



Mental Health Matters

Algonquin College Pembroke Campus Counselling Services

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Sticking to New Years Resolutions

With the New Year ringing in did you set goals that you are now trying to keep? Or have you already abandoned them? If you want to set goals and stick with them these steps can help you with that. If you are trying to change a behavior it takes at least 21 days/attempts to help solidify that for yourself.

Starting with Simple goals that you are almost guaranteed to succeed in will help

you with your overall success. You can build on the first goal when achieved choose a new goal to accomplish.

Ensure that your goal is specific with details of exactly what you will accomplish, in what time frame, and the steps involved in reaching the final outcome.

Expect that things will get in your way, but try to plan for them. If your new goal is around healthier eating

when are you most likely to have challenges, plan them in advance so you don't fall into the old habit. It's also

important that you allow yourself to fail. If you slip up, don't let it derail your bigger plan. Forgive yourself and get back on track.

Focus on why you are trying to complete the goal. What are the benefits? To feel healthier? To get on the honor roll? To be able to keep up with your kids/classmates/partner? Visualize your success.

Try to quiet your inner voice of negativity. Telling yourself "I always fail" or "it's just so difficult" makes it harder to stay motivated. Perhaps remind yourself: "It's hard but I've done difficult things before and I can do this too."

If you need help getting through a habit or addictive behaviour maybe SMART Recovery is for you? Stop by room 200 on Wednesdays at 4pm



Beating the blues Written by Jasmine Cady Counsellor Woodroffe Campus

No matter how exciting it is to start college, many of the most independent people can find themselvesThe post-holiday blues! We've all been there. It's that melancholy feeling that often follows a vacation. For some students, returning to a regular routine after a holiday away from school can lead to feel-

ings of anxiety, loneliness, and sadness. Many struggle with lethargy or a lack of motivation as they readjust to school. There's an expectation that we will feel renewed and refreshed after a holiday, but unfortunately this is not always the case. Sometimes we fall into a funk. The Christmas holiday

is a much-needed vacation away from the demands of college life. After exams are over you definitely deserve a break. For many students, the holidays are a time to decompress – a time to nap and sleep in, indulge in sweets and treats, and catch up with family and friends. (continues pg. 2.)

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Upcoming Activities

- **WIND Activities** : See fb.me/WINDACOV for most up to date activities
- **Project Lighthouse Photo-booth** –Jan 25th in the Coomons
- **Bell Let's Talk Day Photo-booth and speaker**–Jan 31st in the Coomons
- **Project Lighthouse Mug and Valentine making**–Feb 12th in the Coomons
- **SMART Recovery** – Thursdays– 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. Rm 216

Beating the blues continued...

For others, the holidays are stressful and lead to disappointment after our expectations are not met. Either way, returning to school is often a challenge. Here are some tips for beating the post-holiday blues:

1. Take your Time

Give yourself some time to recover. Feeling a bit blue during the transition back to school is normal. Allow yourself to feel whatever it is you're feeling without trying to resist it.

2. Stay Active

Plan activities! January and February are formidable months. With the lack of light and the cold weather keeping us

indoors, it's easy to fall into a funk. Check out campus events and activities, go to concerts, plan weekly dinner parties with friends, and organize movie nights. Post a calendar on your fridge and mark it up with stuff to look forward to.

3. Keep Care

Make self-care a priority in your life. Figure out what this means for you and implement it as a regular routine the day you return to school. Need some ideas? Buy yourself some flowers, take a yoga or meditation class, start a journal, make some hot chocolate, take a nap, treat yourself to a nightly bubble bath.

4. Enjoy the Great Outdoors

Get outdoors! I know it's freezing and your toes feel like icicles but hear me out: We live in one of the most beautiful parts of the world. Get out there and take advantage of it! Strap on some ice skates and head to your local rink, check out winter festivals, or go hiking or snowshoeing.

5. Ask for Help

If you feel like the post-holiday blues is turning into depression or becoming unmanageable, reach out for support. Talk to a friend or family member, or contact Counselling Services on campus. 613-735-4700 x2804

Fentanyl, what is it and why do I need to be concerned?

Social media is a huge part of many peoples lives, with some studies saying that social media is more addictive than cigarettes. We are glued to our screens and the impacts of this is increasing at significant rates.

For someone with anxiety, social media can become a constant struggle comparing themselves to others and trying to perfect themselves to what seems to be the perfect everyone else shares. However, most of what is shared is only the positive of life and a skewed version of what is real.

Social media is a wonderful way to connect for those with social anxiety, however, isolating oneself from the world

and only communicating via electronic devices tends to lead people with social anxiety finding increased symptoms. Social media can be a huge challenge for those with depression, PTSD or other trauma as it can trigger a need to isolate themselves to avoid experiencing extreme stress. Or memes can give people misinformation or downplay mental health by making jokes out of mental health and mental illness.

It is suggested for those who are particularly affected to take regular breaks from social media. Whether it is a day a week, or turning off your accounts for a period of time and connecting with those around you, many benefit from

"On average we use social media for over 3 hours a day"

the space of taking some time away.



Suicide signs and prevention

Suicide is more widespread than you might think—it's the fourth leading cause of death worldwide. Here in Canada more than 3,500 people lose their lives to suicide each year. Although many people find it uncomfortable, it is important we talk about it. If you, or someone you know is considering suicide, get help from a counsellor, a doctor, or even a crisis line.

Some signs to watch for:

- Repeated expressions of hopelessness, worthlessness or desperation;
- Behaviour that is out of character—e.g., someone who is normally careful acts recklessly;
- Sleeplessness, social withdrawal, loss of appetite, loss of interest in activity;
- Giving away prized possessions to

friends and family; making a will, taking out insurance or other preparations for death;

- Making remarks related to death and dying or telling someone they intend to commit suicide, even in a joking manner; and/or
- Tension, anxiety, nervousness, impulsiveness.

Crisis Line—1-866-996-0991

Study Skills: Be Organized

The following are some ideas that help many, choose what works best for you.

Use an academic planner: Take your planner to every class, record each assignment under the date it's given, and write down the date each assignment is due. When an assignment is completed check it off. Use your planner to also keep track of test dates, activities and appointments.

Break down assignments: Large assignments are more manageable if you break them down into smaller parts. For example, if a research paper is assigned on Jan 8 and it's due Jan 21, you could give yourself these smaller assignments (Jan 9—do Research, Jan

11—do outline, Jan 15—write first draft, Jan 17—revise and rewrite.

Use three-ring notebooks for class: Three-ring notebooks work well because handouts can easily be inserted, and if you do miss a class, you can copy someone else's notes and insert them where they belong.

Organize and save computer work: Make sure you save your work often and have back up copies of important files.

Keep returned papers, quizzes, tests: Returned tests and assignments can help with studying for future tests and can be handy if there is a question about your grade.

Have phone numbers for classmates: Make sure you have a number for at least one person in your class in case you miss a class or have a question about an assignment.

Maintain a neat and organized study area: Having an area with everything you need in one spot leads to less distractions. You can leave your books/bag ready for the next day so you don't forget it as well.



Substance Use Harm Reduction Tips: Pick One... Not too much, not too often

Pick One:

Things that go together: peanut butter and jelly, milk and cookies, hipsters and beards.

Things that don't go together: alcohol and ANY OTHER drug, including caffeine.

Mixing alcohol with any other drug is the highest risk combo for unpredictable physical reactions and can lead to using more than you planned, which can have its own problems (vomit much?). Mixing tobacco with marijuana can make it harder to cut down or stop because the nicotine in the tobacco is highly addictive (like heroin kind of addictive).

For best results, stick with *one substance* at a time.

Not too much, not too often:

Consuming less alcohol and using less of a drug reduces the chances of you trending on social media for all the wrong reasons. This could mean choosing to drink light beer, or alternating drinks with water or pop.

Another alternative is to buy smaller quantities so you use less. This prevents you from using more just because it's there.

Everybody needs a vacation. Try going several days without indulging, or take a Friday or Saturday off from drinking

Everyone has issues and needs support at one time or another. Whether you are concerned about your use of substances or someone you care about, there is information and support available to you on and off campus.

or using drugs.

Think everyone binge drinks at college? Think again! 53% of Ontario college students drink 4 or less drinks in one sitting.

Wellness in Nature Days (WIND) — What are we doing ?

Did you know that just 10 minutes walking out in nature starts to promote an improved mood? Walking is also good for your brain as it aids in improving memory, having better cognitive control and academic performance - all very useful things for students.

We have a team of staff and students that will be leading walks and other outdoor activities that are aimed at

promoting wellness for students especially as we go into our exam time.

If you have an activity that you would like to see happening, please let us know at <https://www.facebook.com/moodwalkspembroke/>

Join us online to see when all our latest walks/activities are happening!



Counselling Services Pembroke

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We are here to support you. The College offers free and confidential counselling to students who are experiencing distress or simply need to talk to someone.

Issues that are commonly addressed in counselling include: adjusting to college life, anxiety, grief, homesickness, guilt, suicidal thoughts, sexual concerns, relationship issues, and career choices. A number of support groups on topics such as single parenting and stress management will also be running throughout the year. A variety of resources are available on time management, test anxiety, etc.

Volunteer Opportunities

If you would like to be involved in helping with student mental health and getting people talking, then we are looking for you. We have a couple of programs for those looking for some skills related to mental health.

Purple Couch—Looking for people to participate in general mental health and suicide awareness training, so they can facilitate the purple couch efforts around campus. We want students engaged in conversation. We want students to feel like they can go to the purple couch and always have someone to talk to.

Wellness In Nature Days (WIND)—With such a beautiful campus we want to use the environment to help promote connection and wellness with others. If you have a passion to go on hikes then we want you to help use with our

WIND project. We are looking for people to lead various activities as well as help with advertising and research projects.

Harm Reduction Student Ambassadors—Are you wanting to help promote safe use and overdose prevention, we are looking for student ambassadors as part of a community team to help with events on campus.

All of these options are available to students for September 2017 and we are looking forward to having a strong team to help us. If you are interested please email: Nicole Lewis at lewisn@algonquincollege.com

