

OUR TRAIL TO WELLNESS

For the Students and Employees of Lakehead University



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Welcome Message

Welcome to the 5th edition of [Our Trail to Wellness](#), Lakehead University's wellness newsletter! As we continue our journey towards creating a healthier and more supportive environment for everyone, this edition focuses on Emotional Wellness.

Emotional wellness involves recognizing, understanding, and managing our emotions with kindness and compassion. It involves everything from impulse control and self-esteem to the ability to express feelings and trust in ourselves and others. In this newsletter, you'll find valuable stories and tools to help you understand your emotional health and build resilience.

At Lakehead University, we are committed to providing our community with the support needed to thrive emotionally. Whether you are a student or an employee, you will find relevant and practical information to help you navigate life's challenges. Our [Wellness Strategy](#) aims to enhance mental health literacy and promote practices that contribute to emotional well-being.

Remember, wellness is a lifelong process - it's about making choices that lead to a more balanced and fulfilling life, and everyone's path to wellness is unique. We invite you to explore the various resources available, engage in activities that bring you joy, and practice self-compassion daily.

Thank you for being a part of our Lakehead community. Together, we can build a culture of wellness and support each other on our journey toward emotional health.

Warm regards,

Andrea Tarsitano
Vice-Provost Students and Registrar, Lakehead University

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 health and well-being.

To this end, Lakehead University's Wellness Strategy: [Our Trail to Wellness \(2020-2025\)](#) recognizes and considers nine (9) main dimensions of wellness as contributing factors to our overall health and well-being.

lakeheadu.ca/trailtowellness



Wellness Dimension: Emotional Wellness

Emotional Wellness: To recognize and process your emotions with kindness and compassion, while also being able to cope with life challenges and adapt to change.

Emotional Wellness includes, but is not limited to:

- Drive and determination (motivation)
- Impulse control
- Self-esteem, self-acceptance, and self-compassion
- Self-confidence and trust in oneself and others
- Ability to understand, accept, and manage one's feelings
- Ability to express feelings with others
- Being optimistic about outcomes
- Ability to recognize emotions in others
- Incorporating humor, play, and fun into life.



9 Dimensions of Wellness



- Emotional
- Social
- Intellectual
- Cultural
- Physical
- Financial
- Spiritual
- Occupational
- Environmental

[Our Trail to Wellness](#) is built on the foundation of the 9 Dimensions of Wellness. This particular Issue features:

Emotional Wellness



5 Ways to Enhance Emotional Wellness

Emotional self-care is crucial for maintaining mental well-being and resilience. Here are five tips to help you enhance your emotional health:

Practice Mindfulness

Spend time each day being present and aware of your thoughts and feelings without judgment. Techniques like deep breathing, meditation, or simply observing your surroundings can help reduce stress.



Set Boundaries

Say no to activities or commitments that drain your energy or cause stress. Protect your emotional health by setting limits in your personal and professional life.



Express Yourself

Find healthy ways to express your emotions, such as journaling, talking to a friend or therapist, engaging in creative activities, or joining support groups. Releasing emotions constructively helps reduce stress and anxiety.



Prioritize Self-Compassion

Be kind to yourself, especially during tough times. Treat yourself with the same care and empathy you would offer a friend. Acknowledge your strengths and forgive your mistakes.



Participate in Cultural and Community Events

Join local cultural and community activities that resonate with your heritage or interests. This might include attending cultural festivals, community gatherings, or participating in traditional arts and crafts.



Remember, emotional self-care is an ongoing process. It's important to prioritize your needs and make self-care a regular part of your routine. By taking proactive steps to nurture your emotional health, you can build resilience and better cope with life's challenges.



While it is important to recognize that ecological and social factors impact emotional health, there are also many insights on the ways we as individuals and societies can mitigate these factors and build emotional wellness. In their study with First Nations respondents, Dr. Chris Mushquash and colleagues found that people who reported higher levels of social support and cultural strengths also reported higher levels of emotional health ([Tanner, et al., 2022](#)). Dr. Dwight Mazmanian and his colleagues have found that the presence of emotional regulation skills (the ability to understand and express emotions) in students reduced negative repetitive thinking and emotional distress ([Constantin, et al., 2019](#)).

Leveraging technology to build emotion regulation skills, Dr. Aislin Mushquash and colleagues found that use of a smartphone app was associated with improved emotion regulation in students transitioning to university, and that this effect was greatest in those who reported more adverse childhood experiences ([MacIsaac, et al., 2021](#)). Finally, Dr. Amanda Maranzan and her students have argued that training in self-care, including behaviours that promote emotional well-being, should be included in the curriculum for professional psychology programs ([Maranzan, et al., 2018](#)).



Thus, being able to recognize one’s own emotions, approach them with compassion, and draw upon cultural and social supports to regulate how these emotions influence our thoughts and behaviour are fundamental skills. Challenges that confront us in our everyday lives, changes in our circumstances, and global threats to human and ecological safety all evoke emotions that can be felt as hurtful. By supporting each other to continually practice and build emotion regulation skills, and by building them into curriculum and support programs across the institution we can take significant steps in building a culture of wellness at Lakehead University.



Dr. Mirella Stroink
Dean, Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences



References:

Constantin, et al., 2019	Negative Repetitive Thoughts Clarify the Link between Trait Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Distress
Galway & Beery, 2022	Exploring Climate Emotions in Canada’s Provincial North
MacIsaac, et al., 2021	Adverse Childhood Experiences and Building Resilience With the JoyPop App: Evaluation Study
Maranzan, et al., 2018	Self-care and the Canadian Code of Ethics: Implications for Training in Professional Psychology
Tanner, et al., 2022	Understanding Social Determinants of First Nations Health Using a Four-Domain Model of Health and Wellness Based on the Medicine Wheel: Findings from a Community Survey in One First Nation

Peer Support: Connecting with Others

Peer support relies on people using their own personal experiences to help each other and allows you to connect with like-minded individuals. It provides a sense of connection that is essential for our mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing. Beyond social connection, the benefits of peer support are wide-ranging and well-evidenced.

TalkLife Workplace (for Employees)

TalkLife Workplace is an anonymous online 24/7 mental health peer support network offering instant, ongoing global support at any time of the day or night available to all employees of Lakehead University. TalkLife Workplace is a de-identified community where employees share anonymously. Employees can sign up using their Lakehead University email address.

In addition to connecting with peers, TalkLife Workplace has trained volunteers and professionals available when needed. The combination of anonymity, 24/7 peer support, and access to trained professionals create a safe and welcoming environment which ultimately supports positive health.

You will also have access to:

- Journaling and Mood Tracking
- Wellbeing Library
- Clinical Self-directed Modules

TalkLife Workplace is accessed on a web platform via mobile, tablet, or desktop.

Download the TalkLife Workplace app via [Google Play](#) or the [App Store](#).

Talk Campus (for Students)

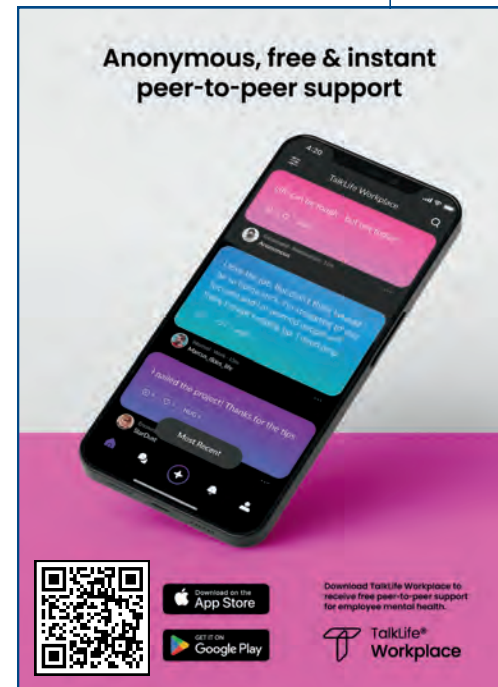
Talk Campus is a free to download app where you can talk with other students from around the world if you're struggling and worried about your mental health. Your Lakehead University email address will give you free access, just download TalkCampus from the app stores.

TalkCampus is anonymous and your privacy is strictly maintained. Lakehead won't know that you're using it, and you also won't be able to see where other students are from.

TalkCampus is based around peer support; you can use it if you need some help yourself or you can go on there and listen and support others.

The platform is safe and moderated and is designed as a place where you can just be yourself and talk about how you're really feeling.

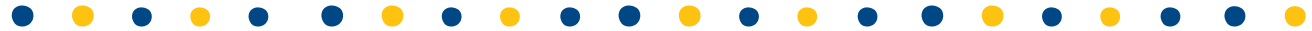
Student life can be tough and we know sometimes you might not want to talk to us about how you're feeling. TalkCampus isn't a replacement for counselling or professional support however it is a great place to start talking and to make sure that however you're feeling right now you're not alone.



Balancing Act: Nurturing Emotional Wellness in Graduate School



Madeline Fabiano, MSc. Candidate School of Kinesiology



While May and June marks the end of the school year for many students, I, a first-year graduate student, was preparing for the upcoming spring/summer semesters. Having recently graduated from Lakehead's Honours Bachelor of Kinesiology program, I was no stranger to the importance of balancing self-care and academic responsibilities. However, in my initial week as a graduate student, I swiftly recognized the different work ethic and self-discipline required to excel in this degree. As the time commitment to my studies increased, I began to recognize a decline in my overall wellness, specifically emotionally.

Emotional wellness has been regarded as one's ability to overcome life's hurdles while identifying and processing their emotions with self-compassion. Despite the importance of this element, I continuously found myself prioritizing other aspects of my well-being, such as my education and occupation. Upon recognizing the lack of attention I paid to this element of wellness, I began to take charge of my emotional well-being. This was due to my previous knowledge of the dimensions of wellness, which highlighted the ripple effect that can result from neglecting one or more aspects of an individual's wellness.

The first step in improving my emotional wellness was identifying the lack of time I set aside for myself. As a graduate student, I have often noticed the persistent feeling of facing an endless array of tasks, assignments to grade, or impending deadlines. To overcome this, I began allocating specific working hours each day as I found it challenging to step away from the work/school mindset when the environment remained unchanged. By establishing a daily routine, I was able to recognize the time I dedicate to my studies each day, thereby aiding in cultivating self-compassion. As a result, this fostered an increased sense of motivation and dedication to my studies as I designated a specific time to 'put the books down' each day to avoid burnout.

By dedicating time to focus on myself, I acquired more opportunities to connect with others. Not only was I able to meet new students in my program, but I formed close relationships that have played integral roles in my success thus far. This fostered conversations with other students who were facing similar challenges regarding the various hardships experienced in graduate school. Although stress is inevitable while in school, I found comfort in knowing that those around me were in similar situations, which reassured me that I was not alone. I also found support in speaking with my supervisor and other faculty members, who confirmed that I was on the right track and that my feelings were valid. These collective experiences contributed to a greater sense of self-acceptance and enhanced my ability to accept and articulate my emotions.

Through engaging and expressing my emotions with others, I developed a heightened ability to recognize the emotions of those around me. This stemmed from the newfound emotional self-awareness I developed, which enhanced my ability to understand and interpret the emotions of others. When warranted, this improved my capacity to provide assistance and advice to those around me, as I was better equipped to identify their emotions. I achieved this by focusing on nonverbal and verbal cues that have been used to convey emotions, such as body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, and word choices. Additionally, I used elements of motivational interviewing to better understand the emotions of others by using open-ended questions, affirmations, and active listening to ensure that others felt valued and understood. As a result, I was better equipped to recognize the emotions of others, which fostered a deeper sense of empathy.

While there are numerous components that contribute to nurturing emotional wellness, I found success in allocating time for myself. This practice not only improved my motivation to continue my studies, but my capacity to express my own emotions and detect those of others. Considering the multifaceted nature of wellness, I plan to continue improving my emotional wellness by heightening my trust in others and staying optimistic as I enter the spring/summer semesters.



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Madeline Fabiano, M.Sc. Candidate
School of Kinesiology, Lakehead University

A banner for Lakehead University Student Affairs. It features the university logo and the text "Looking for help? Not sure where to go? IT'S OKAY. WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU SUCCEED!". There are two speech bubbles: one yellow saying "got questions?" and one white saying "we've got answers.". On the right, there is a close-up photo of a woman with red glasses looking to the side.

Upcoming Events

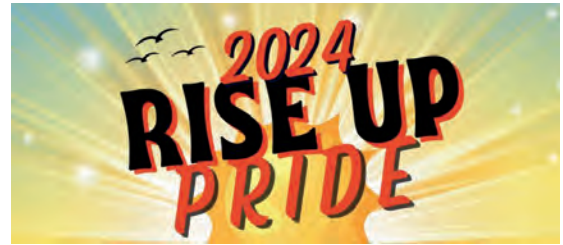
Event calendars to check out:

- [The City of Thunder Bay Events](#)
 The City of Thunder Bay hosts many great events throughout the year. You can also explore our [Online Community Events Calendar](#) to see what's coming up. We invite you to [subscribe](#) to the events calendar, to be notified when there are events that interest you.
- [The City of Orillia Events](#)
 From the renowned Mariposa Folk Festival to heritage classics like The Orillia Scottish Festival, events are one of the ways in which Orillia truly shines. Check out what's coming up next in the Sunshine City by exploring our [Calendar of Events](#).
- [Campus Connection](#)
 Subscribe to Campus Connection and be the first to hear about the latest news and events at Lakehead University. Students and employees are all welcome to partake in the various events happening on and around campus. It's a great opportunity to meet new peers and colleagues while learning more about our amazing Lakehead community.
- [Lakehead University's Event Calendar](#)
 View the Lakehead University master calendar of events to see what's happening on campus monthly. Details can be broken down by campus and by category. Also make sure to check out:

lakeheadu.ca/shw-events

lakeheadu.ca/hr-events

 June marks Pride Month! 



At [Lakehead](#), we recognize the importance of fostering a culture of inclusivity, respect, and support for all members of our diverse 2SLGBTQQA+ community.

Check out the following event calendars for a listing of Pride 2024 events near you:



[Thunder Bay Pride Events](#)

[Orillia Pride Events](#)

[Barrie Pride March](#)

Stop by the **Pride Block Party** on the Thunder Bay Campus on **June 27** hosted by [Pride Central](#) and [LUSU!](#)



In January 2024, the Alumni Association launched [The Resiliency Project](#), extending a warm welcome to all students and graduates! This platform serves as a dedicated safe space for mental health discussions, fostering connections, and actively participating in events.

Find out more at www.lakeheadu.ca/alumni



Available Resources: To Enhance Our Emotional Wellness

Specific Tools Available for Students

Student Health and Wellness lakeheadu.ca/shw



Student Health and Wellness provides a range of health services, counselling options, and wellness programs so that you can get the most out of your Lakehead Experience.

Often, students mention that a helpful way of dealing with problematic situations and feelings is to start by talking them through with a qualified mental health professional.

Counselling at Student Health and Wellness is a free, short-term, client-centred, non-judgemental service. Licensed/registered, professionally trained counsellors provide one-to-one counselling to students and help them address their needs.

Learn more about [mental health supports](#) at Lakehead, including counselling services and how to check in with your mental health.

Check in with your
mental health

WellU

WellU is an opportunity to share up-to-date health and wellness information and advice that is geared specifically to Lakehead students and the student life cycle.



Submissions will come from Student Health and Wellness health professionals and counsellors, Peer Wellness Educators and Lakehead students.



Have you **checked in** lately?

lakeheadu.ca/wellukey



Available Resources: To Enhance Our Emotional Wellness

Resources for Lakehead University Employees

GSC Change4Life

Human Resources
lakeheadu.ca/hr



Employee and Family Assistance Program

Whether you have questions about handling stress at work and home, parenting and child care, managing money, or health issues, your [Employee and Family Assistance Program \(EFAP\)](#) provides free, confidential, short-term counselling and referrals for employees and their dependants.

Thunder Bay
807-623-7677 or
1-888-423-5862

Orillia
1-844-671-3327

Check out Change4Life®
Get Healthy. Get Rewarded.
+ win great prizes!

Monthly and quarterly bonus draws all year!

Complete your health risk assessment
Complete your HRA and receive a personalized health report card and action plan based on your profile. If you're wondering where to start on Change4Life, there's no better place than the HRA.

Earn points and bid on monthly rewards

- Complete a Learn & Earn module.
- Try the Mindfulness program.
- Add a wearable and track your steps.
- Set a goal!

Keep coming back for more ways to win
Earn more chances to win prizes in the new monthly and quarterly bonus draws, just by staying active on Change4Life.



Lakehead University Social Committee

Upcoming activities for faculty and staff will be promoted through The Bulletin and Campus Connections. Stay tuned for the next fun-filled gathering with colleagues, peers, and friends. For future activity suggestions, feedback, volunteer opportunities, or questions, please reach out to [Jonathon Racine](#) at wellnesscoordinator@lakeheadu.ca



Future Newsletters

If you are passionate about wellness and have insights to share, we invite you to contribute to our future newsletters!

Upcoming topics include:

- Financial Wellness
- Occupational Wellness
- Social Wellness

For inquiries or submissions, please contact:

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Subscribe to our Newsletter

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



“Do not judge me by my success, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again.”

-- Nelson Mandela