

JUNE 2021



ENGWellness Graduate Newsletter

Produced by: ENGWellness Ambassador

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June is Pride Month!



Happy Pride Month!

Every year, Pride Month is held in June to commemorate the 1969 Stonewall riots and to celebrate 2SLGBTQ+ (two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning) pride. Pride month is dedicated to amplifying 2SLGBTQ+ voices, celebrating 2SLGBTQ+ culture, and supporting 2SLGBTQ+ rights. We celebrate the 2SLGBTQ+ community and recognize that there is still a tremendous amount of work to be done to promote inclusivity and ensure 2SLGBTQ+ rights are upheld.

Campus Supports

These groups are on-campus networks dedicated to supporting the 2SLGBTQ+ community at Waterloo.

EngiQueers

EngiQueers is a group dedicated to connecting and supporting 2SLGBTQ+ students in engineering.

UW Glow

UW Glow is a WUSA student-run service offering a campus support network for 2SLGBTQ+ and questioning folks at Waterloo.

There are several other on-campus resources available dedicated to supporting the 2SLGBTQ+ UWaterloo Community. UWaterloo's Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion office is a great place to learn more about these groups, how to access them, as well as Pride and Anti-Racism, inclusive language and understanding identities, and a list of Pride Events and resources at UWaterloo and in the surrounding area.

ENGWellness and other Campus Wellness programs are all places where human rights are respected and where LGBTQ+ people, and their friends and allies are welcome and supported.

National Health and Fitness Day

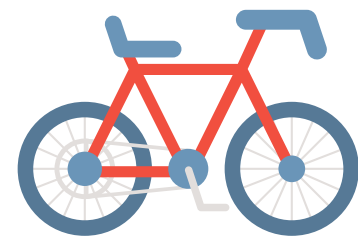


National Health and Fitness Day – June 5th

National Health and Fitness Day was established in 2014 as an initiative to promote physical activity in Canada. Exercise has been shown to reduce stress and increase productivity, and it is an important part of leading a healthy life. Whether it's getting outside for a short 5-minute walk or going on a miles-long bike ride, physical activity can have tremendous positive impacts on your physical and mental health.

According to the Canadian Psychological Association, regular physical activity can help prevent depression and anxiety disorders, reduce day-to-day stress, and boost academic performance. Exercise reduces the amount of cortisol, which is a hormone associated with stress, that is produced by the body. It also helps the brain to produce more dopamine and serotonin and increases blood flow to the brain. Aside from the obvious physical health benefits provided by exercise, physical activity has a significant positive effect on mental health and well-being.

Especially during a pandemic, it is often easy to disregard physical activity. Exercise often gets pushed aside due to the stresses of day-to-day life, and that's totally understandable! Life is busy and it's often hard to set aside time for physical activity, but it's worth doing. Even small amounts of physical activity have significant positive effects on mental health and productivity. It may not be possible to go to a gym or work out with others, but walking, running, cycling, and doing bodyweight exercises are simple, COVID-safe ways of working physical activity into your routine. It's not always possible to set aside time for exercise, and you should remember to be flexible and kind to yourself in your schedule, but spending time being physically active can be hugely beneficial for physical health, mental health, and overall well-being.



For more information on the links between physical activity and mental health, check out the resources below!

- [Canadian Psychological Association: "Psychology Works" Fact Sheet: Physical Activity, Mental Health, and Motivation](#)
- [Harvard Medical School: Exercising to Relax](#)

Move Your Mind

Getting moving and being active plays an extremely important role in supporting our mental health and overall wellbeing, and according to the Canadian Mental Health Association, it is fundamentally linked to our mental health. Physical activity can help in a number of ways, including through reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression, helping to cope with stress and negative life events, increasing energy and self confidence, and providing a sense of control which is even more important and valuable during the current pandemic. With this all being said, **come get moving and involved with the University of Waterloo's Move Your Mind (MYM) program offered by the department of Athletics and Recreation!**



During the current Covid-19 pandemic, 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 and on campus recreation options
- A tangible plan of action using the SMART goal setting model
- Personalized motivational support and accountability throughout the term
- Access to an optional workout buddy program matching students with like-minded volunteers to get moving and active
- Drop-in group activities and workshops (ie. weekly virtual meditations)

Students interested in participating can contact the Move Your Mind Coordinator at athcpwel@uwaterloo.ca or fill out the online referral form! The 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 an activity that requires a specific accommodation, please contact Donna at dmrheams@uwaterloo.ca.

Student volunteers are also always needed! Grow your leadership skills and help improve mental health awareness on campus by helping a peer reach their movement goals!

If interested, email athcpwel@uwaterloo.ca to learn more!

Athletics Sessions: June 15th & 17th!

Join us and UW Athletics as they guide us through Zumba on the 15th and a series of stretching exercises on the 17th. Both sessions will be held from 11:30am to 12:20pm EDT and are open to all MME and ECE students, faculty, and staff. We hope to see you there!

This is the [Zoom link](#) for the Zumba session

This is the [WebEx link](#) for the stretching session



Food Support Services

Food insecurity is a prevalent issue among university students and has been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. There are supports in place on campus and more broadly in the Waterloo region to help students, staff, and faculty in need.



**WUSA Food
Support Service**

WUSA Food Support is operating with the help of SLC's Turnkey desk to offer premade hampers to all visitors. They currently offer an array of hampers including Vegetarian, Meat/Regular, Halal, and Kosher. They have a custom hamper request form so they can make hampers to meet specific needs. Last term, they also launched a gender-neutral hygiene hamper program where they offer two varieties: Hygiene Hampers, and Menstrual Hampers. Any University of Waterloo affiliate (faculty, staff, undergraduate, graduate, co-op, etc.) can visit SLC's Turnkey Desk and pick up 4 food hampers and 1 hygiene hamper per 30 days. Due to COVID-19 regulations, their services are available Monday-Friday 7:30am-7pm.

Visit WUSA Food Support on [Facebook](#) and on [Instagram](#) to find relevant information, updates, and contests with prizes to help raise awareness of food insecurity. They are also available to talk over private message or email to answer any concerns or connect people to the nearest food banks in their area.

The Food Bank of Waterloo Region is another resource available in the area. They offer a variety of programs including food hampers to support people in need. Due to COVID-19, their hours are often changing, so if you want to access this service, you should call in advance at 519-743-5576 ext. 340. For more information about the programs and services they offer, you can visit their [website](#) or call them directly.



Nutrition is essential to health and wellness. Don't hesitate to access these services if you are dealing with food insecurity. These programs are here to support you and make sure you have access to food resources.

TED Talk Tuesdays

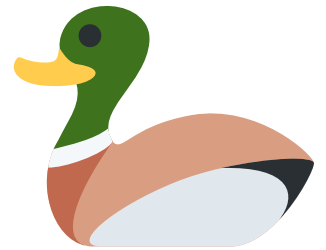
Over on the ENGWellness [Instagram](#), we're running a weekly series called TED Talk Tuesdays! Every week, we add a TED Talk we think is worth watching to this YouTube [playlist](#). These talks are a great way to take a short break from work and they give some really valuable information and insight. Check out the talks currently on the playlist and stay tuned for a new recommendation every Tuesday!

Getting Outside: A Breath of Fresh Air

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

With school being entirely online, it's now easier than ever to stay inside for days on end. I know that during my first online term, there were stretches of days at a time where I didn't step outside at all. When I didn't have to walk around campus to get to class, my default state of existence became indoors, sitting at my desk, staring into my laptop, and it took an intentional effort to get outside. During my second online school term I made that intentional effort to get outside at least once every day and I noticed a real difference in my mental health because of it.

Getting outside is valuable to me because it gives me a sense of perspective. It serves as an important reminder that even while school is all online, the world still exists outside of my laptop and outside of my room. When you can't see people in person and all your coursework is online, it's easy to more or less forget about the outside world. For me, getting outside more helped me to think more about the world outside my computer screen, and reminded me to appreciate the beauty of the outdoors. When I would go for my daily walks this past winter term, no matter how stressed I was about school or co-op, every time I saw a duck, a smile broke across my face. Something about their cute little faces, their adorable waddles, and their state of being completely oblivious to the stresses and challenges of human life just filled me with joy.



It's little things like that that I was missing when I spent days at a time inside. When I started getting outside more, I started to become more appreciative of the world around me, and my mindset became more hopeful and positive because of it. I started to think more about the wonder of sunlight breaking through into my room in the mornings and became more attuned to the rhythms of pattering rain on my window. Noticing the little things made me feel more hopeful and helped me deal with stress.

Aside from its immediate effects on my state of mind, going outside carries extra value these days, since it's often a way we can safely interact with others in person. In COVID times, a walk with a friend isn't just a walk with a friend, it's one of the only ways we can really interact in-person with the people we care about. Feeling a sense of connection to other people is so beneficial to your mental health, and going on a walk with a friend is an easy way to feel that sense of connection. I'm all in favour of Discord meet-ups and virtual games nights, but getting outside is a unique and important opportunity to see people face-to-face (well, mask-to-mask).

Getting outside, even just for small amounts of time, is also a lovely way to get some exercise. It's energizing, it's fun, and it can be very beneficial for your mental health. For me, getting outside more has been a literal and figurative breath of fresh air. It's allowed me to be more appreciative of the world we live in, and helped to relieve stress and give me energy. Going outside has been shown to improve peoples' moods and their productivity, and that has really rung true for me. Going for a walk to get a bit of exercise and some fresh air every day really helped me get through my second term of online school. It may not be possible every day, but when you can, I'd encourage you to get outside, breathe in the fresh air, and maybe smile at a duck.

Joel Woods, 3A Math
Spring 2021 ENGWellness Ambassador

Grad Wellness Resources

The Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (GSPA) website contains an excellent list of the wellness resources available to grad students! Check out their [website](#) for an organized list of the supports available to you.

Mental & emotional wellness

A number of resources on campus support the mental and emotional wellness of students, including those students in graduate studies (e.g., counselling, workshops, spaces).

MENTAL & EMOTIONAL
WELLNESS RESOURCES

Social wellness

Connect with others while you are at UW for your graduate training. There are a number of resources that facilitate the creation of inclusive graduate student communities.

SOCIAL
WELLNESS RESOURCES

Physical wellness

Campus resources are available to support you in maintaining/enhancing your physical health & wellness, such as medical clinics & information related to exercise & nutrition.

PHYSICAL
WELLNESS RESOURCES

Additional wellness resources

There are important resources that span across different types of wellness, including those related to graduate student representation, accommodations, inclusion and financial support.

ADDITIONAL
WELLNESS RESOURCES

Supporting wellness

A number of opportunities and resources exist for graduate students to support wellness on campus and accrue training in supporting the well-being of others.

SUPPORTING WELLNESS
ON CAMPUS

Urgent help

There are immediate resources available if you are in crisis, feeling unsafe, or worried that you might hurt yourself or others. The Campus Wellness website contains both on-campus & after-hours contacts.

URGENT HELP

MMEGA

MME will be working to recruit a Wellness Rep to work in collaboration with MMEGA. Stay tuned for more details!



Content Archive

Check out our ENGWellness resources including mental health pages and PSAs. All resources 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.



@uwengwell



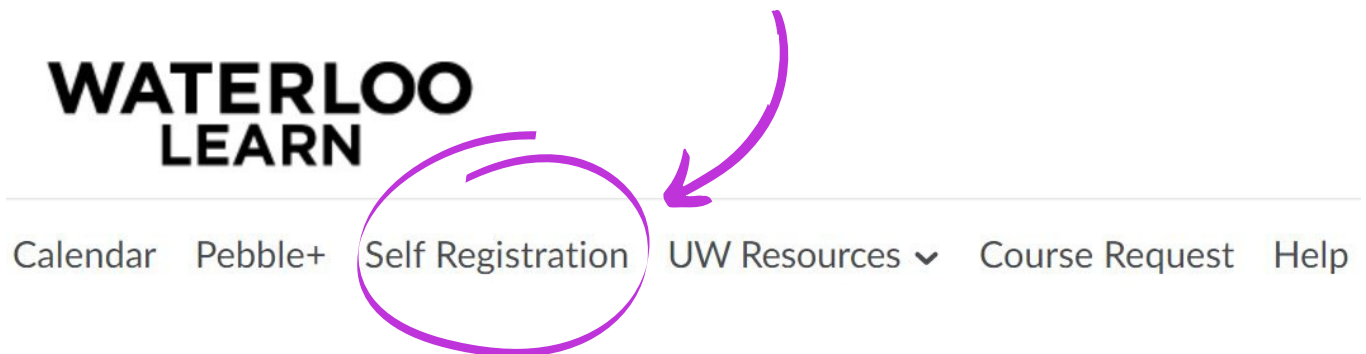
@uwENGwellness



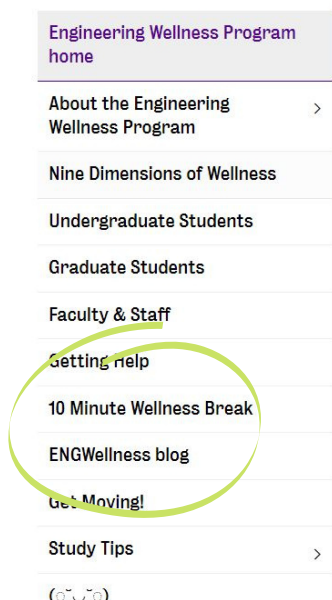
@UwengW

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.



Wellness Resources - For All 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 session:

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