Welcome from the Director

Greetings to all our new and returning students, faculty, administrators, coaches and staff! As we embark on another new academic year at Fordham, we at Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) recognize that transitions and “new beginnings” can be bittersweet. On the one hand, beginning something new can be exciting and exhilarating. On the other hand, the experiences of “not knowing,” unpredictability and “letting go” that are inherent in transitions can be challenging and at times even overwhelming. This first issue of “Welcome to Wellness” will focus on navigating some of these challenges and transforming them into opportunities for growth and learning.

We hope you find this inaugural newsletter helpful and informative. And please remember, if you’re ever struggling with the transition to university life (or anything else), you never have to do so alone at Fordham.

Jeffrey Ng, Psy.D.

Anxiety: What is it and How to Manage it?

Anxiety is a feeling of distress, worry and apprehension that is generally accompanied by physical changes, such as sweating, trembling and an increased heart rate. This autonomic “flight or fight” response can be triggered by thoughts, stressors, dangerous situations and past traumas. A moderate amount of anxiety can enhance creativity, performance and motivation. Too much anxiety or stress, however, can interfere with our psychological, emotional and physical health and well-being. Due to the normal demands of college life and the fast paced nature of contemporary living, it can be easy to become overwhelmed by stress. Here are a few suggestions for reducing and managing your stress and anxiety:

- Prioritize Tasks & Tackle High Priority Items
- Take Breaks to Play and Recharge
- Identify & Confront Catastrophic Thinking (Page 2)
- Practice Self Care - Exercise, Eating Well, Avoiding Drugs/Alcohol, Sleep (Page 2)
- Practice Relaxation and Mindfulness Exercises (Page 3)
- Reach Out For Help & Support (Page 5)
**DID YOU KNOW?**
Physical activity is one of the best defenses against depression and anxiety.

All full time FCRH, FCLC & GSAS students are entitled to free membership & use of the Lombardi Center & Ram Fit.

“Don’t believe everything you think. Thoughts are just that - thoughts.”
Allan Lokos

“Slow down you’re doing fine. You can’t be everything you want to be before your time.”
Billy Joel

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**SLEEP MATTERS**

Getting sufficient and restful sleep is one of the best things we can do for our emotional and physical well-being, yet many college students report not getting enough ZZZs. Consider these five tips to ensure that your mind and body are ready to take on the days and semester ahead.

- **Strive For a Regular Sleep Schedule** - Going to sleep and waking up at the same time each day helps to “set” your internal clock and keeps you rested.
- **Create a Cozy Sleep Area** - Use a fan or white noise app on your smart phone to provide calming sounds that mask outside noise—or consider ear plugs. Minimize outside light using curtains or eye shades.
- **Create a Relaxing Bedtime Routine** - The time before going to bed should be filled with relaxing activities like reading, bathing, or listening to soothing music. Avoid watching TV or using the computer right before bed since these activities stimulate the brain.
- **Exercise Regularly** - Regular exercise helps you fall asleep more easily and sleep more soundly. Try to work out at least 4 hours before going to bed so your body has time to settle down.
- **Avoid Caffeine, Alcohol & Nicotine** - Drinking caffeine within 6-8 hours of going to bed can make you alert and restless. While many people think of alcohol as a sedative, it has been shown to have a disruptive effect on sleep. Similarly, nicotine is a stimulant that will make a restful night of sleep more elusive.

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**CATASTROPHIC THINKING**

Catastrophic thinking refers to the tendency to expect the worst case scenario to happen while ignoring more likely alternatives. Reactions or expectations are generally exaggerated or disproportionate to the actual event. For example, let’s imagine that instead of completing your assigned reading for English class, you accidently read the following week’s assignment. You start worrying that you’ll be unprepared during class and that you’ll embarrass yourself if the professor calls on you. You then conclude that you’ve never been good at English and that you’ll probably fail the class anyway. This is an example of catastrophic thinking, which can take you from the small mistake of reading the wrong assignment to failing an entire class in T-minus 20 seconds flat! Consider these tips to nip catastrophic thinking in the bud:

- **Slow Down** – Oftentimes we react prematurely, having “knee-jerk” reactions to stressful situations, because we feel rushed. Slowing down can help us be more intentional about our thoughts and actions.
- **Practice Self-Awareness** - Monitoring your reactions to life circumstances can be a powerful first step to recognizing “triggers” for catastrophic thinking. Consider keeping a journal or chart to capture your thoughts, feelings, physical sensations and behaviors every time you experience a distressing response to a life event. Try to notice trends and recurring themes.
- **Challenge Extreme or All-or-Nothing Thinking**. Do some “reality testing” by asking yourself questions to challenge your automatic thoughts. Examples include: What evidence do I have for and against this thought? What might be an alternative or more likely explanation? What would I tell a friend who was having this kind of thought?
- **Practice Mindfulness**. Mindfulness involves being aware of and paying attention to your present experience with acceptance and without judgment. Enhanced mindfulness can help diminish the power that automatic thoughts have over our moods.
Relaxation & Mindfulness

Diaphragmatic Breathing

Practicing diaphragmatic breathing is relaxing, restful and can create a sense of well-being. Breathing deeply into the belly interrupts the body’s “fight or flight” response, calms the nervous system, and reduces psychosomatic disturbances such as anxiety and panic attacks. Since we are always breathing, breath awareness is a self-management skill that can be beneficial and utilized at all times. Here’s a brief guide on how to begin practicing diaphragmatic breathing:

- Place one hand right above your belly button and the other on your chest. Your hands can be used as a simple biofeedback device to tell you what parts of your body and what muscles you are using to breathe.
- Open your mouth and let out a sigh, as if you are letting go of the day. As you do, let your shoulders and the muscles of your upper body relax down with the exhalation. The point of the sigh is not to completely empty your lungs. It’s to relax the muscles of your upper body.
- Close your mouth and inhale slowly through your nose. As you inhale let your belly expand and push out. When you’ve inhaled as much air as you comfortably can (without straining or using your upper body), take a brief pause.
- Pause for as long as is comfortable for you without straining to hold your breath. Allow the belly to be full and expanded as you pause after the inhale. Know that when you breathe this way, you are likely taking in larger breaths that you are used to.
- Exhale through your nose and allow your stomach to fall. Repeat the brief pause in between the out-breath and the in-breath.
- Repeat this breathing for 10 cycles or a few minutes. Allow the exhale to be longer than the inhale, up to twice as long as the inhale. Repeat the brief pause in between the out-breath and the in-breath.

Once you feel comfortable with the above technique, you may want to incorporate words that can enhance the exercise. For example, you could say to yourself “relaxation” when inhaling and “stress” when exhaling. The intent is to bring in the feelings you want on the in-breath and release those you don’t want on the out-breath. Also, once you feel comfortable with breathing into your abdomen, you no longer have to place your hands on your chest and belly.

Abdominal breathing is just one of many breathing exercises, but it’s one of the most important one to learn before exploring other techniques. For additional guidance on diaphragmatic breathing and other mindfulness techniques, download the following free mobile apps:


Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS)

Counseling and Psychological Services is a comprehensive mental health service within the Division of Student Affairs at Fordham University. Our mission is to promote students’ emotional and psychological health and well-being through counseling, psychotherapy, psychiatric services, consultation, outreach, prevention, and contributions to the mental health professions. Consistent with the University’s commitment to Cura Personalis, we strive to foster a community of care that recognizes and values the depth, dignity and uniqueness of each student.

CPS provides confidential and free services for all matriculated students. These services include:

- Individual Short-Term Counseling
- Group Counseling & Workshops
- Psychiatric Evaluations and Medication Management
- Crisis Intervention for Urgent Situations
- Personalized Referrals for Specialized and/or Longer Term Services

For a virtual tour of our office and services click on the video below:

MEET OUR COUNSELORS

Dr. Kelly Zanetich is a Supervising Psychologist and the Coordinator of Outreach and Prevention at CPS’ Lincoln Center office. She enjoys working with college students on the wide range of challenges that can emerge for them while they pursue their degrees. She is particularly interested in student veteran experiences and mindfulness meditation for cultivating emotional resilience and well-being.

Dr. Heather Himes is a Supervising Psychologist and the Group Therapy Program coordinator at CPS’s Rose Hill office. She is originally from Long Beach, California. Dr. Himes is particularly interested in transgender issues, LGB experiences, and religion and spirituality.
“A little boy was having difficulty lifting a heavy stone.

His father came along just then.

Noting the boy’s failure, he asked, “Are you using all your strength?”

“Yes, I am,” the little boy said impatiently.

“No, you are not,” the father answered.

“I am right here just waiting, and you haven’t asked me to help you.”

- Anonymous

Resources on Campus

The following resources are available on campus to assist and support our students:

- Health Services
- Career Services
- Safety and Security
- Dean of Students Office
- Resident Advisors/Directors
- Academic Deans & Advisors
- Athletic Coaches and Trainers
- Office of Multicultural Affairs
- Disability Services for Students
- University Mission and Ministry
- Professors and Teaching Assistants
- Counseling & Psychological Services
- Office of Substance Abuse Prevention & Student Support
- Office of Student Leadership & Community Development

Online Resources on College Mental Health and Wellness

ULifeLine - online resources for college mental health & wellness
http://www.ulifeline.org/

MTV’s Half of Us - celebrities & artists discuss their own struggles with mental health
http://www.halfofus.com/

Active Minds - peer to peer organization dedicated to promoting college mental health awareness
http://www.activeminds.org/

Jed Foundation - national organization committed to college mental health & suicide prevention
http://www.jedfoundation.org/