

June 2022

ENGWellness Graduate Newsletter

Produced by: the ENGWellness Ambassador



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Just do it.

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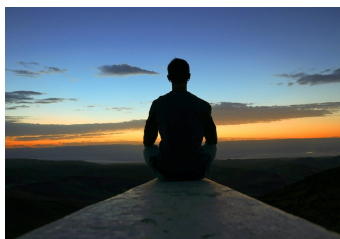
Alright folks, we're now back in-person, the gyms are open, intramurals are up and running, clubs are back, events are being planned...it's all getting back to the way it was. These past couple of years have been exceptionally difficult, but there's only so many times you can say that. At a certain point, you have to move on. As the great Master Oogway puts it: "yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, but today is a gift...that's why it is called the present." Fictional character or not, this guy was onto something. All the things that you missed out on having because of COVID are coming back, and now is your opportunity to seize all of it. If you wanted to start exercising, get more involved, make some new friends, now is your moment -- the "present" of now is right there for you to take it. So, what are you waiting for? Just do it.

Wellness Breaks

Below are a couple of wellness breaks taken from our website. These were created during COVID lockdowns, but the lessons are still valuable!

Negativity Bias

As humans, we are literally hard-wired to find the negative in any situation. This is because (back in 'the day') things that were negative were more likely to harm us than things that are perceived as positive. The brain's natural negativity bias can lead to many mental health related challenges. Being able to find the positive, or an opportunity in a negative situation, is actually a LEARNED behavior. Learned optimism, as well as the emotion of gratitude, have been shown to be insulating in times of challenge. Check out our video on Negativity Bias.



Dealing With the Unknown

Our brain often perceives the unknown as a threat. When that happens, our survival mechanism (fight or flight) becomes triggered and begins to question whether we have the skills, knowledge, resources and capacity to address the unknown situation. Check-out our short video on one approach to dealing with the unknown.

Introduction to Social Anxiety

If you struggle with stress in situations like meeting new people, presenting in front of peers, or social situations, you are not alone. These struggles are highly common, though they can be very debilitating. In some cases, these stresses become so overwhelming that they are recognized as a clinically diagnosable disorder. The clinically diagnosable term is social anxiety, and if you think you may have it, please seek professional help. This newsletter segment here is to provide you with an understanding of the disorder, but also how to deal with normal stress based on our understanding of dealing with the disorder.

What 'social anxiety' means to most people is different than the health professional's definition. When people say they have 'social anxiety', they are often referring to a certain amount of stress they feel when in social situations like presenting in front of our peers or going to social events. Social stress or nervousness is a normal reaction, but the key to it not being classified as a disorder is that it is manageable. That is, the amount of nervousness or stress that we feel is controllable enough that it doesn't take over our lives.



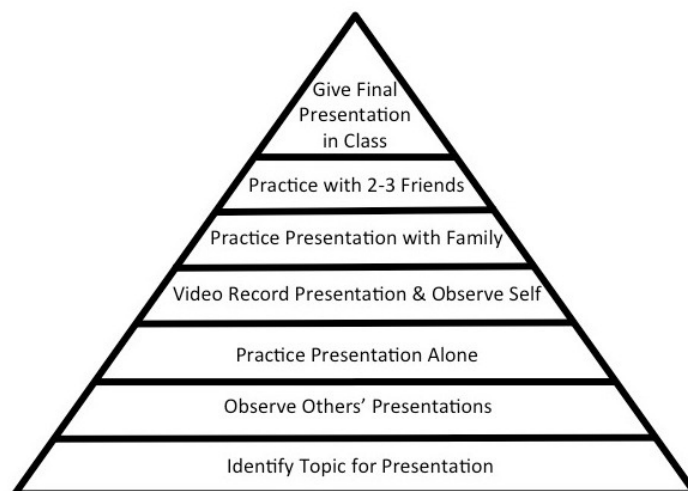
We illustrate the difference between **social anxiety disorder** and **social stress** not to diminish or discount the discomfort you feel in social situations. We illustrate this difference as it is important to distinguish between a mental disorder and the more common social stresses. It is important to normalize social stress and ensure that you reach out for help if you think what you are experiencing may be more anxiety disorder-related.

In fact, social anxiety is often conceptualized as the same psychological construct as social fear, but taken to an extreme. Social anxiety therefore exists at the extreme end along a spectrum of varying degrees of extremity of social stress. From a treatment perspective, this simplifies things greatly. Anxiety disorders are well-known as the most treatable of mental disorders, and according to this 'spectrum' theory, social anxiety is no different. So, just as the treatments discussed are effective for those with social anxiety, they should also help improve your social stresses as well, regardless of if you can be labeled 'socially anxious' or not. Before moving ahead on how to cope with and hopefully gain control of your social anxiety, remember, this is a guide, not professional help: please seek help from a professional if you think you need it.

Dealing with Social Anxiety

The academic literature is quite clear about the most effective treatment methods for social anxiety: continued and increasing exposure to one's fears following conscious recognition of irrational thoughts. Fear is a well-developed psychological state that played and continues to play (albeit to a lesser extent) an important role in our survival as individuals and as a species. If there is a threat of any kind, being fearful is the appropriate response, no matter how uncomfortable it may be. However, this fear system is hijacked in anxiety disorders and the fear response stays active and continues to affect our daily lives-even when no threat is present.

The most common and effective manner in which these irrational fears are handled is through something called Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). There are three main steps involved in CBT: cognitive restructuring, exposure technique, and skills training. The first step, cognitive restructuring, is where our fears and anxieties are brought into the light of our consciousness, or, cognition, and are then changed using a combination of cognitive and behavioral techniques to remove the associated subconscious irrational fears. The client is taught to recognize negative automatic thoughts, observe the relationship between these thoughts and anxieties, restructure the illogical frames of mind, and formulate rational alternatives. As a side note: fear is not removed, it is only controlled. CBT is meant to gain control of this fear by recognizing what fears are justified/rational and which are not. Additionally, the clients (the person(s) with the disorder) are prompted to create a hierarchy of situations that differ on the amount of anxiety or fear they would provoke. An example of such a hierarchy is shown below:



Once the client has written down this hierarchy of anxiety provoking situations, the therapist can then begin to expose the client to these situations. This is the second step in the process known as exposure training. The therapist often will play a role and enact some of the low-level anxiety provoking situations and gradually work their way up the hierarchy. Soon, the client will be ready for real-life situations, or phase three: social skills training. The client will have to work on these skills by themselves outside of therapy.

Checkout our [Social Anxiety LEARN Module](#) for more!

Indigenous History Month



The following is an excerpt from The Office of Indigenous Relations:

"The month of June is National Indigenous History Month. It is the shared responsibility of all peoples on this land to acknowledge Canada's historic and ongoing colonial relationship with diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, and actively work within our own spaces, communities, places of work, and families to advance the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. On May 28, 2021 the remains of 215 children were found at the site of a Kamloops residential school. That number has risen drastically as more sites are investigated. As we reach the one year anniversary, It is imperative that we continue to acknowledge and honor the lives of each of these children - and thousands of others - while acknowledging and addressing the ongoing impacts of these losses for communities across this country.

Learn more about residential school systems in Canada, and their historic and ongoing impacts. During National Indigenous History Month, we must also recognize the varied historic achievements of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, as well as present contributions on campus and beyond. This is a time for us all to celebrate and strengthen our knowledge about the diversity of experiences within First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and communities. National Indigenous People's Day takes place on June 21st, the summer solstice. Learn more about this day. "

The Office of Indigenous Relations and what they offer:

The Office of Indigenous Relations is a central hub for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students, researchers, faculty, and staff, along with allies within the Waterloo campus community. Additionally, the Office of Indigenous Relations provides the campus community with guidance, support, and resources to strengthen our shared vision of reconciliation.

The Office offers bursaries, awards, and scholarships; academic programming; and student supports and clubs.

Pride Month

In support of Pride Month, we thought we'd share some resources that the 2SLGBTQIA+ community may find helpful!

The word "PRIDE!" is written in large, colorful, hand-drawn letters. Each letter is a different color: P (red), R (orange), I (yellow), D (green), E (blue), and ! (purple).

UW GLOW Centre

Glow is the oldest continually-running university-based 2SLGBTQ+ group in Canada. Run entirely by dedicated student volunteers, Glow promotes a healthy attitude towards all sexual orientations and gender identities on the UWaterloo campus by providing a wide variety of peer support, social events, advocacy work, and resources.

EngiQueers

It all started in June 2013, when five engineering students from McMaster University attended Toronto Pride. Inspired by the movement, they started a student club focused on social events. Today, EngiQueers Canada is a nationwide non-profit organization that represents over 30 similar member groups at engineering schools across the country.

*also note some events from SVPRO Office down below!

What's Happening Around Campus?

Convocation

Degrees and diplomas will be conferred across a total of 14 ceremonies in June 2022. Find your ceremony by reviewing the ceremony details [here](#).

PRIDE month workshops from SVPRO & SASC – open to all!



Sexual Violence 101

Join us for a virtual PRIDE month discussion about the ways society views sexual violence and how we get it wrong in so many ways when responding to, witnessing, or hearing about sexual violence.

Register on Go Sign Me Up
June 14 3pm-4:30pm
On Zoom

The poster features a yellow background with several raised fists in various colors and orientations at the bottom, symbolizing solidarity and support.



June 28th, 4:00pm-6:00pm

What About Bisexuality?

A Pride month conversation about the lived experiences of bisexual people.

The poster features a teal background with an illustration of a person holding a bisexual pride flag. Logos for SASC and the University of Waterloo are at the bottom.

Quantum Perspectives: Communication

Quantum Perspectives: A Panel Series celebrates 20 years of quantum at IQC. Over the past two decades, IQC's leading quantum research has powered the development of transformative technologies, from ideas to commercialization, through research in theory, experiment and quantum applications. This year, we're celebrating IQC's 20th anniversary with a panel series exploring all perspectives of quantum, including sensing, materials, communication, simulation and computing.

Wellness Representatives

The goal of the Wellness Representative initiative is to help monitor and enhance the well-being of MME and ECE Undergraduate and Graduate Engineering students in an organic, peer-supported manner. This is done not only by championing wellness initiatives and promoting wellness strategies within these departments, but also by encouraging interactions amongst peers that would occur organically anyways.

Additional Resources

The following mental health supports are available to you
Counselling Services: 519-888-4096

The following crisis supports are available to you as well
Crisis Services Canada: 1-833-456-4566 or text 45645
UW Police: 519-888-4567 ext. 22222

Academic Support

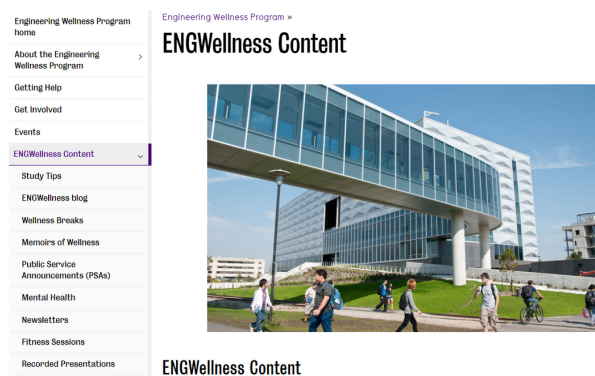
- Student Success Office: Compilation of learning and life skills resources.

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

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](https://www.instagram.com/uwengwell)



[@uwENGwellness](https://www.facebook.com/uwENGwellness)



[ENGwellness.uwaterloo](https://www.youtube.com/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