

APRIL 2021



ENGWellness Graduate Newsletter

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World Health Day

World Health Day – April 7th, 2021.

On this same day every year, The World Health Organization (WHO) creates awareness around a specific health-related theme. This year's World Health Day will shine a light on building a fairer, healthier world. What does this look like?

Health inequities encompass inequalities between various groups of people and countries, which are often avoidable. One's living conditions, socioeconomic status, and other factors determine their risk of illness and access to resources. There are wide disparities in health status and life expectancy across varying social groups. Due to COVID-19, the world came to realize the vast inequity in health services. We have witnessed that people can live healthier lives and have better access to medical services, solely dependent on their environmental and living conditions, and more specifically, their geography. The goal of addressing these inequities is to strive for a more equitable health care system whereby everyone can reach

their full health potential regardless of their socioeconomic status and/or their geographical location. Everyone deserves the right to a fair and equitable health care system and resources.

Sexual Violence Awareness

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. During this month, our goal as a community is to raise awareness around the prevalence of sexual assault and educate our communities on fostering a safer environment.

Sexual violence is a widespread problem across Canada, as it violates several social boundaries and can affect people of all cultural backgrounds, genders and ages. In Ontario, 1 in 3 women experience sexual violence and 1 in 8 men experience sexual violence. Sexual violence is defined as any form of sexual activity when consent is not given. Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ also face higher rates of sexual assault and abuse. In comparison to heterosexual individuals, in 2018, gay, lesbian, and other sexual minorities in Canada were approximately three times more likely to report being

physically or sexually assaulted in the past 12 months. According to a [new study](#), sexual minorities in Canada were also twice as likely to face inappropriate sexual behaviours in their day to day activities than heterosexual Canadians.

Being a victim of sexual violence can affect an individual's mindset, actions, and feelings resulting in short and long-term physical, mental, and emotional consequences – including trauma. Due to this, many cases of sexual violence go unreported as victims may feel ashamed, embarrassed, and fearful of reprisal. Whether you are a parent, educator or friend, you can make a vast difference in one's life [by noticing the signs of sexual assault](#) and educating your colleagues and students.

At the University of Waterloo, [The Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office \(SVPRO\)](#) assists all individuals who have been impacted by any act of sexual violence. Through various initiatives, SVPRO aims to educate and provide supportive responses to those who have experienced sexual violence, their supports, those who have witnessed, along with those who have caused harm. While maintaining a safe environment, the SVPRO assists with short term coping strategies and provides resources for extended support.

How to not 'just be a bystander': intervening to interrupt sexual violence

By Meaghan Ross, Sexual Violence Response Coordinator in the Sexual Violence Prevention & Response Office

Have you ever been in a situation – maybe in a lab, or on the bus – when you knew something wasn't quite right; for example - that someone was harassing someone else, but you weren't sure what to do about it? Did your mind spin trying to think of what to say, or worrying about how the person would react, or thinking that 'maybe it wasn't your business'? Me too!

When we see harassment, catcalling, stalking, groping, persistent flirting, hazing, or even when we hear rape jokes, it can be hard to know what to do or how to act. And it can be hard to overcome the Bystander Effect – the thought that someone else will be better able to respond in the moment.

The solution to overcoming this is a little bit like using First Aid; the more you practice your First Aid skills, the more you automatically react helpfully and effectively. The same is true for bystander intervention; the more you practice your intervention skills, the more you automatically react helpfully and effectively.

Check out [SVPRO's Bystander Intervention infographic](#) to learn about both the steps you can take to prepare yourself, and the tactics you can use to intervene next time.

When I need to intervene, I think about my 4 Dos:

- Can I be DIRECT with the person causing harm: "Stop that, it's not okay." Or with the person being targeted: "Want to come sit over here? Are you okay?" And if not,
- Can I DISTRACT the person causing harm, or the person being targeted: "Do you know where the bathroom is?", "Want to come get coffee with me?" Or,
- Can I DELEGATE by getting others' help to intervene: "Hey, I think something is weird over there? Can you help me figure out what to do?", Or
- Can I DOCUMENT by keeping an eye on what's happening or making a record of it.

To know which tactic to use, I think about whether I believe the person causing harm is receptive. In other words, is this a teachable moment or is my priority supporting the person being targeted? I also think about what goals I have: is the goal to ensure the safety of the space, or to signal norms about how we want folks to interact with each other, or to let the person harmed know I'm an ally, and so forth.

We can easily get caught up in thinking we always need to change the consciousness of the person whose harassing others, or that we always need to be outspoken when intervening. But, sometimes we can simply distract those involved and the behavior stops.

No matter what tactic we do, we need to remember that our intervention matters! By interrupting sexual violence in all its forms (harassment, online, assaults, jokes, etc.), not only are we supporting those impacted in the moment, but we're also challenging the ongoing normalization of sexual violence and the acceptance of rape culture in our communities 'as just the way things are'.

As we see from the [11th Principle's : Consent & Rape Culture Pyramid](#), when our communities and culture tolerate attitudes and behaviours that are sexually violent; the foundation for assault and other forms of harm is created and normalized. Instead, we can create a #ConsentCulture!

Interested in learning more about SVPRO's work to address sexual violence on campus? Check out @uwaterloohrei on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook!

The Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office (SVPRO) supports all members of the University of Waterloo campus community who have experienced, or been impacted, by sexual violence. We can discuss resources and provide referrals, short term coping strategies, facilitate academic accommodations, and review complaints and reporting options. Find out more [here](#).

We Love Music!

Music has always been utilized as a form of entertainment, meditation, communication, celebration, and mourning; however, there are many more emotions that music can unlock. It helps us express feelings that we may not quite understand or know how to release. There is a strong link between music therapy and mental health as it teaches us to channel some of our deeper emotions. Music therapy is a form of expressive therapy that helps enhance physical and mental wellbeing through the expression and regulation of emotion. Music can be used



as a form of communicating one's feelings and helps evoke a variety of responses to stimulate people. This can help when coping with past trauma and encouraging the healing process. Through activities such as listening to music, making music, or playing an instrument, music therapy connects us to our inner emotions. It serves as a healthy distraction for our mind and can significantly improve our mood and impact our behaviour. It can also help to improve one's self-confidence and social skills.

Check out the [ENGWellness LEARN module](#) if you're interested in learning more about music and mental health! Big thanks to Angelica, the Music Ensemble and Concert Coordinator at Conrad Grebel, for providing us with the information below.

Composer and conductor, Leonard Bernstein said: "Music can name the unnameable & communicate the unknowable." For many, music is part of everyday life. We may not realize that playing an instrument or singing in a group also supports emotional, psychological, and social well-being.

The University of Waterloo Music Department has 7 ensembles that are open to ALL students. There are also many clubs based on musical interests.

- [Music Department Choral Ensembles](#)
- [Music Department Instrumental Ensembles](#)
- [WUSA Clubs](#)

Move Your Mind

Physical activity plays a strong role in overall wellbeing and according to the Canadian Mental Health Association, it is fundamentally linked to mental health. It can reduce anxiety and depression, increase feelings of self-efficacy, encourage self-expression, boost concentration, and help us better cope with stress and negative life events. Increase your physical activity and get involved with the [University of Waterloo's Move Your Mind \(MYM\) Program](#) offered by the Athletics department!

Move Your Mind is a student operated program that aims to help students experience the benefits of physical activity by helping to break down any barriers that might be in their way of participating. What makes Move Your Mind unique is that it is entirely peer-to-peer and can be specifically adapted to each student. There are also no rules regarding what term you are in, your stream, or reasons for joining the program.

During Covid-19, Move Your Mind will be virtually providing the following:

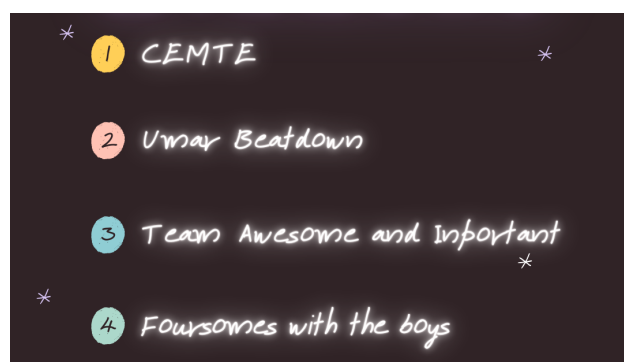
- One-on-one activity consultation with the Move Your Mind Coordinator; assessing interests, providing education and resources about virtual recreation options.
- Tangible plan of action using the SMART Goal Setting model.
- Personalized motivational support and accountability throughout the term.
- Workout Buddy program matching students with like-minded volunteers.
- Drop-in group activities and workshops (i.e.. Weekly meditations this term).

Students who are interested in participating can contact the Move Your Mind Coordinator at athcpwel@uwaterloo.ca or fill out the online referral form! A MYM Coordinator will then make contact to discuss goals, interests, and recreation options in order to create a term plan. If you are interested in a specific activity that needs to be accommodated, please contact Donna at dmrheams@uwaterloo.ca. The MYM Coordinator will provide ongoing support throughout the term, as well as an end of term meeting. All follow up reports can also be sent to referring service providers (if requested) to be added to the patients record.

Student volunteers are also needed! Grow your leadership skills and help improve mental health awareness by helping a peer reach their goals. If interested, email athcpwel@uwaterloo.ca to learn more!

Foursomes Trivia Winners

The ENGWellness Foursome Trivia has officially come to an end! Here are our top contenders for this terms Foursomes Trivia. Congratulations to all winners and thank you to everyone who participated! Prizes will be sent out soon ;)



Mind Your Wellness

Our last Mind Your Wellness session for the term was provided asynchronously on the topic of exam strategies! It has been posted, along with the other sessions, in the [Content Archive](#) section on the ENGWellness website! Check your inbox for a dedicated page of tried and true study tips and strategies already sent out by the ENGWellness Team and keep it on hand for reference!



MMEGA

Check out the [Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering Graduate Association](#)! All registered graduate students in the MME department are considered part of MMEGA. We participate in the development of policies involving graduate students and promote social interaction between different research groups!

Content Archive

Check out our most recent fitness class on [YouTube](#)! All recorded sessions and presentations as well as previous newsletters can be accessed under the [Content Archive](#) tab on the ENGWellness website.

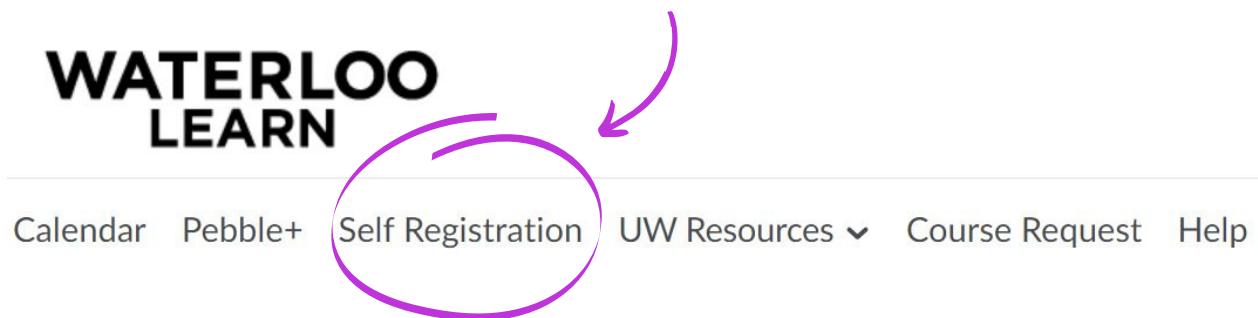
Stay Connected

Be sure to also follow our other social media to stay connected and updated.

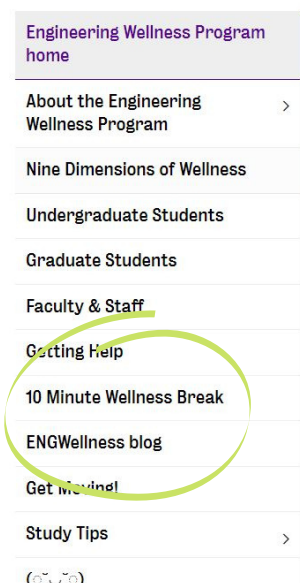


LEARN Group & ENGWellness Site

Get news and access to our content modules through our ENGWellness Learn 'course'! Students can enroll using the Self-Registration function within Learn.



Stay connected with our [ENGWellness Blog](#) and check out our [Wellness Breaks](#) page for ideas on how you can spend your study breaks and rejuvenate!



Welcome to the Engineering Wellness Program (ENGWellness)

The wellbeing of our students (graduate and undergraduate), staff, and faculty matters! The ENGWellness Program was created to support and promote the wellbeing of our community throughout the year.



Helpful Wellness Resources - For All Students

- [Student Success Office](#) - Super useful compilation of learning and life skills resources.
- [EngSoc's Guide on Accessing Mental Health Resources at UW](#) - A no nonsense guide of the services and resources available at UW to ENG students.
- [OUSA COVID-19 Resources for Students](#) - Financial aid, learning tips, and other mental health initiatives.
- [Mental Health Commission Resource Hub](#) - Mental health and wellness during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Campus Wellness Group Therapy and Workshops](#) - Group therapy can be beneficial by helping you find new perspectives on shared challenges, feel inclusion and relief knowing that others experience similar challenges, and allowing you to practice new skills in a supportive environment.
- [Campus Wellness Online Workshops and Seminars](#) - Everything from managing emotions, reducing stress, and improving sleep.
- [Chaplains Services](#) - Spiritual mentors to promote the integration of academic knowledge and meaningful personal faith.
- [Canadian Mental Health Association \(CMHA\)](#) - Tips to manage your mental health during COVID-19.
- [Empower Me](#) - This student-focused service provides you with "one-stop" access to counseling and campus wellness services in a variety of areas including mental health, addictions nutrition, financial, and others. It integrates off-campus resources with already existing on-campus resources and can be accessed 24/7 (within N.A.) in a variety of languages. Gender and faith inclusive services are available.
- [Here 24/7](#) - Offers addictions services and support groups
- [Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction \(CCSA\)](#) - Offers free online resources, tools, apps, and information to support substance use issues by connecting with peers support workers, social works, and professionals for confidential chat services.
- [Centre for Addiction and Mental Health \(CAMH\)](#) - Provides valuable information on addiction and ways to identify if help is needed and how to access it.
- [Waterloo Assignment Planner](#) - Customizable planner for reports, essays, presentations, math assignments, and you name it!

Contacts to book a session:

Sam Vandekerckhove (MME) - srvandek@uwaterloo.ca / ENGWellness@uwaterloo.ca
Leah Foster (ECE) - ljsims@uwaterloo.ca / ENGWellness@uwaterloo.ca