

A Note from the Head of Campus Life and Wellness

Greetings,

In this second edition of the Campus Counseling Center Dispatch, we hope to call attention to the ethos of self-care and the pivotal role that lifestyle changes play in promoting a sense of holistic wellbeing. Though our mission continues to revolve around the idea of making mental health counseling more accessible to people, our aim, through the current edition of The Dispatch is to emphasize the importance of improving our personal autonomy. This, we plan to achieve by way of shedding light upon the distinct facets that the concept of “taking care of ourselves,” encompasses. We hope that the entries in this edition will allow our readers to effectively reflect on their needs and replenish their reservoirs of energy as a matter of priority

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Lifestyle Changes And Mental Health

Zahra Saghir Hashmi (Campus Counselor)

The impact that our lifestyle choices and physical health have on our emotional well-being is often overlooked.

Read More on Page 02

INVEST
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Lifestyle Changes

And Mental Health



Zahra Saghir Hashmi
(Campus Counselor)

The impact that our lifestyle choices and physical health have on our emotional

well-being is often overlooked. While the use of coping mechanisms is always beneficial, their effectiveness can be reduced if our lifestyle choices are unhealthy.

Whilst the ingredients for a healthy lifestyle are relatively easy to understand, they can be challenging to implement. It can be difficult to change old habits, or instill new ones. The truth is, the things that often derail our healthy intentions (e.g. excessive chocolate, fatty/salty/processed foods, gaming, internet, social media, drugs and alcohol, partying) are very rewarding in the short-term, whereas the benefits of inculcating healthy lifestyle changes sometimes aren't evident for a few weeks or months.



This is even more noticeable when we are struggling with negative emotions such as anxiety, stress, or any form of distress. We tend to reach out to things that bring us immediate emotional relief, even if we know that they will not bring us lasting emotional relief.

This means that committing to making healthy lifestyle changes has to be a very conscious and deliberate effort. Here are 9 ways to make your lifestyle change intentions more deliberate:

Recognize your motivation for making the change. What do you want to change? What advantages are you hoping for? You will quickly lapse if you do not have a clear idea of what is driving this change.

Make a plan that includes clearly describing the behavioral change, when you intend to do it, how frequently you will need to engage in it and so on. The more specific you are, the easier it will be to implement.

Life Style Changes And Mental Health

Zahra Saghir Hashmi (Campus Counselor)

Measure the outcomes. If you are changing your behavior to feel better, keep track of how you feel during the change to see if it is effective. **Read More on Page 03**

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LIFESTYLE CHANGES AND MENTAL HEALTH

Zahra Saghir Hashmi (Campus Counselor)

Measure the outcomes. If you are changing your behavior to feel better, keep track of how you feel during the change to see if it is effective.

Start small and modify one behavior at a time. Try not to change everything at once or make drastic alterations. Begin with changes that you are confident you can implement (for example, two weekly walks or replacing afternoon snacks with nuts/fruit).

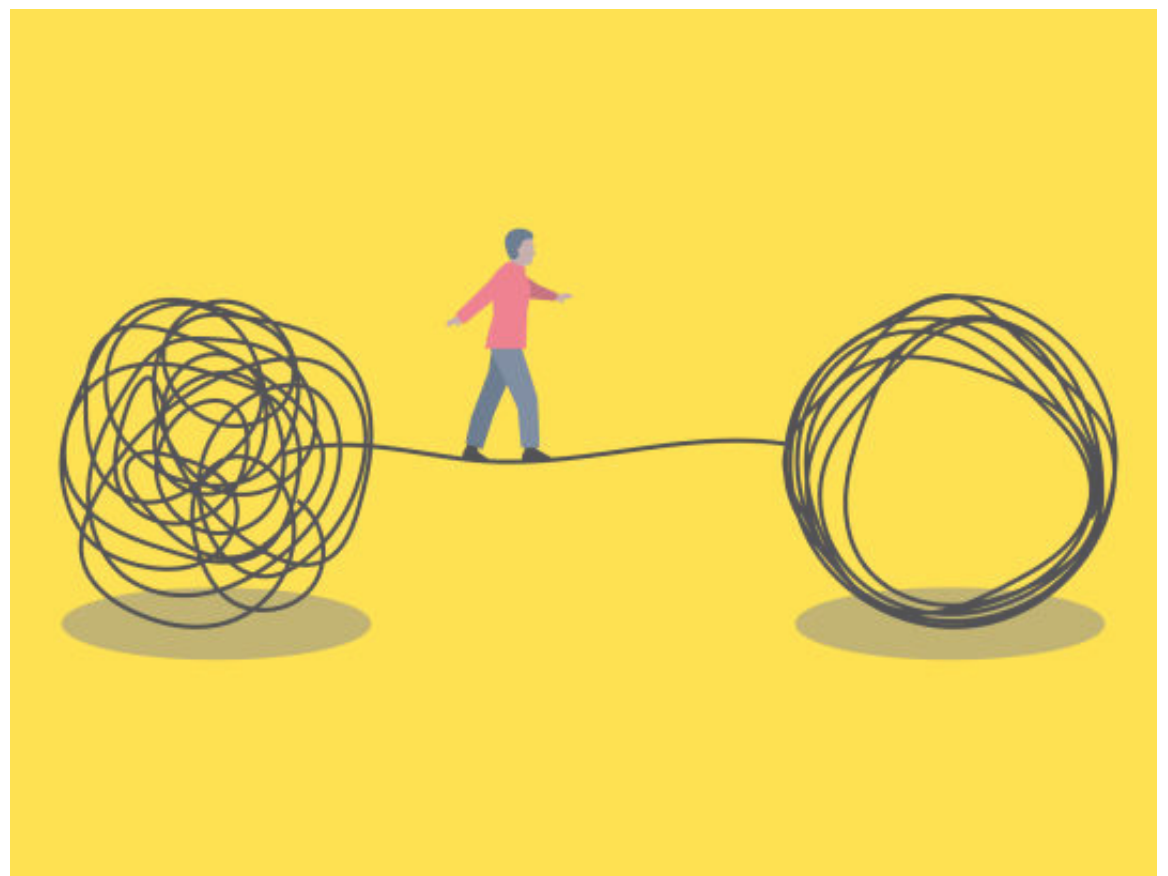
After you've mastered one change, move on to the next.

Set up triggers. Use your mobile phone and inbuilt calendar/notifications to send you reminders of when you should be engaging in a new healthy behavior. This might be an alarm for your two weekly walks, or a reminder before dinner-time to select certain foods.

Reflect and retry if it doesn't go well. You may not get it right the first time. If you fail, don't feel defeated. Take some time to reflect on what happened and have another shot at it!

Involve a buddy. Get a friend, loved one, or family member to assist you with the changes. They might want to make the same changes (e.g. become gym partners) or agree to push you to stick with your program.

Ask for support. You aren't on your own. In each of the lifestyle changes mentioned above, there are people you can talk to for assistance. Professionals can help with customizing the plan to your unique circumstances, and help you in overcoming common obstacles.



Self-Care On A Budget

Aaleen Zafar (Campus Counselor)

A simple search on Youtube regarding the words "self-care" will provide you with an endless list of ... **Continued on Page 04**

ASKING
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HELP
IS OK



Self-Care

On a Budget

Aaleen Zafar Campus Counselor

Try to think of foods, physical activities, types of content, or experiences you enjoy and incorporate them in your everyday life every now and then. As a counselor, I am always amused by the different ways people choose to care for themselves, be it watching funny Tiktok videos, learning the new K-Pop dance routines, weekly yoga sessions, playing with slime, watching an episode of your favorite sitcom or simply doing nothing.

We all realize the importance of a good diet and exercise for our physical health, we must similarly care for our mental health as.

Having read this dear reader, I hope you will take out ten minutes from your busy day to show yourself a little love and care!

Misconceptions About Counseling

Aaleen Zafar (Campus Counselor)

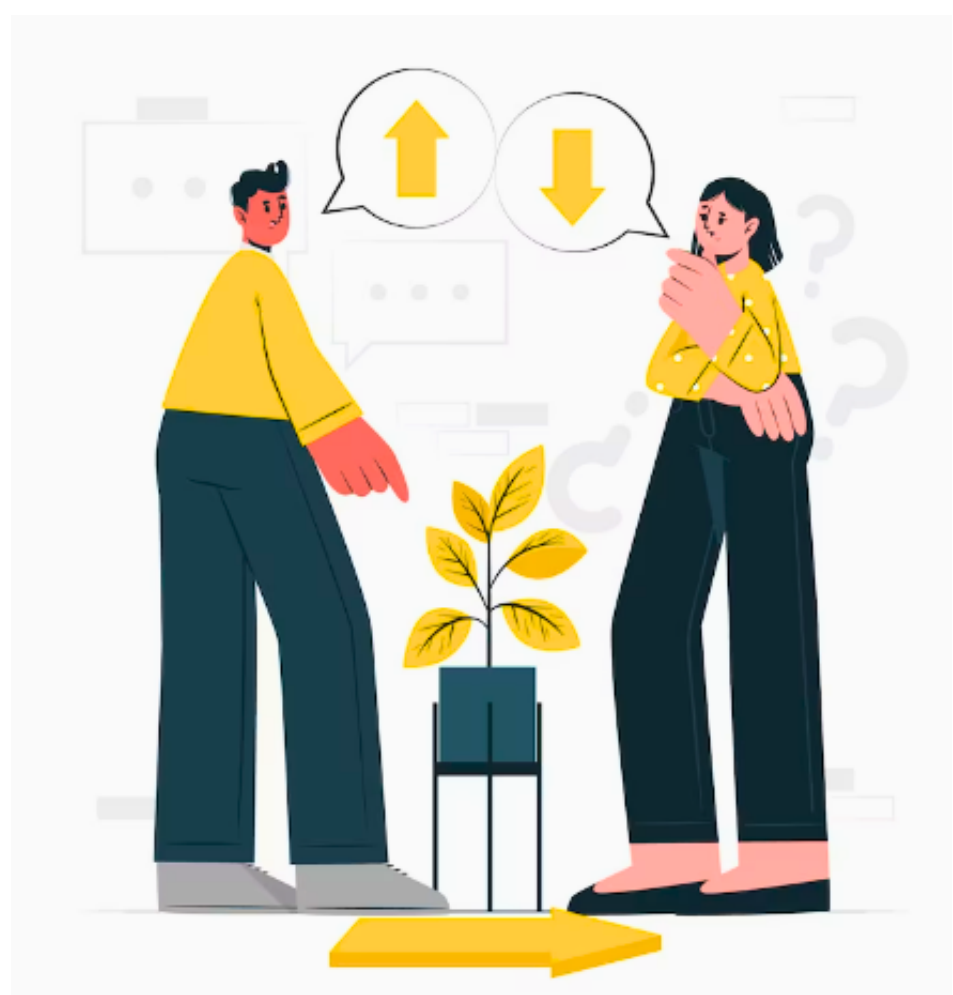
To offer a simple explanation, just like going to a doctor ... [Read more on Page 06](#)

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT COUNSELING

Aaleen Zafar (Campus Counselor)

Based on the content we might have consumed, or simply from the conversations we might have had with other people, we may have some biased ideas about counseling and people in counseling. Contrary to frequent assumptions, a counselor or therapist will not force you to lie down on a couch and tell them your deepest darkest secrets or force you to recollect all the possible mistakes your parents might have made.

He or she will not use hypnotism or other similar means to make you forget uncomfortable memories and neither will they pick apart your personality to explore what might be wrong. A counselor will not give orders or dictate or force you into making changes in your life that you are not ready for. Similarly, there does not need to be a severe disorder or a “bad enough” problem for you to pursue therapy as often portrayed in various form of media.



Misconceptions About Counseling

Aaleen Zafar (Campus Counselor)

To offer a simple explanation, just like going to a doctor or having a supplement for our physical health helps us physiologically, counseling provides a similar boost to your mental health.

Counseling involves exploring ways to improve your mental health with the help of a qualified professional, who can assist you in analyzing your emotional problems and unearthing potential solutions for them. At some points in our life, we are all going to experience grief, pain, sadness, loss, anger, regrets and other uncomfortable experiences.

Sometimes, we are able to resolve these feelings on our own with time and social support, however, in difficult circumstances these feelings may pile up and your psychological immune system might have a hard time fighting them off. This is where the role of a counselor comes in.

The Road To Happiness

Sabrina Asim (Campus Counselor)

We find everybody caught up in the pursuit of happiness nowadays.

Continued on Page 07



Counseling may allow you to confront some uncomfortable aspects of your life and talk through some of your problems while setting specific goals with the counselor.

People come to counseling for different reasons, be it dealing with a painful breakup, trying to process memories of a trauma, needing help with confidence or simply needing a little help navigating their current circumstances in life.

There is nothing inherently wrong with people pursuing therapy. Just like we are able to appreciate people going to the gym, working out or eating healthy diets in an attempt to improve their physical health, let us all also have a similar appreciation for people willing to work on their mental health!



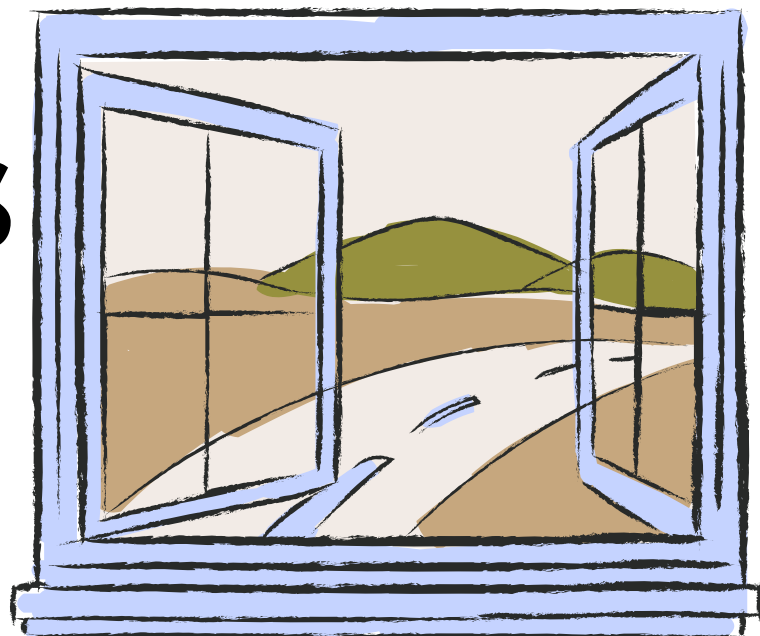
THE ROAD TO HAPPINESS

Sabrina Asim (Campus Counselor)

We find everybody caught up in the pursuit of happiness nowadays. However, very few are able to readily describe what happiness means for them and how they can work towards it. Here are some evidence based ways that can allow you to build up your levels of happiness and recognize sources of contentment in your life.

Purposefulness. People who find their life purposeful show a significantly higher level of happiness as compared to those who fail to identify any meaning to their lives (Besika, 2023). It would be a great initiative to introspect and identify things that offer you direction in life, be it engaging in volunteer social activities, contributing in a charity program, becoming good at your craft etc.

Mindfulness. All of us are accustomed to the idea of multitasking and we typically view it as a time saving positive trait. On the contrary the evidence suggests repeatedly engaging in multitasking may lead towards depression and anxiety (Becker et al., 2013). When we engage in one task with all our senses, we get a rich spectrum of sensual experiences. However, multitasking minimizes derived satisfaction. Whatever we do in our day to day life, from eating our meals, exercising, engaging in creative tasks or relaxing, we should involve all our senses in order to maximize the positive outcome of the experience. Thus mindfulness can improve our overall level of contentment.



Failures are your strengths. This might be surprising but it is true. Failure means you are trying and are actively exploring the world. In this process of exploration, you build your resources, learn to cope, learn to address challenges and new ways to solve problems, which ultimately increases your adaptability and maximizes your happiness.

Unconditional Self-Acceptance. We often tie our self worth with our accomplishments. If we accept ourselves as uncertain beings who may commit mistakes, cannot be perfect but are unique; we might experience a substantial increase in happiness. You are a respectable, dignified human being no matter what you can or cannot do. Practicing unconditional self-acceptance can allow you to achieve a great amount of happiness (Ackerman, 2023).

Ackerman, C. E., MA. (2023). What Is Self-Acceptance? 25 Exercises + Definition & Quotes. *PositivePsychology.com*. <https://positivepsychology.com/self-acceptance/#comment-list>

Becker, M. W., Alzahabi, R., & Hopwood, C. J. (2013). Media Multitasking Is Associated with Symptoms of Depression and Social Anxiety. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 16(2), 132–135. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2012.0291>

Besika, A. (2023). An everlasting love: The relationship of happiness and meaning. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1046503>

Catherine Moore, P. (2023, March 10). What is the negativity bias and how can it be overcome?. *PositivePsychology.com*. <https://positivepsychology.com/3-steps-negativity-bias/>

Gratitude. We have a natural tendency to count what is bad and take for granted what is good in our life (Moore, 2023). For instance, if you are blessed with multiple talents and have access to multiple luxuries, you might still focus on what's missing. To achieve a positive state of mind, you need to build the habit of purposefully counting what is good in your life, such as having a good sleep, clean water to drink, good health, friends, family or good food. You will find yourself in a more positive frame of mind after practicing this simple tip.

Social Connections. You may have heard a simple rule of happiness, "sharing is caring". That's true. If you are in search of happiness, engage in social activities, connect with people, involve in social celebrations, share people's sorrows and happiness and you will experience a feeling of richness in your life. Remember that life is all about active participation.

Final Words. You might have known some of the above mentioned tips already. However, knowing them alone may not bring any change in your life unless you practice what you have learnt. Remember: *Consistency is the key! Happiness is a skill that you can have command over for yourself. Good luck on your new journey of happiness!*



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PRE -COUNSELING FORM

Meet The Team



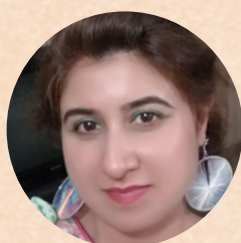
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