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# INTERROBANG

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HEALTH OF SURVIVORS PAGE 4



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**FROM THE EDITOR** Hannah Theodore

Dear readers,  
October is mental health month. It can get a bit repetitive, can't it? When corporations and other entities latch onto the concept of mental health awareness, as if those of us who struggle with mental illness are ever unaware of its festering presence in our lives. Yet stories, as ever, can be a way to find common ground with one another, to know that we are not alone, and that all of us, together, are navigating a constantly more unfamiliar world with each passing day.

A StatCan survey from March 2021 found that 25 per cent of people over 18-years-old in Canada now report that they suffer from some kind of mental health issue, from anxiety to depression to PTSD. Young people aged 18-24 are the most likely to report symptoms of these conditions. Be it due to social media, the rapidly changing social landscape due to COVID-19, a lack of access to jobs and home ownership or some combination of all three, young people are dealing with more emotional turmoil today than ever before.

Rather than attempt to find answers to these problems, this

issue holds a collection of honest stories that paint a true-to-life picture of how it feels to be a person living in the world today. People living with invisible disabilities, people recovering from eating disorders, and survivors of sexual violence trying to find some kind of healing; they are all represented here.

Then there is our cover, which depicts a feeling that many of us recognize all too well after a year and a half of living with COVID-19: that the end is in sight, yet still seemingly so out of reach.

While it may take time to get to that distant finish line, let us continue to listen - really listen - to the people around us, let us engage with groups that are advocating for solutions, and let us continue to believe those who tell us they are struggling.

See you at that journey's end,

**Letters to the Editor:** [fsuleters@fanshawec.ca](mailto:fsuleters@fanshawec.ca)

# 2021 BI-ELECTION

[FSU.CA/ELECTIONS](http://FSU.CA/ELECTIONS)



# VOTE

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### October 18th - October 20th

# Fanshawe looks to expand in-person learning, residence capacity limits

**Hannah Theodore**  
INTERROBANG

Starting Jan. 2022, Fanshawe College plans to expand in-person learning options as well as capacity limits for various campus experiences.

Students can expect to hear from their respective programs directly in the coming week in regards to any changes to their learning models. The winter semester, which begins Jan. 5, 2022, is expected to include increased in-person class delivery, and more in-person campus activities. Winter orientation, set to take place Tuesday, Jan. 4, 2022, will also combine virtual and in-person experiences.

“We’re also preparing innovative virtual learning experiences and tools to support remote access where required,” said the college in a recent statement.

Residences, which so far this year have been operating at a decreased capacity, will return to full capacity in the winter term. Fanshawe offers three on-campus student residence buildings (Falcon, Peregrine and Merlin House) with capacity for 1,220 students, along with 66 townhouse accommodations nearby that can house another 396 students.

“We are excited about seeing more students back in our hallways this winter – we know students have been missing the experience of studying and working together in person,” said Janice Lamoureux, Dean of Students. “Our student services teams are looking forward to providing students with a full suite of in-person services and more vibrant experiences on campus.”

Access to athletics facilities, fitness centre and dining options will also be increasing. There is little information at this time as to how these services will increase. During the fall term, only Fanshawe Student Union (FSU) funded dining options have been open, including Oasis and Out Back Shack, while Chartwells eateries like Starbucks, Tim Hortons and Subway have remained closed.

“As Ontario continues to re-open, we will work in partnership with public health and the provincial government to determine the extent to which on-campus services and activities will be available this winter,” added the college.

The college’s vaccination policy will remain in effect as well, with all staff, students, faculty, visitors and contractors needing to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 before the start of classes in January. Returning students will have already received



CREDIT: HANNAH THEODORE

Residences, which so far this year have been operating at a decreased capacity, will return to full capacity in the winter term.

information regarding how to upload proof of a vaccination. New and incoming students, meanwhile, will receive more information soon about

providing proof of a vaccine later this year.

More details are still to come, but for now, students can expect a more

populated and active on-campus experience in the winter term. Visit [fanshawec.ca/covid-19](http://fanshawec.ca/covid-19) for more information.

# HOCO 2021 sees more police than partiers

**Gazette News**  
GAZETTE

Western’s first September Homecoming had a lower turnout, with around 2,000 students and more than 100 police officers showing up to the unsanctioned street parties that used to attract tens of thousands.

On Sept. 25, scores of police enforcement and emergency services patrolled Broughdale Avenue, Western University’s notorious party street, in overwhelming numbers, easily outnumbering the purple-clad students and party-goers.

The London Police Service, emergency services and the city heavily staffed Fake HOCO in previous years as the event attracted tens of thousands of partiers — 25,000 at its 2019 peak — and resulted in several injuries, incidents of property destruction and unruly crowds. Over 150 police personnel policed the event in 2019.

Bylaw officers, who were present in overwhelming numbers, patrolled Broughdale Avenue to enforce the city’s reinstated bylaws: gatherings were capped at 25 indoors and 100 outdoors, with fines ranging between \$750 and \$5,000 for hosts.

London’s weather forecast called for heavy showers throughout the afternoon and crowds grew as the rain picked up around noon.

The police forced students off Broughdale at 1 p.m. as crowds surged and front lawn parties grew rowdier, with officers forming two human barricades across either side of the street.

The closure of Broughdale redirected student parties to neighbouring streets, like Huron Street, where students continued to congregate for HOCO fanfare. Some students who lived on Broughdale said they were barred from accessing their homes when the police barricaded the street.



CREDIT: YIFEI ZHANG

A police officer looks on at a group of HOCO partiers, Sept. 25, 2021

“We ended up leaving because we weren’t allowed to go inside any of the houses because of the fines and stuff like that,” said Ariel, a second-year BMOS student who also attended the gatherings on Broughdale and Huron. “I have friends living on [Broughdale]. Obviously I didn’t want them to get fines and anything like that so we just came over [to Huron].”

Some students were hoping for a much larger turnout on Western’s first return to its regular Homecoming date in five years. Fake Homecoming was introduced in 2016 in rebellion against the university’s decision to move Homecoming to the middle of October when students’ midterms are in full swing.

“[I was expecting] lots more people. It’s kind of disappointing,” said Mia, a student dressed in Western merchandise who was partying with her roommates on their front porch on Broughdale Ave.

Many unmasked students clung to their backyards and front lawns, staying off the heavily-patrolled roads and sidewalks.

“It’s intimidating. I feel like I can’t do anything without a cop staring me right in the eyes,” said Brendan, a fourth-year computer engineering student on Broughdale.

Some officers engaged in the student festivities, taking pictures with partiers and throwing footballs.

President Alan Shepard restored Western’s homecoming date to the

last Saturday of September after previous leadership pushed the event to mid-October — an unpopular move among students as the new date conflicted with their midterms — in hopes to keep party-goers away from Broughdale Avenue.

The decision backfired and saw backlash from students and party-goers from across the province, who kick-started a “fake homecoming” on the original September date.

Fake Homecoming attracted larger crowds and, consequently, more injuries, destruction and unruliness from revellers. When Fake HOCO drew its largest crowd in 2019, city officials reported 31 hospitalizations, over \$300,000 in fines and 14 arrests.

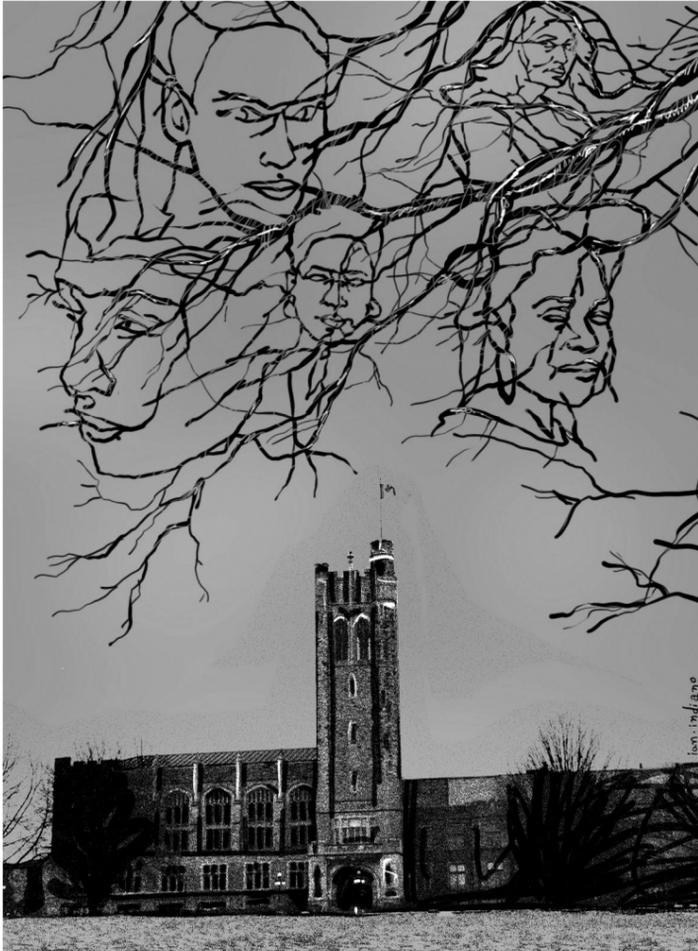
The unsanctioned street party

drained both city and emergency services’ resources, putting increasing pressure on Western to provide alternative programming, which led to the Students’ Council’s Purple Fest — a concert featuring popular music artists, like Lil Uzi Vert in 2018, to keep students away from illegal street parties.

London Police Service said the priority for officers this year was to keep Broughdale’s road clear in case emergency services vehicles needed to get through.

“We want to ensure that we don’t have large gatherings of people on the street. It obviously creates safety hazards if we have a large group of people blocking access to emergency vehicles and services.”

# How sexual violence impacts survivors



CREDIT: IAN INDIANO

Sexual violence can cause significant trauma in survivors as it holds a neurobiological impact — it affects the brain and nervous system leaving symptoms such as insomnia or hypersomnia, loss of appetite, long-lasting nightmares, and much more.

**Amy Simon**  
INTERROBANG

“We use the term sexual violence because it’s an umbrella term,” said Fanshawe’s Sexual Violence Prevention Advisor Leah Marshall. “It’s any act of aggression or violence towards someone that’s sexual in nature, or that targets someone’s sexuality, or gender identity.”

Recent discussions about sexual violence have been circling through the media after students filled the grounds of UC Hill at Western University in an organized walkout to protest both the school’s handling of sexual assault allegations on campus, and to stand in solidarity with survivors of sexual violence.

Less than a week later, Fanshawe College hosted their own ‘Take Back Our Campus Walk’ after similar threats were posted in an online chat.

These events have left some to ponder the question of how sexual violence impacts survivors as this violence can take on many different forms that are not always physical in nature.

“It can be degrading or sexist comments made online. Homophobia and transphobia are also examples of sexual violence so we need to expand our definition of what that looks like,” said Marshall.

“It doesn’t matter if the violence is physical or not, it can still have an impact on people’s lives.”

Sexual violence can cause

significant trauma in survivors as it holds a neurobiological impact. It affects the brain and nervous system leaving symptoms such as insomnia or hypersomnia, loss of appetite, long-lasting nightmares, and much more.

“Our ability to remember things or keep things kind of linear in terms of what’s happened or what’s going on in our life can be impacted as well. The way that trauma impacts memory can be pretty significant.”

Marshall explained that’s why sometimes survivors say they have difficulty putting all the “pieces of the puzzle together.” But no matter what form the violence takes, it’s never the survivor’s fault.

“What happens is that sometimes our bodies and how safe we feel in the world can change because of what someone else has done to us. But the survivor should never be at fault for someone else’s doing.”

According to Katreena Scott, the Director of The Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children (CREVAWC), survivors’ reactions to sexual violence are still not well understood in society as “rape myths” are still common. These topics of victimization and “victim shaming” have impacted how survivors disclose their experiences.

“Some people say, ‘If nobody’s come forward, well, maybe people are just making too big a deal out of this,’ and I want to counter that myth. I want to remind people that disclosing

to anybody is a step and it’s an important step,” said Scott.

And while important, Marshall added that the difficulties lie in the world we live in.

“We live in a world that’s really unkind to survivors. We live in a world that blames survivors instead of holding perpetrators accountable. We live in a world where sometimes when we tell someone about the violence we’ve experienced, they question us, try to be an investigator and find out all the details or what we could have done differently, or how this may have been our fault. When really, no one deserves to be subjected to any type of violence.”

Marshall and Scott agree that as a community, and as a culture, the way support is shown for survivors needs to change. Specifically how one responds to survivors. Understanding and listening are two very important things when it comes to breaking down barriers built from sexual violence.

For Fanshawe students, to confidentially review your options, contact Leah Marshall at [lkmarshall@fanshawec.ca](mailto:lkmarshall@fanshawec.ca).

For Western students, contact The Centre for Research & Education on Violence against Women & Children at 519-661-4040, or email [crevawc@uwo.ca](mailto:crevawc@uwo.ca).

For more community based opportunities, contact The Regional Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Program at 519-646-6100 ext. 64224 or ext. 0 for a crisis.

## Fanshawe announces Pathways Scholarship winners

**Kate Otterbein**  
INTERROBANG

Fanshawe has announced the winners of this year’s Pathways Scholarships. The Pathways Scholarship is a scholarship funded by the schools that attend the Pathways Fair. It’s completely free for students to attend, but the school representatives pay a fee to go towards students’ education.

“The idea [of the Pathways Scholarships] is to take a little bit of the burden off of the students when they embark on the second journey. We know that financial support is one of the barriers for some students to continue their education,” said Gabriela Kongkham-Fernandez, the Pathways coordinator at Fanshawe.

There are three different scholarships available: The International Pathway Scholarship, the Domestic Pathway Scholarship, and the Internal Pathway Scholarship.

Tailer Gallerno was the recipient of the International Pathway

Scholarship. She just graduated from Fanshawe’s Fitness and Health Promotion diploma and transferred to the Institute of Technology Sligo in Ireland. She started year three of a Bachelor of Science Honours in Health Science and Physical Activity.

“This pathway will allow me to finish my undergrad, as well as meet people in a different country to make connections. Ultimately, this pathway will allow me to go on and complete a master’s in physiotherapy [and achieve my end goal of becoming a physiotherapist],” said Gallerno.

The recipient of the Domestic Pathway Scholarship was Alexandria Walker. After graduating from Fanshawe’s General Arts and Science Certificate, she transferred to King’s University College to complete a degree in Social Sciences.

“Deciding to go back to college at 26 was not an easy decision and with two children to raise, I was hesitant to take the leap. Fortunately, Fanshawe made the transition easy and by enrolling

in the General Arts and Science Program, I was able to receive academic upgrading as well as new knowledge that was crucial to achieve a university transfer,” said Walker.

Bowen Qin was the winner of the Internal Pathways Scholarship. She graduated from Fanshawe’s Business Accounting Diploma and continued on at Fanshawe to complete her Honours Bachelor of Commerce – Accounting.

“I like the flexibility of the Fanshawe Pathway program. The Accounting diploma program opens every term so that I can take courses based on my interest and personal schedule. Now I can get a degree and courses that are qualified for CPA pre-required courses,” said Qin.

The Internal Pathway Scholarship was just launched this year to support students continuing their academics at Fanshawe.

For students wishing to learn more about the Pathways Scholarships, there is a Pathways fair on Oct. 20. The fair is virtual from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The fall fair is directed towards international, out-of-province partners only. Some partners coming to the fall fair are from institutions in B.C., Alberta, and other countries.

“Students have an opportunity to connect with partner institutions, ask questions about the pathway opportunities, application process, and so on,” said Kongkham-Fernandez.

The goal of these fairs is to show students what their options are.

“The fairs are such a great opportunity for students who think they want to continue their studies, but they’re not sure what the options are or how to do it. Students can come, it’s no pressure, no commitment, but you get to



CREDIT: PHOTOS PROVIDED BY MEGAN ZINN

Tailer Gallerno (top), Alexandria Walker (bottom left), and Bowen Qin, this year’s recipients of the Pathways Scholarships.

hear from these excellent partner institutions around the world,” said Caitlin Smith, the international projects and exchange coordinator at Fanshawe.

“It’s really important to have those conversations with the actual partner institution. Often, they can provide more information on what it’s like to live abroad or in that city and provide more of that student experience that our students

really appreciate hearing,” said Kaitlin Marriott, Pathways and Special Events Consultant in the Lawrence Kinlin School of Business.

The Pathways Fair is a great opportunity for students, but if this one isn’t for you, there is also another fair in the winter for opportunities within Ontario. For more information, visit [fanshawec.ca/pathways](http://fanshawec.ca/pathways).

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# Fanshawe offering new scholarship for Afghan refugees



CREDIT: HANNAH THEODORE

Office of the Registrar at Fanshawe College, 2021.

**Aisha Javid**  
INTERROBANG

Fanshawe College recently announced a new scholarship for Afghanistan refugees.

“The executive leadership sat together and said, you know, immigrants or refugees have honestly been through so much,” said Executive Director for Reputation and Brand Management, Dave Schwartz. “What can Fanshawe do? So it’s actually a Fanshawe funded scholarship for five students. It’s two years of education that includes the tuition and fees. It also includes \$500 each semester, for expenses such as books.”

The department is collaborating with London’s Cross Cultural Learner Centre. This centre is referring members within the city who identify with the specified criteria of this scholarship.

“We’re not actually working with any immigration departments or refugees directly. We’re relying on our partner to help refer students to us, who would qualify for this scholarship,” said Schwartz.

Schwartz pointed to Fanshawe president, and member of the executive leadership team, Peter Devlin, and Registrar and Executive Director of Student Success, Janice Lamoureux, as the two core individuals who implemented this scholarship.

“So it’s really to their credit that they’ve invented this, and they’ve found the funding inside our budget to pay for it,” said Schwartz.

Schwartz also felt that this a small part for the college and his team, but they recognize the trauma the

recipients have endured. The final purpose for this scholarship is also help these individuals obtain employment after graduating from Fanshawe.

“They’ll get great jobs out of Fanshawe, they can start their lives, you know, we have lots of support for them as well,” added Schwartz.

Furthermore, the scholarship recipients will work closely with the advising team at Fanshawe. With over 200 different programs offered at the college, Schwartz and his team want to guarantee the appropriate program for the refugees. They also want to ensure that these students aren’t lacking any requirements and if so, they’re willing to help.

“They might require an English upgrading, and we even have a great student success team, where they can get tutoring, if they need it. They can get counselling and accessibility if they need it. We also have an award-winning career services, so ideally, after they go through their post-secondary, we can get them a great job and start here in Canada.”

Fanshawe also offers multiple grants and bursaries, and Schwartz highly encouraged prospective and current students to speak to the Financial Aid office to learn more.

“I always say, no matter who you are, talk to our financial aid team, because there’s a lot of money out there. Both through the Ontario government and alone, there’s a lot of grants.”

Any individuals interested in learning more on this scholarship are encouraged to communicate with London’s leading newcomer agency, Cross Cultural Learner Centre, and speak to advisors their on their employment and academic goals.

# Fanshawe student wins \$5K to bring her idea to life

**Kate Otterbein**  
INTERROBANG

Natalie Tyson is a fourth-year student in Fanshawe’s Honours Bachelor of Early Childhood Leadership. As part of that program, Tyson had to complete an internship. Her internship was at the STEAM (Science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) Education Centre in St. Thomas, Ont.

Tyson saw firsthand how vulnerable families feel disconnected from varying events and services in the communities. So, she came up with the idea to start STEAM camps to bring the community together and help everyone feel included. This idea won her an Ontario Community Changemakers microgrant of \$5,000 and leadership development and training to bring her idea to life.

“From my personal experience, I learn best through hands-on learning,” said Tyson. “Working with children in the field, I saw that they are more engaged in programs that are enriching and stimulating to them. STEAM is a perfect way to do that. You’re engaging in math without even knowing it 99 per cent of the time. I hope that families and the community all bridge together.”

She is planning these camps at local businesses within St. Thomas, like at the Elgin County Railway Museum, the senior’s centre, and in Oneida First Nations of the Thames. Tyson has been working with the Indigenous STEAM education program.

“I’m hoping that they come out to the community to engage in those hands-on interactive STEAM-based



CREDIT: DENISE LOVE

Natalie Tyson running a STEAM activity table.

activities, engage with other family members, and just look at the resources and supports available in St. Thomas.”

One of Tyson’s requirements for these camps is that she wants to be working firsthand with these families.

“I will be there working alongside them, instructing them, letting them take the flow on their ideas, especially with younger children. It’s hard to keep them engaged long enough if you’re sitting there instructing them. So the really neat thing with the STEAM family camps is that they can do whatever they want. There’s no right or wrong answer, it’s what they interpret from it.”

Tyson wants to get everybody in the family involved, including seniors. Some projects she plans on doing with families are a constellation projector, making 3D glasses, and creating a buzzing bee.

“Children get the opportunity to learn how bees work and what the buzzing actually means and where it comes from. I’ve also been looking

at genetics, fruit DNA extraction. So children are going to learn how to extract DNA from fruit, learn what it is, what our DNA is, and where we come from.”

When it came to winning the grant, she didn’t think she would win.

“I did not expect my little idea from a pandemic to branch off and become so surreal. It was just one idea I had in my internship that is now transforming over a year-long project. I was reading some of the other applicants, their projects are way above and beyond with environmental science, engineering, with the LGBTQ community, and just for St. Thomas, the city that nothing really happens in, gets this \$5,000 grant, not only for families but for the whole community. I kind of jumped up and freaked out when I got the email.”

Tyson is hoping her project will be implemented by next spring. She wants to ensure everything is safe with pandemic restrictions and allow as many people as possible to benefit from her camps.



Have any questions or comments about Fanshawe’s Mission, Vision, Values or board policies?

Tel: 519.452.4458  
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**Tom Hutchison-Hounsell**

Student Representative to The Board of Governors



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# Sattler's *Safe Night Out Act* reintroduced amidst campus sexual violence

**Jessica Gould**  
INTERROBANG

On Sept. 28, NDP MPP Peggy Sattler reintroduced an enhanced version of her *Safe Night Out Act*, a bill that was first introduced in 2017.

At a news conference at The Wave at Western University, Sattler dedicated a push for the act to protect against future sexual violence. A new requirement of harassment training was added to the act for all Ontario licensed establishment staff.

Sattler addressed the rise of sexual violence was not unique to the London community.

"The agonizing stories about Western and Fanshawe that rocked our community, and dredged up hateful memories for so many survivors of sexual assault, where drinking is involved, those stories are not unique to London," shared Sattler.

With a comprehensive provincial response to include sexual violence training with SmartServe, Sattler noted the new certification was long overdue, with more efforts to protect against sexual violence needed while the Ontario NDP, student organizations, and allies continue to push for a more significant response to end the violence.

In providing additional protection, Sattler reflected the updated *Safe Night Out Act* will be evidence-based with a focus on consent. For those who have already obtained their SmartServe certification, the updated act will also require training for sexual violence.

Employees and contract staff such

as security hired at bars and night-clubs will also undergo training.

A sexual violence and harassment policy to set how incidents will be dealt with and a sign posted to indicate that trained staff will also be a requirement for every licensed facility.

Sattler's act will also play a role in eliminating sub-minimum wages for liquor servers for recognizing the increased role servers must take in responding to sexual violence and harassment for customers and awareness of vulnerability for themselves.

"They are forced to rely on tips," said Sattler. "We know that 80 per cent of liquor servers are women. Ontario is the only remaining province with a lower minimum wage for liquor servers, and it is long past time for this to go."

Western University Vice-President of Student Affairs Eunice Oladejo applauded the persistent efforts for a shift in bar culture to begin.

"This is just one step, but a very important one in making our campuses and communities safer. The past few weeks have shown the need for governments, universities, and us as community members to be proactive when it comes to sexual and gender-based prevention and response," shared Oladejo. "Students have been scared, exhausted, and disheartened and our community has been heartbroken and angry."

Fanshawe Student Union President Ricardo Souza also advocated for the protection against sexual violence within the London community.

"Sexual violence is not one institution's issue," he said. "It is a community issue and using the



CREDIT: JESSICA GOULD

Left to right: Ricardo Souza, President of Fanshawe's Student Union; AnnaLise Trudell, Manager of Education, Training, and Resources at London's Anova; NDP MPP Peggy Sattler; Hayden Van Neck, a representative of the Walkout Against Sexual Gender-Based Violence; and Eunice Oladejo, VP External at Western USC.

bystander approach, which the *Safe Night Out* bill supports, takes the blame and responsibility off of individuals to not get assaulted and puts it back on the community to say something and do something when they are witness to sexual violence that we know all too often occurs in these venues."

Both Liberal and Conservative governments have declined Sattler's *Safe Night Out Act* from 2017,

despite being sharply accepted by sexual violence experts.

A reintroduction in October of the

enhanced *Safe Night Out Act* will be presented when the Ontario legislature resumes.

## No updates in police investigation of Med-Syd sexual assaults



CREDIT: YIFEI ZHANG (GAZETTE)

The London Police Service have said they have received no formal complaints of sexual assault or drugging in Medway-Sydenham Hall.

**Sheetal Vemanagari**  
GAZETTE

The London Police Service have said they have received no formal complaints of sexual assault or drugging in Medway-Sydenham Hall during OWeek since their investigation started in mid-September.

Police launched the investigation after reports began circulating online about drugging and sexual assault incidents at Western University's Orientation Week. Police said they'd received three reports of sexual assault during OWeek before launching the investigation, but that none of the cases are linked to the reports online.

"We have been unable to substantiate information circulated in social media posts about widespread incidents of that nature," said London police in a statement on Oct. 1.

Police will continue investigating the incidents, recognizing that

responses to trauma are unique to survivors.

"We know that, for a variety of well-documented reasons, incidents of sexual violence are generally underreported and that victims and survivors who were initially reluctant to report may decide to come forward with their disclosure at a later date," said London police.

Detectives with the Sexual Assault and Child Abuse Section were assisted by members of Western's campus police and Med-Syd dons to contact over 600 students in their joint investigation.

While no formal complaints surfaced, police continue to encourage anyone who has experienced sexual violence to report incidents for investigation.

"The London Police Service is committed to thoroughly investigating all complaints of sexual assault, whether reported to us directly or referred to us through a third party."

fsu.ca/mental-health

# Fashion design student teams up with new flight services program

**Aisha Javid**  
INTERROBANG

A student of Fanshawe's fashion design program, Jacqueline Bradica, has won a design competition for the new flight services program.

Professor of Fashion Marketing and Management at Fanshawe, Wendy Sperry explained how the collaboration came together.

"Jacqueline [Program Coordinator for the new program, Flight Services, Jacqueline Bailey] e-mailed me and asked if our students could collaborate with a design for a scarf as part of the uniform for her new flight services program."

Sperry then put forth an assignment for her first-year fashion students. Her students were tasked with creating three thumbnail sketches of ideas and then selecting one of them to work with.

"They also had restraints. They had

to choose three colours, which were Fanshawe's colours of red, black and grey," said Sperry.

Another major challenge her students faced was in producing a corporate image for the scarf.

"I think some of the designs were very creative, but they didn't translate into that corporate look. So, I think it was challenging, like fitting into the parameters and not letting your creativity go completely wild. You really have to think about what the parameters of the project are. And then, also consider how the scarf would be folded and worn. You need to think about all of those things," added Sperry.

Nonetheless, Sperry said she was incredibly proud of her students and thought all the submissions were extremely well done.

"I think they were very excited, and they all did a really great job! I have to say all of the design work was also really inspirational, and I think the fact that they chose one of the students was

super exciting!"

All the entries were proposed to the Aviation Department and Bradica's scarf was the winning design.

"I am extremely happy that my design was chosen. While I was designing, I remember picturing not only how the design would look flat but focused more importantly on how the colour layout would look while folded and worn as part of the uniform. I very much enjoyed the whole process!" said Bradica.

The fashion department at Fanshawe is known for collaborations with many different programs and faculties on-campus. For example, their most unique and vibrant fashion show event, Unbound, incorporates various programs to help market, plan, style, and implement the event.

"We do all kinds of collaborations, the big one for fashion designers is the Unbound, which is the big fashion show at the end of the year. They collaborate with many different programs.



CREDIT: FANSHAWE MEDIA SERVICES  
Jacqueline Bradica with her scarf, alongside Jacqueline Bailey, program coordinator of the flight services program.

Like, MIA (Music Industry Arts), and theatre. There's like 11 or 12 programs this year involved, so there is a tremendous amount of collaboration that happens in this program," said Sperry. Sperry said she was incredibly

grateful for the collaborations other programs offer to her students.

"I think it's always a wonderful opportunity when students can take on real life projects, and the outcome is so positive."

## Off the radar: what's going on in the world

**Ian Indiano**  
INTERROBANG

"Ignorance is bliss."

This phrase was first written by Thomas Gray in 1668, in his poem *Ode on a distant prospect of Eton College*. Since then, the phrase has become a common presence in our daily lexicon. It means that, sometimes, not knowing is better than knowing. Of course, that's a very broad and shallow statement. In the context of this issue's theme (mental health), it might serve as a warning sign for a column that many times talks about tragedies or injustice. However, this simple three word phrase does not explain what "ignorance" is, nor what "bliss" is, and sometimes, while ignorance can be a bliss to some people, the same ignorance might be the bases of someone else's tragedy. So far, staying informed is still the best we can do.

Here are five news stories from around the world that you should be paying attention to.

### Farewell to Angela Merkel

After 16 years as the chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel is leaving office. Merkel announced her intentions to not run for re-election in 2018, but agreed to stay in office until the end of her mandate, at the wishes of 67 per cent of Germans. Merkel, who was considered the most powerful woman in the world, became chancellor as the leader of the

Christian Democratic Union (CDU), but the latest polls suggest that she will be replaced by a candidate from the Social Democratic Party of Germany. Merkel leaves office with a legacy that definitely helped to shape 21<sup>st</sup> century geopolitics.

### Thousands on the street protest against Brazilian president

Thousands of Brazilians took to the streets in cities and towns across Brazil calling for President Jair Bolsonaro's removal on Oct. 2. The protests were organized by opposition parties and unions, and the date marks exactly one year before the 2022 elections. Bolsonaro's management during the pandemic has been widely criticized, especially for supporting untested alternative treatments for COVID-19 and openly speaking against the vaccine. As his country reaches 600,000 COVID-related deaths, Bolsonaro has fallen behind in opinion polls and faces several criminal investigations of corruption and anti-democratic policies.

### Spanish volcano erupts

The Cumbre Vieja volcano, on Spain's La Palma island has been erupting since Sept. 19. It is estimated that the lava has covered around 267 hectares and destroyed 656 homes. About 6,000 people have been evacuated, leaving behind schools and banana plantations that are now covered by lava. After almost two weeks, the lava finally reached the ocean, raising fears of explosions and toxic gases being released. The president of the

Canary Islands, Angel Victor Torres, said that the estimated damage incurred by the eruption exceeds \$466 million, and is now pledging financial support.

### Ivory-billed woodpecker to be declared extinct

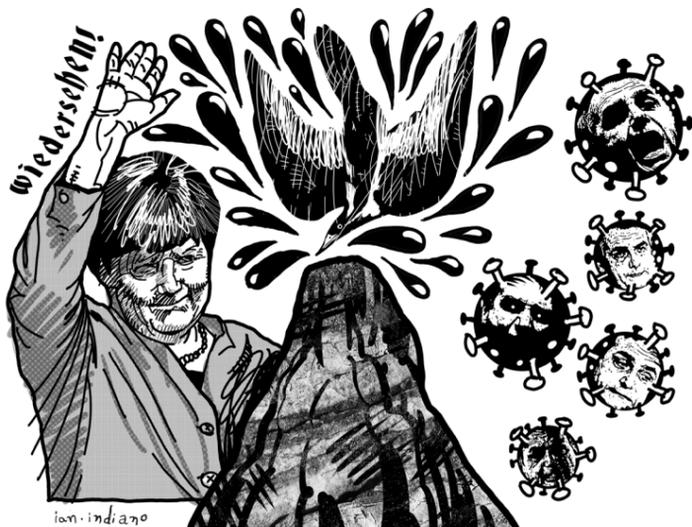
The United States government has declared that 23 species, including the iconic ivory-billed woodpecker, extinct. All of those species were already in the endangered species list but are being removed because they hadn't been documented for many

years. The decision is being questioned by specialists claiming that it is too soon to declare those species officially extinct. These extinctions are a direct result of the human population growth and the loss of natural environments. Although the decision is being questioned, there have been no definitive sightings of the woodpecker since 1944.

### More than 50 countries have missed COVID vaccine target

The World Health Organization (WHO) targeted that 10 per cent of the

world's population to be vaccinated by the end of September. However, more than 50 countries have failed to meet the target. Most are in Africa, where half of the countries have vaccinated less than two per cent of their population. Many of those countries are facing vaccine shortages as the biggest cause for falling behind. According to WHO projections, the African continent needed at least 270 million doses to reach the 10 per cent target, but so far, it has received only 200 million.



ian.indiano

CREDIT: IAN INDIANO

Angela Merkel leaves office, thousands protesting in Brazil and 23 more extinct species. All of this and more, this week on Off the Radar.



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# Addictions



**Michael Veenema**  
RELIGION

A few days ago in my church we had a discussion on addiction. With a little help from Google, we came up with a definition. One, addiction involves a substance or an activity. Two, it results in repetitive or compulsive behaviour. Three, it frequently brings on negative consequences. Four, interruption of the behaviour can result in severe, even traumatic effects.

This definition allows for the recognition of a range of addictions. One can be addicted to pills, pornography, gambling, high risk activities, video games, friendships, sex, praise, work, or, as in the case of one our family members, church mission trips (which might not be the worst thing to be addicted to).

What can be done to prevent addiction? I'm going to suggest four things that may help.

#### Relationships with nurturing adults

Gabor Maté, a psychologist and author, helps us to see that one reason many of us do *not* become addicts to opioids and other substances is that we have a good network of relationships.

Many of us, including me, have been sedated for waking surgery. In my case, I was given an opioid. I would have to say that it was among the happiest 90 minutes of my life. However, I did not leave the hospital craving the services of an illegal opioid dealer. Maté and others would say that this is, in part, because I have a good network of relationships.

Among the most important are healthy relationships with nurturing adults. This goes contrary to some of the assumptions we may have. According to certain preconceptions, the main key to good mental health is for you and me to exercise our individual choices and to choose friends who will nurture us.

Friendships are not by any means unimportant. But having adults who love us and share their wisdom with us is absolutely key – especially when we are young, and, I would say, during every stage of life.

This puts the spotlight decidedly on parents. But other adult family members, and friends to a lesser degree, also have their roles to play.

#### Knowing yourself

Know your sins, your weaknesses, your strengths.

About sins: Knowing yourself will help you address the sins you need to get rid of and



CREDIT: EPIXIMAGES

One can be addicted to pills, pornography, gambling, high risk activities, video games, friendships, sex, praise, work, or, as in the case of one our family members, church mission trips (which might not be the worst thing to be addicted to).

be forgiven for. Some people believe that our church communities spend too much energy imposing guilt on people. I have no doubt that that does happen. In my encounters with people, it is not unusual to meet those who have reacted against their church's tendency to make them feel guilty.

But I think I meet even more people who deny guilt for past wrongs. We can do much to run from such self-knowledge, or cover it up. This is where addictions come in. Addictive behaviour can seemingly fill the darkness created by our wrongs.

I think the best way to deal with the guilt over past wrongs is to admit the words we should not have spoken and actions that we should not have committed. First, to our own selves, then to God, and, if possible, to the person(s) we hurt, and (cautiously) to others.

About weaknesses: Some years ago I was asked about my personal weaknesses. Being younger, or perhaps more accurately, being a bit arrogant, I could not think of any. Sometimes it takes experience to realize that we are not as strong as we would like to be. We

find ourselves plagued by lack of courage, ignorance, or hostility towards people I feel have wronged me.

When we are victims of our weaknesses, we are more susceptible to addiction. But when these are dealt with to the best of the ability God gives us, we find ourselves less vulnerable to addictive behaviour.

About strengths: Each of us has many. If we were nurtured by caring adults, they will have pointed them out to us and helped us to develop them. But even if we were not, there are many opportunities each day for us to recognize our strengths and to develop them. Again, knowing and exercising the character strengths and abilities God has given makes it more likely that we will live an addiction-free life.

#### Live a meaningful life

We must not embrace stupidity, immorality, and carelessness. These things can make our lives a meaningless puff of smoke.

Related to this: we should not chase happiness. This is one of the things I learned growing up in a Christian community. Chase

meaning. Embrace the responsibilities God has set before you to the best of your ability. If you do, happiness is likely to come on its own.

There is a book in the Bible called Proverbs. Its main message is this: In the way that God has constructed the social, ethical, and economic realms, if you do bad, more bad is very likely to happen (this should not be confused with what is called Karma, though there is some surface resemblance). Do not act foolishly or speak deceptively. If you do, almost for sure meaninglessness will cloud your life, and maybe overwhelm you.

On the other hand, if you do good, almost for sure more good will happen. Do what is wise and almost certainly when you get to the end of your life, you will be more prosperous than if you had not. You will be more able to draw satisfaction from your family or friends, and from your education and attempts to stay healthy. And, again, likely, addictions will have left you alone, or at least, wreaked much less damage than if you had chosen a different path.

## Western needs to better accommodate student sick days

### Editorial Board GAZETTE

As the weather gets colder, more students are beginning to get sick, and Western doesn't have enough checks and balances in place to make sure these students are not attending class unwell.

In a normal year, it can be hard to hear a professor in a large lecture hall over the chorus of coughing and wheezing — but this isn't a normal year.

The added risk of the coronavirus means that students feeling under the weather are forced to decide between their education or the health of their classmates. No young adult should have to make that choice.

While Western University has a COVID-19 screening survey that students are supposed to fill out before coming to campus, no one checks if students have taken it. There's also nothing to prevent students from lying on these surveys.

There's also no clear alternative for students who fail the screening survey. If Western is going to tell students not to come

to class when they're feeling unwell, they need to put systems in place that ensure students aren't disadvantaged if they can't come to in-person class.

Some in-person classes still have mandatory attendance and participation, and without Zoom hybrid options, students are putting each other at risk of getting sick.

There isn't much more that Western can do on campus to keep students safe. They could try to mandate social distancing, but the university doesn't have the capacity. It's on students to decide whether or not they come to school — the university should make sure the option to not attend is realistic.

Hybrid class models with Zoom would probably be the best solution if Western wants to keep students from coming to campus sick. This model is already in place at Ivey Business School, where professors are live streamed on Zoom and students sign onto the call whether they are in-person or at home.

Classes with hybrid components already have paid students who assist professors with the transition. There's no reason that this program can't be extended across campus



CREDIT: YIFEI ZHANG (GAZETTE)

In a normal year, it can be hard to hear a professor in a large lecture hall over the chorus of coughing and wheezing — but this isn't a normal year.

to ensure students have the option to attend class online if necessary.

If professors are unable to adopt a hybrid model, they should be sending students lecture recordings or detailed slides with lecture notes if they need. A powerpoint slide with three bullet points isn't good enough.

Students don't want to come to campus sick and the university doesn't want them to be here. For everyone to get what they want, Western needs to create a system where taking a sick day doesn't leave students at a disadvantage.

# Mental health issues: body image

**Svitlana Stryhun**  
INTERROBANG

Have you ever postponed your life? Not wearing your favourite dress, avoiding meeting friends, entering into relationships? If that annoying thought, “I’m not good enough for that now,” follows you every single time you want to enjoy the moment – then you probably have.

Sometimes your reflection in the mirror, random photos or people’s words bring us negative emotions. It not only affects our mood but also influences the perception of who we really are. A distorted view of ourselves is one of the most notable reasons for depression and mental disorders.

The first and the most important fact to remember is that our body shape doesn’t influence your intelligence and ambitions.

We build a self-image relying on the thoughts of other people and constantly suffer from it. Society makes us go through some difficult challenges; we are bullied at school, laughed at work, left by our friends and lovers. We blame our body, beat it, exhaust it in the gym, forget to feed it throughout the day. But our body is a home for the soul and mind. If we mistreat one of the components, the other two will suffer. That means that if people make us think we don’t deserve to be loved, it will lead to troubles in all spheres of life.

The real secret of self-image hides in the structure of the word “self-image” itself. It’s our opinion about ourselves. And it should never be influenced by family, friends or people we know.

My story began in high school in Ukraine. Some classmates hated me for being “fat,” others just supported them by treating me as a recluse. I never participated in class activities, I was afraid to answer during lessons or even talk with people around me. That’s when my mind assumed the wrong thought that still ruins



CREDIT: DAISY-DAISY

The first and the most important fact to remember is that our body shape doesn’t influence your intelligence and ambitions.

my life sometimes. I believed that a slim body meant happiness. But as it turned out some time later - it doesn’t. During my last school year, in one month, I lost 17 kilograms. I was eating only pea soup without potatoes, I could hardly warm up my hands, and my only thought was to lose one more kg. My parents were crying and begging me to start eating at least twice a day. But I hated myself and tried to destroy everything

that reminded me of my old image. I was happy, but it was ephemeral. Only now I understand all the harm it brought to my mental and physical health.

There’s one thing that should be known to every person who doesn’t love themselves: Your body is your power and it’s up to you to decide whether to use it for your benefit or against yourself. It’s absolutely impossible to

get a second chance after killing your health with never-ending diets.

Lastly, if you are being bullied, remember - when people see something they don’t have or someone who has potential, they learn about their vulnerable points and hit as hard as they can to destroy. But the best revenge is to show stability and power in achieving better results every day. Self-love is the key.

# Netflix review: *Britney vs. Spears* reveals more hidden truths about conservatorship

**Savannah Bisailon**  
INTERROBANG

On Sept. 22, Netflix released a new documentary focusing on the story of Britney Spears’ conservatorship. *Britney vs. Spears* tells the story of Spears’ conservatorship through the eyes of journalists Jenny Eliscu and filmmaker Erin Lee Carr.

Eliscu and Carr investigate Spears’ fight to freedom through a series of interviews and new, previously-confidential evidence.

This documentary features interviews with many people who worked closely with Spears over the years. *Britney vs. Spears* brings attention to some of the dark and twisted layers of her conservatorship, in ways not yet seen by other recent documentaries focused on the same issue. Those who have been following the story will know that Spears’ father, Jamie oversaw the conservatorship of Spears’ person up until a few weeks ago, which meant for years, he oversaw and controlled every aspect of her life, from work to when she could see her kids.

There were a lot of small details about this case that I learned of for the first time while watching this documentary. For example, during filming of the 2008 MTV special *Britney: For the Record*, filmmaker Andrew Fried said there was a time on set where they took 30 minutes out of their day, per Jamie’s request, to take Spears’ to a field and let her drive her car, as a way to show she had some sort of freedom.

It makes me so sad to learn that her life has been so controlled that the only time she can have time to herself had to be scheduled by her father. Eliscu and Carr’s investigation revealed many details surrounding the small things in life that most people would take for

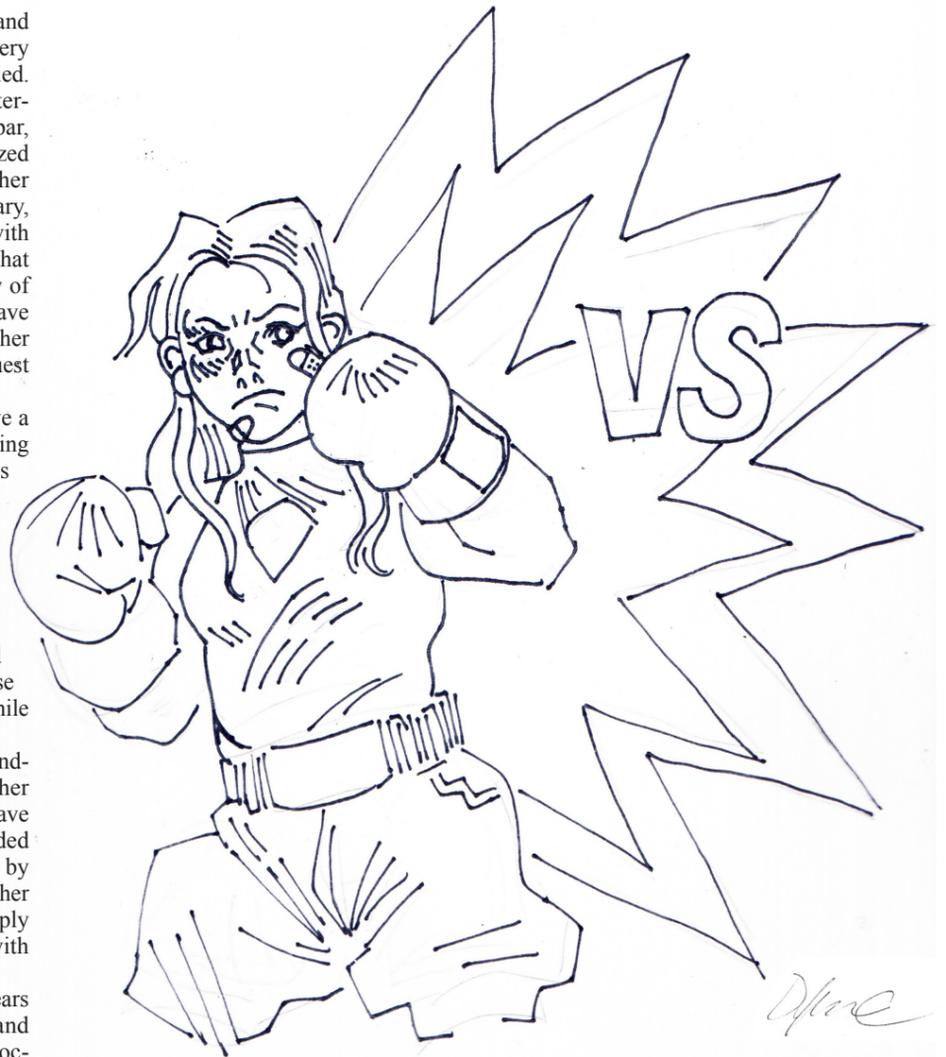
granted. Most of us oversee our own life and can control what we do or say, whereas every move Spears makes is watched and controlled.

The documentary also features an interview with physician Dr. James Edward Spar, who, according to court documents, analyzed Spears and played a role in diagnosing her with dementia. However, in the documentary, Spar refused to confirm that he ever met with Spears at all. Carr and Eliscu pointed out that if Spears really had dementia, her quality of work and her ability to work at all would have been affected. But, right around the time of her diagnosis, she was back working, even guest appearing on *How I Met Your Mother*.

From watching this documentary, I have a better and clearer understanding of everything that has gone on outside the public eye. This documentary, unlike the others, really touches on personal stories from those who have known Spears. In a particularly emotional moment, one of Spears’ former backup dancers tells the story of a time she visited Spears backstage at a show, and how Spears’ bodyguard asked her to come back to visit more often because that was the first time he had seen Spears smile like that in years.

Most of the other documentaries surrounding Spears’ life have focused more on her actions and not the actions of those who have helped get her into the situations she ended up in. Spears’ life has always been caught by the paparazzi to dehumanize her and make her seem like the problem, when she was simply falling victim to the struggles of fame, with the help of her father.

*Britney vs. Spears* shows the side of Spears that no one else gets to see, the raw and emotional side. I think this was a great documentary that showcased the reality of her situation really well.



CREDIT: DYLAN CHARETTE

*Britney vs. Spears* can be viewed on Netflix now.

# My invisible abilities: You say you see me, but you don't

**Dee-Dee Samuels**  
INTERROBANG

"Tell me what you know about brain injury."

It's what I asked the Accessibility Department after my futile attempt at trying to navigate the accessibility system during my first few weeks of my first year at Fanshawe. By the look on her face, I could tell I caught her off guard by my bluntness. Word-finding and phrasing are some of the many issues a person with brain injury can experience, especially when overwhelmed, and I was. There was a time I could express myself with such grace – a skill I honed for years, now gone – but brain injury is anything but graceful. It's clunky, jarring and off-key for the most part. The brain is as complex as the universe, and every brain injury presents differently. To accommodate it needs great consideration, not a generic approach. I was frustrated with good intentioned individuals not grasping the complexity of my brain injury. I, like my injury, was becoming more and more invisible. If I didn't advocate for myself and the students that would come after me, I would slip through the cracks as so many of us with brain injuries do.

Pursuing higher education as a mature student was not in my plans, but neither was an acquired brain injury. Life would never be the same, my doctors repeatedly remind me. All I heard was, "different could mean better right?"

Next thing I know I'm scrolling through the Fanshawe College website and there, like a sign from the universe, under the Accessibility Department it reads 'Acquired Brain Injury.' "That's me," I thought excitedly, and the tears that I try to fight spill out onto my cheeks.

## Cognitive effects of brain injury

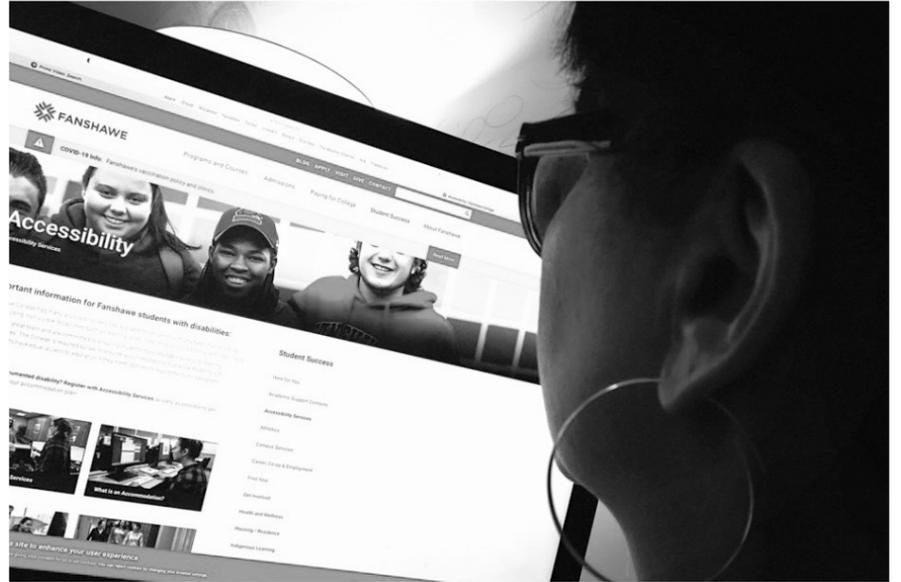
Energy crashes, mixing up of words, difficulty focusing, flooding (brain gets overwhelmed and shuts down), sequencing (trouble knowing what order to say things in), organizing, understanding what appropriate behaviour is, and serial tasking.

Just writing this is exhausting, but these are the barriers someone, (me) with a brain injury experiences daily.

On my first day of school, the hallways were buzzing with bright-eyed, excited students and my brain injury and I were proudly one of them. With my game face on, I headed to my first class, ready to relearn a subject I had worked professionally in for most of my life but was now scattered in my brain like an unmade puzzle. During my first class, the noise was alarming, students were flapping around me, and there were so many conversations to block out. I wanted to crack and inside my head starts spinning, my brain injury reminding me it's still there, bubbling away beneath my shining game face.

Fear not, Fanshawe College has a system in place for students with a brain injury. So, I reached out for the help they offered. But there were trap doors to accessing this mysterious "help." I had to email one department, wait to be matched with a tutor and then set up a meeting with them. If you need more than one tutor and also a learning advisor this means keeping track of multiple emails and responses. When I was feeling overwhelmed and asked for emotional support, I had to set up another meeting and wait for a response. My brain flooded and it shut down because of the tsunami of administration needed. Remember, I have a frontal lobe, executive function disability.

On top of all this, I had to study, organize work groups, and rearrange some classes, and when I spoke up, I was reminded that the beginning of term is very busy, and there is often a flurry of activity. For the first time I felt shame. My executive function was the one thing I needed now, but it was shattered. What they were asking me to do to receive help for my cognitive disability was equivalent to informing someone with a physical, visible disability that the help they needed was at the top of a staircase and all they needed to do was just climb.



CREDIT: DEE-DEE SAMUELS

Students with invisible disabilities have very unique talents and valuable perspectives on life to offer.

## You say you see me, but you don't

My school has moved online due to COVID-19, which meant more administration and even more need for the executive function of my brain. At the beginning of this term it took three weeks to get an appointment with my accessibility counsellor. I was already overwhelmed and actually forgot what the main purpose of the meeting was. There was a flurry of activity for me and my brain injury, too. It's an exercise in futility; I don't want to be difficult and I refuse to be invisible.

But there is a light at the end of this sordid tale. People at Fanshawe did hear me. The entire department of Television and Film Broadcasting listened to me, worked alongside me and made adjustments and adaptations to my course work, while I made sacrifices and reduced my course load. It's teamwork. I did not expect perfection

but improvement and patience. They told me that because of my persistence, they would change the way they communicate with the accessibility department. They have also hired the appropriate tutors and advisors specific for our department. With the understanding from my professors, I went on to win a national award for my work. The girl with the broken brain has not slipped through the cracks this time.

Students with invisible disabilities have very unique talents and valuable perspectives on life to offer. A very brave and honest conversation needs to be had about an accessibility department that needs to rethink its approach to the way they assist these students. The counsellors are caring and intelligent educators who can, with the right approach, transform students with invisible disabilities into students with remarkable visible abilities.

# How cinema stigmatizes mental illnesses

**Jessica Gould**  
INTERROBANG

The relationship between the silver screen and representing mental illness has been a complicated one since film began. Hollywood's decades-long obsession with sculpting evil and disorders to be synonyms ranges across various genres, most notably within horror and thriller. There is a long-standing pattern in how cinema portrays mental illness and further pushes the stigmatization of invisible diseases.

When cinema perpetuates stereotypes and villainizes fictional characters with mental illnesses, barriers are made for real people with schizophrenia, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and other diseases, then demonized with the villain's representation.

The 2016 M. Night Shyamalan psychological horror *Split* faced backlash from the dissociative identity disorder (DID) community, after upsetting thousands who suffer from the disorder through the violent DID antagonist Kevin Wendell Crumb. Mental health experts point to movies such as *Split* or predecessor Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* as portraying isolated, extreme aspects of illnesses such as DID, with the misrepresentation of mental health hurting those who suffer from diseases inaccurately represented in media.

Although it features an attempt to show the importance of funding mental health clinics and

social work resources, 2019's *Joker*, directed by Todd Phillips, continues to push the notion with Joaquin Phoenix's performance as Arthur Fleck that disease and destruction are linked.

"What do you get when you cross a mentally ill loner and a society that abandons him? You get what you f---ing deserve!" Fleck cries just before the film's violent climax.

Fleck, with his illness never specified, but involving negative thinking, feelings of isolation, and abuse, indicates he suffers from depression and trauma. The chaos Fleck delivers onto the world is painted to be seen as actions taken on behalf of the treatment of his illness and contributes to the blur of disease and evil.

As films continue to create villains equipped with mental illness tropes, it is difficult for audiences who cannot understand the reality of the diseases presented in media. For those in the audience living with illnesses that see mental health represented in a dramatically evil light, there is a feeling that these disorders are the same way in reality, with a significant difficulty placed on survivors to separate from the monsters of the screen. For films trying to escape reality and craft a world of fantasy and mystery, there is an underlying ignorance of mental illness as filmmakers incorrectly regard those who suffer from diseases as the reasoning for violent actions.

On the other hand, it is nice when media encourages us to see through the lens of mental



CREDIT: WARNER BROS. PICTURES

*Joker*, Warner Bros. Pictures, 2019.

illness and tell a story about the confusion and difficulty of living with that illness. Films such as *It's Kind of a Funny Story* showcase the ups and downs and beautiful disaster of navigating through life and the difficulties and

outlook found when balancing a mental illness. Hollywood needs to listen and reconsider perpetuating problems for communities affected by the stigma of creating fear of ordinary people with mental illnesses.



**HAVE AN OPINION? SUBMIT YOUR STORY!**  
**Letters to the Editor: [fsuleters@fanshawec.ca](mailto:fsuleters@fanshawec.ca)**

# THINGS I WISH I KNEW BEFORE BEING DIAGNOSED WITH ANXIETY

Savannah Bisailon | **Interrobang**

Did you know that anxiety disorders affect between 0.5 per cent and one per cent of the population? Anxiety is defined as an emotion characterized by the feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure (apa.org). A lot of people have been diagnosed with anxiety or know someone who has been diagnosed with it.

In Oct. of 2018, I was officially diagnosed with severe anxiety and panic attack disorder. I remember my first year of college and not being able to understand why in certain situations my heart rate would increase or why I would randomly break out in a rash. I wish someone would have told me that it was just my body warning me.

The human body is designed to prepare you for action and will react accordingly to the situation. Just knowing how to calm yourself when you feel anxious could make it so much easier when it comes to facing the task that makes you feel anxious. Another thing I wish I knew would have to be that even on days where I could be having a good day, anxiety can just pop out of nowhere. I could be working at my desk and all of a sudden feel so anxious and have no idea where it came from.

People who do not have anxiety often don't understand that it can exhaust you and you just do not feel like being social. There were days where I felt like I couldn't communicate with anyone because I felt like I just couldn't communicate what I was feeling.

I wish people would understand that sometimes people with anxiety have a hard time expressing the emotions they are feeling and sometimes we end up in an overwhelming situation they have no control over. Sometimes, when I get very overwhelmed, I completely shut down.

Trevor McLean is a former orderly who worked in the mental health wing of an Ottawa hospital. According to McLean, there are signs not

many people are aware of that are caused by anxiety, and tackling those issues is the first step in addressing our mental health.

"If you don't take care of your own mental health, how can you take care of others? How can you do your job or function doing family activities if you yourself are in crisis and can't think or act clearly and don't take care of your own mental health?" he said. "You are going to wear yourself down physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Mental health is important because it controls all aspects of your life as mentioned above."

For McLean, mental health is just as important as physical health, especially with this past year and being isolated from people. What I wish I knew about managing anxiety during the pandemic is how common some of these emotions I have been feeling are among others.

McLean discussed the effects the pandemic has had on people's mental health and how it shows that mental health has never been taken seriously.

"With COVID, it has shown the huge gaps in mental health coverage and that mental health hasn't been taken very seriously and has been understaffed and underfunded for years," he said. "People were not able to get the help they needed and just stayed silent and suffered. But now, with prominent individuals coming forward and saying, 'I can't function, I need help,' it has pushed the case for mental health coverage to the forefront and shows that even if you don't have a physical ailment, mental health can affect you and stop you from being a productive member of society. By prominent people coming forward, it might get the ball rolling on the government to invest more in mental health services."

Before I was diagnosed with anxiety, I used to be so afraid to talk to a professional because of the stigmatization I thought I was receiving from others. I have family members who believe in the idea of anxiety being something you can get over. But, McLean argued that is not the case.

"Bouts of anger, depression, fear of going to work or going outside, not being able to drive or do activities of daily living, emotional outbursts such as crying....all of these would collectively be seen as having a bad or off day. But if these symptoms persist, you need to seek medical help because it could turn into a crisis situation," he said.

If you are feeling any of these feelings and are unsure where to go, there are many services available throughout the college and the community. Reach out to Counselling and Accessibility Services if you are concerned about your mental health.



# How to find the balance between working from home and home life

Savannah Bisailon | **Interrobang**

<b>MON</b>	<p>Over the past year, many people, including students around the world, had to shift their lives to staying at home, which also meant they would need to work from home. With working from home, it has become a lot harder for people to find the balance of relaxing and working from home.</p> <p>It can be more difficult to focus at home because of so many distractions. It can also be a challenge for people to find the balance of separating the workday from the home day. Especially at the beginning of the pandemic and the stay-at-home order, many people found it hard to find the balance between their home life and work life.</p>
<b>TUE</b>	<p>When balancing work life and home life, according to Owl Labs Blog, it is important to set a schedule and try to stick with it. As humans, we are very routine/schedule-based, which we have been taught since birth. Sophia Barron, a writer with Owl Labs Blog explained that working from home can lead to unhealthy levels of flexibility.</p> <p>“When you have the flexibility to work from anywhere, it can sometimes feel like you need to be available and online anytime, too,” she said. “And if you’re working on a different schedule than the rest of your team, this flexibility can sometimes lend itself to a lack of work-life balance.”</p>
<b>WED</b>	<p>I personally find it a lot easier for me to get distracted throughout the day if I do not have a set routine. For instance, when I get up to work, I must separate my bed and my workspace. So, if I am working at home, I treat my desk as if it were my classroom and my bed as if it were my bed. I am more than likely to want to relax if I were to work from my bed.</p> <p>Barron also suggested making plans for your after-work hours.</p> <p>“To that end, if you’re a remote worker seeking a little more work-life balance, make plans for your after-work hours, and stick to them,” she said. “Whether the plans include happy hour drinks with a friend or</p>
<b>THU</b>	<p>attending a workout class, if you have somewhere to be at the end of your workday, you’ll be more likely to actually sign off and stop working.”</p> <p>Being able to schedule time away from the screen is important. Something that I found works for me is after I am done working, I like to take an hour or two where I just strictly go outside and enjoy the outdoors. Just getting some physical activity helps me refocus and reconnect with myself at the end of the day.</p> <p>Kristin Kumpf, a counsellor at Fanshawe College explained the importance of finding balance between work life and home life.</p>
<b>FRI</b>	<p>“I think it depends on the individual,” said Kumpf. “For some people, they just gained travel time, right? If they can do that mental divide, that’s okay. It’s a little harder if you’ve got kids, for instance, that you’re trying to look after, and you can’t do that clear divide between work and that’s more challenging. So, it really depends on the situation. Time management and organization are the key and then talking to the people in your life, getting help if you can.”</p> <p>Kumpf also suggested that if you do have kids, scheduling time with your partner to take care of them might make it easier for you to focus on work. This could help lighten the load.</p>
<b>SAT</b>	<p>“So, if you’ve got kids at home, get a talk maybe with your partner and say, ‘how can we schedule our times so the kids are looked after?’ And we get to spend some time on work. So hopefully, you know, employers can be somewhat flexible.”</p> <p>For students, it could even be beneficial to separate their home from work, even just by enforcing the idea that your bed is strictly for sleeping and desk is for working.</p> <p>“This is easier for some people than others,” said Kumpf. “If you have a workspace, even if you only rent a room.... if you can have a little desk in the corner of the room, this is where I do my schoolwork. This is</p>
<b>SUN</b>	<p>where I’ve worked, rather than sitting on your bed, which is where you sleep. Any little mental cues you can give yourself that this is work time, this is fun time. This is not work time, right?”</p> <p>For Fanshawe students who want to better their mental health there is a website called <a href="http://welltrack.ca">welltrack.ca</a> and you can sign up for free, using your Fanshawe email. Welltrack.ca helps you manage your mental health and give you the proper resources. Balancing work life and home life is especially important during these uncertain times, as we endure another semester of courses being delivered mostly online.</p>

# How you think about food can change your mental health

Aisha Javaid | **Interrobang**

You shouldn't be beefing with your food; it may be negatively contributing to your mental health.

Listen, we've all been there, whether you're dieting or battling an eating disorder, it can all be stressful. Our emotional well-being is significantly correlated with our feelings and the physical nature of our bodies.

Moreover, in today's time, through social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, we are readily exposed to videos showing "what I eat in a day" from influencers. With filters and editors accompanying all camera features, our expectation for our appearance is becoming illusional.

Regardless of which media outlets you allow to influence your relationship with yourself, your desire to have a fit body shouldn't feel like a punishment. In fact, a healthy mind-set is strongly connected to a healthy appearance. Understanding intuitive eating is one key to developing this healthy link between your physical and mental self.

Intuitive eating is a theoretical concept about one being in complete charge of their eating habits. Some of the underlying principles that doctrine this philosophy include neglecting diet mentality, understanding your hunger, and being content with your relationship with food.

Nutritionist, Somatic and Intuitive Eating Counsellor, Karri Wilson discussed the importance of intuitive eating.

"I am a registered holistic nutritionist and registered nutritional

therapist," she explained. "I spend a lot of time talking about food and feelings, and how people feel about what's on their plate and what's in their bodies."

Wilson referenced babies as examples of intuitive eaters. A newborn's cry is usually a signal for hunger. But, as we age, we allow society and mainstream media to dictate our eating habits and meal schedules. We allow a certain time to dictate when we should eat, and through this mentality we seek external validation for fulfillment. Additionally, Wilson's goal is helping her clients become intuitive eaters again.

"The work that I do is really that kind of internal, intuitive, authentic journey of connecting back to your body, knowing how to best nourish your body and what it means," she said.

Furthermore, Wilson revealed a significant increase in her clients over the past year, particularly in students who were living in residences for school but had to resort back to their homeland, due to the pandemic.

"A lot of these students have felt, you know, some old shame and guilt surrounding their food and eating," she said. "I'm working with individuals who sometimes at home felt like they had to eat in secret and hide their food because they were made to feel that there was something wrong with their body, or something wrong with their eating habits."

The frequent changes in an individual's environment significantly affects their habits, especially their nutrition. The comments and praises made from family and friends greatly influence our self-worth. Seeking approval and assurance from others, for either losing or gaining weight, is imprisoning. It can lead you to becoming more anxious or depressed about everything you ingest.

Thus, many nutritionists, like Wilson, believe in body liberation and body acceptance as opposed to body positivity. Body positivity is a social movement used to help empower individuals in always admiring their figure. But Wilson believes that it's crucial for people to accept their bodies even when they know it's not looking the best.

"I don't strive for body love," she said. "I think we all have days where we don't love our body. Let's face it, I think even J-Lo has days where she gets up and doesn't love herself. Because body image isn't about our body."

Recently, many professionals in the food industry including dietitians and nutritionists are battling more than media outlets. They are also trying to combat the effects of social media and its effects on the minds of young people. All in all, their hopes are to help people find peace in their eating habits and self-image. It's important to research and seek professional help when you're trying to achieve your goals. Remember, having a healthy mind-set throughout your healthy eating journey is crucial.



# The dangers of alcohol consumption

## Paranoid Android | Interrobang

Alcohol has become so ingrained in North American society, that most people don't even question it. Alcohol consumption appears to play a significant social role in our culture and there is an expectation to drink; not if, but when. It is socially accepted that kids are going to drink underaged and I've even witnessed first-hand parents of teenagers support underaged drinking by providing the liquor. Rarely do we stop to think about what alcohol actually is and what we're putting into our bodies.

The alcohol used in beverages is ethanol (also called ethyl alcohol), a volatile, flammable liquid. It is an industrial chemical that is used as a solvent and an additive in gasoline. And, yes, it makes you feel good when you drink it. It can help you relax, or act as a social lubricant by lowering your inhibitions, but it's also a depressant which slows brain function and neural activity and can actually lead to increased anxiety and stress, not to mention the dreaded hangover which includes symptoms of fatigue, weakness, thirst, headache, muscle aches, nausea, stomach pain, vertigo, sensitivity to light and sound, irritability, sweating and increased blood pressure.

It is important to note there is a distinction between drinking alcohol on occasion versus excessive drinking, abusing alcohol or being an alcoholic (also called alcohol dependency). Here are some symptoms of different scenarios to watch out for.

Symptoms of excessive alcohol consumption include:

- Slurred speech
- Slowed reflexes
- Decreased ability to control bodily movements
- Difficulty concentrating
- Gaps in memory (brownouts)
- Remaining conscious but having no memory of your actions (blackouts)
- Behaviour changes
- Poor decision-making abilities
- Risky behaviour

Symptoms of alcohol poisoning include:

- Confusion
- Vomiting
- Seizures
- Difficulty breathing
- Blue-tinged or pale skin
- Hypothermia
- Passing out
- Coma
- Death

Symptoms of alcohol abuse include, but are not limited to:

- Drinking to relax
- Driving under the influence of alcohol
- Problems with family and friends because of drinking
- Neglecting responsibilities
- Having legal problems because of alcohol

Symptoms of alcoholism include, but are not limited to:

- A strong desire or craving to drink
- An inability to control cravings
- An inability to stop drinking
- An increased tolerance for alcohol
- Lying about drinking
- Attempting to drink without others knowing
- An inability to get through everyday activities without drinking

There are long-term effects and consequences to alcohol abuse and alcoholism to consider as well. These include:

- Shrinking of the frontal lobes of your brain
- Hallucinations (with sudden withdrawal of alcohol)
- Physical dependence, which can vary person to person
- Higher risk of cancer, particularly breast cancer in people assigned female at birth (AFAB)
- Cardiovascular disease
- Reduced ability to fight off bacteria and viruses
- More susceptible to illnesses like tuberculosis and pneumonia
- Organ damage and malfunction including liver damage, chronic pancreatitis and diabetes

complications (inability to balance blood sugar levels)

- Stomach distress including bloating, gas, ulcers and frequent diarrhea
- Anemia and fatigue
- Birth defects when drinking while pregnant
- Infertility
- Erectile dysfunction
- Osteoporosis
- Malnutrition caused by the inability to properly absorb vitamins and minerals from food
- Changes in coordination which impact balance and your ability to walk
- Muscle cramps, weakness and potential alcohol-induced rhabdomyolysis (muscle death)
- Damage to your central nervous system causing numbness in the hands and feet

You may have heard the term "Big Tobacco", which refers to a group of the largest global tobacco companies who are notorious for systematically deceiving the general population regarding the risks of lung cancer from smoking and second-hand smoke as well as the dangers of addiction. The alcohol industry is no different. According to Movendi International, a global movement for development through alcohol prevention, the producers, distributors, retailers and marketers of the alcohol industry have been "manufacturing death, disease, destruction and disability" by undermining science and spewing false claims like one to two drinks per day being good for you.

Recent studies have shown that zero drinks is the safest route and that any possible benefits of drinking alcohol are offset by the potential to develop cancer and other diseases. That being said, it's going to take a minute for society to catch up to this knowledge, much like any other scientific findings, e.g. tobacco.

Alcohol is the second-most abused substance following tobacco, and binge drinking has become a sort of rite of passage for post-secondary students. It is important to be aware of the amount of alcohol you consume and be on the lookout for signs that you may be abusing or dependent on alcohol.



#### Paranoid Android | **Interrobang**

You may have heard the term Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) or its well-known counterpart Narcotics Anonymous (N.A.), but unless you have experienced these programs firsthand, or know someone who has, you probably have a stereotyped idea of what they look like.

Alcoholics Anonymous is a worldwide fellowship that has helped hundreds of thousands of people solve their problem with alcohol. You may not know that there are also dozens of other programs like A.A. that focus on a variety of other issues. There are anonymous fellowships for almost any problem or addiction you can think of, including co-dependency, overeating, eating disorders, gambling addiction, marijuana addiction, cocaine addiction, and many more. These fellowships follow a relatively close variation of the A.A. program, with a more specific approach to the problem or addiction in question. You can track down most of these resources with a quick Google search. There are also programs for friends and family of alcoholics, including Al-Anon, Alateen and Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACA).

Alcoholics Anonymous began in the U.S. in 1935 and was founded by Bill W., a New York stockbroker, and Dr. Bob S., a surgeon. The basis of the program is *Alcoholics Anonymous: The Big Book* (currently on the fourth edition, more about that later) which was first published in 1939. The Big Book describes the A.A. recovery program and contains personal stories from actual A.A. members. It also lays out the 12 steps and 12 traditions which are viewed as the principles by which the whole program and fellowship functions.

Now you might be thinking, fellowship, eh? Sounds a bit cult-ish, to me. And at first glance, you might be right. The word cult has multiple definitions, but it can be defined as “a relatively small group of people having religious beliefs or practices regarded by others as strange or sinister.” The number of A.A. members across the globe is estimated at just over two million, which by comparison to the global population is definitely a small group of people. As for religious beliefs, yes the A.A. literature comes off pretty religious, with the use of the word God in four of the 12 steps along with another three of the steps alluding to Him. It does start to feel a bit religious until you take into consideration the time and place *The Big Book* was written. In 1939, Christianity was one of the most predominant religions in the U.S. A religious belief is

not a requirement of A.A. and there are plenty of agnostics, atheists and freethinkers in the fellowship. And lastly, the practice of excluding alcohol from one’s life could definitely be viewed as strange and/or sinister depending on who you talk to. All this said, A.A. is not a cult, but a better way of living free from alcohol with a focus on improving one’s outlook and helping others, one day at a time.

Now what do you do if you suspect you may be abusing alcohol or developing a dependence? Your first thought might be to seek medical help from your doctor, but there are still so many unknowns about alcoholism and addiction in general, and so many stereotypes within the medical field, that most medical professionals, if they know what they’re doing, are going to refer you to A.A. That’s because A.A. works. And not a whole lot of other options have had the same level of success.

I’m not claiming A.A. is a perfect solution. Although *The Big Book’s* fourth edition was published in 2001, there is still a lot of content that could use improvement. It has not been updated in almost 20 years, and there is a long way to go to make the content more inclusive of assigned female at birth (AFAB) and other marginalized people. However, the great thing about A.A. is that there are specific groups that focus on specific community needs, like men’s only groups, women’s only groups, LGBTQ2S+ groups, young people’s groups, agnostic and atheists’ groups and more.

Some important information about the types of meetings you can attend:

- **Open meetings:** open to the general public, you do not have to identify as an alcoholic.
- **Closed meetings:** closed to the general public, must have a desire to stop drinking.

With an open mind and enough willingness, if you need help, you can find it in A.A. Visit the A.A. website at [aa.org](http://aa.org) for more information and to download the literature for free, or visit the local district website at [aadistrict11.ca](http://aadistrict11.ca) for a list of local meetings in London and Middlesex. There are in-person meetings which have been the go-to format before the COVID-19 pandemic and online meetings, which have blown up since COVID and are usually held on Zoom.

# HOW TO BALANCE work, school, and life

Aisha Javaid | **Interrobang**

Your experiences at college may undergo several alterations. From switching employers to being in your first relationship to dealing with various health-related problems. These changes may become difficult and overwhelming. In which case, here are a few effective steps that will help you manage your college life.

## 1. Develop a plan

Planners, schedules, and goal-tracking apps are going to become your best friends in college. This quantitative-based method will require you to calculate all your time expenditures. Record and determine the hours you expect each day for every activity you perform in a week. Once you have blocked off time from your daily schedule, you'll notice all your available time. On a monthly calendar, you can also oversee your full weeks and be able to allocate appointments that won't conflict with other essential events.

## 2. Support and resources

Communication is key. Being able to express your struggles with your daily life is important. Conversing with your housemates, professors, and employers about your situation is vital, allowing them to acknowledge your workload. Resources such as guidance and mental health counsellors are extremely beneficial, especially when you feel stressed. These resources may also further assist you with your situation by recommending shifts in your timetable or course load.

Moreover, Academic Advisor for the School of Information Technology and Student Success Advisor, Faith Wallis, acknowledged the many concerns she's dealt with from students.

"I do a lot of defusing with students," said Wallis. "It's always about helping them find those resources and counselling services both on and off campus."

Wallis works to help students with their mental health, as it affects their education. Find out who your Academic Advisor is early, so you know where to go when you're struggling to balance your schedule.

## 3. Burn-out and managing stress

Drinking excessive amounts of caffeine or becoming a social media addict are signs of burn-out and tension. These damaging obsessions will become detrimental to your success in college. Remember, your free time is extremely valuable when you undertake multiple tasks alongside school. These open time slots should be employed to help relax and rejuvenate you for your workweek. Understanding and researching techniques to control stress or obstacles that interfere in your life is key in good time-management practice.

Wallis also mentioned the effects of not taking a break and the impact it has on your schooling.

"I like to tell them [students], they need to treat school as a full-time job," she said. "You take 40 hours, five days a week to work. Then, you take a day for yourself and a day for your friends. Because if you are focusing on school 100 per cent of the time, you are going to burn-out."

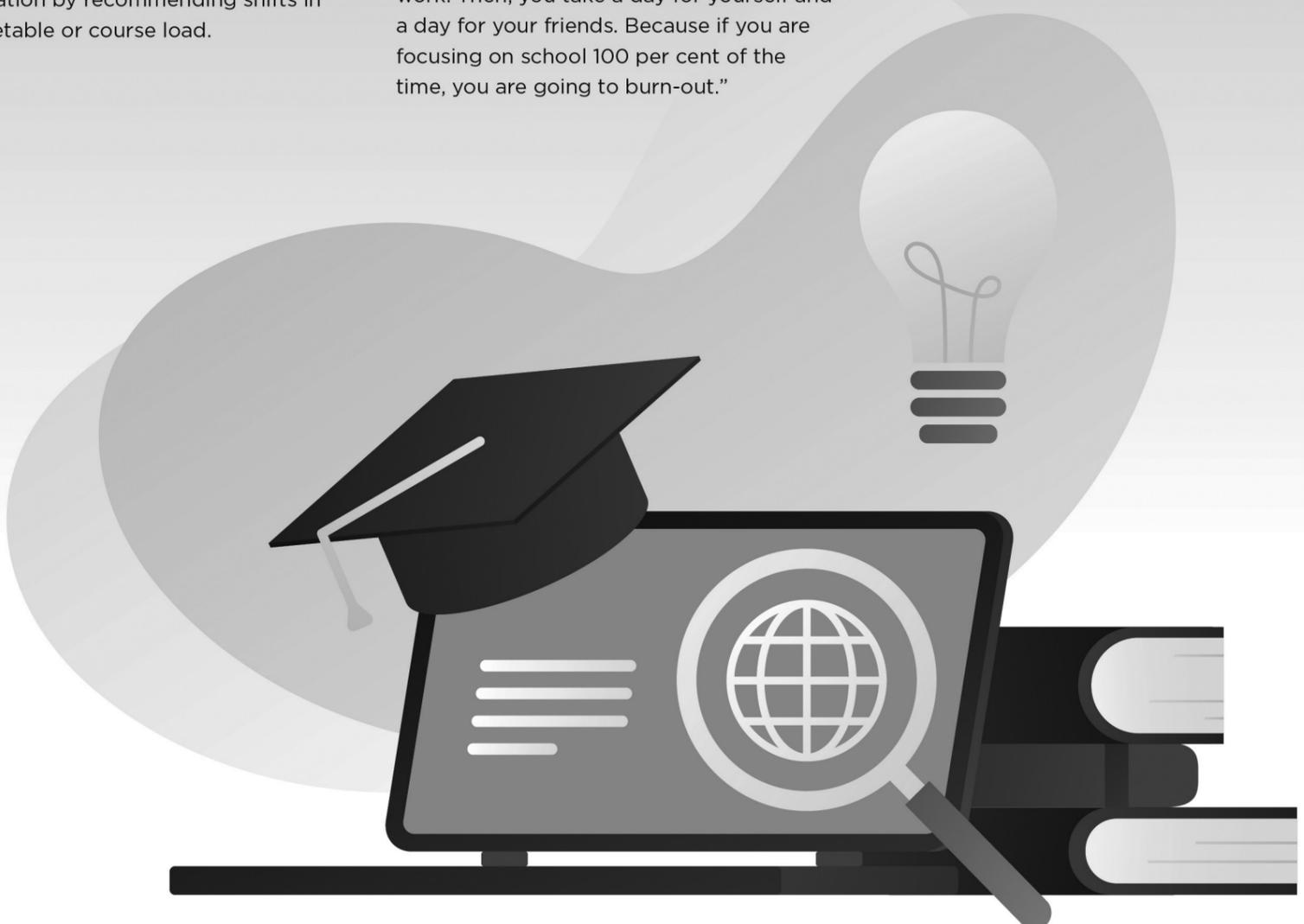
## 4. Reward yourself

It's not easy, I know. But it's important to reward yourself for all your hard-work and dedication. This reward is something you set, that you think you earn. It's important to celebrate your major and minor accomplishments, especially after you finish a hectic workweek. Treat yourself to a spa date or a movie and take care of yourself.

## 5. Taking advantage of flexibility in school and work

Often, your work or school may allow you to replace classes and shifts for different time slots. When you are feeling overwhelmed with your schedule, seek ways to reorganize and re-establish timing for your daily activities. It may be beneficial to replan occasionally if you feel exceedingly swamped.

With proper scheduling, communication and stress management skills, balancing commitments outside of college isn't too difficult. But these skills require time and practice, so be easy on yourself. Remember your end goal and that dedication and hard work are going to help you achieve your aspirations.



# Therapy dogs putting smiles on hospital patients' faces

**Kate Otterbein**  
INTERROBANG

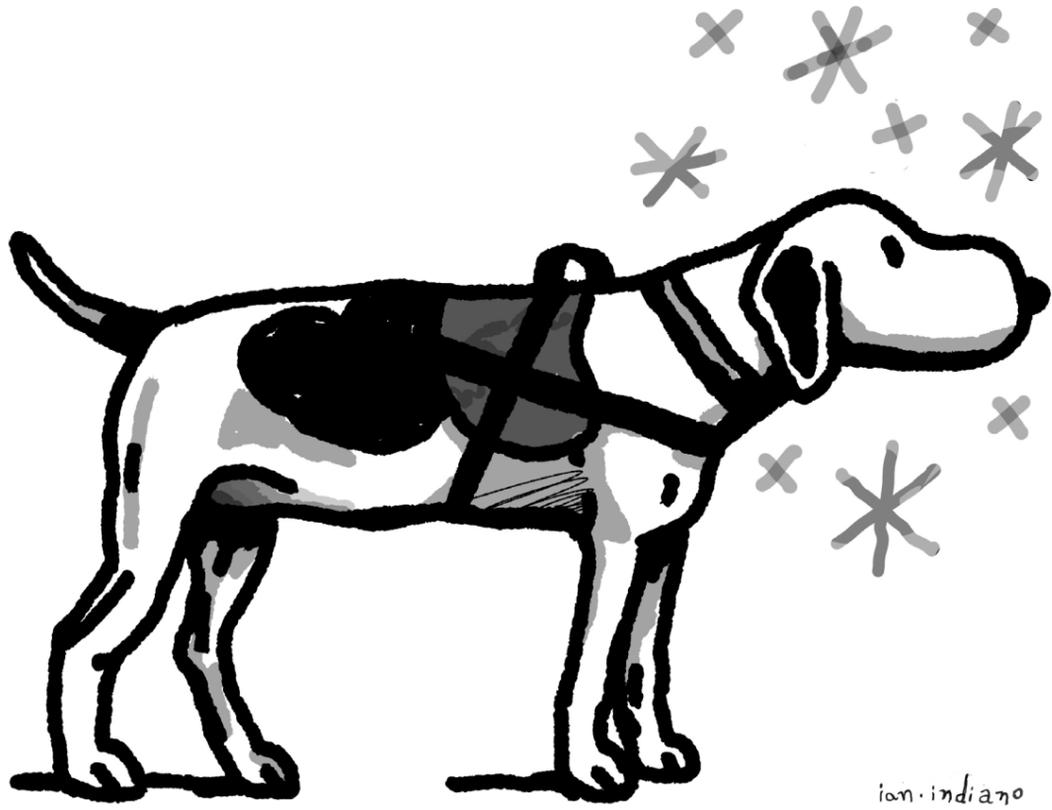
Therapy and personal support dogs are becoming more frequent to help people deal with struggles in their life. They provide many benefits, like allowing people to live comfortably, knowing if they have difficulty in public, they have the support of their dog. But, the cost can be hefty. Personal support dogs can cost upwards of \$25,000 after training, veterinary bills, basic necessities, and food costs. These costs can be a struggle for many people looking to get a personal support dog. But, there are some therapy dogs that people can benefit from, free of charge.

Tracey Silverthorn has two trained therapy dogs as part of the St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog Program. She takes her pugs, Zombie Pug and Crowley Puggy, into hospitals to visit patients and lift their spirits. Before Zombie and Crowley, she had a therapy dog named Igor. Silverthorn and Igor were the first team to visit the Children's Hospital.

"These dogs go through pretty rigorous testing to become therapy dogs to start with," said Silverthorn. "They have to be at least one year old because the maturity level generally isn't there until a year old. Then they have to do 40 visits with adults before they can go back and be child tested and read tested, which means they can sit quiet enough for kids to read books to them."

Silverthorn added that she gets started with obedience training at a young age with all of her pugs, so they all get tested at one year-old to

Personal support dogs provide many benefits, like allowing people to live comfortably, knowing if they have difficulty in public, they have the support of their dog.



ian.indiano

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become a therapy dog.

Zombie is already licensed, but Crowley is still in training, as he is not old enough yet. However, since the pandemic hit, neither pups have been able to go into the hospitals. All visits have been done virtually, which means the unlicensed Crowley still gets to participate.

"To a certain degree, the online therapy dog stuff has actually been

really interesting for the patients," said Silverthorn. "Normally, I'm going into their room. This has opened it up so they can see how we live. There's one lady that I think it's going on like, eight years that I've been doing this with her. You build a bond, but they don't know enough about your life. With the iPad, they get to see the dog collars in the spare room, they get to see the

garden, where the dogs live."

Having therapy dogs isn't only beneficial for the patients they go and visit; Silverthorn also gets joy from making people happy.

"I was at Costco one day, and I feel [tapping] on my hip. And I look down at this kid, and Mom's going, 'Oh, I'm so sorry.' The kid is looking at me going, 'Do you remember me?' He says, 'you brought your

pugs in to see me! I'm all better now!' This is so why I do what I do," Silverthorn said.

Therapy dogs provide the emotional support that many people benefit from. Whether it be patients in the hospital or people struggling with mental health. But owners of therapy dogs also get a feeling of pride and accomplishment when their dogs can make someone's day.

## The comic book villain: Mental health vs. psychosis

**Aisha Javid**  
INTERROBANG

OK, I'll be honest, I *Harley* ever read comic books or know a lot about them. However, I certainly have an appreciation for the stories, surrealism, character development and the hidden messages within them.

The only time I remember religiously collecting comics was in my childhood. In the fifth grade, my best friend and I had a strange obsession with reading *Archie* comics. We even had an inside joke and were convinced that we were Betty and Veronica, because of our personalities and hair colours matching theirs. I had dark hair and she was blonde; hence I was Veronica, and she was Betty.

It was an outdated series, but nonetheless we deeply connected with the characters and stories, even to the point where we would sometimes have minor arguments over who *Archie* should be with.

Today, whenever I speak to that same friend, we joke about those days and name it as one of the most precious times of our childhood.

I suppose we were kids...and it was *Archie*. But, I occasionally wonder, what if we were older. What if the comic books we were obsessed with were intended for a mature audience? What if we instead connected with characters who were a

threat to society or psychotic or battling mental health problems?

I guess my "what ifs" could continue forever. But, honestly, through my observations and experiences, I understand the profound influence of comics, the film franchises they inspire, and their effects on us emotionally.

A specific character who has always stood out to me, in comics, and in movies, is the Joker.

Joker is sadistic; he's a supervillain, a psychopath, all topped with a cruel sense of humour. Furthermore, he's very popular and certainly a fan favourite in the DC Universe. He's entertaining, and for some, he's relatable.

Any individual familiar with his character, would quote his personality as being severely mentally ill. He portrays common mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, sociopathic tendencies, and more.

Owner of Heroes Comics in London, Ont., Brahm Wiseman explained how Joker is generally viewed.

"You know, he's certainly not a sympathetic character," said Wiseman. "Most serial killers are psychopaths, right? So he's a psychopath and is somebody that doesn't care about anybody else's emotions or well-being."

"We don't want to paint Joker in a sympathetic light because he kills people. He's a great foil to Batman,



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The element of psychosis is entertaining in fictional characters but horrific in the real world.

but he's not sympathetic in the same way that most people dealing with mental health are in real life."

Wiseman further explained that the element of psychosis is entertaining in fictional characters but horrific in the real world.

"We always love villains and that's okay. Typically, in comic books, villains do have a sympathetic side. Something wrong happened to them, and something went wrong

in their lives that turned them into who they are. They're still making wrong choices at the end of the day. We love to cheer people like that in horror movies and all but it's a lot different than a person like that in real life. We don't do that."

Manager at Worlds Away, Rick Miles, narrowed in on the toxic relationship Joker has with Harley Quinn.

"People tend to really romanticize the Harley Quinn and Joker

relationship," he said. "It is completely disempowering, and that's problematic. It's an abusive relationship. He absolutely emotionally and physically abuses her."

Nonetheless, both Miles and Wiseman appreciate comic books, and entertaining characters like the Joker. Their hope is that people can be amused by fictional characters, while not glamorizing individuals who are abusive and threatening.

# The growing spectrum: understanding autism in women

**Ian Indiano**  
INTERROBANG

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD), or simply autism, refers to a broad range of conditions that can affect people's ability to socialize, behave and communicate with others. Individuals with autism may think, interact, learn, and solve problems in a different way. Their abilities may range from highly gifted to heavily challenged. According to the Canadian Medical Association, approximately one to two per cent of the Canadian population is on the autism spectrum. Today, there are around 135,000 autistic people living in Ont.

But what are the causes behind the condition? We still do not know what causes ASD, but that does not mean that we don't know much about it. Science makes advances in autism research every day. In the past, it used to be broken down into subtypes, like Asperger's syndrome, but today, the common notion is that it is a condition with a wide-ranging spectrum of severity and symptoms. In fact, the spectrum keeps growing the more we learn about it.

But there is still much to learn. Many recent studies suggest that autism often goes undiagnosed in girls, which may explain why many people believe autism is more common in boys. The reasons for this are not clear, but it is believed, for example, that women are more likely to learn how to camouflage or hide their symptoms. Because there is no objective medical test for autism, the current diagnosis procedures are commonly standardized based on symptoms in male individuals. The result is that three males are diagnosed for every one woman, who also tend to be diagnosed much later in life.

Ashley Sandham, is a fine-art student who is diagnosed with ASD and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

**What is people's biggest misconception about ASD?**

One of the biggest misconceptions about autism is that people assume that everyone presents the same on the spectrum. The diagnosis criteria out there for ASD is based on the study of young boys and men with ASD. This causes women with ASD to be under-represented as a demographic. TV shows often represent ASD symptoms as extreme when they can also be super subtle.

**How does being a woman on the spectrum differ from being a man in the spectrum?**

Women growing up with ASD often learn how to mask/hide our symptoms; so, by the time some of us are in grade school we are able to hide our symptoms so that we can fit in with our neurotypical peers which often leads to a late diagnosis in the late teens or adulthood. Men usually don't learn the same social coping skills that are required of women, making it harder for them to mask their symptoms. Men often get treated sooner, getting access to the resources that they need to help them succeed in school.

**What do you think people should do to increase social acceptance?**

To increase social acceptance of autism, people should learn that we all present different and have each our own body of interests, just like you. Sometimes patience is required to communicate with us, as we can experience social burnout and become overwhelmed. We also might not be able to read some of social queues that are sub-conscious to neurotypicals, so it is sometimes better to be straight forward, as we might not be able to read the context.

**Do you have any last words or anything else you would like to share with our readers?**

I think it's important for people to keep an open mind when dealing with different individuals, since sometimes disabilities can be invisible; so always be kind and patient when talking with and engaging with your peers. Whenever possible try to accommodate so that everyone can be included.



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Many recent studies suggest that autism often goes undiagnosed in girls, which may explain why many people believe autism is more common in boys.

# MENTal health: Cry about it

**Jessica Gould**  
INTERROBANG

Masculinity on its own is not a barrier to men’s mental health. However, orthodox masculinity limits the parameters culturally defined in what a man can be and has often been portrayed as men not showing weakness, suffering, or pain. To have men only be seen as powerful perpetuates a specific notion that men can only be considered valid if they are to demonstrate these orthodox kinds of characteristics.

Christian Ylagan is an instructor in the department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies at Western University and highlighted the critical issues with hegemonic masculinity.

“These orthodox notions of masculinity prevent the ways that men are allowed to engage with their emotions, with their feelings, with their experiences, with pain or weaknesses and these kinds of things,” said Ylagan. “Men who internalize this kind of masculinity see depression and anxiety and these kinds of issues as somehow emasculating, and orthodox notions of masculinity prevent men from acknowledging the fact that these feelings, experiences, and emotions are part of a healthy human condition.”

Ylagan noted that many men who internalize and try to align themselves with the narrow orthodox notion of masculinity create additional barriers for Queer and Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) men in feeling invalidated to ask for help.

“There is a very narrow notion of what is considered hegemonic masculinity, in the prime form of masculinity, and we already know that that’s the kind of masculinity that is white, cisgender, heterosexual, middle/upper class,” explained Ylagan. “That kind of form of masculinity that has colonial roots is predominant or a hegemonic form of masculinity, where certain notions of orthodox masculinity are derived from. Given this hegemonic or orthodox masculinity in media and culture, a lot of people, including Queer and BIPOC men, internalize these notions and then find it difficult to broaden their conception of masculinity.”

Men who face multi-layer obstacles with intersectional racial, social, and cultural aspects intertwined with masculinity meet more factors against accessing help for mental health.

When it comes to taking steps toward the erasure of stigmatizing men’s mental health, the problem of orthodox masculinity is not just a male problem. Collectively, everyone in a societal stance has implicated some of the stigma or



CREDIT: VICHAI PHUBUBPHAPAN

Men who face multi-layer obstacles with intersectional racial, social, and cultural aspects intertwined with masculinity meet more factors against accessing help for mental health.

conditions of orthodox masculinity.

“We have to examine our own prejudices about mental health among men,” said Ylagan. “Do we also perpetuate some of these notions that men are invincible, that men don’t feel emotion, that men don’t feel depressed? When was the last time we asked our friends how they’re doing, or where are they at mentally during this difficult time?”

Ylagan further identified one way to help in the erasure of the stigma is to allow men to acknowledge the fact they are not doing well, especially in the face of the ongoing pandemic.

“A lot of the things that perhaps define masculinity in an orthodox way, like having employment and having money, those things are crumbling during the pandemic time. People might have lost their job or broken up with somebody, so awareness is one way we can erase the stigma and offering men a space without judgment to experience these particular emotions or experiences.”

As a culture with propagated notions of masculinity and attributing masculinity to power or success while living in today’s pandemic world, these things are less accessible. People have lost their feeling of stability or success, perpetuating how men engage with their

mental health.

“It’s a multi-layer problem in that sense, we’re not just looking at mental health in a vacuum, but there’s a societal aspect as well,” said Ylagan. “Of which we are all part of. Everyone has implicated in

some way in propagating certain ideas or notions or concepts about masculinity, and that feeds into the way that men engage with their own mental health issues. It’s not just a problem for or among men; it’s a problem for everyone that feels

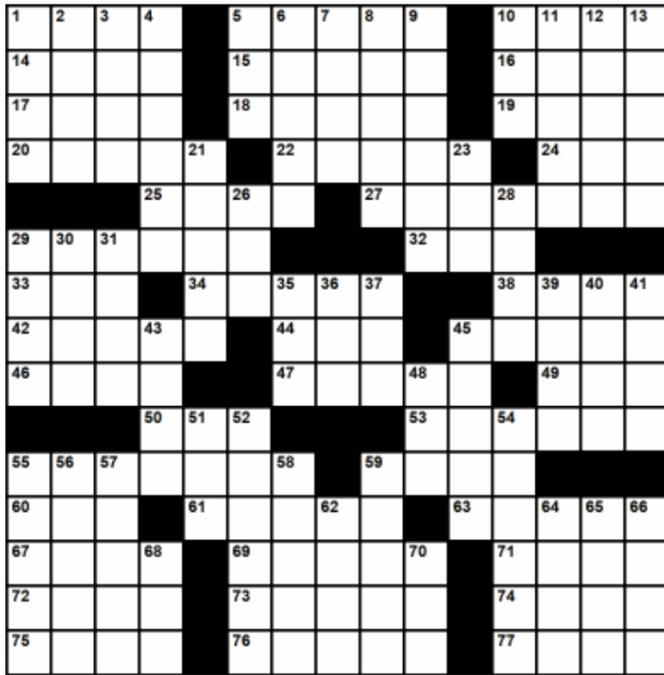
with men.”

A cultural shift in normalizing men to connect with their mental health while creating spaces to do so are essential steps in helping end the stigma for men to feel valid beyond orthodox masculinity notions.

**CROSSWORD**

**ACROSS**

- 1. Unlike a novice
- 5. Building block
- 10. "Check this out!"
- 14. Shakespearean verb
- 15. Land
- 16. Dr. Seuss's "Horton Hears \_\_\_"
- 17. Cathedral area
- 18. Score 100% on a test (2 words)
- 19. Body part
- 20. "Bye Bye Bye" boy band
- 22. Queen \_\_\_ lace
- 24. \_\_\_ grecque (cooked in olive oil, lemon juice, wine, and herbs, and served cold)
- 25. "Neato!"
- 27. Menu phrase
- 29. "Hogan's Heroes" corporal
- 32. Assent
- 33. Michael Sheen's character in "Twilight"
- 34. Some sports car roofs
- 38. Baseball's Ordoñez et al.
- 42. Marriage and others
- 44. Cashew, e.g.
- 45. Brute
- 46. Disappointed interjections from Dirk Nowitzki
- 47. Chopin composition
- 49. Red or Black
- 50. Ode title words (2 words)
- 53. Away from the bow
- 55. For the reason that
- 59. Focus group?
- 60. Heredity unit
- 61. Sicilia, in Italia
- 63. Exams
- 67. A long, long time
- 69. Fill with joy
- 71. Give's opposite
- 72. Touched the tarmac
- 73. Bone connector
- 74. Mexican miss (Abbr.)
- 75. Male parents



- 76. Part of a play
- 77. Right on the map?
- DOWN**
- 1. Tribal chief
- 2. Short snoozes
- 3. Online craft store
- 4. Word of origin
- 5. One-time connector
- 6. Stick-on
- 7. Opera conductor Daniel
- 8. Fetch
- 9. Diner
- 10. "Fiddlesticks!"
- 11. Exertion
- 12. "I \_\_\_ return"
- 13. NBC morning show
- 21. Checked things
- 23. "Comprende?"
- 26. Away
- 28. Longest Swiss river
- 29. Superman's mother
- 30. Clapton who sang "Layla"
- 31. Not just one
- 35. Solitary
- 36. Place
- 37. Disco owner on "The Simpsons"
- 39. Comfort
- 40. Belgian river
- 41. "South Park" boy
- 43. "¿Cómo \_\_\_ usted?"
- 45. Assail
- 48. Calendar square
- 51. French 101 word
- 52. Evaluate
- 54. African fly
- 55. Bakery item
- 56. Name on a famous WWII bomber
- 57. Wolf, e.g.
- 58. Windblown
- 59. Consumed
- 62. Highway divider
- 64. Mother of Isaac
- 65. Box office purchases (Abbr.)
- 66. Usher's offering
- 68. John, Paul and George: (Abbr.)
- 70. Ram's mate

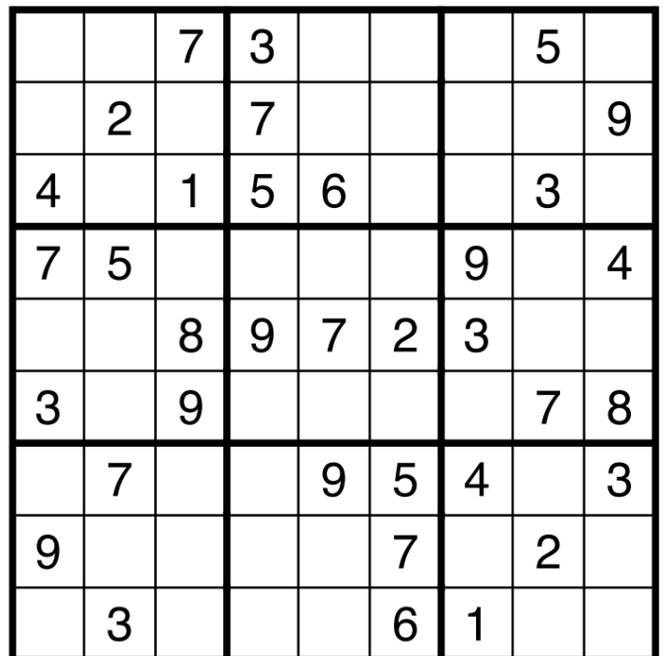
**WORD SEARCH**



**GOOD MENTAL HEALTH**

- Friends
- Happy at work
- Learning
- Kindness
- Stability
- Exercise
- Peace
- Sharing
- Family
- Hobbies
- Purpose
- Sleep
- Connection
- Laughter
- Adventure

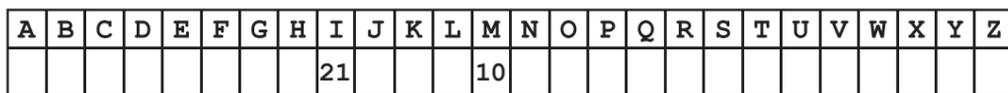
**SUDOKU**



*Puzzle rating: Easy*

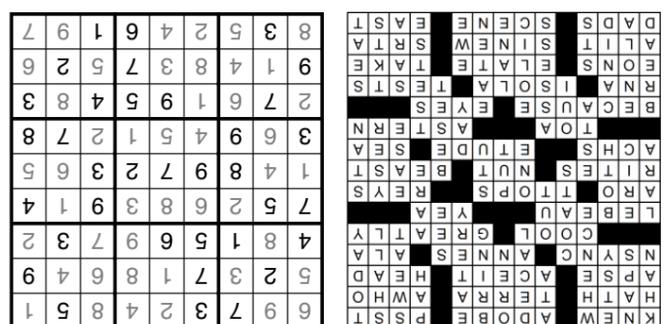
Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 grid contains the digits 1 through 9. That means no number is repeated in any column, row or box.

**CRYPTOGRAM**



“  
 15 25 22 22 23 14 10      5 21 22 3      21 11  
 8 22 21 11 19      8 14 5 23  
 25 14 8 22 25 9      15 25 14 3 9  
 ”

**PUZZLE SOLUTIONS**



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Freshman Fifteen



By Alan Dungo



**Aries**

A chance to bring in extra cash looks promising. Time invested will pay off. An idea you have will help you get things done in a shorter amount of time. Discuss ideas and plans with someone you love and trust to look out for you and it will help you make an important decision that will improve your life. Using charm will pay off; pressure will not. A little romance will lead to better living arrangements. Doubt will set in if you haven't figured out how to handle shared expenses. Don't procrastinate; address such issues swiftly.

**Libra**

Pay attention to what's going on at home. You'll offset a problem with someone who lives with or near you. Being aware of what others are going through will allow you to make a difference in the outcome of a situation that will affect you. Put everything you've got into positive changes at home that will make your place more inviting and peaceful. Your state of mind will improve and encourage you to spend more time with someone you love. Tone down your spending habits. Question where your money is going and allocate funds better to suit your current budget.

**Taurus**

Set goals and take care of responsibilities to ensure you reach your target. Physical action will pay off and help you gain the respect of those you work alongside. Take the time to gather facts before you act. A sensitive issue will spin out of control if you aren't careful how you respond. Don't mince words when trying to get your point across. A direct approach to achieving what you set out to do will have good results. Don't let change throw you off guard. Emotions will be difficult to control. Listen to instructions, pay attention to detail and finish what you start.

**Scorpio**

An opportunity is apparent regarding a position or a change to your status. Do your due diligence to prepare for whatever comes your way. A healthy mindset and updating any paperwork that needs a tweak will help and build confidence as well. Touch base with people who are forward-thinking, and offer insight into topics of interest. You'll get wind of something that sparks your imagination and sends you in a positive direction. An open mind will lead to a change in lifestyle. Channel your energy into love, romance and stabilizing your personal life.

**Gemini**

Trust your instincts, not what someone persuasive tries to instill in you. Research and fact-find until you are sure the information you gather is reliable and gives you the peace of mind required to make a wise decision. You have more going for you than you realize. Speak with confidence, and you will summon the support needed to get what you want. Adjust your skills to suit the job market. Be a good listener and the information you receive will help you dodge a situation that can affect your reputation.

**Sagittarius**

Be careful how you handle situations involving a friend or relative. Stick to the facts, and question anyone who exaggerates. Channel your energy into living up to your promises, and you'll make a good impression on someone who can help you get ahead. Take the initiative and a position that excites you will come your way. Put together a plan, and update your resume. Don't hold back; if you want something, do your part to ensure you leave nothing to chance. Believe in yourself, but don't promise something you cannot deliver.

**Cancer**

Home improvements should stick to a budget and you oversee all the details yourself. Set up a space designated to being productive. Refuse to let an outsider tell you what to do; it's up to you to make your request concise and to get what you want. Listen to complaints and criticism, and respond with care. Being mindful of others will keep anger down and morale up. A kind word will make a difference to the response you get. Downtime, relaxing with someone you love or pampering yourself will lift your spirits. Romance is encouraged.

**Capricorn**

Spend time on what matters. The improvements you make at home will positively affect your state of mind and the amount of time you spend there. Pleasing someone you love will bring you closer and encourage you to share more of your interests and time. An emotional matter will surface if you force your will on someone or refuse to compromise. Anger will not solve anything; it will make matters worse. Balance, integrity and keeping the peace will work in your favour. Think matters through carefully and consider what you can offer to ensure you get what you want.

**Leo**

A couple of changes to how you earn your living will make a world of difference to your attitude. An optimistic approach to life, love and work will encourage others to help you get ahead. Share your thoughts, and welcome suggestions. Let your feelings be known to a friend. You will get valuable information that will help you make a difficult decision. Having a clear picture of a situation will deter you or someone else from overreacting. A change may not be welcome but it will be necessary. Do whatever's needed to save money, your reputation and bring you peace of mind.

**Aquarius**

Look over expenditures and shared expenses to ease your mind and confirm that everything is taken care of on time to avoid penalties. Staying on top of finances will give insight into what you can put aside for personal pampering, entertainment or something you want to purchase. Opportunity knocks. Don't skip a beat. Get involved in a project that excites you, and it will energize you. Do something creative or spend time with friends or family. It will bring out the best in you. Avoid excess, indulgent behaviour or overreaction.

**Virgo**

If change is what you want implement it and pursue your dreams. Don't wait for someone to make the first move. It's up to you to make the adjustments that will soothe your soul and get you closer to your goal. Take the initiative when it comes to professional and financial goals. Step out of your comfort zone, if necessary, to get what you want. Refuse to let anyone interfere with your plans. Expect to face opposition when dealing with a relative. Don't make a big deal out of something you cannot change. Do your own thing, and give others the freedom to as well.

**Pisces**

Your intuition will be spot. Don't second-guess yourself when it comes to relationships or something creative you want to pursue. Trust your instincts, and follow through with your plans. Romance will enhance your life and bring you closer to someone you love. Pay close attention to what others are doing or saying. Being well-informed will encourage better decisions when right or wrongdoing is an issue. Question someone's motives if they make an offer that sounds too good to be true. An unexpected gift is heading your way.

NOT NEUROTYPICAL



Touch is a powerful reassurance tool.

By Christopher Miszczak © 2021



Butt sweat n Tears by Andres Silva



@FilbertCartoons



By Dylan Charette

# Fanshawe's cross country teams run through the competition at home event

**Brad Kraemer**  
INTERROBANG

Following a cancelled 2020 season, the Falcons' men's and women's cross country teams started their 2021 campaign triumphantly at the annual Fanshawe Invitational at the Fanshawe Conservation Area on Oct. 2. Individually, Seth Marcaccio was named Ontario Colleges Athletics Association (OCAA) athlete of the week for his blistering pace of 25:43 in the men's 8km race earning him first place. Sandy Freeland achieved second place in 2019 and again this year with a time of 26:41, giving the Fanshawe men a one-two finish to lead the team over St. Clair, who finished five points behind the Falcons.

Even without the individual race winner, the Falcons' women built a larger gap to the opposition than the men in their 6km run with strong finishes from Tamara DePauw and Katie Rice, securing second

and third place respectively with times of 25:18 and 25:41. Falcons' Brooke Jez finished 19th in her first race since suffering an injury four year ago and was pleased with her admirable outcome.

"It was amazing to run cross country again," said Jez. "I have not raced cross country since 2017 due to an injury. Four years is a long time to go without racing, glad I was able to strap on the spikes again. I am very happy with my results, I went out and did the very best I could, that's what counts."

The Falcons' cross country teams staked their claim as a team to be reckoned with moving forward and Jez is thrilled to continue. Expectations could be high for the teams after such a successful first event of the season, but she maintained that the athletes just want to have fun and give it their all.

"Honestly, I think [the teams are] just excited to race," stated Jez. "It's been way too long. Our main goal is to go out and do our best while enjoying the sport we all love. As



The Falcons men's and women's cross country teams led by head coach Ashley VanderVecht (right) coming together for a team photo before the big run.

CREDIT: FANSHAWE ATHLETICS

well as hoping to keep everyone healthy and in our best condition before the OCAA championships."

A great opening race for the Falcons has the school proud and hopeful for when Jez and the rest

of the runners race in the OCAA championships at the end of October.

# Why the 2021 Toronto Blue Jays were the most exciting Jays team since '93

**Brad Kraemer**  
INTERROBANG

The Toronto Blue Jays fell short of an American League wildcard playoff berth by a single game after

a 91-win season and a playoff race tighter than Robbie Ray's pants. It had Canada rallying around the Jays like in 2015 and when the nation comes together for sports, there is nothing more beautiful. The 2021 team was young, fun and most

importantly, super talented. The comparison between this year's Blue Jays and the Jays of 2015 can be made – there were some similarities, no doubt – but there were plenty of differences as well. Ones that make this team even better.

## Age

First of all, the most obvious distinction is that in 2015, the Jays were full of veteran stars with the oldest lineup, on average, across both leagues. The 2021 Jays actually had the youngest batting lineup, a polar opposite. Despite their age disparity, absolutely nobody wanted to play either squad. Whether the heart of the order consisted of Troy Tulowitzki, Josh Donaldson, José Bautista and Edwin Encarnación or the current Marcus Semien, Vladimir Guerrero Jr., Bo Bichette and Teoscar Hernández, opposing pitchers were always in for a tough night on the mound. Three of the players from 2015 are already out of the league, while all of the four current Jays are in or before their prime. The prospect of the future makes this ball club all the more engaging.

## Hype

The hype for both teams gained a lot of traction in the last two months of their respective seasons. In 2015, the former General Manager of the team Alex Anthopoulos traded for left-hander David Price and shortstop Tulowitzki at the trade deadline. This year, the Jays were sitting over 6.5 games back of the wild card when they swept the New York Yankees in the midst of an eight game winning streak and at one point in the month of September, claimed the top wild card spot over division rivals Yankees and Boston Red Sox. The division-winning 2015 squad may have made the playoffs, but the fight for the postseason in 2021 had Canadians glued to their screens watching this young team.

## Talent

This is where things get eerily similar. The 2015 Jays had three of the top four RBI leaders in the American League, along with the leader in ERA in Price and the runner up in WHIP, Marco Estrada. This season, the Jays had four players hit for over 100 RBIs and Robbie Ray led both ERA and WHIP categories. Josh Donaldson

won the 2015 AL Most Valuable Player and David Price was the Cy Young runner-up. With "Vladdy" in contention for the triple crown until the last couple weeks and Robbie Ray as the Cy Young favourite, at worst, the Jays will have two second place players for both awards. The battle in talent goes much further than the two leaders of the team though, this Jays roster is deeper with guys like Lourdes Gurriel Jr. and Randal Grichuk hitting for over 80 RBIs. Plus, we still haven't mentioned the \$150 million dollar man, George Springer, who came on very strong at the end of the season. That alone is downright scary. The Jays are also very deep in their starting rotation with the epitome of steady José Berrios, Korean sensation Hyun-Jin Ryu and potential Rookie of the Year Alek Manoah. The weakness of both teams was in the bullpen, so imagine if Kirby Yates (injured for the year) was healthy and pitching in a nasty one-two punch with closer Jordan Romano this season.

## Fun

Finally, the most important part of it all. To not take anything away from the 2015 squad, this Jays team might have been the most fun in all of baseball. Don't get me wrong, the 2015 Jays were fun, but there's definitely a difference. Donaldson and Bautista were intense guys. Same with Marcus Stroman. They were much more likely to start a fight rather than friendships. It feels like the 2021 Jays are in a constant state of partying in the dugout and it's clear that they all get along. The home run jacket, the smiles, Vladdy getting taped to the dugout – all of it makes this team so exciting.

The 2021 Blue Jays missing the playoffs is a travesty. Not just for people in Canada, but for all baseball fans. With a rotation of their calibre and a batting order scarier than *The Shining*, the Jays could have been a dark horse for a World Series run.

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**DIRECTOR**

**SPEECHES**

# How chess can benefit mental health

**Brad Kraemer**  
INTERROBANG

Chess is more than a game. It's strategy, focus, memory, perspective and creativity wrapped into 32 white squares, 32 black squares and 16 pieces. It's also a game that takes time, and to become a grandmaster, it takes *all* your time.

The average adult chess player has a ranking of approximately 1200. Masters typically range from 2000-3000. As your ranking increases, players begin to use their brains differently than others and the more you play, the likelihood of your brain adapting closer to that of a grandmaster increases. Many studies on the brain have proven that chess can improve IQ, memory, problem-solving skills and concentration while also helping to prevent Alzheimer's in the elderly, reducing Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in youth and relaxing those with anxiety.

Evan Moorehead, who's been diagnosed with anxiety, is a 1750-rated chess player and he believes that chess is one of the best options he has to relieve stress and keep his mind occupied.

"I find playing a game of chess really helps," said Moorehead. "It's just something to get your mind off it because you have to be so focused on the game that your mind just forgets about everything else."

As for Alzheimer's, a study conducted by the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health concluded that due to the cognitive benefits of playing chess, it can act as a protective factor against dementia. Also, for ADHD, a 2016 study by the International Journal of Applied Psychology tested 100 students with ADHD for four months by having half of them play chess regularly. They found that those who played chess showed an increase in attentiveness and a decrease in over-activity by around 41 per cent. Kimberley Smith is the mother of a former sixth grade Waterloo Regional Chess Champion and although her son does not live with ADHD, she said she's noticed a change in her son's attitude since he started practicing chess.

"I've seen a difference in my son's behaviour, such as his level of patience and less tantrums than when he was younger. The game is so slow and monitored and it shows calmness in him," said Smith. "He's always learning [and growing] through the game of chess."



CREDIT: IVANASTAR

Chess can improve IQ, memory, problem-solving skills and concentration while also helping to prevent Alzheimer's in the elderly, reducing Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in youth and relaxing those with anxiety.

Mental disorders do not discriminate, although a constructive lifestyle can be vital for maintaining strong mental health. Moorehead explained how chess can be a handy tool for other things like a busy school day.

"If I'm studying for something, I find playing a game of chess gets your mind ready," said Moorehead. "It really helps you concentrate just by decision-making and stuff and just learning how to approach different situations analytically."

If chess is something you enjoy, it can also be a great way to meet people. Friendships typically begin on the foundation of common interest and the board game is actually a very social hobby. Moorehead also believes chess is great for making friends and with the popularity of the Netflix miniseries *The Queen's Gambit*, the amount of people you can meet playing chess has only grown.

"I'm not as involved with chess communities, but I know there's one on campus [at the University of Guelph] that's just really big and I think it's good to meet a lot of different people," said Moorehead. "If you see the numbers on some of the websites after that [*The Queen's Gambit*], and it was kind of right in line with some of the big Twitch streamers moving over to chess and the growth of some chess streamers on Twitch, it was just a booming popularity over COVID."

Chess is undoubtedly a time-consuming game, but if you give it time, you can get a lot out of it. There are social, intellectual and mental health benefits that are only just a few moves away.

# Focus on the moment: The power of mindfulness

**Ana Lustosa**  
INTERROBANG

According to a recent Statistics Canada survey on COVID-19 and mental health (SCMH), one in four (25 per cent) of Canadians between 18 years-old and older screened positive for symptoms of depression, anxiety or post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in spring 2021, up from one in five in fall of 2020. The results show that COVID-19 has had a dramatic effect on people's mental health.

While it may not be for everyone, using awareness of breathing and focusing on the current moment, also known as mindfulness, is an ancient practice that can help against symptoms of anxiety and depression.

In London, there are many places that offer meditation sessions either in-person or online. With more than 800 followers on their Facebook page, the London Mindfulness Community is one example. Created seven years ago and adapted because of the pandemic, they are a peer group of enthusiasts who promote meetings each Sunday morning that are totally free for all to attend. Depending on the weather, the series takes place outdoors. The only request is to bring your own mat, blanket, pillow, or chair.

"Meditation doesn't have to be done in a beautiful room with a statue in the corner or anything like that," explained Greg Reid, one of the facilitators for the group. "The first step is to take look around. What's going on? Not try to change anything...in the second minute, you just assume your breath, notice the sensation of



CREDIT: NADIA\_BORMOTOVA

While it may not be for everyone, using awareness of breathing and focus on the current moment, mindfulness is an ancient practice that can help against symptoms as anxiety and depression.

breathing in your body...in the third minute, there are sensations, awareness of breath to spread in your body."

It may sound simple, but mindfulness techniques can go even further. A study carried out in partnership between the London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) and researchers from the Lawson Health Research Institute found that the practice can bring beneficial results for those who have Multiple Sclerosis (MS).

"[Mindfulness] is a practice where we focus on the moment and living in the present," said Dr. Sarah Morrow, neurologist and Associate Scientist at Lawson and Director of the London MS Clinic at LHSC.

Discovering if mindfulness could help newly diagnosed patients to better cope with the situation at a time of intense stress was the goal. 24 MS patients were divided into two groups. One of the groups joined a program for 10 weeks, participating in many different mindfulness techniques, including homework they had

to do to keep up the practice. One of these patients was engineer-in-training and 28 year-old, Mitchell Kuska.

"I was diagnosed with MS when I was doing my Masters at Western University. I had started a new semester when I tried to go through dealing with a diagnosis of MS," said Kuska.

The program used during the study was based on *Mindfulness Without Borders*, a charitable organization that offers courses to educators, youth, health, and corporate professionals.

Six months later, the researchers recognized the results.

"[Those] in the mindfulness group had better coping, they did better on depression, and there was a better improvement on stress scale," said Dr. Morrow.

Though the study was completed in July of 2021, Kuska said he will continue to use the techniques.

"Mindfulness just helps me about what is going on in my body, in my mind, and be able to deal with it," he said.

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