



KPU

Peer Wellness Newsletter

ISSUE 1 | SUMMER 2022

WELCOME!

Hello! We welcome you to our first newsletter and appreciate you checking out our program and hearing what we are all about!

We are the KPU Peer Wellness Team and we are a group of KPU students who work together to offer social events for other KPU students as well as provide information to students about resources and services that KPU has to support your overall health and wellbeing.

We believe that students should have the best experience and overall good health while attending KPU and as they pursue their post-secondary studies by attaining and succeeding within their academic goals. We are advocates for student health and overall wellbeing, whether that be *physical, emotional, mental, social, financial or spiritual* health.

We as the KPU Peer Wellness Team are here to help students with their concerns, questions, whether big or small, and help guide you to resources that can bring you solutions that may bring on a positive and successful impact on your overall health and wellbeing.

We hope to see you at a future event that we host and we can't wait to get to know our fellow KPU students!

- Emmah Canning, Peer Wellness Volunteer

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

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Connect with us!

 @KPUPeerWellness
 kpu.ca/peerwellness

 KPU Peer Wellness
 studenthealth@kpu.ca

Interested in learning more about the Peer Wellness Program? Read this testimonial provided by Peer Wellness Volunteer Emmah Canning!

What is Peer Wellness? When should I reach out?

KPU Peer Wellness is a student-led program that offers social support and helps KPU students navigate health & wellbeing resources here on campus and outside of campus-life. We are advocates for overall health and wellbeing, and making sure that KPU students experience the best health & wellbeing while being a student and going out to achieve their academic goals. You can reach out anytime to us if you have questions about certain KPU resources and where they may be on campus. You can reach out to us through our website, Instagram or Facebook!

Q: What has your experience volunteering with Peer Wellness been like?

My experience volunteering with the Peer Wellness Team has been nothing but such a positive, welcoming, and warm experience and I haven't even been a part of the Peer Wellness team for a year yet. Everyone is so friendly, funny, positive, and supportive, and it's such a refreshing feeling being around other people who also have a huge passion for wellbeing and helping other people through being advocates of maintaining good health & wellbeing as that is a big passion of mine and a big reason why I am currently pursuing my BA degree in Psychology/Counselling. Overall, it so far has been an amazing experience as we have been able to help so many KPU students with their concerns, needs and resources that they may need to benefit from.

Q: Who makes up the Peer Wellness Team?

KPU students! That is one of the great things about our program is that we are all currently attending KPU as students as well.

Q: Where can I keep up to date with the Peer Wellness Schedule?

You can keep up to date with the KPU Peer Wellness schedule on our website! Just go to www.kpu.ca/peerwellness and click on the "Events and Activities" tab to check on what's to come with future events that we will be hosting! You can also scan the QR code below, and follow us on our Instagram [@KPUPeerWellness](https://www.instagram.com/KPUPeerWellness) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/KPUPeerWellness).

Q: What can I expect when attending an event?

We provide resources, good information and fun social activities for KPU students who come to join us! We are always open to feedback from our attendees whether that's future event topics or suggestions for improvement. We are also open to any questions or concerns that KPU students may have and we are here to help you all get the answers you need!

Questions submitted by Peer Wellness
Volunteer Mary Langhorst

Upcoming Events!

KPU Welcomes You
Events at Langley,
Richmond & Surrey on
May 3rd, 4th and 5th.

First Year Festival
Virtual Games Day –
Friday May 6th from 12-
1PM.

Virtual Resource
Session with Sport &
Rec – Monday May 30th
from 1-2PM.

National Health &
Fitness Day – Outdoor
games and events!
Thursday June 2nd from
11-2PM. Surrey
Courtyard!

Our team will be hosting
socials on-campus twice
a month, and will be
tabling at different
campuses, all summer
long! Scan the QR code
below to check out the
schedule:



RESOURCE HIGHLIGHTS

In every issue of our newsletter, we will showcase various health and wellness resources that KPU students can access!

1. KPU's 24/7 Student Support Program – My SSP by keep.meSAFE



KPU's 24/7 Student Support Program (My SSP) provides students with access to a series of diverse health and wellness services. Through the Keepme.SAFE platform, those attending KPU can acquire a series of health assessments, one-to-one counseling support, as well as a variety of other resources for free!

Are you interested in receiving anonymous feedback on your mental health? The health assessments from My SSP provide options for quick evaluations of one's anxiety, depression or substance use. You will be asked a short series of yes/no questions and be provided with a summary of suggestions you may want to take.

My SSP is also a 24/7 service! So, experienced professionals are there to provide immediate counseling support to you whenever and wherever you may need it. Students have 2 options they can choose from. Either they can elect to use the online text-based service (available via the My SSP app or the web), or students can call and receive real-time phone-support. If you would like to meet with the same counselor repeatedly, it's as easy simply as scheduling an appointment.

Finally, you can explore a series of great resources to learn and support your overall well-being. Read articles, listen to podcasts, and watch videos on health, living, relationships, and student life. Maintaining a healthy level of physical activity is also vital. So, you can gain access to virtual fitness programs through My SSP as well. All you need to do is sign up!

Here is how to do it:

Want to access My SSP on your phone?

- Download the My SSP app to your mobile device today! It is available on the app store by clicking here: [My SSP on the Apple Store](#) or on Google Play: [My SSP on Google Play](#)

Want to use your laptop or desktop computer?

- Visit the website!
 - Domestic Students: <http://mystudentsupport.com/>
 - International Students: <https://keepmesafe.myjssp.com/Home/UniversitySearch>

Want to talk to a counsellor on the phone?

- Canada: 1-844-451-9700

Information provided by Peer
Wellness Volunteer Partap Grewal

RESOURCE HIGHLIGHTS

2. KPU International

Are you an international student in search of opportunities around campus or a current student interested in studying abroad or global opportunities? Do you need academic, social, and immigration support? Any international-related questions? Get the support you need and discover many possibilities through *KPU International*.

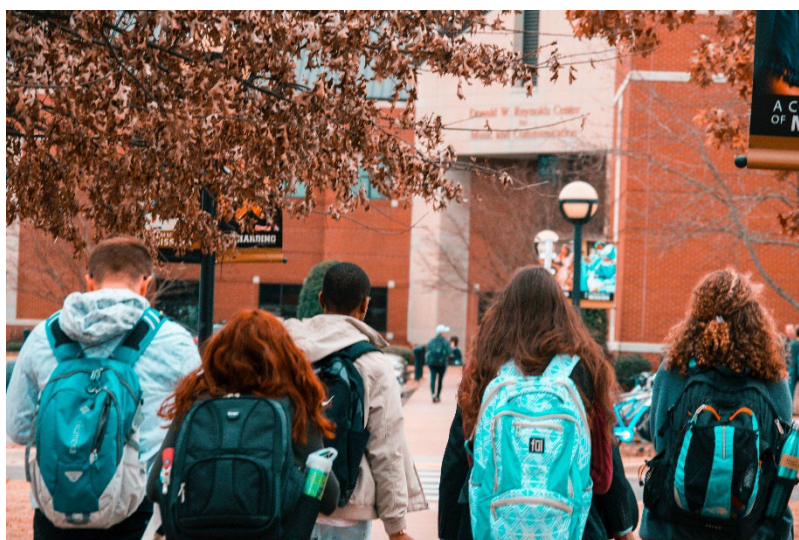
Travelling to a new place can be a rewarding thing to do but moving and starting a life is a whole different scenario which involves many stressors that can affect your overall health and wellness. With Kwantlen Polytechnic University as home to a large demographic of international students, it is vital to lend them a hand and give support as they navigate the start of their post-secondary journey through graduation.

KPU International offers many services such as **academic advising**, **new student orientation**, **basic temporary medical insurance**, **socialization events**, and even **studying abroad opportunities**. New international students can visit their website (link below) which elaborates on what you must know upon arrival to Canada and preparation for your first semester. A student mentor will accompany you through your first semester on campus through their International Peer Mentorship Program, and they also host [pre-arrival webinars](#) to learn more about housing, transportation, banking, insurance and more.

Other than international student support, they open KPU student's doors to global opportunities. Current students can apply for a semester abroad for exchange programs, summer and field schools, and internships, and now with a mix of virtual and in-person exchanges. KPU's International Study Abroad Coordinator can help you choose a program that fits your requirements and interests.

KPU International is open to support you and answer your questions through in-person appointments, virtual appointments, or by visiting their website at: kpu.ca/international. To learn more about advising, visit: www.kpu.ca/international/advising.

Information provided by Peer
Wellness Volunteer Aubrey Clarito



RESILIENCY

The Underdog of Mental Health Strategies

Article written by Peer Wellness Volunteers: Aryan Anganu, Catherine Crisostomo & Mark Mercado

Introduction

Whether it's the first semester or another one, students are often met with unpredictable challenges throughout their academic journeys. With many resources and strategies for managing stress, it becomes difficult to depict which coping method is most helpful. If this is the case, one might consider the concept of *resiliency*!

Resiliency, in accordance with the Canadian Association of Mental Health (CAMH), is the notion that an individual can recover from difficult experiences, functioning as well as they did prior to them. In turn, individuals are able to approach these experiences with certain cognitive techniques or strategies to propel the progression of their livelihood. Resiliency offers individuals a way to lessen the overwhelming feeling that is associated with approaching challenging experiences. It means that one would be more inclined to cope, persevere, and in a way, "bounce back". For a brief overview of resiliency and the basics of how it is applied, please read this article from Health Link BC titled "[Building Resilience](#)".

Given the attention towards resilience has gradually increased over the past couple of decades, it has been deemed by professionals and researchers as an important cognitive aspect for mental wellness; Twofold for the student demographic. Since life is filled with moments of change, resiliency builds skills of adaptability, perseverance, and problem-solving to overcome them. Between various personal experiences of academia, grief, social interaction, or other aspects that affect mental health, resiliency is a tangible skill to develop for these certain situations. This article will introduce a few major points about resiliency models and where they can be applied. Hopefully, by the end, resiliency is an aspect that can be introduced as a way of allyship with mental health.

Resilience Application

Models

Regarding its application, two main models can facilitate an introductory approach to building resilience. This includes *Dr. Alison Block's Five Factors that promote Resilience* and *Dr. Diana Brecher's Five-Factor Model of Resilience*. Dr. Block (2022) directs attention to the concepts: connection, communication, confidence, competence and commitment, and control. On the other hand, Dr. Brecher addresses the concepts: mindfulness, gratitude, optimism, self-compassion, and grit. There are parallels between both models, however, there is no "better" model between them; they merely provide the areas of thinking to consider when approaching resilience-building at a holistic level.

Techniques

Everyday stressors, such as school, work, and responsibilities create tension that pile up if we don't keep them in check. Stress can seriously affect our mind and body, which can lead to major health issues. Positive Psychology contains few techniques individuals can use to develop resilience: [Resilience Skills, Factors and Strategies of the Resilient Person](#).

Article cont...

- [Resilience Building Plan Worksheet](#)
 - A worksheet created by Sydney Ey, Ph.D. at Oregon Health & Science University for building and managing resilience. This worksheet asks questions related to stress and anyone can create a personalized plan to practice skills and develop resilience
- [The 4-factor Approach](#)
 - The steps of 4-factor approach include: stating the facts, placing blame where it belongs, reframing, and giving oneself time. This approach allows individuals to train our minds to think with perspective and look at situations differently.

Strategies

Resilience involves behaviours, thoughts, and actions that anyone can learn and develop. Building resilience takes time but will give individuals the capacity to grow from difficult situations. Here are few strategies that enable individuals to build resilience:

- Social Connection
 - Connect socially with family and friends to help remind that individuals are not alone during adversity. Being socially isolated can negatively impact health and can cause physical and mental health problems.
- Mindfulness
 - Being present in the moment and having awareness of what is happening to the mind, body and surroundings. Managing stress by giving the body and mind resources and positive energy.
- Gratitude
 - Thinking about positive aspects of life and being grateful for the things happening around.
- Adapt
 - Adapting to change and solving problems, accepting that change is part of life. Developing SMART goal: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-limited
- Cope
 - Understanding strategies that work for oneself to be able to bounce back and adjust to stressors.

Contemporary Significance

Resilience is the ability to recover from challenging experiences with a positive sense of themselves and their futures. According to McGrath and Kovacs (2019), resilience comes with protective and risk factors. Protective factors are positive emotions that allow individuals to cope and acquire satisfaction in life. Risk factors include negative emotions, which trigger anxiety, depression, and stress.

Article cont...

Resilience does not eliminate stress and hardships but allows individuals to overcome and learn from them. Applying resilience promotes physical health, including cardiovascular health, better immunity, and sleep quality (Tugade et al., 2004). It also promotes healthy behavior and practices, such as reducing risks of smoking, drinking, and use of substances. Resilience is also important to student wellbeing and academic success. Committing and viewing challenges as opportunities, instead of threats, allow students to succeed academically and at work. Students can set up performance goals to help achieve goals in a short period of time allowing greater satisfaction in the effort they put into their work. Jowkar and colleagues (2014) suggests that performance goals have positive impact and are positive predictors of academic resilience in students. Student surveys done by Kong (2021) states that 79% of students have felt more optimistic during the COVID-19 pandemic and 68% felt productive, which further displays the effects of academic resilience. In essence, individuals that are resilient, are better equipped to deal with adversities, and overall experience a better quality of life.

References

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