

AUGUST 2021



ENGWellness Staff/Faculty Newsletter

Produced by: the Spring 2021 ENGWellness Ambassador

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Returning to Campus

Much of the content of this newsletter was adapted from a presentation given by Dana St. Jean, Pandemic Response Therapist with the CMHA

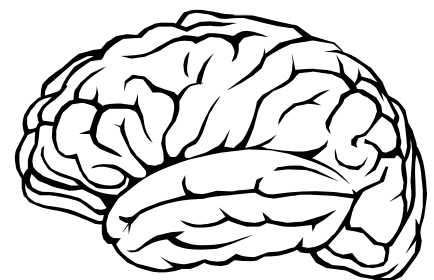
As Spring term comes to a close and with Fall term fast approaching, a return to in-person work is imminent for many. Returning to campus is in many ways exciting, but comes with a unique set of challenges. While in-person activities are gradually returning to campus, the pandemic is not over, and returning to in-person work is a source of COVID-related anxiety for many. Returning to campus represents a huge change in routine and work style compared to remote, online work. On top of that, there is a lot of uncertainty about what campus will look like in the Fall. The COVID situation is always changing, and many have yet to learn exactly what their in-person work will look like in the midst of the pandemic.

Campus can be an overwhelming space. It's often busy, loud, and filled with people. Being back in-person will take a lot of getting used to.

There will be a sudden spike in social interactions with people returning to in-person work. This is exciting, as it's an opportunity to reconnect with people we have not been able to see, but it can also be overwhelming as everyone gets used to being around people again. These challenges are very real, and returning to campus will not be easy. Luckily, there are ways to cope with these challenges.

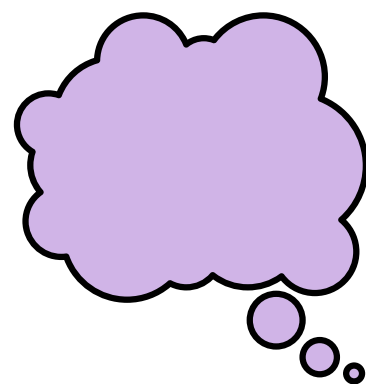
Mental Preparation (things to think about)

A large part of preparing for and coping with the challenges of a return to campus is mental preparation. One thing to keep in mind is how resilient you have been over the time of the pandemic. It's important to remember all the hard work you've done leading up to this point and keep in mind how much you have been able to persevere through when challenges arise. Another thing to remember is that returning to work will be challenging for everybody. We're all doing the best we can with what we have. Keeping this mindset in the midst of challenging situations and interactions with coworkers can be a helpful way of framing difficult situations.



Being aware of our thinking patterns can be helpful too. Negative thoughts are going to enter your mind and you will have worries and fears. One thing that can help is factchecking those negative thoughts as they enter your head. Trying to stay in the moment and thinking through your current situation while factchecking your own thoughts can help deal with challenges. With COVID, it is often easy to get caught up in worrying about the big-picture-national and global situation, and that can be incredibly stressful. However, when you're in a stressful, challenging situation, the things you have control over are the here and now. Ask yourself "what am I doing right now in this moment?" and then you can proceed from there.

One of the most important things you can do while returning to campus is to be kind and patient to yourself. This is not going to be easy. You will face challenges, you will make mistakes, and you will be stressed. But you will make it through. Being kind to yourself in difficult times and being patient with yourself when adjusting to a new routine are important for your mental health and can be accomplished by practicing positive self-talk. Self-talk is the way you speak to and about yourself internally and build yourself up. Rather than getting mad at yourself when things don't go well, remind yourself that you are doing the best you can within your situation, and that you will make it through this.



Physical Preparation (things to do)

On top of the mental strategies discussed earlier, there are physical strategies that can help with your return to campus. If there were particular coping strategies that worked well for you prior to the pandemic for dealing with stress, try to tap back into them, and make them part of your routine again. Schedules will likely look different on campus than they did in person. One suggestion for adapting to that change is to write out all your personal and work responsibilities on pen and paper before returning to campus so you can see them all laid out. Then consider how you'll manage all of these tasks and make note of appropriate available supports to help with these responsibilities.

A key part of returning to in-person work is setting boundaries to make yourself more comfortable. This includes boundaries related to COVID safety, both on a University-wide scale and on a personal scale, but it also includes setting boundaries in how you use your time and maintain a work-life balance. Try to make a commitment to yourself to take a lunch break every day where you can truly take time away from work. It is easy to sometimes want to work through lunch if you have something you need to work on, but in the long run, it is suggested that you maintain a firm commitment to your lunch break. It is important to take breaks and have time where you can think about things other than work. Making a lunch plan like going out for a walk can help maintain your commitment to taking a break. Take time before your return to campus to set out what you want your boundaries to be. Maybe one of your boundaries is that after 6pm, you will not be checking emails at all. Set this boundary up at the outset of the term, and communicate this boundary with the people you work with.

Having these conversations can be helpful in the long run to maintain healthy work boundaries. Part of setting boundaries is knowing when to say 'no'. People tend to want to say yes to be as helpful as they can be, but for the sake of your own mental health and your work-life balance, you will need to say no to things some times. This is an important part of healthy boundary setting and communication. There will come a point in the term where some of your boundaries will be crossed. This is essentially an inevitability at work, and it's something you should prepare for. Take time to consider how you intend to react and respond to a boundary being crossed.

An important tool in responding to boundaries is effective communication. It is important to communicate boundaries clearly and directly. "I" messaging can be an effective communication tool. Stating things from an "I" perspective rather than saying "You..." will help to avoid the person you're talking to being put on the defensive. Talk about your own feelings from your perspective and communicate your boundaries using "I" statements. Another part of effective communication is respecting the rights and feelings of others. Everyone on campus, be it students, faculty, or staff will be experiencing a wide variety of emotions. It's important to respect and acknowledge those feelings when communicating with people. Anxiety and emotion levels will likely be heightened with a return to campus, so it is especially important to be respectful of what people are feeling.

Getting used to being on campus will take time. It is recommended everyone should take some time to acclimatize to being on campus before their return-to-campus date. Taking some time to get used to your workspace and feel what it is like to be on campus can help smooth the transition back to in-person work. Your return to campus affects more than just you. If you live with others, especially if you live with kids, this can be a significant change for them as well. Especially for young children, it can be helpful to prepare them for you not being around the house as much as you may have been over the past year. For example, spending a morning or afternoon away from home can help both you and the people you live with get used to what it will be like when you return to in-person work.



Returning to in-person work will be challenging, but there are strategies you can use to cope with the transition. It's important to be aware of your emotions, and listen to your thoughts. One useful idea is that whatever emotion you're feeling is the right emotion for you in that moment. Be aware of your feelings, remember that we're all doing the best with what we have, and remember that we will get through this.

On-Campus COVID Information

Testing Centre

The Health Services COVID-19 Testing Assessment Centre is open to University of Waterloo students, employees, postdocs and their family members who live in the same household. Testing is by appointment only. You can use [this form](#) to book an appointment.

Rapid Antigen Screening

The COVID-19 Rapid Antigen screening site is open and screening eligible asymptomatic employees and students. An appointment is required to be booked in the system, however same-day walk-in appointments are available if space permits.

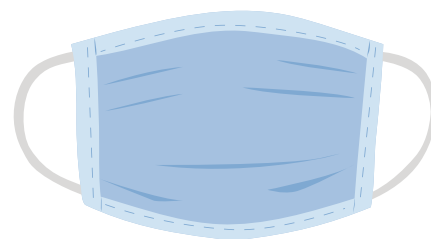
Rapid antigen screening helps identify asymptomatic individuals infected with COVID-19 that regular screening protocols such as symptom screening might otherwise miss and therefore helps break the chain of transmission by preventing these individuals from unknowingly spreading COVID-19.

Please note that this screening is for *asymptomatic* employees and students only. Students and employees experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 must contact the [Health Services COVID-19 Testing Assessment Centre](#).

Vaccination Centre

A vaccine centre is now open at Health Services and available to all students, employees, and family members of students and employees!

Vaccination against COVID-19 is now required in order to live in Waterloo residences. Students should aim to be fully vaccinated with both doses before their move-in date, however the *minimum* requirement is that residents should receive their first dose of a [Health Canada](#) approved vaccine before they move in. These students must also receive a second dose of an approved vaccine as soon as possible within the recommended time period and provide proof that they have done so by **November 1, 2021**. Residents who can't get a vaccine due to medical reasons or other grounds protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code will be able to submit a request for accommodation.



Returning to Campus won't be Returning to "Normal"

The following is a blog post from the [ENGWellness Blog](#). Check it out for more reflections like this one!

Returning to campus means a lot of different things. On the hopeful side, it signifies a dying down of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects in Canada. It means possibilities for more social interactions, in-person classes, and in-person extracurriculars. There is much to be excited about. But there's much to be worried about too. Suddenly interacting with more people than we've seen in a very long time, adjusting back to in-person classes, lingering fear and concern about COVID, and more.

The potential for a return to campus is exciting. It's hopeful, and there are a lot of positive things to look forward to. But while we become excited, it's important to keep our expectations in check. This pandemic has been rough for everyone, and it's tempting to see a return to campus as the light at the end of a long, dark tunnel. It's easy to think of returning to campus as the last step in this process, after which things will be 'normal' again. We have to remember that this just isn't true. COVID is not over, and the effects of the pandemic on social interaction and mental health are far from over as well. I say all of this not to put a damper on the excitement and joy of being able to see people in person again, but to keep my own expectations in check. I know that if I go into the Fall term expecting things to be like they were pre-pandemic, I will be seriously disappointed. And that disappointment has the potential to have a real impact on my mental health. If I go into the next term expecting things to be as they were, the only thing I can end up being is disappointed when they aren't that way.

If instead, I go into next term remembering how difficult the past year has been, remembering the long months of not seeing any friends in-person, of quarantine, and of isolation, then I can begin to appreciate all the wonderful things about a return to in-person. If I go into the next term not thinking about all the things that aren't the same as before, rather than thinking about all the great things we can do now that we haven't been able to do for months, I am able to be grateful. Personally, gratitude plays a big role in my mental health. I find that remembering to be grateful for the good things in life and for the opportunities I have helps me to stay hopeful and stay in good spirits. Returning to campus will bring a lot of joy and happiness and excitement, and I would much rather experience all that joy



It is also important to remember that a return to campus will not all be smooth and easy. Transitioning back to in-person classes means getting used to completely different lecture styles and learning styles than we have been accustomed to. It will take real time and effort to get used to being around lots of people again. These are real challenges, and they shouldn't be taken lightly. Everyone will have a lot of adjusting to do.

I can't wait to get back to campus where I can see people again, and attend an in-person class. That idea is incredibly exciting, but I'm very aware that it won't all be easy. I need to be patient with myself if I have a hard time adjusting back to classes or feel overwhelmed by being around lots of people. Things are changing and it takes time to adjust.

Being mindful of your mental health and being patient with yourself can help to navigate a return to campus and make the most of an exciting (albeit stressful) change.

Joel Woods, 3A Math
Spring 2021 ENGWellness Ambassador

ENGWellness Trivia

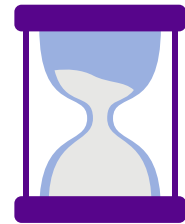
Over the past month, we've been running our ENGWellness Foursomes Trivia game. We had 4 rounds of trivia and received submissions from 17 different teams!

These teams were our top-4 scorers over the month-long period. Each member of these teams will receive a prize package from the W Store. Congratulations to our winners!

- 1 *Nanopartigals*
- 2 *W*
- 3 *picobrain*
- 4 *Ferocious Ferrets*

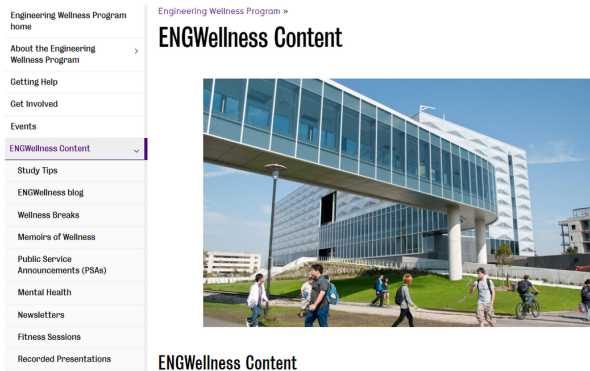
Mind Your Wellness - Time Management

Looking for Time Management tips? Check out [this Mind Your Wellness session on Time Management!](#) This video contains useful time management advice, especially with exams around the corner!



ENGWellness Content

Check out our ENGWellness resources including mental health pages and PSAs. All resources as well as previous newsletters can be accessed under the [ENGWellness Content](#) section of our website.



Stay Connected

Be sure to follow us on social media to stay connected and updated.

-  [@uwengwell](#)
-  [@uwENGwellness](#)
-  [@UwengW](#)
-  [ENGwellness uwaterloo](#)

LEARN 'Course'

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

WATERLOO LEARN

- Calendar
- Pebble+
- Self Registration**
- UW Resources ▾
- Course Request
- Help

Wellness Resources - For you to refer to students

Crisis Support

- [Here 24/7](#) - Offers addiction, mental health, and crisis services
- [Good2Talk](#) - Free, confidential support service which can connect you anonymously with a professional counsellor.
- [Empower Me](#) - This student-focused service provides you with "one-stop" access to counselling and campus wellness services. 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.

Mental Health Resources

- [EngSoc's Guide on Accessing Mental Health Resources at UW](#) - A no-nonsense guide to the services and resources available at UW to ENG students.
- [Centre for Addiction and Mental Health \(CAMH\)](#) - Provides information on addiction and ways to identify if help is needed and how to access it.
- [Campus Wellness Online Workshops and Seminars](#) - Everything from managing emotions, to reducing stress, to improving sleep.
- [Mental Health Commission Resource Hub](#) - Information about 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.
- [Canadian Mental Health Association \(CMHA\)](#) - Tips about managing your mental health during COVID-19.
- [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 workers, and professionals for confidential chat services.

Academic Support

- [Student Success Office](#) - Compilation of learning and life skills resources.
- [OUSA COVID-19 Resources for Students](#) - Financial aid, learning tips, and other mental health initiatives.
- [Waterloo Assignment Planner](#) - Customizable planner for reports, essays, presentations, math assignments, and you name it!
- [Tutor Connect](#) - Connects people with student tutors

Contacts to book a one-on-one coaching session:

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