

THE HIPPOCAMPUS

THE SMHS OFFICE OF STUDENT SUPPORT NEWSLETTER



February 2024 Newsletter

Office of Student Support Website



"You can't go back and make a new start, but you can start right now and make a brand new ending." - James R. Sherman

Happy Leap Year! While Valentine's Day certainly holds a commercial appeal, the core values of valuing and strengthening meaningful relationships are important to remember as we settle into February. Practice self-care and self-empowerment, make sure to build up your fellow students, and if you feel and if you feel like you could use some extra support, know that the Office of Student Support is here for you.

To schedule a virtual or in-person meeting, contact our office at SMHSstudents@gwu.edu.

In this edition of the newsletter, you can find the following:

- New for February
 - CAPS Workshop - Mindful Moments: Navigating the Healthcare Hustle
 - Student Wellness Committee February Events
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- Black History Month at GW
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- February Events Around DC
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New for February

GW Counseling & Psychological Services Workshop - Navigating the Healthcare Hustle

Mindful Moments:

CAPS RESILIENT MINDS SERIES:

NAVIGATING THE HEALTHCARE HUSTLE

FEBRUARY 21ST , 12 PM
CAPS
REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED

Calling all Healthcare professional school students (e.g., M.D., PA, Nursing, etc.), Join CAPS for an hour of discussions and activities!

Register Now

Registration Required

Student Health Center

capsoutreach@gwu.edu

Mindful Moments: Navigating the Healthcare Hustle, Feb 21 from 12-1pm, GW Student Health Center

Attention Healthcare Students! Are you pursuing a career in healthcare, whether it's as an M.D, a PA, a Nurse, or another vital role? We understand the unique challenges and pressures you face. That's why CAPS has created a special support space just for you. Lead by a CAPS Clinician, join us for a blend of insightful discussions and hands-on activities, all designed to build a sense of community among healthcare students. It's a perfect opportunity to share experiences and find support in a group that understands the demanding journey you're on. This space is more than just a meeting; it's a haven for you to connect, unwind, and find encouragement from peers and professionals who get it. Don't miss out on this chance to nurture your well-being and foster connections within the healthcare student community!

Student Wellness Committee February Events



Join us for

Valentine's Day Cookie Decorating

Wednesday, February 14th
at 12PM
Student Lounge at Ross Hall

See you there!

Wellness Committee

Valentine's Day Cookie Decorating: On Valentine's Day at 12pm, join the Student Wellness Committee in the Ross Hall Student Lounge for a cookie decorating event! Stop by and create a sweet treat to enjoy with classmates.

Valentine's Day Guessing Jar: The Student Wellness Committee and OSS are challenging students to put their critical thinking and measurement skills to the test! Now through February 14th at 12:30 EST, you can stop by the Office of Student Support (Ross 112-B) to guess how much Valentine's Day candy is in our jar. Guess correctly and they could win a gift card! For students not on campus at all, you can submit an entry through [this form here](#) (there is a reference photo in the form).

Academic Support Spotlight - Personal Statement Success

Quick Tips for



3 Quick Tips for Personal Statement Success -- Mark Gurarie

No matter if you're interested in a academic program, scholarship, fellowship, or residency, the application process is intense and demanding. It asks you to put yourself out there and make a case for yourself. Critical in all of this is the part of the process that causes the most angst: the personal statement.

The task: to differentiate yourself; to show how your interests, experiences, and personality make you a good fit; and to make the case that you'll be dedicated, engaged, and driven. You have to explain who you are, what got you here, and what you'd like to do next. As a kind of cover letter, you either directly or indirectly have to "sell" yourself. A tall order!

As a writing coach who's helped many students with applications, I tell students that the personal essay should "make you three dimensional:" a real, flesh and blood person beyond what can be gleaned from your CV. There's no singular approach—and there will always be differences in opinions about what works—but, as you turn towards the task, let me share three quick tips:

1. Think About Structure: Lead off with an introduction that demonstrates what makes you a good fit. Include body paragraphs that develop specific aspects. Land on a conclusion that highlights how your experiences and skills will help you achieve your goals as well as those of the relevant residency, fellowship, scholarship, or institution.

2. Show Don't Tell: Advice often given to writers is that it's (usually) stronger to use specific examples that demonstrate what you want to say—that show!—rather than just telling it. Use specific examples that are relevant to what you're applying for.

3. Be Clean and Clear: Your reader will be going through a lot of these essays, so clarity and concision are your friends. Use direct language and avoid over-long sentences. If there's a simpler way to say something, it's probably better. Also, typos, grammatical mistakes, and other slips don't reflect well: proofread!

Tough as they can be, remember you're not alone. If you're having trouble getting started, need extra help, or live feedback on your work, consider signing up for Writing Coaching Services at the Office of Student Support. In one-on-one sessions, we can work with you to make that statement as strong as possible.

Resiliency and Well-being Center Spotlight - Stress Resources



From Viktoriya Karakcheyeva, MS, NCC, LCP, LCPC-SP, LCADS and the Resiliency & Well-being Center team.

Working hard should not be confused with overworking at the expense of your mental health, physical health, or relationships. As healthcare students, you are under a lot of stress from external and internal sources. We know that your health, wellness, and well-being are vital to your success.

Here are some practical tips to help reduce stress and maintain well-being:

Self-care and a healthy lifestyle are critical in accomplishing your goals. Attend to your basic needs such as restorative sleep, healthy nutrition, movement throughout the day, etc. , so you have energy to focus on what you need.

Set SMART goals and manage your time - create a realistic and manageable schedule that includes a combination of dedicated study time, breaks, and self-care activities. Prioritize tasks to avoid feeling overwhelmed, regularly assessing and adjusting according to your needs. Work smarter, not harder to do more with your time including working in teams / delegating / asking for help.

Mindfulness and relaxation techniques help to balance the autonomic nervous system, bring it to homeostatic “rest and digest” state, which **turns energy drains into energy gains**. The Headspace app is free for you as a GW student to help you get into a good routine.

Stay connected with classmates, friends, and family to share experiences and discuss challenges. Support and belonging are vital parts of your whole health, so use it to gain perspective, have a shoulder to cry on, or see the bigger picture.

Reach out for help early: If you're struggling with the workload or emotional challenges, reach out to professors, student support services, and counselors as soon as you notice it. Addressing issues promptly can prevent them from escalating.

The best rest may be a change of activity. Shifting things up in your routine from what you do all day every day to something different and new can improve brain functioning, and help your brain to gain clarity and sharpness.

Self-compassion: Be kind to yourself and recognize it is ok to not be perfect or to make mistakes. Avoid comparing, contrasting, and criticizing yourself. Accepting yourself for who you are, recognizing your strengths and taking mistakes as opportunities to grow can alleviate unnecessary pressure.

Maintain a sense of purpose: Take time to reflect on why you chose a career path in medical or health sciences to motivate yourself during challenging times. “If you know your why, you can handle any how” (Viktor Frankl).

[Resources within GW to help you manage your stress:](#)

[Mental Health Q&A with Dean Lorenzo Norris](#), Chief Wellness officer for the GW medical enterprise—GW Medical Faculty Associates, GW Hospital, and the GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences (SMHS)—and associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at GW SMHS.

[Grand Rounds: Shame & Sentinel Emotional Events in Health Professions Learners](#)

Black History Month at GW



In February 1976, President Gerald Ford declared February African American History Month. In 2006, national Black History Month transformed into the Black Heritage Celebration (BHC) at GW. Throughout the month of February, GW celebrates Black heritage, showcasing the rich history, culture and accomplishments of the Black community. The [Multicultural Student Services Center](#) provides logistical support for Black organizations to collaborate and promote cultural awareness. Below, you can find a list of events supported by the MSSC - click on the link to view more details:

2/15 - [Celebrating our Voice in Academia](#)

2/20 - [Soul Revue](#) and [Recreating Icons](#)

2/21 - [Engineering a Path to Greatness](#)

2/22 - [Island Rhythms Unleashed](#)

2/24 - [FINALE](#)

2/26 - [Discussion of Black Representation in Professional Spheres](#)

2/27 - [Art and Resistance](#)

February Events Around DC

Looking for something to do in February around DC? Here are some ideas to get you started:

- [Celebrate Black History Month](#): The District boasts a number of ways to celebrate and engage with Black history and culture, including visiting to the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture (free; timed tickets required), honoring Rosa Parks' legacy at The Mansion on O & O Street Museum, and learn about DC Black history with the *Ancestral Places: People of African Descent* tour at Tudor Place (discounted student tickets available).

- [The Future of Orchids - Conservation and Collaboration](#): Already ready for spring flowers? The Smithsonian Gardens and the US Botanical Garden have filled the entire courtyard of the American Art Museum/Portrait Gallery with over 350 live orchids. Centered around the themes of the future of orchids and orchid conservation, the exhibition will explore the numerous challenges facing wild orchids today, including climate change, habitat destruction and over-collecting, and offer a glimpse into the work being performed today by a diverse group of scientists and conservationists to protect the future of orchids.

OSS Pillars

OSS Pillars are the foundation of what we do. All of the events, services and opportunities we provide to students are done with these pillars in mind. Our primary services, as well as connections we have with other offices throughout the university, can be found below. Interested in a service, but don't see it below? Contact us to have a conversation!

Academic Support Information

CV Support: We have a dedicated faculty advisor with whom you can schedule appointments to review and revise your CV. To schedule an appointment, email [OSS](#) with your request and attach any resume or CV documents you may have. If you have never created a CV before, we are happy to work with you and share our template.

If you are looking for instant feedback, OSS offers drop in hours on Tuesdays (12-4pm) and Fridays (12:30-4pm) in Ross 112-B.

Learning Support: Our dedicated learning specialist, Terri Edwards, is available to meet with students to discuss active learning strategies, study strategies and scheduling, test taking strategies, and more. To book an appointment with her, please use her [Calendly link](#).

Peer Tutoring: If you would like to work with a peer tutor, email [OSS](#) to learn more about peer-led academic support.

Small Study Groups: Consider adding small group studying into your academic schedule. OSS assigns students to a study group of 2-5 students; the sessions are facilitated by a student who commits to that role. Groups may choose to meet in person or virtually. Contact [OSS](#) for more information to be a facilitator or participant.

Writing Coach: Coaching sessions help students build their writing confidence and develop vital writing skills for writing assignments, personal statements, and professional writing. To receive a referral to the writing coach, please email [OSS](#) directly.

Himmelfarb Writing Center: A representative from the GW Writing Center will be providing in-person consultations at the Himmelfarb Library this semester! They will be onsite every Tuesday from 4 pm - 6 pm, beginning October 10th. They can help you with a variety of writing assignments from research reports to cover letters to CVs. The Writing Center table will be located adjacent to the first floor Circulation Desk. The service is free.

Walk-ups are welcome, but appointments are preferred. To make an appointment, visit the [Writing Center website](#). If you are a first-timer, you'll see a link on the page that lets you register for a free account. If you are an online student, or would simply prefer a remote consultation, you'll see an option to request a virtual consultation.

Mental Health Resources

Talkspace: As educators of our future healthcare professionals, we know how important mental health is and are pleased to offer all SMHS students a **free** subscription to Talkspace. Talkspace offers unlimited text messaging and four 30-minute video

sessions a month with a licensed therapist and is a convenient, clinically effective, and confidential service. You will be matched with a therapist that suits you and your needs via a special algorithm. To register, go to www.talkspace.com/gwu and input your GW email address. [Medical Residents should **NOT** use their MFA email address] After you are registered and matched with your therapist, you can schedule an *optional* 10-minute live video introduction session. Students who experience difficulty registering should contact partners-support@talkspace.com and cc Alex Velto (alex.velto@gwu.edu).

Please note that after **a year** of using the platform, you will need to revalidate your account. Go to the 'Check my coverage' feature found in your Talkspace app settings - and follow the prompts provided. If you prefer to remain connected to your current therapist, you will have to reach out to partners-support@talkspace.com to validate instead.

Student Health Center: The [Student Health Center](#) (formally CHC) is open and operating to assist students seeking medical, psychiatric, counseling, and psychological services. Physicians and counselors provide in-person treatment in the office, and virtual appointments are offered during regular business hours. Call 202-994-5300 to schedule an appointment.

Hours:

Monday – Friday: 8:30 am – 5:00 pm (ET); extended hours until 7pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays

Saturday: 12:00 pm-4:00 pm

Sunday: 12:00 pm-4:00 pm on the Mount Vernon Campus

Resiliency and Well-Being Center: OSS frequently collaborates with the GW RW&C on matters related to individual and group well-being. The R&W Center takes an evidence-based, whole-person [approach](#) in the health and wellness (well-being) services it provides to the GW medical enterprise—SMHS, GW MFA, and the GW Hospital. The R&W Center provides individual, departmental, and institutional-level [services](#).

Additional Resiliency and Well-Being Center workshop information in February can be found [here](#).

Student & Community Life

Student Wellness Committee:

"The Wellness Committee is a group of elected students from all programs within the GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences with a passion for promoting wellness in our community. We believe that as students who are training to become healthcare providers, it is critical that we learn to care for ourselves by nurturing our own personal health and wellness, as we strive to care for others. This committee seeks to promote wellness by organizing events and initiatives that enhance student wellbeing and strengthen relationships within our programs. We consider many dimensions of wellness and work with the Office for Student Support (OSS) to ensure accessibility to resources and safe spaces, as well as provide events like movie nights, picnics, cookie decorating, therapy dogs, and other initiatives to promote connectivity and healthy habits." - *Student Wellness Committee Leadership*

For information on how to join the Student Wellness Committee, or to send suggestions/ideas for wellness events, please send them [an email](#) or follow them on Instagram at [@bewellgw](#).

Student Organizations: Interested in joining one of the 80+ student organizations SMHS has to offer? You can find a full list of them [here](#), updated every semester.

Want to start your own organization? The Medical Center Student Council provides guidance on the process on [their website](#), with enrollment periods open twice a year.

Office of Student Support Website

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