



Words of Wellness

The Wellness Center Monthly Newsletter

Managing Your Academic Stress

by Dr. Shanté Bassett & Dr. Jane Kim, Counselors, The Wellness Center

In the last two years in light of the pandemic, the ways in which we live and learn has changed drastically. Academic changes like remote learning, were unexpected yet necessary shifts that many, students and staff alike, struggled with. Since these changes have become long term, students are now feeling their long-term effects, and the consequences are not equally experienced across races.

While remote access to classrooms has been a helpful way to keep students connected and engaged in learning, it does not benefit all equally. Barriers like limited access to reliable internet, personal computers, and lack of privacy have interfered with students' ability to engage in the learning process. By and large, these barriers have run along racial divides, where students of color are more likely to be enrolled in online learning and less likely to be given the option to engage in in-person learning. As a result, students of color experience the adverse effects of remote learning at a higher rate. These negative effects include:

- Difficulty focusing on schoolwork due to crowded surroundings at home
- Little or no access to academic supports previously received at school
- Worsening mental health outcomes



For these reasons and more, college students are experiencing a greater level of stress; what you are experiencing is real and you are not alone! School can be stressful; keeping track of classes, learning new information, studying, remembering assignments, and passing exams can overload the mind. This type of stress is known as academic stress, or “the mind and body’s response to academic-related demands that exceed adaptive capabilities of students.” Although the stress is great, you can make it through. Why? It’s called resilience. Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity or significant sources of stress.

Here are some ways you can tap into your resilience and manage your stress:

- **Self-Care:** Did you know that sleep is when your brain moves

information from short-term to long-term memory? Sleep is essential to learning!

- **Organization:** Don’t expect your brain to do all of the work, make sure to write down assignments and deadlines in a journal, planner, or calendar. Whether you use your phone or good old paper and pencil, write it down!
- **Awareness:** Be mindful of what you are experiencing and how your mind/body are responding. With heightened awareness, you’re better able to address your stress.
- **Communication:** If you are overwhelmed or need more time on an assignment, communication is key. Reach out to your professor early to let them know what’s going on.
- **Using Resources:** Reach out to your supports here at LaGuardia!
 1. The Wellness Center is here to help you with anxiety, stress management, and more.
 2. Academic advisement can help you make sure you’re on the right track towards your graduation goals.
 3. The Writing Center is available for tutoring and writing support.

References

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7026e2.htm>

https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7011a1.htm?s_cid=mm7011a1_w

Book Recommendations

Celebrate Black Heritage Month with these powerful book recommendations. The following books are available in the Library for loan:



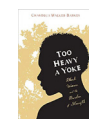
[Invisible Man Got the Whole World Watching by Mychal Denzel Smith](#)



[Heavy: An American Memoir by Kiese Laymon](#)



[I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou](#)



[Too Heavy A Yoke: Black Women And The Burden Of Strength by Chanequa Walker-barnes](#)

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: Syria Brown, M.A, MHC-LP



In celebration of Black Heritage Month, with this month's theme focusing on the importance of Black Health and Wellness, Counselor Syria Brown shed some light about Black mental health and well-being, as well as being a Woman of Color in the mental health field.

Can you give us one word that in your mind characterizes Black History Month? "Black History is World History. It is celebrated every day that members of the Black Diaspora achieve their goals/dreams. In the past, many

Black people were denied health services due to the color of their skin and therefore had to rely on other means of treatment."

As a counselor and from your experience, what do you think are some of the barriers that prevent members of the Black community from seeking out mental health treatment?

"Presently, in my experience as a counselor, members of the Black community have internalized the distrust built over time of medical practitioners due to generational trauma and years of being told to "keep it in the family/household" due to fear of judgment; putting the needs of the many over the individual despite the negative impacts this could lead to."

What are your thoughts on mental health stigma in the Black community, and how can we reduce the stigma to promote care- and service-seeking?

"To be in the 21st century, where we can speak up and receive care is an amazing feat enabling an opportunity to break generation trauma and re-write the narrative for the betterment of ourselves as individuals and as a community. I hope that during this month while reflecting on the strengths and achievements of the Black Community that students will also find the courage to seek help afforded to us by the sacrifices of our ancestors and maintained by the will power of this generation. For those new to mental health/wellness, it may seem intimidating, but it is a practice that has been evolving over many years. We can create an inclusive, caring, and supportive environment for all, in order to protect the interests of those who once were ignored, mistreated and denied. Through its use, those complex feelings and concerns can be explored, challenged and overcome."

What advice would you give to our students who may be reluctant to seek help?

"Some advice that I would give to our students who may be reluctant to seek help is to think about their reasons for wanting to get help and how things can change with that additional support. Also, to keep in mind that therapy is a process and by building a trusting relationship with a counselor/therapist takes time."

How do you make time for your own wellness and self-care?

"I make time for my own self care by crafting like painting, knitting, etc. It is a process of self-expression and allows me to be creative in an organic and honest way."

Syria Brown is a Mental Health Counselor who received her bachelor's degree in psychology and Master of the Arts in Mental Health Counseling from CUNY Brooklyn College in New York City. While acquiring her master's, she interned at LaGuardia Community College before being hired as a Mental Health Counselor-LP. To the Wellness Center, she brings fresh eyes and insight to the experiences of the college population. She has worked in college settings with college aged people for 2 years. She is currently an ASSIST-Coach at LaGuardia Community College in the Neurodiversity Program and is interested in topics including neurodiversity, attachment styles and sociocultural factors that impact mental health and development. Ms. Brown is passionate about being a resource to the students and assisting them with achieving their authentic goals and aspirations for better mental health.

For the full list of the Wellness Center staff, please visit our [website](#).

For Students:

If you are new to the Wellness Center and would like to access counseling services, please complete our intake form by visiting [this form](#) or scanning the QR code on the right.

For Faculty and Staff:

Please contact the Center via email and briefly describe your concern or visit our webpage at [Helping Students in Distress](#) webpage.



Intake Form

African and African-American Pioneers in Psychology

Get to know some of the important African and African-American psychologists who have conducted critical research and contributed in the field of psychology.

[Read More](#)

Did you know...

The Wellness Center has a team of multilingual counselors that can offer counseling support in your native languages. We currently provide counseling services in the following languages: English, Hindi, Nepali, Spanish, Tibetan and Urdu.



LaGuardia's Wellness Center wants to hear from you!

Your feedback will help us better understand your mental health and wellness needs.

[Take Survey](#)

RESOURCES



In crisis? Text "CUNY" to 741741 to text confidentially with a trained Crisis Counselor for FREE, 24/7.



If you need to speak with someone immediately, please contact NYC WELL for services at: 1-888-NYC-WELL or 1-888- 692-9355 or text 65173.



In the event of an emergency, please call 911.