

# THE HIPPOCAMPUS

THE SMHS OFFICE OF STUDENT SUPPORT NEWSLETTER



## March 2024 Newsletter

Office of Student Support Website



*"March is the Month of Expectation / The things we do not know / The Persons of prognostication / Are coming now" - Emily Dickinson*

Welcome to March! With Spring Breaks upcoming for everyone, we hope that you will be able to take some time to reset and recharge for the rest of the year. If you find your energy and focus dropping off as the semester hits its midway point, please reach out to us to set up a time to discuss how to keep up the strong work all the way through the end of the semester!

To schedule a virtual or in-person meeting, contact our office at [SMHSstudents@gwu.edu](mailto:SMHSstudents@gwu.edu).

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

- New for March
  - THIS WEEK: Student Wellness Committee Social 5k Run/Jog
  - Resiliency & Well-being Acupuncture/Acupressure Workshop
  - Ask an Expert: Sleep - Responses

- Women's History Month at GW
  - Academic Support Spotlight - Mary Whiton Calkins
  - SWC Cookie Decorating Event in Pictures
  - Talkspace Spotlight - March
  - March Events Around DC
  - OSS Pillars
    - Academic Support
    - Mental Health Support
    - Student & Community Life Support
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## **New for March**

**Student Wellness Committee Social 5K Run/Jog**

SMHS Student Wellness Committee presents

# GW SMHS Social 5K

Join classmates for an EASY run  
around the monuments

5:30 pm Thursday, March 7th

Meet in Ross Courtyard

After the run, enjoy apps from  
Duke's Grocery on us!



In conjunction with OSS

Questions?

email: [bewellgw@gmail.com](mailto:bewellgw@gmail.com)

## THIS WEEK!

The Student Wellness Committee, in conjunction with OSS, is organizing a casual 5k run/jog on Thursday, March 7th. Students will meet in the Ross Hall Courtyard at 5:30pm, and will end at Duke's Grocery around 6:15pm. Students are then encouraged to stay and socialize afterwards! We'd ask if anyone plans on staying to socialize at Duke's Grocery, please fill out [this quick rsvp](#) so we get an idea of how many tables to reserve!

## Resiliency & Well-being Acupuncture/Acupressure Workshop





**March 20th, 12-1pm EST, Online**

Join Ashley Drapeau MPAS, MAC, PA-C, L.Ac, of the Resiliency & Well-being Center, for a transformative and rejuvenating workshop on the ancient healing practices of acupuncture and acupressure. Discover the power of these holistic modalities to promote relaxation, reduce pain, and enhance overall well-being. Learn hands-on techniques from an experienced practitioner and gain valuable insights into the principles of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Whether you are looking to improve your own health or expand your knowledge of natural healing remedies, this workshop is perfect for anyone interested in a more balanced and harmonious life.

The link to the session can be found here: <https://gwu-edu.zoom.us/j/97557478464>

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**Ask an Expert: Sleep - Responses**





**You asked, we answered!** Our partners in the Resiliency & Well-being Center helped address anonymous questions about sleep, which you can find below. Note: Not all questions were able to be answered with the amount of information provided.

**1. If you're naturally a night owl, how do you change your circadian rhythm so that you're sleeping early, waking up, and focused in school?** Routine is the key to improving your circadian rhythm. Your brain will adjust if you go to bed and wake up at the same time. This needs to stay consistent even on the weekends. At first, this may be difficult and does take time. Take the gradual approach of moving your bedtime up an hour or even 30 minutes every night. Some tips: exercise helps with melatonin production, avoid alcohol and caffeine in the evening, limit screen time, and avoid naps.

**2. Why do some people get a sudden burst of energy before bedtime?** Some may get a sudden burst of energy before bedtime for several reasons. This could be due to late caffeine or alcohol intake. If that does not apply, it may be due to cortisol, a stress hormone, that is released during an autonomic response. There could be a medical reason that cortisol is increased at night or it could be due to a life stressor.

**3. Tips on falling asleep? Also on establishing a healthy sleep amount given our variable schedule in medicine?** Developing a routine is paramount to good quality sleep. This routine may include yoga nidra, meditation, breath work, or taking a relaxing bath. Avoiding screen time before bed especially in the bedroom is important.

**4. Sleeping 6-7 hours straight vs 4-5 hours and a 1 hour nap in the day: pros and cons?** Having a sleep schedule of reduced sleep of 6-7 hours and a one hour nap will have negative consequences to your circadian rhythm. These are timely to improve. Taking a nap of 20 minutes or less is okay. Any more and it will impact your overall sleep at night.

**5. How to make the most of sleeping during the days, when on night shifts?** Night shift is very difficult to manage as there are certain cues that help one fall asleep. Recreating these during the day is tough but not insurmountable. For example, keeping the room very dark may include a sleep mask and black out curtains. Also, meditating or breath work before falling asleep can be helpful. Lastly, using ear plugs to block out daytime noise and limiting caffeine a few hours before the end of your shift. If no improvement, there are medical interventions that could be useful.

**6. What is the role of melatonin in sleep cycle, and will it help for jet lagged/ switch from days to nights and nights to days shift?** Melatonin is a hormone in your body that plays a role in sleep. Your body produces more at night than during the day. This natural production reduces with age. Taking melatonin as a supplement can be helpful for shift work sleep disorder. See link for more information on possible side effects and evidence to support:  
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/drugs-supplements-melatonin/art-20363071>

**7. How long does the average med student sleep, year-by-year?** Some sources say about 6-7 hours but reduced during certain clinical rotations. See link for more information: <https://www.statpearls.com/ExamPrep/medical-student-resources/what-is-the-importance-of-sleep-and-dedicated-rest-for-students-and->

residents#:~:text=The%20average%20medical%20student%20sleep,further%20decreased%2C%20and%20frequently%20disrupted.

**8. About how many hours of sleep is 1 full cycle including REM? Essentially, what is the minimum amount of sleep to have some baseline functioning - 1 hour, 90 minutes, 2 hours?** In a typical night, a person goes through 4-6 sleep cycles. Last about 90 minutes each but this varies depending on the stage. See link for more information about each individual stage: <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/stages-of-sleep>

**9. I have been soundly sleeping 7-8 hours a night but I still feel tired and burned out when I wake up, and have to rely on caffeine to find motivation and energy throughout the day. Should I be concerned about an underlying issue?** Yes, if you are getting 7-8 hours of sleep per night and still not feeling energized during the day, it may be time to seek medical care. This could be due to a medical condition.

**10. Does having ADHD affect sleep quality? If so, what are some effective ways of mitigating that?** ADHD can impact sleep via impaired arousal, alertness, and regulation circuits in the brain. Some research has suggested it can be related to a later onset of melatonin production. Often times, stimulants if taken too late in the day can interfere with sleep.

**11. My greatest difficulty is staying asleep. I often wake up in the middle of the night and find it difficult to fall back asleep, often taking about an hour or so before I'm able to get back to sleep. What methods have shown to be effective in those circumstances?** If you awaken in the middle of the night, it is best to get out of bed and leave that room. You can engage in another activity for a period of time and then try and fall back asleep.

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## Women's History Month at GW



Check out these wider GW events - both online and in person - as a part of Women's History Month!

[Ongoing through July 1 Anne Lindberg: What Color Is Divine Light?](#)

The George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum  
701 21st St., NW  
Free

[March 1 to 10 at 6 p.m. Dajana Peric: Nine Stitches](#)

Smith Hall of Art, Gallery 102  
801 22nd St., NW  
Free

[March 8 at noon Woman, Life, Freedom: International Women's Day Event featuring Azar Nafisi](#)

Elliott School, Room 602  
1957 E St., NW  
[Registration requested](#)

[March 8 at 7 p.m. What's Next? The Future of Reproductive Justice and Church and State Separation](#)

Online  
[Registration required](#)

## Academic Support Spotlight - Mary Whiton Calkins



This Women's History Month, OSS wants to recognize the work of Mary Whiton Calkins, the first female president of the American Psychological Association. Her early work focused on memory, with her ideas and theories about paired associate learning and the effects of primacy and recency predating modern memory research by about 70 years. She also was never awarded her PhD, due largely due to structural sexism. Despite this, some of Calkin's early observations included:

**Recency.** Calkins was aware that recency could affect how people remembered her stimuli, so she was careful to arrange test sequences so that the last pair that was presented in a list was not the first to be tested, "so that no after-image of the numeral might remain". Murdock's (1962) paper is titled "The Serial Position Effect of Free Recall" so it makes sense that this is what is most commonly cited, but Calkins was describing these phenomena back in 1896.

**Modality Effects.** Calkins conducted two sets of experiments, one set using visual presentation, the other using auditory presentations. She noted that both sets were similar, except that the recency effects were stronger in the auditory presentations.

**Negative Recency Effect.** The recency effect, as described above, goes away when there is a delay. Your memory for those items quickly fades and you aren't able to apply the same processes, or at least not to the same degree, as you were with the other items on the list. "This decrease is evidently the result of fatigue; the twelfth pair is not observed with the same attention as the earlier ones".

**Primacy Effects.** Calkins stated in 1896, that the subject "may not only accentuate the first presentation but recur to it while learning the rest of the series". Rundus (1971) and Glanzer (1972) concluded some 80 years later that the primacy effect occurs because we tend to rehearse the first item as we are going through the list (again these are the citations most commonly given in textbooks). She was also possibly the first person to use the term *primacy* when talking about recall experiments.

For a more information on Mary Whiton Calkins, visit the [Learning Scientists' Blog](#)

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## SWC Cookie Decorating Event in Pictures

Check out the highlights from the last Student Wellness Committee event - make sure you don't miss the next one!









## Talkspace Spotlight - March

This Women's History Month, we can celebrate that conversations around women's mental health are more open, empathetic, and informed than ever before — in part thanks to trailblazing stars like Selena Gomez and Naomi Osaka, and many regular women who have been vocal about their experience with mental health conditions. By speaking up, we both remove stigma and show that these challenges can co-exist with success.

This March, learn more about the mental health conditions that impact women. Here are some insights from Talkspace experts:

[Women's Mental Health Facts & Resources](#)

[Depression in Women: Signs, Causes, & Treatment](#)

[Anxiety Symptoms in Women: A Quick Guide](#)

## March Events Around DC

- **Men's and Women's Basketball Championships:** Ready for March Madness to begin? Washington DC plays host to the [ACC Men's \(March 8th-12\)](#), [CAA Men's \(March 8th-12th\)](#), and [CAA Women's \(March 13th-17th\)](#) 2024 Championship. Take in

all the games, and see who will clinch their spot in the big dance!

- **Peak Cherry Blossom Bloom:** This year, peak bloom is expected to be between [March 23rd and March 26th](#). Make sure you get outside and take in the sights!

- ***Fighters for Freedom: William H. Johnson Picturing Justice*:** The Smithsonian American Art Museum proudly displays this series to honor Black activists, scientists, teachers, performers and international heads of state working to bring peace to the world. Johnson celebrated these figures – some very famous, others unsung – while acknowledging the racism, violence and oppression each one fought against. Exhibit available until September 8th.

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## 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.

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### 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](http://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](mailto:partners-support@talkspace.com) and cc Alex Velto ([alex.velto@gwu.edu](mailto: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](mailto: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 March can be found [here](#).

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## 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](#).

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**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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