

OUR TRAIL TO WELLNESS

For the Students and Employees of Lakehead University



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Welcome Message

This month's Issue of Our Trail to Wellness focuses on Intellectual Wellness – The ability to remain open-minded to new ideas, concepts, and skills while exercising our creativity and knowledge in meaningful ways.

Having a growth mindset is critical in both our educational and personal endeavours. This form of mentality enhances our self-awareness as we become more mindful, well-rounded, and curious to life's offerings. In fact, some of the best ways to enhance our Intellectual Wellness is through open and respectful communication, learning new hobbies or refining the old, unwinding with a good book or literature of choice, continuing to ask questions, and challenging the norm. Through each new experience, we are continually learning and questioning personal and public assumptions which further develop our critical thinking skills. Ultimately, our continued educational growth can lead to greater success in both our personal and professional lives.

Universities provide incredible opportunities to engage with intellectually stimulating topics through numerous public forums, sponsored workshops, and events. I encourage you all to explore the wide range of offerings at our institution to help cultivate a community of intellectual growth and positive well-being that contributes to our everyday success.

Dr. David Barnett, Provost and Vice President, Academic

9 Dimensions of Wellness



9 Dimensions of Wellness

Wellness is an active, lifelong process of becoming aware of your choices and making decisions that will help us to live a more balanced and fulfilling life. Everyone's optimal wellness is different with many factors influencing one's own health and well-being. To this end, [Lakehead University's Wellness Strategy](#) recognizes and considers nine (9) main dimensions of wellness as contributing factors to our overall health and well-being: Cultural, Emotional, Environmental, Financial, Intellectual, Occupational, Physical, Social and Spiritual.

Wellness Dimension: Intellectual Wellness

Our Trail to Wellness is built on the foundation of the 9 Dimensions of Wellness. This particular Issue features **Intellectual Wellness**.

Intellectual Wellness: Being open to new ideas and experiences while embracing our creativity, thinking critically, and expanding our knowledge and skillsets.

Intellectual Wellness includes, but is not limited to:

- Time management skills
- Creative expression
- Critical thinking
- The ability to ask questions
- Stress management skills
- Self-awareness
- Goal setting
- Learning new studying techniques
- Accepting and acknowledging different perspectives



5 Ways to Enhance Intellectual Wellness



1 Read

Sit back and relax with the reading material of your choice. The options are endless! Classic novels, comics, educational articles, bibliographies, etc. Visit our **Chancellor Paterson Library** or the **Harvie Legacy Library** for a wide assortment of options or download one to your digital device to read at your leisure.



2 Journal

Keeping a record of your thoughts and feelings is a simple way to benefit your mental health. It can increase self-awareness, reduce anxiety, organize thoughts, and help process emotions. Be as creative as you would like! Tell stories about your day, doodle, create poetry, use journal prompts, or practice gratitude.



3 Play Brain Games

Try your hand at some fun-filled brain games such as crossword puzzles, sudoku, scrabble, trivia, jigsaw puzzles, chess, and so much more! Engaging in cognitively stimulating yet fun activities can positively impact your critical thinking skills, memory, attention span, and reasoning skills.



4 Experience the Arts

Attend or participate in cultural events on campus and within our local communities. Events or classes such as learning to play a new instrument, DIY crafts, visual arts, attending a music concert, and dancing are just a few examples of activities that can help express your creativity and open your mind in new ways.



5 Talk It Out

Enjoy some current event discussions with friends in person, online, or through text. Remain open-minded and understand that your opinions could potentially differ, however, by expanding your mind with new concepts and ideas, your worldly views will continue to grow and evolve.

Intellectual Wellness Dimensions Emerging from the Student Experience



Project in the Faculty of Education: Gary Pluim & Erin Valanzuela, Faculty of Education, Orillia

Intellectual wellness is a central concern within the Faculty of Education and an area for which we solicit data in our annual student experience survey, colloquially entitled “Operation Happy to Be Here” (OH2BH). This project recruits broad-based data on the experiences of Professional B.Ed. Program students who are in training to become certified teachers in Ontario. We know that this profession requires attributes of organization, creativity, and curiosity, so in our program, we aim to cultivate environments that develop qualities of increased mindfulness, executive function, reflexivity, and open-minded thinking.

The OH2BH project is a grassroots initiative that, since 2018, has used numerous methodologies to promote student voice, perspectives, and involvement in the faculty. Our recently completed 2023 questionnaire focused on “**Transitioning to Post-Pandemic Conditions**” and elicited many findings touching on dimensions of intellectual wellness. Data from a large sample (almost one hundred students) provided valuable insights into student demographics, perspectives, and tangible suggestions for organizational development. One significant finding from this year’s questionnaire was how students really appreciated our new hybrid format of course delivery – one day/week online, one day/week face-to-face). While this change was made for a variety of institutional reasons, students overwhelmingly reacted positively to this change. Said one, “I believe the hybrid version of this program is wildly helpful in maintaining a school/life balance. My mental health has never been better, and I believe that is because I am able to spend time in Orillia, as well as where I currently live throughout the week”. According to another student, among the best aspects of online learning is that it “creates better time management”, enables “students to focus better”, and recognizes that “students want to learn because they are in their own space”. Another finding was that in both face-to-face and online environments, students appreciated all the instances in which their professors/instructors integrated opportunities for mindfulness, noting how some included it right from the “students’ first class”.

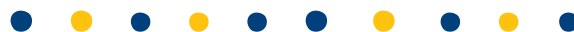
Student intellectual wellbeing is at the forefront of faculty planning recognizing the lasting effect of the pandemic on our students. As shared by one student “Since contracting Covid-19 last year, my short-term memory and lung capacity have been significantly impaired. I have also lost practice in developing sustainable routines and habits, and struggle to maintain my mental health. All of these things at one time or another have impacted my educational experience.” Another noted that a lingering effect of the pandemic is having “a hard time focusing and listening for long periods at a time”. Indeed, when asked “In the past two weeks, how frequently have you felt worried, nervous, anxious or on edge?”, only ten percent responded with “not at all” and 43% responded with “nearly every day”. Similarly, when asked “In the past two weeks, how frequently have you had trouble

relaxing?”, 13% responded with “not at all” and 44% said “nearly every day”. These findings were particularly strong amongst students who identified as living with a health condition such as anxiety disorder, ADHD, and executive functioning disorder (these being among the most commonly reported).

As a faculty, we also recognize that certain institutional conditions affect certain dimensions of our student's intellectual wellness. Between juggling schedules, managing expectations, and finding a way to navigate the various elements connected to lifelong learning, intellectual wellness plays a key role in maintaining health and balance. For example, students noted that their overall workload and number of courses affect student stress. Said one, “There should never be more than 6 to ensure comprehension, retention, and mental wellbeing”. Another stated, “I feel like when I have fewer courses to focus on I am better able to allocate time to learn the required concepts and complete the required assignments”. Similarly, large classes of “60-100 people are distracting and not conducive to meaningful learning”. Finally, the spaces for learning in Orillia were heavily cited, as among other limitations, the cold temperatures in the classroom are “distracting”, make “focusing challenging”, and make it hard to “engage and learn”.

One insight from our 2023 findings showed that deliberate program interventions toward intellectual wellness were well-received. The student wellness session provided through our professional development program, for example, “was super helpful in learning what resources are available to us”. When asked to envision potential specialized streams for the second year of our program, 53% of our respondents suggested “mental health and wellbeing”. One student suggested, “mental health courses should be mandatory” in this program. As future teachers, the skills and attributes that our teacher candidates gain through increased attention to intellectual wellness in our program, will, in turn, be passed on to their students once they become teachers.

The findings from our OH2BH project are instrumental for us in the Faculty of Education as they help inform instructor practices, faculty decisions, and policy directions. In the past, the findings have instigated numerous activities to support student experiences such as fitness clubs, healthy meal provision, and cohort community building. Faculty and students note an appreciation for intellectual wellness because of its direct impact on day-to-day experiences in post-secondary education. OH2BH sees the importance of continuing to explore wellness and we are working to provide participants with the chance to share their thoughts directly connected to wellness throughout the OH2BH project. The data relating to intellectual wellness is particularly useful for us as they help illuminate the ways in which our program does and does not support intellectual wellness, offers suggestions as to how we can do better in certain areas, and highlights what is important for our teacher candidates to replicate in their own teaching.



Gary Plum & Erin Valanzuela, Faculty of Education, Orillia

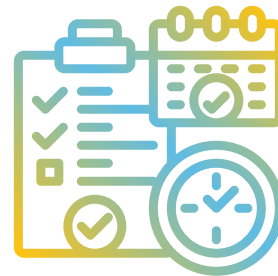
Time Management

Does it seem as though there are never enough hours in a day? Why do some of our peers and colleagues accomplish more when given the same 24 hours? More often than not, the answer is good time management skills.

Time management is the process of planning and regulating how much time to spend on specific activities to maximize personal efficiencies. Good time management is a learned skill and important to master as it increases productivity, lowers stress, and helps lead to educational and career success. One question to ask ourselves is: How can we manage our time to ensure we are working smarter, not harder?

10 Ways to Improve Time Management Skills

1. Establish personal deadlines ahead of the scheduled due date
2. Create a daily and weekly/monthly schedule
3. Learn to say "No", in reason
4. Take breaks in between tasks
5. Create a To-Do List
6. Avoid distractions
7. Reward yourself when tasks are completed
8. Concentrate on one thing at a time
9. Ask for advice or help
10. Delegate



The Prioritization Matrix

A Prioritization Matrix, also known as the Eisenhower Matrix, is a simple yet powerful time and project management tool that can help you focus on what matters most and keep critical projects on track.

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Do Now	Do Later
Not Important	Delegate	Delete

Quadrant 1: Do Now

These items are both urgent and important, and will require immediate attention. *Example: PR Crisis.*

Quadrant 2: Do Later

Essential issues, but not necessarily urgent. *Example: Business strategies that help achieve long-term goals.*

Quadrant 3: Delegate

Urgent items that pop up and require immediate attention can potentially be delegated to a trusted peer or colleague. *Example: Team members who ask for help or urgent email requests.*

Quadrant 4: Delete

Not essential or urgent (Unnecessary tasks). *Example: Organizing your desk space.*

Stress-Free Scheduling Strategies

Are you tired of back-to-back meetings, or sprinting to the washroom in between said meetings, only to be late to the next? Are you tired of spending excess time and energy scheduling meetings and waiting for feedback from team members via Doodle polls, only to re-send the poll because not all members are available at the provided times?

Here are some simple tips and tricks to alleviate some unnecessary stressors in our daily lives:

1 Change the length of your meetings

Meetings are an integral component of doing business, which means, they are unavoidable. However, with an increase of virtual and in-person meetings, we need to be thoughtful and respectful regarding personal time. If the standard length of a long meeting is 60 minutes, consider wrapping up in 50. If the standard length of a short meeting is 30 minutes, consider wrapping up in 25. This allows meeting members to quickly grab some water, run to the washroom, or transition to your next meeting to ensure you are arriving on time.

2 Open Calendar Visibility

There are many ways to manifest small daily victories to improve or refine personal time management. One everyday example is by creating open calendar visibility through Google Calendar to reduce the time spent on **when** to meet while increasing our focus and effort on the preparations for the task at hand.

Benefits of sharing Google Calendar for Open Visibility:

- Efficient Scheduling (Saves time and energy)
- Access to the most up-to-date calendar information
- Efficient use of employee or peer group time
- Reduces double-booking
- More time dedicated to projects
- Specifics remain private (Scheduled times are automatically labelled as "Busy")

Learn how to set your Google Calendar to open visibility by [clicking here](#).

3 Open Calendar Visibility → Easy Group Scheduling

The more peers and colleagues with open visibility through Google Calendar, the easier it can become to schedule meetings without the support of third-party programs while saving your time and energy for what matters most to you.

Learn how simple and time-efficient scheduling meetings can be by [clicking here!!!](#)



Available Resources: To Enhance Our Intellectual Wellness

Specific Tools Available for Students

- **Lakehead University Libraries**

The library website is your main access point for everything related to library services, spaces, and collections. Here are a few useful tools and resources available for our students:

- OMNI Academic Search Tool** to find books, journal articles, films, and more
- interlibrary loan** connects you to resources that goes beyond our local collection
- Ask - Chat with a Librarian** service provides real-time chat-based research assistance online
- Book an appointment for a **research consultation** with your liaison librarian or our archivist
- Sign up for available **workshops**

- **Academic Support Zone: Tutoring & Writing Support**

- Tutor Directory via **mySuccess**
- Contact: **academiczone.ssc@lakeheadu.ca** or (807) 343-8010 ext. 8859

- **Student Referral Guide Thunder Bay**

- **Student Referral Guide Orillia**

We offer you a wide range of academic and personal support services right from the start of your Lakehead education and through to after graduation. This Referral Guide will help you learn about the different ways we can support you and the best office to connect with in Student Affairs.

- **Student Health & Wellness**

- Stress Management tools and resources**

Time Management and Organizational Tool for All

- **Trello**: Trello is a flexible work management online tool where teams can ideate plans, collaborate on projects, organize workflows, and track progress in a visual, productive, and rewarding way. From brainstorming to planning to execution, Trello manages the significant milestones and the day-to-day tasks of working individually or together as a team and getting things done. A great free resource for all!

Employee Benefits through Green Shield Canada (GSC)

Did you know? As a benefits plan member with Green Shield Canada (GSC), you have access to a variety of additional health and wellness resources.

1. GSC Digital Pharmacy - Health Depot

Website: [Health Depot with GSC](#)

This is a brand-new service available through GSC. Perks of the Health Depot include free next-day delivery, lower dispensing fees, consultation with a pharmacist, and the ability to assign others to an account which allows another person to manage prescriptions on a plan member's behalf.

2. GSC Everywhere & GSC Offerings

Website: [GSC Everywhere Login](#)

Downloadable App From: [Google Play](#) and [Apple Store](#)

GSC Everywhere can be accessed through a desktop or mobile app and is primarily used to submit claims, review your benefits coverage, and locate medical providers near you. However, some additional offerings are listed below:

- **Dependent Management**

Allows employees to manage their dependent information. This includes adding a new dependent, such as a spouse (married or common law) or a child (through birth, adoption, or legal guardianship), updating dependent information, such as their name, date of birth, sex, and in-school status, and removing a dependent, such as in a separation or divorce.

- **Digital Clinic**

Includes: **Inkblot** (An online session with a qualified therapist), **Tranquility by Inkblot** (Internet-based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy), **ALAViDA** (Virtual support for substance use management), and **The MindBeacon** (Personalized Cognitive Behavioural Therapy). For all services, except ALAViDA, plan members can use their existing "Psychology" benefit to expense these services.

- **Room for Her**

The site is linked to your **GSC Everywhere** account and includes information specifically for women. Topics include Mind, Body, Work, and Relationships. There are also counselling options (free trials) supported through **Inkblot**.

3. Change4Life, through [GSC Everywhere](#)

Online Health portal for plan members with a user-friendly dashboard via desktop or mobile app. Once members complete their online health risk assessment, the program will provide personalized tips, online tools, videos, articles, and activities to support their personal wellness journey. It can link to Fitbit, Garmin, and devices that utilize OS by Google. Members are awarded points by reading articles, completing trackers, and participating in surveys. These points can then be used to enter draws for prizes (across Canada).



Future Newsletters

If you are interested in contributing to our future newsletters, we would like to hear from you! Upcoming topics include:

- Environmental Wellness
- Cultural Wellness
- Emotional Wellness

For inquiries or submissions, please contact:

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Subscribing to our Newsletter

To subscribe to the *Our Trail to Wellness* newsletter, please [sign up here](#).



**"You'll never be bored when you try something new;
there's really no limit to what you can do."**

- Dr. Seuss