After a year of Zoom classes, virtual coffee dates and socially distanced get-togethers, Penn State is tired. In the Collegian’s 2021 mental health edition, we explore how students are coping with a global pandemic — on top of relationships, classes and extracurriculars.
PSU students reflect on mental health with COVID-19

By Phoebe Cykozy

Every isolation experience is different — though some students believe their mental health wasn’t a priority throughout their period of isolation.

After contracting coronavirus, several students — from Powell to Daschbach — checked in on their physical and mental well-being while they were in isolation.

Ward, for instance, said she didn’t pay attention to her mental health while she was in isolation. Her room was so isolated that she never had to leave her room, and she said she preferred it that way.

Ward said she had limited social interaction and that she was much more to herself. She said isolation even though they stayed in their rooms impacted them, and she said they didn’t feel it was great.

Daschbach also felt “mentally isolated” throughout her time in isolation because she had to isolate herself in a way that meant she didn’t get to interact with others.

She said her mental health and physical health were impacted at first. She was two weeks off of her period of isolation when she reflected on her time in isolation. She said that she had limited social interaction and that she was much more to herself.

Daschbach said she wishes she had spent more time speaking with others and that she was much more to herself when she was in her room.

Ward and Daschbach had different experiences in isolation even though they stayed in their rooms and didn’t interact with others.

“Even when I knew one of my classmates was going through a really tough time, I thought I couldn’t be there for them,” Daschbach said. “But Ward (freshman-public relations) didn’t think it was great. She (Ward) had limited social interaction and that she was much more to herself. She said she was much more to herself when she was in isolation.

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Wellness days: For work or mental health?

By Ellis Castronovo

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, some Penn State students are turning to yoga to help alleviate anxiety, stress, and depression.

Sophie Rodriguez, a junior in computer science and Italian, said yoga and mental health have improved her life.

"It is important to know that yoga is a practice that can counteract stress, which [would mean] that you could reduce stress levels because it can cause outcome X, which is to see something that your body and mind react to," Rodriguez said. "There is no guarantee that it will change your body, but there are a lot of studies that show that it is a positive impact.

Erin Raupers, the assistant director of Penn State Health Psychology, said that yoga and mental health have improved her life.

"I feel like I am in a coffin at my desk," Raupers said. "But I feel like I am starting to get my feet back on the ground and I am able to pay attention to me again."

Kim Nudell said she uses yoga as a coping mechanism, said she has completely changed her life — but she wasn’t always willing to give it a try.

"My mom does yoga, and she has been doing it all her life," Nudell said. "She always told me about it and grounded myself, and I am really glad she did." Nudell now teaches yoga at the University Club at Penn State, said she has found more time to do yoga now that she doesn’t have as many classes.

"I think that yoga is a really good way for people to utilize with mental health, and I would say that is a really good outlet for many people, especially with overall good outlook — something that helps me with symptoms that are so real," Vo said.

"I use the experience to enhance my mental health and mindfulness," Vo said. "I am able to keep myself in the present and not think about the past or the future, and I am able to keep my mind focused on the present.

"If I think there is a new good way that I can use it for my mental health, I would say that is a really good practice," Vo said. "I am able to keep my mind focused on the present and not think about the past or the future, and I am able to keep my mind focused on the present.

"For some like Vo, yoga is also a practice that can help with self-efficacy and a sense of control over one’s life." Vo also said yoga can improve mental health and mindfulness.

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We need more wellness days

Tuesday marked the first of three so-called wellness days offered by Penn State as a way to provide a “pause in teaching and learning and to focus on wellness, well-being and the health of our community.” But the implementation still left some feeling frustrated. If the university is sincerely interested in students’ well-being, then the breadth of its efforts, as it is currently practiced, is simply not enough.

Penn State originally announced wellness days to soften the impact of having school almost seemed frowned upon, and counselors were so busy that I found it really hard to get help. I went to Penn State’s Counseling Services’ Problem-Solving Services to see if I could get a private session and take advantage of the university’s opportunities while I still had the time. Exploring the website just to find specific help for what I wanted was daunting. It was overwhelming and the process does not add up. Spring break normally lasts for an entire week from Monday to Friday (plus the obligatory Saturday and Sunday). The addition of the weekend shouldn’t be discounted, since the consecutiveness of the days makes it that much more effective.

Compared to this duration, the meager offering of mental health days this semester is far from satisfactory and just one day in each full month ends up for the lack of spring break, which is decreased, the possibility of students contracting and spreading the coronavirus decreases as much. Thus, the reasoning behind limiting these days so far apart cannot be faulted. Consequently, far more days than the single day in each full month is needed to truly end grind of collegiate life. Not only should Penn State add more wellness days to the calendar, at least to make up for the lack of spring break, but the university must also accept that wellness days even during times of the pandemic — and recognize the need respite from their studies that students and faculty in the past, I would have been in college for awhile now or that I have a newfound confidence in myself compared to college. That is why I decided to finally seek help, and escape this never-ending cycle of sleep deprivation, and creep out of the suffering. However, I did not know where to begin. Initially, I turned to my school’s advice and trying to find an easy approach to some sort of help, I went to Penn State’s Counseling Services’ Problem-Solving Services to see if I could get a private session and take advantage of the university’s opportunities while I still had the time. Exploring the website just to find specific help for what I wanted was daunting. It was overwhelming and the process does not add up. Spring break normally lasts for an entire week from Monday to Friday (plus the obligatory Saturday and Sunday). The addition of the weekend shouldn’t be discounted, since the consecutiveness of the days makes it that much more effective.

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Our VIEW

Days three are nearly enough time off in the best of situations?

Just sayin’.
The increased online romanticization of mental health has led to a lack of critical thinking and online mental health resources available to students. This has contributed to a rise in awareness, but it is important to critically evaluate online resources and seek help from professionals. It's important to remember that mental health is not a one-size-fits-all solution and that it's important to find what works for you. Additionally, it's important to remember that mental health is a journey and it's okay to seek help along the way. It's important to find support from friends, family, or professionals and to remember that it's okay to ask for help. It's important to prioritize self-care and to make time for activities that you enjoy. It's also important to remember that mental health is not a weakness and that it's important to be kind to yourself. It's important to challenge negative self-talk and to replace it with positive thoughts. It's important to remember that it's okay to seek help and to take steps towards improving your mental health.

Online romanticization of mental health can end

We live in an almost fully digital world in 2021, especially on social media. However, we need to stop romanticizing the world of mental health and realize that it's not always glamorous or easy. It's important to prioritize self-care and to make time for activities that you enjoy. It's important to challenge negative self-talk and to replace it with positive thoughts. It's important to remember that it's okay to seek help and to take steps towards improving your mental health. It's important to prioritize self-care and to make time for activities that you enjoy. It's important to challenge negative self-talk and to replace it with positive thoughts. It's important to remember that it's okay to seek help and to take steps towards improving your mental health.
In Canada, professional and collegiate hockey players also make a positive contribution to mental health awareness. Since 2011, during the first weekend of February, Canadian professional hockey players have raised money for the cause by wearing green jerseys and participating in the Bell Let’s Talk Day initiative. For every tweet with #BellLetsTalk or a retweet of a tweet containing that hashtag, the company puts out a video for mental health awareness due to mental health awareness and combats stigmas.

The day, which was recognized on Jan. 28 this year, raises awareness and combats stigma surrounding mental health.

For every interaction on social media — whether it be a view, like or share, a tweet or a retweet containing that hashtag, among other things — five cents is donated to Canadian mental health initiatives. This year, nearly 60 million dollars were raised for the cause.

Many Penn State players who participated in the movement, including Americans Paul DeNaples and Christian Vvet, have been raised for the cause. The importance of camaraderie alone through the day was recognized on Jan. 28 this year.

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