

"CARPE DIEM" SEIZE THE DAY



Hello Bisons! It is that time of the year when we are back with our books, laptops, planners, journals, and calendars, with set deadlines, and tight schedules - all set to excel yet another year in our university lives and this time - in-person after two long years of online learning! How amazing is that? Some of us have had an incredible time meeting new people and making friends, and some of us are still adjusting to getting back in person.

While some see this as an opportunity to socialize and experience the 'normal' life again, others might be feeling a little antsy to have people around again. All of us are unique beings and it is true that we feel differently, however, it is important for us to know that all feelings are acceptable and respected and all of us are in this together. After taking some time to reflect on the challenges and talking to a bunch of friends and acquaintances on campus, I was able to list the following challenges that were experienced:

1. *Spotlight Effect:* The spotlight effect refers to people's tendency to overestimate the extent to which they believe others see and attend to their outward appearance on a regular basis: they believe the spotlight shines brighter on them than it actually does (Gilovich et al., 2000). Going to classes with so many people around might seem anxiety-provoking as we might feel that all eyes are on us and we are being judged for how we look, how we walk, and how we talk, however, no one is actually looking at us and most of us are feeling the same. This transition from sending questions in the chat or talking with our video off to raising your hand to ask a question in front of the whole class has been a challenging experience for all of us. That said since most of us are experiencing that, we are in this together! Walk with your head high, ask your heart out and SMILE, you are not alone!



Stay Motivated!!

2. Lack of Belongingness: Many of us are coming on campus for the first time ever. Some are in their 1st year, others in 2nd, and a few of us are even in our 3rd year. There might be times when you know you are a part of the university but might not feel as if you really belong there. From the past years that I have been at the university, I have realized that interacting with people and making friends really helps you feel closer to your community.

Finding that one thing that sticks with you through your day, maybe getting a Java chip frappe at IQs and enjoying pool? Maybe getting Chai Tea Latte from Starbucks? Enjoying herbs and garlic cream cheese bagel with coffee at Tim Hortons? Getting the 'Rise and Shine' breakfast at Degrees? Having 'puff-puff' at the AFV Kitchen? Studying at the 'University College Study Lounge'? Anything that you can call 'your thing or your university memory' helps you feel connected and affirms your sense of belonging does the magic! Remember all of us are welcomed, accepted, and celebrated for who we are and the people we choose to be each day.

3. Coping up with Changes: Change can be difficult. It denotes an absence of certainty and predictability. Change is necessary for growth, but it is natural to be concerned that we will be unable to deal with it. So, if you have been concerned about the upcoming changes, know that you're not alone. The first step is to accept that change is unavoidable, and then to decide how to respond to it. What are some ways that can help us cope with change?



**"Move forward.
Good things are
up ahead."**



1. Recognize that facing change makes you feel vulnerable and resolve to be proactive in your response.

- Identify your emotions and fears. What would be the worst-case scenario? What exactly is making you sad or concerned?
- Plan for the change. Is there anything you can do to help with the transition?
- Think about the possibilities. Being optimistic about the future does not require you to be content in the present. Consider the big picture.
- Take excellent care of yourself. Maintain your health by focusing on basic needs such as eating well, getting enough sleep, and exercising. Go for walks! Sometimes, spending time with nature, listening to music, or preparing a nice meal for yourself does the magic!
- Participate in new activities and learn new skills. Do something new. Start baking? Watch something from a new genre? Listen to a song in a new language?
- Look for the lighter side of the situation and breathe. Whatever it is, it is not bigger than you.
- Believe in yourself. This is something you can do.
- Give yourself some breathing room. It takes time to form new habits and routines.
- Stability will follow.
- Consider how you have dealt with change in the past. When did they arrive? How did you deal with it at the time? Make a list of the things you did or qualities you possessed that aided you.
- Be adaptable and avoid denying it. Recognize that some stress is normal and go flow with it.
- Discuss it with someone. Focus on the problems, solutions, and positives rather than your feelings as you talk about them.
- Look for help. Seek support from friends, family, or anyone else who has been through similar situations or feelings. Sometimes even watching an encouraging TED Talk, reading a motivational novel, or listening to a podcast also helps! I have even got some of the best motivational lines from a cartoon that I enjoyed watching as a kid! Look around, there's something beautiful in everything that you can learn and pass along!
- Try to stay away from stressors for a little while. Thinking or being around stressors can make you feel anxious. Find your way to ease into things and re-visit the situations stressing you out one at a time

THERE IS A LATIN PHRASE THAT HELPS ME REMIND MYSELF TO NOT WORRY ABOUT THE FUTURE TO MUCH AND LIVE IN THE PRESENT. MAYBE IT'S HELPFUL FOR YOU TOO!

"*CARPE DIEM*" MEANS "SEIZE THE DAY"

The Mental Health of university students has been a growing concern given the several academic and non-academic challenges that a student faces during university time (Freire et al., 2020). Among the educational stressors, uncertainty and a lack of routine caused by external factors can be bothersome for many and might often appear as 'not having control in one's life. In many cases, feelings like these can provoke anxiety and stress. In difficult times like these, it is critical for us to know the only way we can make things better is by learning how to cope with the 'not so controllable situations' as we might not be able to take charge of them, but we can control our reactions and behavior towards it. How do we do that?



Identifying the emotion: Self-awareness gives rise to self-efficacy and one of the most effective ways of gaining self-awareness is by asking ourselves some questions and acknowledging the answers that we get. Questions may include, what am I feeling? What is happening to me? Why am I feeling so and What can I do about it? Acknowledgment without judgment encourages us to understand ourselves and enlightens us about our own selves (Tartakovsky, 2020). Mindfulness can also help us in, gaining finer insights into situations that trigger anxious responses and effective ways to regulate those emotions (Keng et al., 2011).

- Reminding ourselves that it is not permanent: Positive affirmations and kind reminders of reality can help us stay in the present and save us from a considerable amount of overthinking (Tartakovsky, 2020).
- Breathing Exercise: Be it big or small, most overwhelming situations are best dealt with when we are in a calm and balanced frame of mind and the first step of doing so is taking deep breaths and focusing on breathing. This also helps us come back to a state of ease and comfort (Tartakovsky, 2020)
- Making a list of the things that you can control: Putting down your thoughts on paper helps to organize them and motivates you to act on the things in your control (Alberta Health Services, 2021,)
- Take More Breaks: When life feels strange, taking frequent breaks helps to maintain attention, remain focused, reduce procrastination, and increase productivity. Some examples include going on a run, taking a power nap, meditating, journaling, etc. (Alberta Health Services, 2021,)



Keep Going!



Active Minds at the University of Manitoba is here to support you on your journey at the University. Even though there might be some bumpers on the road, we got this! Some of the resources available at the university are as follows:

- Student Counselling Centre: 474 University Centre University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2 Canada Phone: 204 474-8592
- Career Services: Room 474 UMSU University Centre 65 Chancellor's Circle, University of Manitoba Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2 Canada. Phone: 204-474-9456

- Academic Learning Centre: Room 201 Tier Building
- 173 Dafoe Rd W, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB R3T 2M9 Canada. Phone: 204-480-1481
- Student Support Case Management: 520 UMSU University Centre, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2 Canada. Phone: 204-474-7423
- HORIZON: This is an incredible resource for Indigenous students that lists all the supports you may need to make you feel a part of your community and aid in your success at the university. A Manitoba Map of supports and resources for Indigenous students navigating post-secondary education. P. 204.599.3136 and Website: <https://horizon.miap.ca>
- The Indigenous Student Centre, Migizii Agamik - Bald Eagle Lodge located at 114 Sidney Smith, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2 is another excellent resource for Indigenous students on campus. You can visit and speak to the very helpful student advisors there for you. Phone: 204.583.4949. You can also check their events calendar here <https://eventscalendar.umanitoba.ca/site/indigenous/?view=grid&search=y>



- Healthy U at UofM: Room 469 of UMSU University Centre (fourth floor)
- 65 Chancellor's Circle, University of Manitoba (Fort Garry Campus)
 - Healthy U volunteers provide mental health, sexual health, and overall wellness education through office hours, outreach events, workshops and presentations to groups, and online content. Please feel free to check their office hours below and drop by to make the most of their resources and maybe become a Healthy U volunteer to help your peers!

Healthy U

Fall 2022 Office Hours

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
9:30 - 11:30	9:30 - 11:30	9:30 - 11:30		9:30 - 11:30
		11:30 - 1:30	11:30 - 1:30	11:30 - 1:30
1:30 - 3:30	1:30 - 3:30	1:30 - 3:30		

With the continued uncertainty around us, it is very important for us to take some time to ask how are we doing and how are our peers doing? Do not forget to take some time out for self-care to rejuvenate yourself for the coming weeks. Self-care can seem different for everyone. Maybe a cup of coffee with a friend, having a movie night, doing some skincare, baking, or going out for a run, and a lot more can be ways of connecting back to ourselves. Whatever it might be for you, we hope you are taking care of yourselves and your mental health!



References

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Margarita Tartakovsky, M. S. (2017, October 16). Coping with what you can't control. Psych Central.

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