Welcome from the Director

Greetings to all our new and returning students, faculty, administrators, coaches and staff! We hope everyone had a restful and enjoyable winter break. As the new semester begins, we at Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) are continuously reminded of the profound influence that our students, individually and collectively, have on cultivating an ethos of compassion, civility and wellness on campus. In this issue of “Welcome to Wellness,” we’ll be highlighting some of the many contributions our students have made to promoting and actualizing Curia Personalis, or caring for the entire person, at Fordham.

We hope you find this newsletter helpful as you begin the new semester. And remember, if you’re ever struggling or feeling overwhelmed by university life (or anything else), please reach out to any of the campus resources listed on page 8.

Jeffrey Ng, Psy.D

Managing Socio-Political Stress (Adapted from the Jed Foundation)

Many students have shared that the recent socio-political climate has been stressful and emotionally challenging. If you’re experiencing heightened stress or feeling overwhelmed, here are some strategies that can help:

Stick to your routine: Maintaining your regular schedule of activities and taking care of your usual responsibilities can help engage you and reestablish a sense of normalcy and regularity.

Take care of yourself: You will feel better if you get enough sleep, eat properly and get regular exercise.

Engage in pleasurable and meaningful activities: Take some time to do something you usually enjoy—take a walk, go to a movie, spend time with friends. Doing activities that help or support others can increase your sense of well-being and enhance your optimism.

Limit your social media time: Constantly checking news feeds or other social media can increase your tension. Set aside specific times to check news and social media. Too much time online also can interfere with getting enough sleep.

Limit substance use: Drinking or partying to feel better might seem to help in the very short run but will leave you feeling depleted and lower.

Regulate political debate and argument: It’s important to stay engaged and informed in the political process and the news—but keep it in balance. If it is stressing you out, then let some time pass or take a break.

Spend time with supportive friends and family: Being with people who care about you can help you feel safe and protected.

If you’ve tried these steps and are still feeling stressed, down or depressed, consider reaching out to CPS or an off-campus mental health professional.
CANDLELIGHT MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS

By: Katherine Petrini
CPS Wellness Intern, FCRH ’17

This Fall, CPS and Active Minds kicked off its first Candlelight Moment of Silence. On Tuesday, November 1st, community members gathered at the Keating steps to light a candle in honor of those lost by suicide and to support those who have struggled with this hardship. CPS interns facilitated a moment of silence for all those affected by suicide and empowered guests to be an active ally to end the stigma of mental health issues. Afterwards, guests were invited to participate in a creative endeavor that will result in the creation of a public display of support for National Suicide Prevention Awareness. This public display of art (and support for those feeling vulnerable) will be presented to the group to later hang in McGinley Center. A similar Candlelight Moment of Silence occurred at Lincoln Center on Nov. 2nd in the South Lounge.

The purpose of the event was to highlight resources for individuals and welcome dialogue concerning the reduction of stigma associated with mental health issues, especially in the college environment. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI, n.d.), “Suicidal thoughts can affect anyone regardless of age, gender or background. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people and is often the result of mental health conditions that effect people when they are most vulnerable.” CPS and Active Minds have recognized the need for students to have a safe space, and thus spearheaded this community gathering to stand in solidarity as a community.

This event was a great way to become involved in other events that CPS has to offer, including but not limited to Kognito, an interactive online simulation for identifying and supporting at-risk students and Koru, a four-week mindfulness course, which can help decrease stress and increase mindfulness and self-compassion.

September was National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, but CPS and Active Minds believe this should be a year-round concern for all community members. Support, strength, and solidarity increase with the number of people who participate; men and women for others begins here!

For information about Active Minds go to www.activeminds.org
DID YOU KNOW?

Fordham offers the following resources specifically for student veterans:

- Free yoga classes through Connected Warriors
- Transition support workshops from Edge4Vets
- Collaborative psychosocial services with the VA New York Harbor through VI-TAL
- Free workshops to tell their stories through Veterans Writing Workshop

For more information, visit http://www.fordham.edu/info/20728/veterans

By: Kristjana McCarthy
CPS Wellness Intern, FCRH ’18

THE 22-PUSHUP CHALLENGE TO RAISE AWARENESS FOR VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION

One of the unique things about Fordham’s campus is the fact that we are so diverse, yet we stand in solidarity. In the current day and age standing in solidarity is rarely seen. Our government leaders are divided and images of hatred have plagued our social media accounts and news sources.

Given our Jesuit roots, Fordham students refuse to take positions of complacence. Instead, we stand in solidarity with one another and spread love and hope. The Jesuit values, which begin with cura personalis—a deep respect for the individual and his or her potential—is an example of what makes Fordham different. Caring for each and every individual and realizing their potential is echoed throughout campus.

One example of how Fordham students are living out the University’s mission is by choosing to participate in the 22-pushup challenge for veteran suicide awareness. For 22 days, they perform 22 pushups each day and post videos of it on their social media accounts. For students like me who are Fordham Army ROTC cadets, this is an issue that is personal. We are training to be future leaders of the United States Army and with statistics indicating that suicide is an epidemic within our profession, it is an issue that needs our attention.

The movement, spearheaded by the organization 22Kill, aims to raise awareness for the alarming rate of veteran suicides. This nonprofit organization began when the Veterans Administration released statistics on how many veterans die by suicide every day: 22. 22Kill attempts to raise awareness on issues which can lead to suicide in veterans, including mental health problems that come from post-traumatic stress, brain injuries, or the transition back into civilian life. Those at 22Kill believe that empowering veterans and giving them a sense of purpose can stop the suicide epidemic.

The Fordham community has student veterans, students with family members who are veterans, and future military leaders. Caring for veterans who have struggled with mental health issues, wherever they are in our community, is central in the value of cura personalis. The students participating in the 22-pushup challenge are exhibiting this value.

Choosing to support movements like this is part of what makes our campus community an engaged and caring one. The Veterans Crisis Line is a great resource for those that are seeking help 1-800-273-8255.
AN OPEN LETTER TO A FRIEND WHO IS STRUGGLING

By: Emily Blumenthal
CPS Wellness Intern, FCLC ’17

To the friend of a friend who is struggling:

Mental health is a critical issue on all college campuses—Fordham is no exception. In this letter, I’d like to give some advice about how to handle a friendship with a person who is struggling. First and foremost, be understanding. If they can’t make plans suddenly or ask for plans to be altered to make them more comfortable—try to be accommodating. Know that, when struggling, sometimes any effort put in feels like pushing a boulder up a never-ending hill, and that they’re trying the best they can. Next, be an active listener. If they decide to confide in you, be empathic and make them feel heard. Being engaged can make your friend feel understood and less alone—it may even be enough in some cases to help them get through their distress. However, if you’re starting to have serious concerns about a friend, concerns that might exceed what you think your friend can handle (even with a supportive social network), it might be time to consider referring a friend to Counseling and Psychological Services.

Now, I know firsthand that this is an incredibly hard conversation to have. Even when I had concerns, I chickened out of referring a friend to services because I didn’t want to lose the friendship. Looking back, I wish I had known about Kognito. Kognito is an online training tutorial that teaches you how to have this conversation with a friend that is struggling in a very genuine way.

Moving forward and having taken Kognito now, I feel very confident in my ability to refer friends in a way that comes across as empathic yet firm—rather than coming off as judgmental and demanding.

If you have serious concern, I would recommend being trained with Kognito. In referring a friend to Counseling and Psychological Services, let your friend know all that it has to offer: One can do one-on-one counseling, group counseling, or even attend workshops for stress reduction and better mental health. All of CPS’s services are free and confidential. Additionally, if a friend is potentially at risk for experiencing an emergency, you can direct him or her to CPS’s walk-in services and also let them know about the suicide hotline or crisis text-line. Finally, if your friend is just going through a small rough patch, I hope you are able to be the type of friend you would want in a time of crisis. In the already independent living situation the Lincoln Center and Rose Hill Campuses afford, let’s try and be the types of people that prevent those close to us from feeling isolated.

Sincerely,

Emily Blumenthal
“Never believe that a few caring people can’t change the world. For, indeed, that’s all who ever have.”
Margaret Mead

“From caring comes courage.”
Lao Tzu

“Caring about others, running the risk of feeling, and leaving an impact on people, brings happiness.”
Harold Kushner

“Not he who has much is rich, but he who gives much.”
Eric Fromm

“The essence of all great art, all beautiful art, is gratitude.”
Friedrich Nietzsche

SEMESTER REFLECTIONS & PRACTICES

As we uphold Fordham’s Jesuit principles by committing our selves to the service to others and our community, it is important that we also stop to ensure that we are also nurturing and caring for ourselves. Too often, the exigencies of day-to-day life—especially in college and especially in New York City—leave us little time or energy to restore our own physical and emotional reserves; yet, one of the most important things you can do to help others is to recognize when it is time to help yourself. Thus, in the spirit of caring for others and caring for oneself, we offer a loving-kindness meditation to cultivate compassion for ourselves, our communities, and our world.

LOVING-KINDNESS MEDITATION

With each recitation of the phrases, we are expressing an intention, planting the seeds of loving wishes over and over in our heart. You can begin the practice of loving-kindness by meditating for 15 minutes in a quiet place. Let yourself sit in a comfortable fashion. Let your body rest and be relaxed. Let your heart be soft. Let go of any plans and preoccupations.

Begin with yourself. Breathe gently, and recite inwardly the following traditional phrases directed to your own well-being. You may begin with yourself because without loving yourself, it is almost impossible to love others.

May I be filled with loving-kindness.
May I be safe from inner and outer dangers.
May I be well in body and mind.
May I be at ease and happy.

As you repeat these phrases, picture yourself as you are now, and hold that image in a heart of loving-kindness. Adjust the words and images in any way you wish. Create the exact phrases that best open your heart of kindness. Repeat these phrases over and over again, letting the feelings permeate your body and mind.

Be aware that this meditation may at times feel difficult and can also bring up feelings contrary to loving-kindness, feelings of sadness or anger. If this happens, it is important to be patient and kind toward yourself, allowing whatever arises to be received in a spirit of friendliness and kind affection.

When you feel you have established some stronger sense of kindness for yourself, you can then expand your meditation to include others. After focusing on yourself for a few minutes, imagine someone in your life who has loved or truly cared for you.—this could be a family member, a close friend, even a pet. Picture this person and carefully recite the same phrases:

May you be filled with loving-kindness.
May you be safe from inner and outer dangers.
May you be well in body and mind.
May you be at ease and happy.

Expressing gratitude to those important to us is a natural form of care. In fact, some people find lovingkindness for themselves so hard, they begin their practice by expressing compassion for another. This too is fine. The rule in loving-kindness practice is to follow the way that most easily opens your heart.

Adapted from The Art of Forgiveness, Lovingkindness, and Peace (Kornfield, 2016)

For more guided meditations, download the Stressbusters App just for Fordham students or the Meditation Timer app, both available through the App Store and Google Play.
DID YOU KNOW?

Studies suggest that regular mindfulness practice can have the following benefits:

- Stress reduction
- Increased concentration
- Improved working memory
- Less emotional reactivity
- More satisfaction in relationships
- Increased self-compassion
- And so much more!

Strengthen your mind with mindfulness tools you can use for a lifetime.

KORU MINDFULNESS AT FORDHAM

By: Shenelle Reddick
CPS Wellness Intern, FCRH ’17

When is the last time you sat and thought to yourself, “I’m going to take some time to meditate and not think about my stress?” Maybe it’s been a while. It is important to step away from all the stressors and responsibilities in your life, and just breathe. At Fordham, it is possible to do this through the Koru Mindfulness classes offered at the Rose Hill and Lincoln Center campuses. Now, I know what you many thinking: “What the heck is Koru?!” Koru is an evidence-based program that teaches mindfulness and meditation skills to college students and young adults. It is taught over the course of 4 weeks, and each week two new skills are taught by a professional Koru teacher. Students are then given a log where they practice mindfully engaging in a daily activity, such as brushing their teeth or walking to class, and they are encouraged to incorporate the techniques learned in each class into their daily activities.

I think Koru is something that Fordham students should definitely consider. As a psych major who wants to pursue a career in mental health, before landing my internship with CPS, I had an idea of what mental health is all about. Ever since I started interning, however, mental health has become so much more fascinating to me, which has further helped to solidify my future career goals. The idea of having to take another class in addition to the classes I am already taking may not be that exciting to a college student who is under a lot of stress and pressure trying to maintain a balance between school, family, and other responsibilities. Koru, however, is not something meant to add on to the stress. In fact, it does just the opposite: It relieves stress and helps you learn useful meditation practices.

As a student who has completed the course, I can honestly say I have felt a reduction in my stress and left each class with a clearer mind. Thus, I have come to think of Koru as not another class, but more of a break from my classes where I can just release my stress and let my body and mind be at ease. It also helped me realize that I do not really take the time to center my thoughts and just take moments during my busy and hectic week to just breathe and wind down. I am a person who gets stressed and frustrated easily, so while I was engaged in the meditation practices, I noticed that I was letting go of everything that was stressing me out and just focusing on my mindfulness. For example, if I was studying for a test and felt myself becoming stressed, I would stop and do some belly breathing or label my thoughts so that my mind would become more clear and my stress would be suppressed. If I could take the course again, I would. I highly recommend it.
COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CPS)

CPS is a comprehensive mental health service at all three of Fordham University’s campuses. 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. We strive to foster a community of care that recognizes and values the depth, dignity, and uniqueness of each student.

CPS provides the following confidential and free services in a safe and accepting environment:

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

MEET THE STAFF

Natasha Black, Ph.D., is the Community Training & Outreach Specialist for the Rose Hill and Lincoln Center campuses. A licensed psychologist, she earned her doctorate in Counseling Psychology from Fordham University and completed her postdoctoral fellowship at the William Alanson White Institute. She is passionate about college mental health and social justice advocacy and has worked on two federal grants to expand the university’s reach in providing much-needed services both to students and the surrounding communities. She is interested in multicultural issues and how psychoanalytic theory can offer a lens to further our understanding of difference at the clinical and societal level.

John Eastman, MSW, is a post-graduate fellow at CPS’s Rose Hill center. He was a clinical intern at CPS during the 2015–16 academic year, as he completed his studies at Fordham’s Graduate School of Social Sciences. John is also currently training at the William Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry, Psychoanalysis, and Psychology. He brings to CPS a longstanding interest in the unique challenges and opportunities that arise as individuals transition from late adolescence to early adulthood, including the critical influences of gender, sexuality, race, and class.

Norma Ortega, Ph.D., is our staff psychologist at Fordham’s Westchester campus. She is a licensed psychologist in the state of New York. She completed her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from the Pennsylvania State University, received her undergraduate degree from Rutgers University, and her masters from New York University. She worked in several community family health centers located in Brooklyn and Manhattan providing psychotherapy. Ms. Ortega is bilingual and can conduct psychotherapy in English or Spanish. Her last place of employment was at the ACS-NYU Children’s Trauma Institute, where she provided clinical services, as well as conducted research related to trauma treatment. She has an interest in multicultural issues in counseling, as well as research in the area of providing mental health treatment to address traumatic reactions.
HELP A FRIEND WHO IS STRUGGLING: KOGNITO AT-RISK TRAINING

University and college life can be full of stress, demands and challenges. From exams, papers and internships to navigating our finances, relationships and self-identities, it’s no surprise that **87% of Fordham students described feeling overwhelmed** by all they had to do in the past year. At times, these stressors can contribute to emotional distress, poor academic performance and mental health difficulties, such as depression, anxiety, substance abuse and suicidal thoughts.

As students, you play an important role in helping each other through challenging and difficult periods. To support you in this role, CPS offers an online, game-based simulation to assist you with recognizing, supporting, and when necessary, referring students who may be struggling. To access this simulation please follow the instructions below:

- Go to [www.kognitocampus.com/login](http://www.kognitocampus.com/login)
- Create a new account using the enrollment key: fordham718
- Follow the On Screen Instructions
- Choose Your Course and Click “Launch”

FORDHAM IS DE-STRESSING WITH THE STRESSBUSTERS APP

CPS is proud to unveil the **new and improved Stressbusters Wellness** app to our community!

Produced by the national Stressbusters wellness program, this customized app puts Fordham-specific health and wellness information, announcements, and resources right at your fingertips. The app includes features such as:

- **Break Pad**: A “sonic spa” featuring audio tracks to help students increase a sense of calm and focus.
- **Videostream**: A channel of Stressbusters how-to segments, expert interviews, and other wellness-related short videos.
- **Health Rewards**: Like a frequent flyer program, students can accrue award points for participating in CPS and other Fordham wellness activities.
- **Events**: Stay informed about campus wellness events sponsored by a range of departments.
- **Get Help Now**: One-touch emergency buttons to connect students to immediate support day or night.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- [http://www.stevefund.org/](http://www.stevefund.org/) Online resources & research on mental and emotional health of college students of color
- [http://mentalhealthchannel.tv/about](http://mentalhealthchannel.tv/about) Web-based channel with free documentaries, films & programs on mental health