

# Use your resources!



**Erin Walshaw**

2A Computer Science

My first year did  
**not** go according  
to plan...



So, what are  
the lessons  
from my  
experience?

Be Proactive	Recognize when you are over your head
Take time for yourself	Talk to your <a href="#">advisors</a>
Take advantage of campus resources	Make a plan for when things get challenging



Health Services (located between  
the SLC and St. Jerome's University)

There are a **lot of  
resources** at the  
University of  
Waterloo...

University is designed to **set you up for success**,  
but you have to have the **courage to seek out**  
these services.

# Physical and Mental Health

## Campus Wellness:

Family doctors, bloodwork, nutrition, and counselling. Call: **519-888-4096**

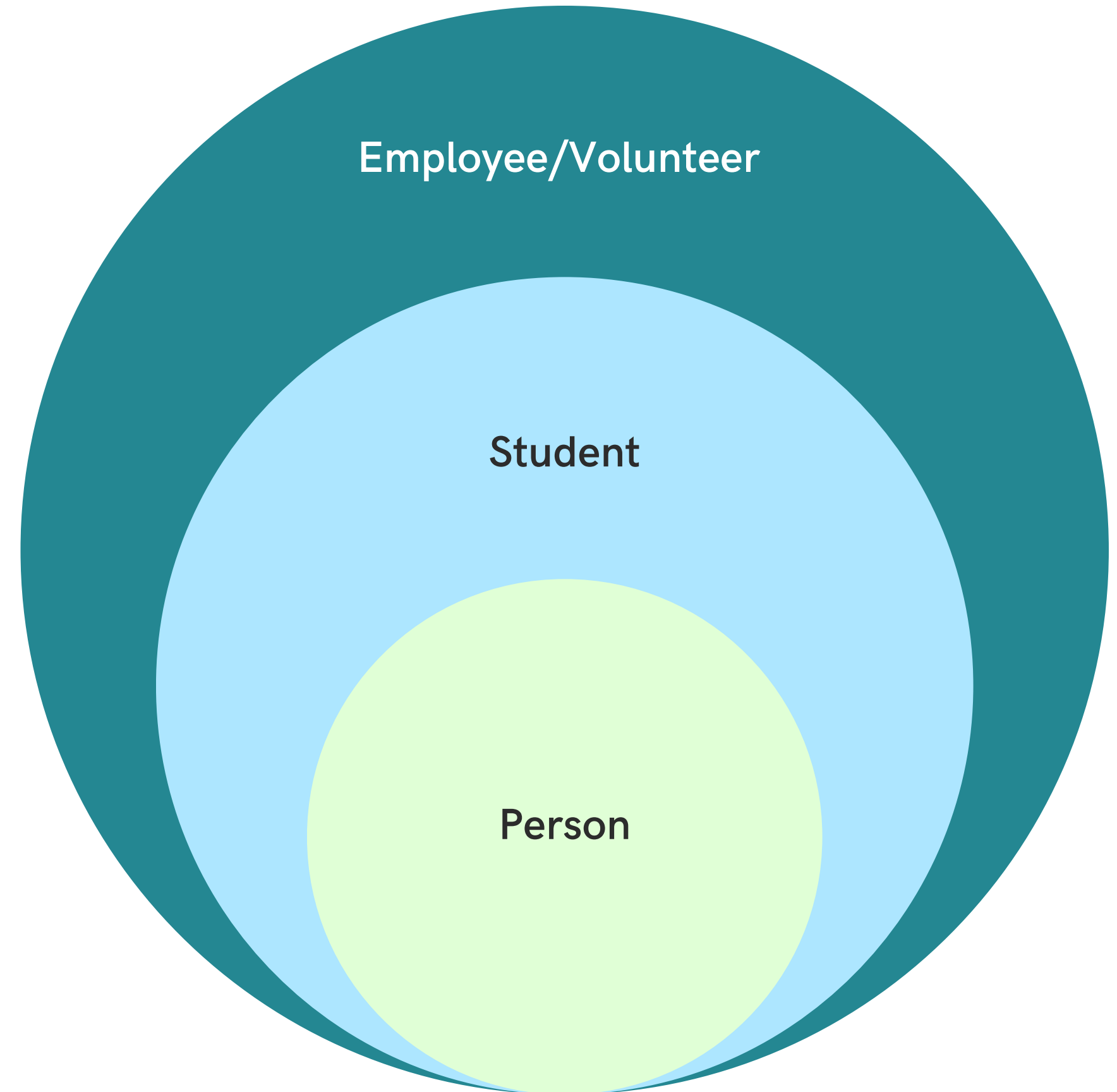
## WUSA Mates:

Confidential peer-to-peer support.

## Wellness Workshops and Activities:

Including: NeuroMinds, Student Disability Community Network, Mind Body Run

**Sign up on the "Events" tab of portal**



# What happens when you get sick?

## Getting a [Verification of Illness Form \(VIF\)](#)

Campus Wellness can fill out a VIF for you for both physical and mental health. They can also submit it to the Absence Database.

## Off-Campus Practitioners

Ask them to fill out the Verification of Illness Form (VIF) and submit it to the Absence Database.

## Contact your Instructors

Reach out to your professors to make a plan to accommodate missed work.

## Take time to recover

When you're on a VIF, you cannot fulfill your academic obligations - take this time to rest and recover so you're feeling better by the time you return.

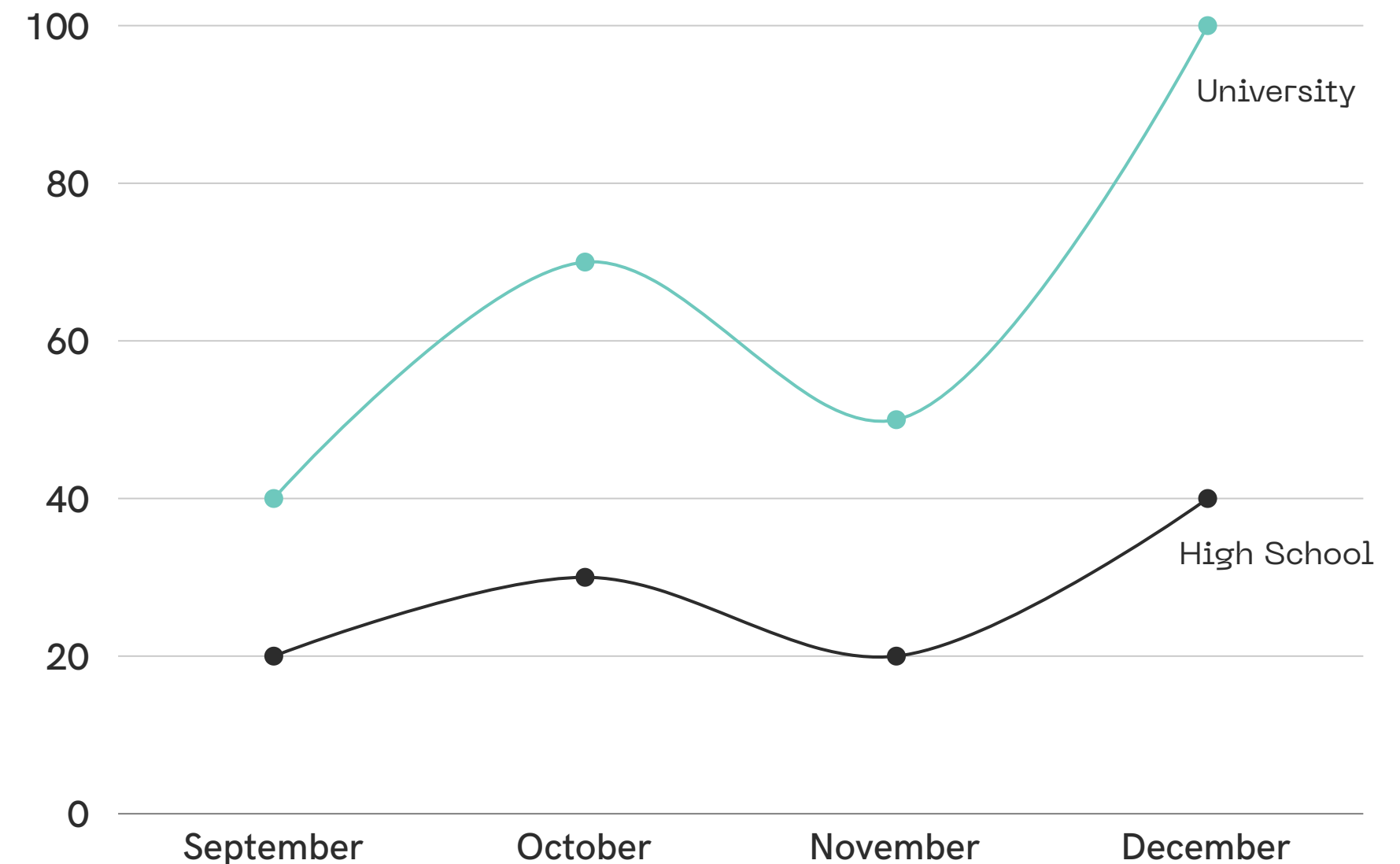
**If you need more support, check out [AccessAbility Services](#). For your first term registered, you don't even need documentation.**

# What is Academic Culture Shock? →

The shock that comes during the transition from high school to university while you're grappling with an unfamiliar academic system.

- Teaching styles are different
- Assessments are harder and/or more frequent
- Classes are larger and not as interactive
- Courses are concentrated around a major

## Stress Level





# Who can I go to for advice?

Student Success Office	Math/CS-Specific
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1-on-1 <a href="#">peer success coaching</a></li><li>• COMING UP: Learning in University and Plan out your fall 2025 term <a href="#">workshops</a></li><li>• <a href="#">SMART Program</a>: covers time management, note-taking, tests and exams, self-advocacy, and identity and learning.</li><li>• <a href="#">Articles and worksheets</a></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Math Tutoring Centre</a>:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Provides help for: MATH 127, 128, 135, 136, 137, 138, 235, and 237</li><li>◦ MC 3022 on weekdays from 9am to 8pm EDT</li><li>◦ Microsoft Teams by appointment on weekdays from 3-7pm EDT</li></ul></li><li>• <a href="#">Computer Science Consulting Centre</a>:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ MC 4065 (can be difficult to find!)</li><li>◦ First- and second-year CS classes</li><li>◦ Check your IA/ISA office hours on the course outline or website</li></ul></li><li>• <a href="#">How to Succeed in Computer Science Courses</a></li><li>• Check Piazza frequently! Seeing the answers to other questions may solve problems you didn't even know you had!</li><li>• <a href="#">Full list of computer science resources</a></li></ul>

Getting help before it becomes urgent is important to reduce stress! Be proactive about your success!



# Navigating homesickness →



## September

You're super pumped for the new environment! While it can be hard to make friends, you'll eventually find your place.

## October

Midterms are all happening at the same time, and it's getting stressful. You'd really appreciate having family or friends around to support you.

## November

Now it's cold all the time, and all you want is a snow-free walk on Jericho Beach.

## December

Final exams are tough, and you would really appreciate a shoulder to lean (or cry) on.  
Thankfully, you're in the home stretch!



# Strategies for Homesickness

Make space for what you're feeling - take time to journal, meditate, or reflect and give yourself the grace to recognize that it is a normal part of the transition to university.

Call your family and friends often - chances are, your other friends are experiencing something similar and can bring you some comfort.

Get on-campus support: Campus Wellness Counselling and UW Mates can provide support for homesickness. You can also join the [Connection Collective](#).

Explore Kitchener-Waterloo: visit Waterloo Park, read in the Rock Garden, or try Victoria Park

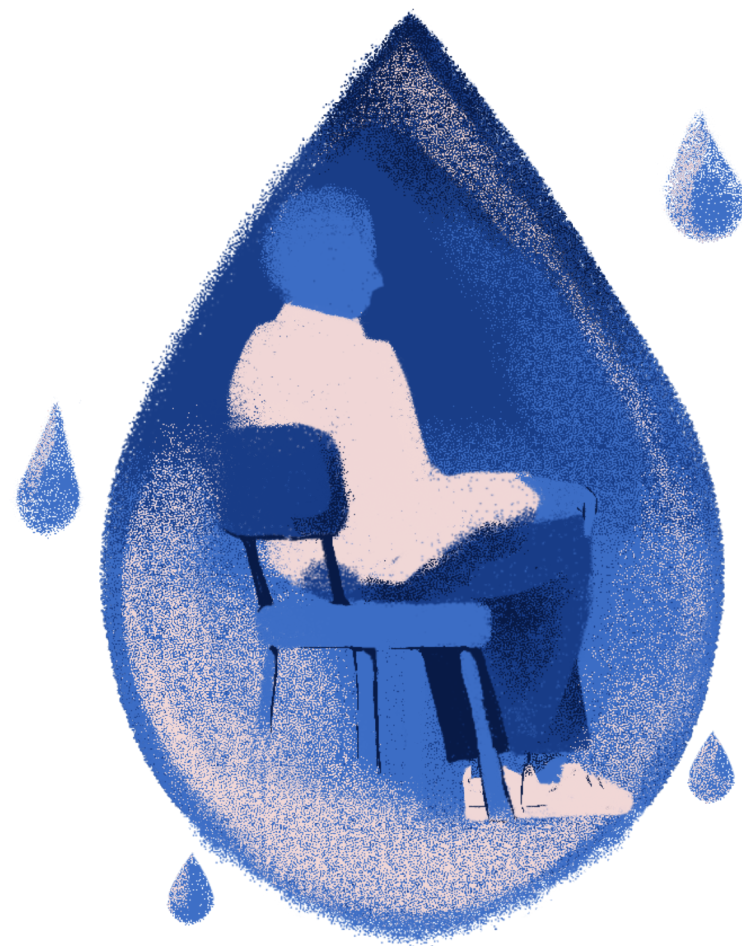
Explore local events! Both the WUSA and the UW clubs host events to connect you to others! There are plenty more in the city.

Decorate your dorm - your room won't feel like *you* if you don't take the time to personalize it. Print photos to make a collage, buy decor online, and check out UW merch at the W Store.



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# Let's talk loneliness→



You might feel like this guy (and that's ok!)



Everyone will experience it  
at some point



You feel more alone than  
you actually are



There are so many  
opportunities to meet new  
people



Your friends and family are  
one text away



The university has supports  
to help you

# The **fun** stuff!

## Getting CS Experience

Clubs are recruiting all the time for roles - many will hire web designers or other tech roles.

Programs such as the [Women in Math Directed Reading Program](#) can help you if you're looking to get involved in the research side of things.

## Math Endowment Fund

Are you looking to attend a conference, hackathon, or other professional development opportunity? If so, you may be eligible for [MEF Professional Development Funding](#).

## Look Beyond University

There are tons of programs outside of UW that you can participate in. During my spring off term, I spent 5 weeks learning French (for free) at the University of Quebec through the [Explore Program](#).

## Try Something New

From Improv to Science Fiction and Fantasy, WUSA has a [club](#) for everything. This term, I want to try ballroom dance. What's your goal?

# Thanks for listening! →

"The scariest moment is always just before you start. After that, things can only get better." – Stephen King

Feel free to reach out to me on LinkedIn if you have any questions!



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