

JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2021



ENGWellness Graduate Newsletter

Produced by: ENGWellness Ambassadors

Greetings and Welcome Back

Welcome to 2021 and the winter term! The pandemic continues but so do we. Over the past few weeks students, faculty, and staff have been adjusting to the new term. Wherever you may be, we hope you are keeping safe and healthy in these uncertain times.

Bell Let's Talk and Normalizing Mental Health

Bell's campaign **Bell Let's Talk** is an initiative focused on promoting mental health awareness, acceptance, and action. It is built on four key pillars which include fighting stigma, improving access to care, supporting research and leading by example in workplace mental health. This year, Bell Let's Talk Day is **Thursday, January 28** and Bell will once again donate 5¢ for every applicable text, call, tweet or TikTok video using #BellLetsTalk, social media video view and use of their Facebook frame or Snapchat filter.



Fighting Mental Health Stigma

The first step to getting rid of the mental health stigma, is to understand what it is. In any given year, 1 in 5 people in Canada will personally experience a mental health problem or illness. This is 20% of the population! The term, "mental health", encompasses a much wider range than many people think, and that's a big reason why such a large stigma exists. The term itself has a "crazy" or "psychotic" connotation associated with it that does not reflect its true meaning.

Put in the simplest way, mental health is how you're feeling. People shy away from the topic because they associate it with bad behaviour. It is true that mental health affects the way you act, but so does the common cold. Imagine telling someone who's in bed with a fever that they're just being lazy. Mental health works the same way. Everyday emotions are all a part of it! If you're constantly feeling anxious, stressed, or unhappy, then that's poor mental health. It's really such a common thing.

Communication & Mindful Language

Perhaps the biggest step to conquering the stigma, is to talk. Sharing your thoughts and listening to others' thoughts can be powerful. If you've been unhappy, talk about it with someone you can trust, and in turn, lend an ear to their problems. It will become clear that everyone goes through periods of poor mental health throughout their lives, and that realization is a big step towards normalizing mental health.

One important thing to keep in mind on the anti-stigma journey, is word choice. Someone with a mental illness is not "crazy". They simply have an illness, which may last a week, or multiple years, and just like other biological illnesses, they can recover with proper care and treatment. In an effort to break the mental health stigma, ENGWellness is launching a new initiative...



Introducing Memoirs of Wellness with our ENGWellness Ambassadors

"They never really spoke to me. Those ambiguous posts, irresponsibly claiming that "everything will be fine", or "you'll be ok"... constantly revising and improving... the effort shows that they care, and that they understand. That's something important about wellness..."

Julian Huang

"When the COVID-19 pandemic started getting serious in March, I was completely thrown off. Suddenly I was moving back home, and no longer walking around campus going to lectures but sitting at my desk on my laptop for hours. I struggled to stick to a routine and take proper breaks, which made every day feel long and each week endless..."

Lucy Cao

" Those suffering from mental health are often afraid to open up and left suffering, many individuals like myself. I personally have experienced severe anxiety, at a random instance, I started to experience feelings that I have never felt. With everything coming crashing down I did not know how to deal with these new feelings ..."

Kajal Patel

This segment above is a new ENGWellness initiative called Memoirs of Wellness! Personal wellness memoirs and journeys of students, staff and faculty will be featured in order to encourage open conversations about wellbeing. To read the full memoirs, visit the [Memoirs of Wellness](#) page on the ENGWellness site!

Access to Care

Bell Let's Talk supports the care and access of mental health services across Canada through various organizations. Mental illness affects millions of Canadians, but needs are often unmet due to barriers including lack of knowledge of resources, long wait times, cultural and language barriers, stigma, and costs. In just Ontario alone, mental illness is underfunded by \$1.5 billion. COVID-19 has further caused a strain. A survey on the impacts of COVID-19 on mental health reported that 24.3% of participants experienced moderate to severe anxiety.

Youth and students often struggle with getting mental health support. Stigma and inadequate support services are often the greatest barriers. However, the University of Waterloo's various support services are available to help students. A few resources include Campus Wellness Counselling Services, AccessAbility Services, Empower Me (a toll-free 24/7 helpline), and CCA, which now has counselling support too. In Winter 2020, changes were also made to the student health plan. Coverage for visits to mental health practitioners increased to a combined maximum of 80% for up to \$800 per calendar year, doubling the previous maximum of up to \$400. With mental health care being important for all students, the University of Waterloo hopes to encourage more students to seek support.



Access counselling services

- Call 519-888-4567 ext. 32655 to speak to a professional team
 - Due to COVID-19 currently all services are provided online or by call
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Mental Health Research

Mental health research allows for the development of several initiatives towards enhancing mental health in post-secondary institutions, as a lot of research is conducted to see what programs are best suited for students. A greater system-wide approach is recommended, shifting the focus to promoting positive mental health at a population level rather than treating individuals. A system-wide approach allows for an inclusive campus environment that is advantageous to positive mental health, student engagement, and academic success. Increasing awareness and knowledge regarding mental health to the population allows for the ability to maintain wellbeing and most importantly, reduce stigma and prejudice surrounding mental health. Studies show that for a successful systematic approach offering mental health services is crucial as they have a positive impact on student retention. Several interventions are strength-based actions being implemented by The Center for Innovation in Campus Mental Health amid COVID-19 to support population mental health. Funding is allocated towards an extensive range of new research projects, along with supporting the development of mobile applications to detect, treat, and recover those with a mental illness. They are working on initiatives for personalized treatments to better the lives of individuals living with mental illnesses. Funding for research can transform the lives of many individuals and enhance overall wellbeing.

Upcoming Events: The Five Weeks of Wellness

For the upcoming weeks in February starting on February 3rd to March 3rd, we want to introduce to you The Five Weeks of Wellness workshop series! Every week we have a guest speaker hosting a panel via WebEx. This series of wellness workshops focus on breaking down barriers and fostering the community. These panels will give you the chance to discuss remote job search and networking, international student experiences, feelings of loss and grief, how graduate students can support student mental health and de-stigmatizing disability and grad access to AccessAbility Services. [Register](#) to attend these workshops. More information on how you can access them will be sent to your UWaterloo email.

Feb 3	Remote job search and networking for grad students
Feb 10	International Student Experiences
Feb 17	Feelings of loss and grief
Feb 24	How grad students can support student mental health in a TA capacity
Mar 3	De-stigmatizing disability-Grad access to AAS services

Writing and Communication Centre Workshops

The Writing and Communication Centre offers a wide variety of free workshops to cater to your communication needs. They offer services to help you with all stages of the communication process through participation and practice such as graduate literature reviews, introduction to STEM writing, and many more!

For winter 2021 they are offering a multitude of online workshops both asynchronously and one on one. For more information visit the [writing and communication website!](#)

Engineering Graduate Associations

A Message from MMEGA

All MME Grad students are welcome to join the MMEGA coffee chats this Winter ([details on the MMEGA website](#)). In an effort to further support our grad students, MMEGA has created [an anonymous feedback form](#) that any grad student can use to share any concerns! For MEng students, you can now join the dedicated [MS Teams channel exclusively for MME MEng students](#). On behalf of all MMEGA execs, we wish you a great Winter semester!

Get Involved

Join in on the Warrior Reset Program that's currently running! [Register](#) online to learn more about resetting your health!



Take part in Bell Let's Talk Day! Remember to use #BellLetsTalk in texts, tweets, and TikTok videos, as well as use the official Facebook Frame or Snapchat filter! Each applicable use and view of the social media video will be counted for a 5¢ donation by Bell.



Use the Bell Let's Talk virtual photo booth and [submit your photo](#) or [check out the UWaterloo Photo Gallery!](#)

Virtual Events!

ENGWellness will be offering a suite of virtual events through our ENGWellness Learn 'course'! Students can enroll using the Self-Registration function within Learn. Make sure to add the course and stay tuned for more information!

WATERLOO LEARN

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

Stay Connected

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



@uwengwell



@uwENGwellness



@UwengW

Stay connected with our [ENGWellness Blog](#) and [Wellness Breaks page](#)! New posts have been added and more are coming!

- Engineering Wellness Program home
- About the Engineering Wellness Program >
- Nine Dimensions of Wellness
- Undergraduate Students
- Graduate Students
- Faculty & Staff
- Getting Help**
- 10 Minute Wellness Break**
- ENGWellness blog
- Get Moving!
- Study Tips >
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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.

STUDENT WELLNESS COORDINATORS CONTACT US	CHECK OUT THE ENGWELLNESS BLOG	10 MINUTE WELLNESS BREAK
CAMPUS WIDE CURRENT STUDENT RESOURCES	UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO COVID-19 INFORMATION	NEED IMMEDIATE HELP?

Helpful Wellness Resources - For All Students

- [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.
- [Wellness Together Canada](#) - Mental health and substance abuse support.
- [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.

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