

THE HIPPOCAMPUS

THE SMHS OFFICE OF STUDENT SUPPORT NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the Inaugural issue of *The Hippocampus*, OSS's new name for our newsletter. Same great content, just a new look! In this issue, we focus on Black History Month and Heart Health!

In 1976, President Gerald Ford formally recognized Black History Month and urged Americans to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history."

Black History Month: Maranda C. Ward, EdD MPH

While February may be recognized as Black History Month, it is important to rightfully respect the contributions and struggles of Black Americans as a story of U.S. history. After all, the reason that February was selected as the month for its celebration is because the birthdays of President Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass are also in this month. And, what do these historical figures have in common? They both played integral roles in ending U.S. slavery- a historical harm of the past with an enduring legacy still felt today. Despite the racism and colonialism that fueled slavery, Jim Crow laws, political disenfranchisement, mass incarceration, redlining and segregation- each year's Black History Month focuses on the ingenuity of Black Americans to rise against these structural inequities.

According to the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (2022), this year's Black History Month theme is focused on *Black Health and Wellness*. As we head into the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic that has hospitals and healthcare workers feeling strained, we can think about the efforts of Black community health workers, Black public health scholars, Black medical practitioners, and Black allied health professionals who tirelessly work to eliminate health disparities in Black communities. This includes work that addresses the physical, emotional, social, and mental health of Black people through resources, classes, social media, data, and research such as:

-Yoga for Social Justice led by GW alumna Dr. Valin Jordan
(<https://yoga4socialjustice.org>)

-Therapy for Black Girls by Dr. Joy Hardin Bradford (<https://therapyforblackgirls.com>)

-The Nap Ministry by Tricia Hersey (<https://thenapministry.wordpress.com>)

-National Quality Minority Forum's Microsite (www.cancerequity.org)

-Morehouse School of Medicine Health Equity Tracker
(<https://healthequitytracker.org>)

This is just a short list of the ways that Black activists, Black thought leaders, and Black health professionals are changing the narrative about the health of Black Americans. Perusing these websites alone you will see how they address the lived experiences of Black people in its health interventions and messaging. These models can be credited to Black thinkers. Any program or institution committed to advancing the health and livelihoods of Black people will also hire and promote Black scholars, collaborate and share power within the Black communities where they establish partnerships and write about Black communities in equitable ways. And, this is a commitment that needs to extend beyond the month of February. -*Dr. Ward is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Clinical Research & Administration within SMHS*

Reference- ASALH (2022). The 2022 Black History Month Virtual Festival. Accessed www.asalh.org

Discussion: "Pathways to Trust"

When: Thursday March 3, 2022 at 6pm EST **Where:** [Zoom Link](#)

Have you ever felt not enough or inadequate as it came to your personal, professional or academic skills and abilities? Hesitant to ask for help because you were afraid or ashamed that others would perceive you as less capable or not fit for the program you are in?

If so, you are not alone. The Office of Student Support together with the Resiliency and Well-being Center offer this interactive workshop to help you build confidence and self-compassion.

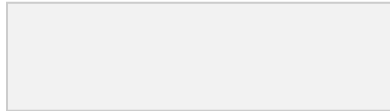
During our time together, we will learn how to:

- Explore our emotions surrounding self-acceptance, resistance, shame, guilt, and vulnerability related to trust
 - Develop more open relationships with ourselves, peers, and significant others and ask for help
 - Utilize self-care techniques
 - Focus less on being perfect and focus more on being whole
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OSS Can Help You Reach Your Academic Goals

Refining and developing learning skills is a lifelong process. Through OSS, academic support is available to all SMHS students, regardless of your program of study. You may find that prior study strategies are no longer sufficient and new methods may be required. OSS encourages you to schedule a meeting to discuss your goals for achieving the most from your training at GWU SMHS. Tutors and academic advising are also available. We look forward to meeting with you to identify how you can achieve your goals.

OSS Can Help You Reach Your Mental Health Goals



Talkspace continues to be one of our most widely used resources and we couldn't be more thrilled. As a reminder, you have FREE unlimited asynchronous messaging with your therapist as well as 4 (30 minute) virtual meetings per month. This is a unique resource only for SMHS students and those in the School of Nursing. If you haven't signed up yet and would like to be matched with a therapist please go to <https://www.talkspace.com/gwu> If you ever encounter any technical difficulties, please email us right away.

As Valentine's Day approaches, let's take a moment to reflect on how trust factors into our relationships, whether they be romantic, or platonic. Talkspace has written an [article](#) that explains how we can be mindful of trust issues in our relationships. Go ahead and give it a read!

OSS Can Help You Reach Your Community Engagement Goals

From the Student Wellness Committee

Easy ways to become more environmentally friendly: Although there are many ways to be more environmentally conscious, here are a few of our favorites. The following could not only decrease your carbon footprint, but could also be easy on your wallet!

DC Zero-Waste Resource: <https://zerowaste.dc.gov/>

Rescued produce delivery service:

Hungry Harvest: <https://hungryharvest.net/>

Misfits Market: <https://www.misfitsmarket.com>

Composting in DC: <https://dpw.dc.gov/foodwastedropoff>

Note: Columbia Heights (Saturday) and DuPont (Sunday) farmer's markets open year-round

Thrifting

-Unique Thrift store (Fairfax, VA)

<https://stores.savers.com/va/fallschurch/unique-thrift-store-5109.html>

-Goodwill (DC) <https://dcbgoodwill.org/>-Goodwill (DC) <https://dcbgoodwill.org/>

Valentines Day: Heart Healthy Tips from [GW Resiliency & Well-being Center](#)

1. **Get to bed and have a great night of sleep.** Restorative sleep is imperative for overall health and the health of your relationships. Poor sleep increases your risk for health issues including heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and depression. Sleep deprivation can lead to overreacting to conflicts in relationships; we are better able to communicate, listen, and concentrate when well rested.
2. **Be Active.** Being inactive and sitting too much increases risk of heart disease, diabetes, colon and lung cancers, and early death. The good news is exercising with others is associated with a greater positive mood. You don't have to join a formal exercise class to reap the benefits. A walk after dinner has been shown to improve blood glucose even into the next day. Just get moving!
3. **Color your life with a diverse diet.** When you "eat the rainbow," adding as many different colorful plants to your diet, you support the health of heart, your mind (and your relationships), and even your microbiome. The colors in vegetables and fruits signal different nutrients (vitamin, minerals) as well as phytonutrients (chemicals linked to health benefits). Eating a diverse diet with lots of different colors ensures you get enough of each. **BONUS:** Increasing your intake of whole plants helps with weight loss and maintenance to support your heart health.

4. **Reduce stress.** One in two U.S. adults report that COVID-19 has negatively impacted their mental health. Prolonged stress is associated with increased digestive problems, inflammation, increased blood pressure, and reduced blood flow to the heart. The GW Resiliency & Well-being Center has [on-demand stress management resources](#) as well as [one-on-one consultations](#).

5. **Quit smoking and vaping.** Smoking increases your risk of heart disease and stroke. Find tips to quit from the [American Heart Association](#).

Scholarship Opportunity

The Healthline and The Nature Conservancy [Stronger Scholarship](#) will award four \$5,000 scholarships to students who are committed to making a difference at the intersection of health and climate change through their studies, extracurriculars, and career goals. Below is a brief description of the scholarship and important dates:

Learn more about the scholarship and how to apply at [Healthline](#).

- Application period: **February 1-April 22, 2022**
 - Eligibility:
 - Students who will be college juniors, college seniors, or graduate students at an accredited U.S. institution as of fall 2022.
 - Tell us about the work you are doing related to health and climate change by sharing your extracurriculars, experiences, and an essay.
 - No GPA or grades required.
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Inspirational Quotes

"Excellence of performance will transcend artificial barriers created by man"- Dr. Charles Drew

"Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps, hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination" -Dr. Maya Angelou

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School of Medicine & Health Sciences

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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