus, 8AM-4PM EST)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Freha Mian</b> fmian@torontofilmschool.ca</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>British Columbia</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>New Westminister Campus</b> (88 6th St., New Westminister, B.C.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Monday, Tuesday, Friday (Virtual, 8:30AM-4:30PM PST)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Wednesday, Thursday (New Westminister Campus, 8:30AM-4:30PM PST)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Golie Shamloo</b> gshamloo@yorkvilleu.ca</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>British Columbia</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>New Westminister Campus</b> (88 6th St., New Westminister, B.C.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Monday, Wednesday, Thursday (Virtual, 8AM-4PM PST)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tuesday, Friday (New Westminister Campus, 8AM-4PM PST)</p>

## Additional Information

For any questions or inquiries, please email  
[wellness@yorkvilleu.ca](mailto:wellness@yorkvilleu.ca)

To book a free and confidential counselling appointment, please visit  
[www.yorkvilleu-bc.janeapp.com](http://www.yorkvilleu-bc.janeapp.com)

# How to Book a Mental Health Counselling Appointment

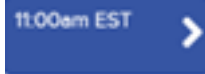
1 Go to [www.yorkvilleu-bc.janeapp.com](http://www.yorkvilleu-bc.janeapp.com)



2 Click on **Book an Appointment** and then **Book by Practitioner**

Book an Appointment at Counselling - Toronto,  
Eastern Time Zone

3 Select an **Available** appointment time



**Note:** If no appointment times are available **or** if no available time works with your schedule, please add yourself to the **Wait List**.

Can't find a time? [Add yourself to the wait list](#)

Unavailable Available

4 **Sign Up** or **Sign In** with a personal email address

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You will receive an email confirming your appointment.

If you require assistance, you can email the team at [wellness@yorkvilleu.ca](mailto:wellness@yorkvilleu.ca).

**\*\* Please note whether your appointment time is in Eastern Standard Time or Pacific Standard Time \*\***

# Mental Health Resources & Crisis Support

If you are ...

- feeling desperate and hopeless
- worried you might hurt yourself, someone else, or commit suicide, and/or
- feeling alone with no one to talk to

Please call one of the numbers below or review the following resources

## GuardMe Student Support Program (GMSSP)

### Support when you need it most

The **GuardMe Student Support Program (GMSSP)** provides a safe and inclusive space for students to access mental health support that meets them where they are.



Exclusive to Yorkville University students, the GMSSP provides a range of mental health and wellness services to support students during their academic journey. These supports include:

- **24-7, immediate support and counselling** from mental health professionals
- Support offered in **multiple languages** to cater to a diverse student population
- Various **online tools and resources**, such as self-help materials and mental health assessments, to help students manage their well-being

Students can access GMSSP at:

[www.gmssp.org](http://www.gmssp.org)

Helpline	Number	Description
<b>Emergency Services/ Mobile Crisis</b>	9-1-1	Emergency responders and the 911 call centers who dispatch them fall within the jurisdiction of provincial, territorial, and municipal governments. For a mental health emergency, call 911 and ask for <b>Mobile Crisis</b> .
<b>Suicide Crisis Helpline</b>	9-8-8	24-hour crisis support via phone or text. Resources offered for individuals in crisis, those unsure if they need help, and people worried about someone else.
<b>Good2Talk</b>	1-866-925-5454  Text <b>GOOD2TALKON</b> to 68-68-68	24-hour, free, confidential helpline offering mental health support, professional counselling, and information on local resources.
<b>Hope for Wellness</b>	1-855-242-3310  To chat, go to <a href="http://hopeforwellness.ca">hopeforwellness.ca</a>	24-hour, Canada-wide mental health counselling and crisis intervention supports to all Indigenous peoples.

# Managing Homesickness

## What is Homesickness?

Feelings of longing, distress, grief, and/or anxiety associated with being away from home or from an object of attachment or importance.

## Why Am I Feeling Homesick?

Feeling homesick is a very normal reaction when separated from a place you hold dear, such as your home, your city or your country. But homesickness isn't just about being away from home – it can also mean being away from anything that is familiar and brings a sense of comfort such as family, friends, pets or even a favourite restaurant.

Homesickness can happen to anyone that has been separated from their “normal” lives. Even when this separation is full of exciting opportunities, such as leaving home to go to school, experiencing homesickness is normal and natural. Being homesick does not mean you've made a bad decision, but simply that you are missing all of the things you've found important.

## How Do I Know I'm Homesick?

Each person may have a different response to feeling homesick. Here are a few common symptoms of homesickness:

- Changes in sleep patterns (inability to fall/stay asleep)
- Changes in mood (increased irritability, anger, sadness)
- Feelings of helplessness/hopelessness
- Feeling lonely/isolated
- Loss of appetite
- Changes in weight (not eating enough/overeating)
- Lack of interest in activities once enjoyed
- Low motivation
- Loss of energy (feeling tired of physically exhausted)
- Difficulties with concentration/focus
- Physiological symptoms associated with anxiety (e.g., increased/rapid heart rate and/or breathing, increased sweating, headache, dizziness, digestive issues)



# Tips for Managing Homesickness

## Acknowledge your Feelings

Feelings of homesickness are common; you are not alone. An important step is to acknowledge that these feelings are not strange and that there are several different ways to manage them. Remember, different things work for different people – there is no “one-size-fits-all” strategy to combating homesickness.

## Stay Connected

Ensure that you keep in touch with friends and family as best you can. It is important, however, to manage this appropriately. Phoning home several times a day may increase your feeling of loneliness, making your homesickness much worse. Instead, set one time each week to connect, giving yourself and your loved ones something to look forward to.

At the same time, begin to connect with people locally. Find a favourite spot to walk or a place to eat. Join a sports team, take a yoga class or engage in the many activities your school puts together.

## Establish a Sense of Familiarity

Try to incorporate certain home-traditions into your new life. Try to cook the same food or use the same spices. Incorporate smells and scents into your home. Even using the same smelling laundry detergent can bring a sense of familiarity and, with it, a sense of calm.

## Engage in a Hobby

Engaging in an activity that brings you a sense of enjoyment and excitement can help keep your mind active. Consider scheduling time in your day to pick up an old hobby or activity or consider trying something new.

## Utilize Mindfulness as a "Way of Being"

Mindfulness can be a specific activity or practice, such as meditating, but can also be incorporated into your daily activity as a way of being. When engaging in a daily activity, such as doing the dishes, focus all your attention on that task and pay close attention to your senses (what you can hear, see, smell, touch and taste). If a thought or feeling comes to mind, don't chase it away. Ponder over it for a moment without judgement or worry. Then, gently, return your complete attention to the task at hand. For example, you might say to yourself: “I am aware that I am having this thought, however, I am washing the dishes and will remain focused on this task.”

## **Stay Positive**

Like building muscle through repeated exercise, you can develop your skill at being positive and optimistic through regular “exercise.” Try to reframe your negative thoughts and feelings by looking for the good. Also be sure to take time, every day, to do something that makes you laugh and brings you joy.

## **Establish a Daily Routine**

Having a daily routine can help you manage homesickness. Set specific times for sleeping, exercising, connecting with family and friends and finishing your schoolwork. Even a casual schedule can help you feel productive and provide a sense of certainty and security in what you decide to do with your time.

# Cyberbullying

**Cyberbullying** is the intentional and malicious act of hurting, humiliating, threatening, harassing, or embarrassing an individual electronically. These attacks are done via text, email, social media apps, or other online platforms. Cyberbullying includes:

- Sending, uploading, or posting hurtful, threatening, embarrassing, false, or humiliating messages or comments, including images or videos, and without the consent of the individual
- Using an individual's password to access their social accounts, or creating an account to impersonate them, with the intent to send hurtful or threatening messages to others
- Creating online surveys or polls to encourage others to rate an individual in negative ways
- Harassing, embarrassing, threatening, or "ganging up" on an individual through online gaming platforms via in-game messages or during game-play

## Signs of Cyberbullying

Someone who is being bullied may:

- Reduce, avoid, or increase amount of time spent on phone or computer
- Block or delete numbers or accounts from their phone or apps
- Express feelings of anger, anxiety, paranoia, or withdrawal after receiving messages or notifications
- Become secretive with phone or computer use
- Engage in anti-social behaviour or withdraw from friends, family, social situations, or social media, which may lead to reluctance to leave home
- Get lower grades in school
- Experience changes in mood, appetite, sleep, or unexplained body pains such as headaches or stomachaches
- Experience a loss of interest in activities once enjoyed
- Make comments regarding self-harm or suicide

# Consequences of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can be perpetrated by a student, faculty, or staff member with the target being any member of the school community. Victims of cyberbullying may experience short- and long-term psychological, behavioural, and social impacts.

## Psychological

- feeling anxious, depressed, hopeless/helpless
- experiencing a loss of self-esteem and self-worth
- thinking about self-harm and suicide

## Behavioural

- engaging in self-isolation, embarrassed to face others
- struggling to concentrate or maintain focus
- considering vengeful activities to "get back" at the bully
- using drugs or alcohol to help cope
- hurting/harming oneself or attempting suicide

## Social

- being excluded or ostracized

The perpetrators, having perhaps been bullied at one point, may also experience the impacts outlined above. In addition, bullies may lose their jobs, be expelled or suspended from school, and be charged with a criminal offense.

## Don't Be a Bystander

You may witness cyberbullying anywhere on the internet and, with a massive user-base, it is easy to assume that someone else may step-in. Unfortunately, most bystanders do not intervene due to fears of being the next target. It can feel even riskier if the bully is in a position of authority. However, in these times it is critically important to remember the words of Albert Einstein, "The world will be destroyed, not by those who do evil, but by those who watch them without doing anything."

# Taking Action Against Cyberbullying

## Speak Up

Tell a trusted colleague, friend, mentor, or teacher. Reach out to community supports, including mental health and wellness. File a police report, if needed.

## Report or Block the Person/Group

Take advantage of the report and block functions within all social media sites and online gaming platforms. These can almost always be done anonymously, helping to create a safe space.

## Gather Evidence

Save emails, texts, copies of posts, screen captures, and any other content that would be considered evidence of the cyberbullying.

## Be An Ally

Provide support to victims by helping them speak up, block, and gather evidence. Help create a safe space for someone to share their experience; check in on victims regularly.

## Reporting Cyberbullying at YU

Every member of the school community has a right to feel safe. Yorkville University's and Toronto Film School's **Student Conduct Policy** makes cyberbullying an offence with penalties that range from warnings to expulsion, and a **Harassment and Discrimination Policy** that makes any sort of harassment or bullying by any member of the university community an offence. Both policies allow any member of the community to make a complaint.

As a first step, students can informally address the situation by confronting the individual and telling them that their behaviour is inappropriate and must immediately stop. If the cyberbully is a student, the campus Student Conduct Officer can be asked to address and resolve the issue. If the cyberbully is an employee of the university, a student can contact the school's Human Resources Department or the employee's supervisor.

# Understanding Anxiety

Fear and anxiety in response to certain situations are a normal part of life and can even serve an adaptive function by keeping you alert. However, sometimes these feelings can become overwhelming and persistent and interfere with your ability to function. As such, it is important to understand and recognize your anxiety in order to begin working towards bringing yourself back to a calmer state.

## Common Signs and Symptoms of Anxiety

Cognitive	Emotional	Physical	Behavioural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficulty concentrating and making decisions</li><li>• Lack of confidence</li><li>• Constant worrying</li><li>• Thoughts of impending doom</li><li>• Speeding or slowing down of thoughts</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Moodiness/ Irritability</li><li>• Hopelessness/ Helplessness</li><li>• Anxiety</li><li>• Depression</li><li>• Anger</li><li>• Fear</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Headaches</li><li>• Muscle tension</li><li>• Stomach problems or nausea</li><li>• Rapid heartrate</li><li>• Sleeping difficulties</li><li>• Fatigue</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Changes in eating or sleeping patterns</li><li>• Social withdrawal</li><li>• Nervous habits (e.g., nail biting)</li><li>• Increased use of substances/ alcohol</li><li>• Neglecting responsibilities</li><li>• Decline in performance/ productivity</li></ul>

# What Can You Do About Anxiety?

## Recognize Symptoms of Anxiety

The first step of coping with anxiety is to *recognize* the signs and symptoms that show up for you.

## Understand Why You Are Feeling This Way

Associate your anxiety symptoms with thoughts, places and situations that increased your anxiety. Aim to understand this association rather than labelling and judging.

## Face Anxiety (Gently!)

Learning to face and accept your anxiety in a non-judgmental way can help reduce the power anxiety has over you.

## Interventions

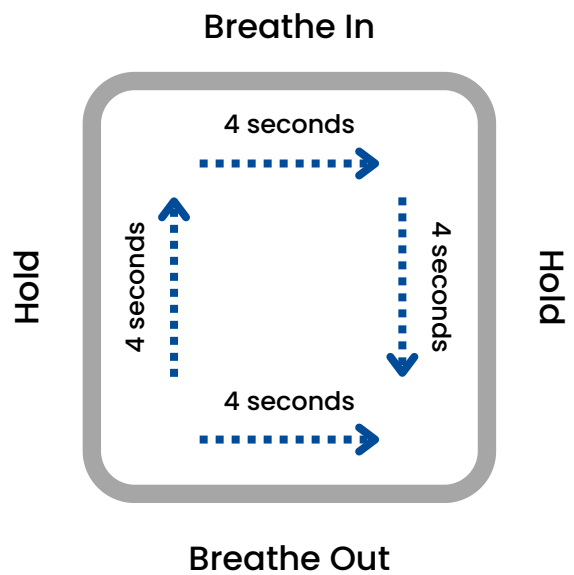
Learning about self-care strategies and incorporating them into your routine can help reduce your anxiety symptoms.

## Strategies to Cope with Anxiety

### Breathing Exercises

Breathing exercises that slow down and deepen the breathing can help relax your mind and body.

**Box breathing** is one such exercise: Inhale for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 4 seconds, exhale for 4 seconds and hold again for 4 seconds. Repeat!



## Sleep

Getting a good night's sleep is important for coping with anxiety-related symptoms. Try setting a routine and practicing good sleep hygiene.

## Progressive Muscle Relaxation

This technique can aid in alleviating disruptive anxiety-related symptoms by progressively tensing and relaxing different muscle groups throughout your body.

Begin by tightening any muscle in your body (for example, your fist) and holding this for 5 seconds; abruptly release this tension and feel the muscle relax. Continue doing this for different muscle groups and remember to breathe.

## Physical Exercise

Remaining physically active is important for both your mental and physical health. This activity does not have to be extremely strenuous. Consider trying yoga, Tai Chi, aerobic exercises or even simply going for a walk/run. Find an exercise that works best for you and set an achievable plan for yourself.

## Eat Well-Balanced Meals

Healthy eating is important for one's overall physical and mental health.

## Journaling

This is a great way to recognize and understand your anxiety by organizing your thoughts and feelings. Once you have identified your stressors and reactions, you can create a plan to cope with them and reduce your anxiety.

## Recognizing Personal Limitations

We all have limits. Recognizing and respecting our limits helps us cope and manage our anxiety. Set more manageable goals and prioritize your well-being. Accept that you cannot control everything. Try challenging your negative thoughts by thinking of alternative explanations.

## Speak to a Professional

Schedule an appointment to speak to a professional mental health and wellness counsellor for free.



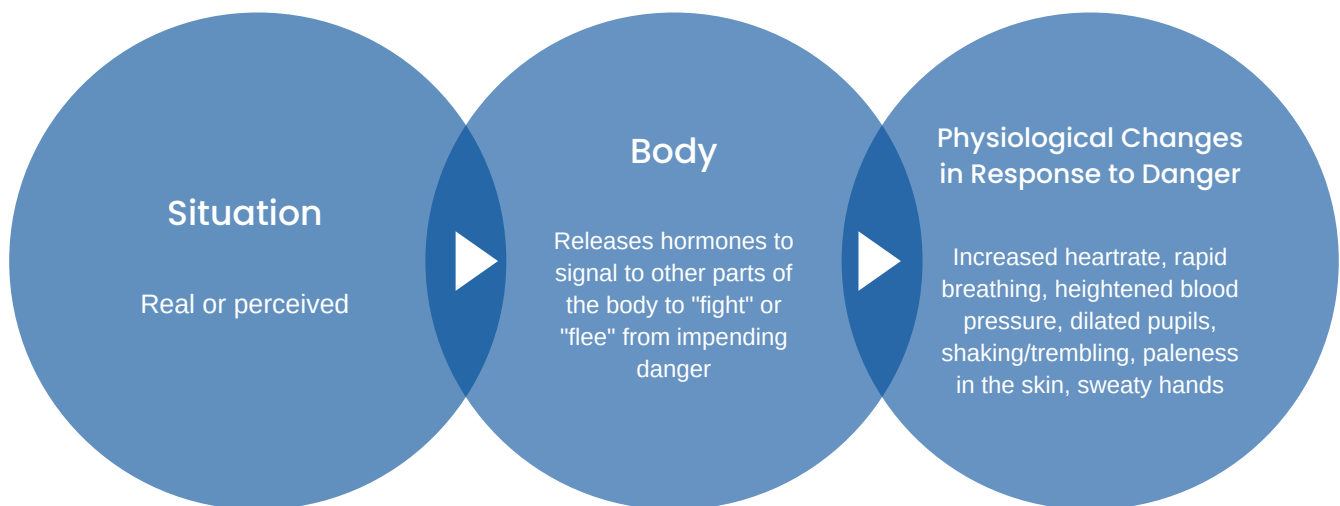
# Stress Management

## What Should I Know About Stress?

Stress is our body's physical and mental response to changes in the environment or to an event. These changes can be perceived as good (eustress) or bad (distress). Stress can be triggered by any threatening situation - real or perceived. It can be short-term (i.e., lasting for a short period of time and dissipating on its own or with a certain level of self-care efforts), or long-term (i.e., causing prolonged and chronic distress that may negatively impact overall functioning and well-being).

## How Is Stress Triggered?

Our body's "alarm system" responds to stress by activating and releasing hormones to stimulate other parts of the body to prepare us to deal with stressors. This physiological stimulation causes symptoms such as increased heart rate, rapid breathing, heightened blood pressure, dilated pupils, shaking and trembling, paleness in the skin and sweaty hands.



# What Are The Symptoms of Stress?

Cognitive	Emotional	Physical	Behavioural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficulty concentrating and making decisions</li><li>• Lack of confidence</li><li>• Constant worrying</li><li>• Thoughts of impending doom</li><li>• Speeding or slowing down of thoughts</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Moodiness/Irritability</li><li>• Hopelessness/Helplessness</li><li>• Anxiety</li><li>• Depression</li><li>• Anger</li><li>• Fear</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Headaches</li><li>• Muscle tension</li><li>• Stomach problems or nausea</li><li>• Rapid heartrate</li><li>• Sleeping difficulties</li><li>• Fatigue</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Changes in eating or sleeping patterns</li><li>• Social withdrawal</li><li>• Nervous habits (e.g., nail biting)</li><li>• Increased use of substances/alcohol</li><li>• Neglecting responsibilities</li><li>• Decline in performance/productivity</li></ul>

## Tips for Stress Management

### Relaxation Techniques

Deep-breathing (meditative) exercises can be a great way to manage your stress. Such exercises work by creating a state of relaxation for your mind and body.

### Practice Positive Thinking

It is a common practice to engage in negative thinking during times of stress. Accept that you cannot control everything. Viewing the problem in a more positive light can help reframe your perspective. Try challenging your negative thoughts by replacing them with more positive ones.

### Self-Care

Set aside some leisure time for activities that you enjoy. Ensure that you are prioritizing sleep and nutrition, as these play a vital role in improving mental and physical well-being. Physical exercise is a great way to practice self-care. This does not necessarily need to be a strenuous or demanding activity, but rather a more enjoyable one. Try creating sleep routines, healthy eating habits and a more physical lifestyle to combat stress.

## **Journaling**

Stress impacts everyone differently. Journaling is a great way to understand and keep track of how, as well as when, stress impacts you. Consequently, through journaling, you can prepare yourself to be more equipped to handle such stressors.

## **Scheduling**

Once you understand what your stressors are, it can be helpful to create a schedule to plan for deadlines, events and responsibilities to prepare yourself for reduced stress and greater success.

## **Coming to Terms with Stress**

Stress is an inevitable part of our lives, but it is important to try and reframe the problem to look at the bigger picture. Ask yourself how important this will be in the long run. Setting more realistic goals and standards, as well as respecting our limits, supports us in better managing our stress.

# An Introduction to Mindfulness

In today's digitally and technologically connected world, people are often unaware of or pay little attention to what is happening within themselves. Stress, anxiety, and depression are on the rise and society seems to have forgotten how to pause, relax, and enjoy the beauty life has to offer. Incorporating Mindfulness techniques into daily life, can help.

Mindfulness is the art and practice of being in the "here and now"; of being in the present moment. It is the ability to be fully aware and focused on what is happening around, and within us. By allowing ourselves to stay in the present and go with what is happening within, rather than trying to fight or avoid our experience, we create the opportunity to gain insight into the fundamental sources of our concerns.

Many mental and physical health issues are a product of chronic stress which can be debilitating. Mindfulness activities such as breathing exercises, body scanning, yoga, and meditation are scientifically proven ways of activating the relaxation response which counteract the negative impact of stress on our minds and bodies.

Although Mindfulness research is still in its infancy, there is a growing body of evidence showing that practicing intentional mindfulness results in positive changes in mental and physical health, including improved ability to be attentive, relaxed, and regulate emotions and increased self-awareness and overall health and well-being.

**//** Our life is shaped by our mind, **//**  
for we become what we think.

BUDDHA

# Mindfulness

Quiets the worried mind

Allows us to safely explore the underlying causes of our stress and worry

Keeps us in the present, rather than worrying about the future or ruminating over past events

Teaches us to look for warning signs of stress in our bodies and minds

Help us learn to stay with difficult feelings without analyzing, ignoring, or strengthening them

Gives us permission to feel and acknowledge our difficult thoughts and emotions, helping us let them go

Creates a separation between the "self" and the "problem", helping ensure our worries do not consume or control us

“ Mindfulness isn't difficult,  
we just need to remember to  
do it. ”

SHARON SALZBERG

# Wellness

## Mental Health Facts

Our mental health relates to our psychological well-being and includes our ability to balance mental, emotional, social, and physical aspects of our lives. When we experience significant distress or feel unable to cope with stressors, our mental health can be negatively impacted.

How much do you know about mental health? Read the statements below to learn the facts so you can take care of your mental health.

### **Myth: Mental health is the same as mental illness.**

**Fact:** Mental health and mental illness are not the same. Mental health refers to a state of well-being and includes our ability to cope with stressors that can impact our mental, emotional, social, and physical health. Mental illness refers to interruptions in parts of an individual's life that may be enough to cause disruptions and impairments in well-being and functioning.

### **Myth: People with mental illnesses are weak and cannot handle stress.**

**Fact:** Mental illnesses are not due to personal weakness. Rather, mental illness can be caused by a combination of biological (e.g. family history of mental health issues), psychological (e.g. stress, trauma), environmental (e.g. pandemic, moving, life transitions), or social (e.g. loss of a loved one, unemployment) factors.

### **Myth: People with mental illnesses or mental health concerns will never get better.**

**Fact:** Individuals diagnosed with mental illnesses or who experience mental health issues can still lead very fulfilling and productive lives with support from friends, family, counsellors, and physicians.

### **Myth: Seeking counselling means I have a mental illness.**

**Fact:** Seeking counselling services does not mean that you have a mental illness. Individuals can seek counselling for a variety of reasons: adjusting to a new environment or culture; life transitions; homesickness; feeling stressed about school; conflict with family, friends, or other interpersonal relationships; feelings of depression or anxiety; etc.

**Myth: Mental illnesses are not real illnesses.**

**Fact:** Mental illnesses are just as real as physical illnesses and can be diagnosed and treated.

**Myth: People who experience mental health issues cannot work.**

**Fact:** There are many people in the workforce who have experienced mental health issues. Having a mental illness does not necessarily mean that an individual is no longer capable of working.

**Myth: Mental health issues cannot affect me.**

**Fact:** Mental health issues are common and can affect anyone regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.

**Myth: I cannot do anything for a person experiencing a mental health issue.**

**Fact:** Friends and family can be of great support to a loved one experiencing mental health issues. You can offer support by learning and sharing mental health facts, treating the individual with respect, and helping them access mental health services.

**Myth: Counselling is a waste of time.**

**Fact:** Counselling can provide individuals with a safe and non-judgmental environment to share their thoughts and emotions, while learning new skills and coping strategies to improve their mental health and overall well-being.

## **Mindfulness Over Matter: Podcast Series**

Former Yorkville University Master of Arts in Counselling Psychology (MACP) practicum student Alex Duz launched a psychoeducational podcast on mindfulness. Mindfulness is the practice of bringing one's awareness to the present moment, in the presence of thoughts and feelings, without judgment. Each weekly episode of **Mindfulness over Matter** promises to be both thoroughly researched, cited and sourced, as well as applicable to different listeners.

<https://soundcloud.com/user-897123585>

The following tip sheets provide additional resources related to mindfulness, wellness, self-care, and sleep hygiene.

# Tips for Improved Wellness & Self-Care

Prioritizing wellness and practicing self-care is often neglected by students. Between managing school and dealing with personal problems and responsibilities, focusing on the self becomes secondary. As life becomes more overwhelming and stressful, practicing becomes crucial in sustaining our mental health and well-being.

## Get Some Sleep

Your body needs sleep to function properly. Establish a bedtime routine, don't eat or drink too much, put away cell phones and tablets and turn off the TV at least 30 minutes before going to bed. Incorporate some breathing exercises and do your best to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.

## Eat Well

Eating healthy, well-balanced meals and snacks will give your body all the essential vitamins and nutrients it needs to thrive. As best you can, avoid heavily processed foods and snacks, caffeine and alcohol. Proper "fuel" will positively impact your mental and physical health.

## Stay Active

Physical activities are proven to have positive impact on your mental and physical well-being. Activities do not have to be strenuous and you can exercise at home without any special equipment. Find an exercise that works best for you and add it to your daily routine.

## Keep a Journal

Take time each day to write in a journal, making note of how you've spent your time and reflect on how you've been feeling. Aim to be positive by recognizing the things that are going well or what made you feel grateful.

## Set Wellness Goals

Incorporating wellness activities can be difficult at first. Start small, focusing on one or two strategies. When the first ones become routine, add another into your daily rituals. Soon, putting your mental and physical health first will become a habit.



# Sleep Hygiene

Sleep is an essential, but often neglected, facet of our well-being. Our bodies require enough sleep each night to be able to carry out essential bodily processes which support our overall health and general quality of life. Sleep deficiency is a common problem, especially for college students who often sacrifice sleep to focus on their studies or to work additional hours. Overtime, chronic sleep deprivation can have negative effects such as increasing anxiety, depression and irritability, and lowering mood, motivation, and cognitive abilities.

## How to Get Good Sleep

### Stick to a Schedule

Set a time to go to bed and wake up every day, regardless of whether you need to be up for work or school. Aim for 7-8 hours (adjust according to your needs) of sleep and remember that it will take time for your body to adjust.

### Establish a Bedtime Routine

Your evening rituals should begin before you try to get to sleep. Working backwards from your desired sleep time, establish a routine that includes changing into your pajamas, having a light snack and turning off all screens. A routine can help condition the body by signaling that a set of activities will eventually lead up to a state of rest and relaxation.

### Avoid Stimulants

Energy drinks, caffeine, alcohol, nicotine and other stimulants can keep you awake. It is a good idea to limit these throughout the day but especially before bedtime. Many, for example, won't drink caffeine after lunch so that it doesn't keep them awake in the evening.

### Exercise

Regular physical activity, either vigorous or light, can enhance the quality of your sleep. Studies have shown that the best time to exercise to support your sleep is either first thing in the morning or in the afternoon. Exercising too close to bedtime can act as a stimulant so avoid that if you can.

## **Avoid Heavy Meals Before Bed**

Large meals or drinking too many liquids before bed can create some level of disruption with your sleep. Particularly, liquids can have you getting up for washroom trips, whereas spicy food may cause indigestion or heartburn which would interfere with your quality of sleep.

## **Sleep Primarily At Night**

Although daytime naps can give you a good boost of energy throughout the day, they can take away from your nighttime sleep. Try limiting your daytime naps to less than an hour, ending no later than 3:00 P.M.

## **No Screens**

Turn off all screens one hour prior to your bedtime as the light emanating from screens is stimulating for the brain. Silence can also help you sleep better. If this is difficult to achieve, try using earplugs, a soothing background noise or a white noise machine.

## **Use Your Bed Only For Sleep**

To help strengthen the brain's association between your bed and sleep, try to avoid using your bed for studying, TV watching or connecting with family.

## **Use Relaxation Techniques**

Take a hot shower or bath to relax tense muscles or do some breathing exercises to calm your mind. Some forms of yoga and targeted medication can also help relax as you get ready for sleep.

## **Don't Catastrophize**

If you can't fall asleep, that's okay! Tell yourself "It's okay, I will eventually fall asleep". If you don't fall asleep, get up and do something relaxing like reading a book or meditating – no screens – and then go back to bed when you're tired.

## **Speak To A Professional**

If you are still having trouble sleeping, don't hesitate to speak with a doctor. If you opt for medication, ensure they are under your doctor's supervision.

# Academic Success

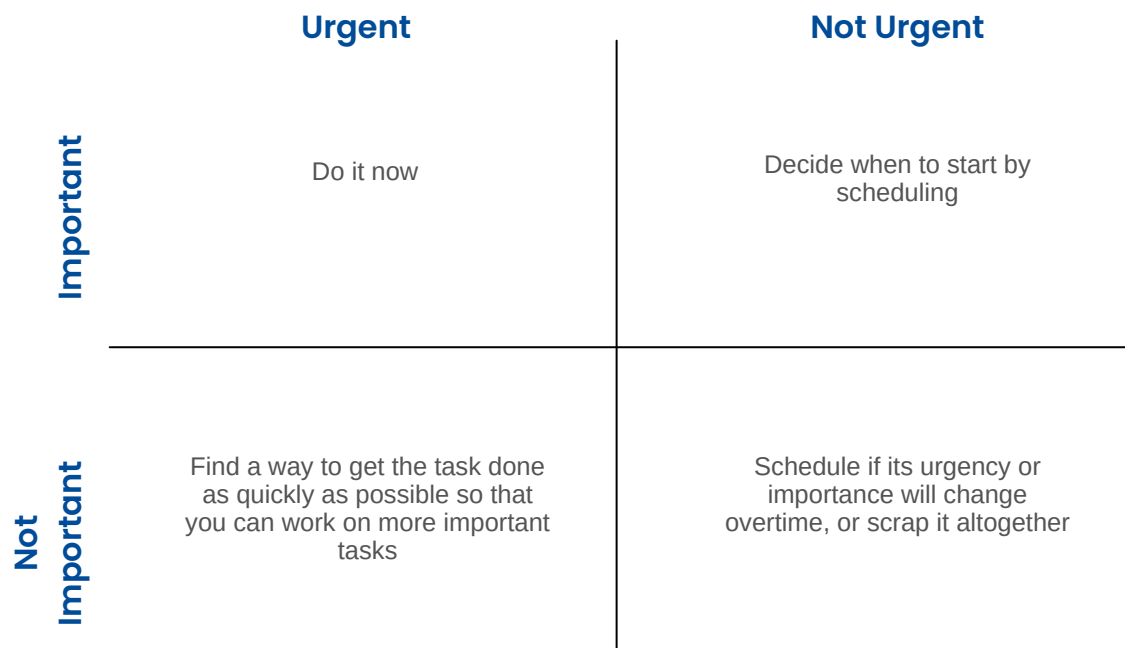
## Transitioning into University

Transitioning into college or university directly from high school, or even after a break period, is a great accomplishment. This change can be accompanied by new responsibilities, exposure to new opportunities, the change to develop a new social network, and perhaps also moving to a new location.

Given the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the world, transitioning into school may cause anxiety and uncertainty. Here are some tips that you can apply to ease your transition into school and help you feel more prepared!

### Tip #1: Prioritize your Time

Make a plan for how the hours of your day will be spent effectively to accomplish your goals. This can include working around class hours by making a list of all your tasks for the day or week and prioritizing your tasks in order of **importance** and **urgency**. The below chart is an **Eisenhower matrix**:



## **Tip #2: Create a Plan to Stay Organized**

Organization skills are important to balance different responsibilities that you may have. Creating a weekly schedule, assigning blocks of time for specific tasks, and setting reminders can help you organize your work and set aside the time needed to complete tasks and assignments. You can also try setting up a designated workspace to help you establish a routine.

## **Tip #3: Hold Yourself Accountable**

Your education is your responsibility! Check-in with yourself and review your goals weekly. Remember, it takes time to adjust to a new study system and program. Be patient with yourself and adjust your schedule as needed.

## **Tip #4: Learn Study Skills**

Developing effective study habits can help you succeed academically. Take the time to understand what the best method of studying may be for you. For example, consider whether you are a visual or auditory learner and identify what time of day you may be able to concentrate best. You can also ask yourself how you might incorporate these factors into a study routine that works for you. Remember to take study breaks to avoid burnout and exhaustion!

## **Tip #5: Avoid Procrastinating (as much as possible!)**

It can be easy to get sidetracked and to put things off for a later time. Try not to let this become a habit! Plan ahead and break larger or more challenging projects into manageable tasks. Making a habit of organizing and reviewing your class notes regularly can help you better consolidate class content; research shows that this method can be more effective than cramming last minute!

## **Tip #6: Connect With Your Peers**

Online classes can make you feel as though you are learning on your own; but this is not true! You can make the best out of the online learning experience by reaching out and collaborating with other students. Try to establish connections with your peers through online discussion boards and other means of online communication. Your peers can be a valuable support system as you navigate through school (online and perhaps in-person!)

## **Tip #7: Don't Be Afraid to Reach Out for Help**

Adjusting to a new school routine can be challenging, but remember that you are not alone. If you need support, you can ask for it - no question is a silly question! Know your support staff and instructors and how you can connect with them when needed. You can also look into what academic resources are available to you and check out the Student Success Centre: [success.yorkvilleu.ca](https://success.yorkvilleu.ca).