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OC Bien Well

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Inside

Welcome to OC Bien Well!, a monthly newsletter out of the Open Campus Academy of Sport (OCAS). This newsletter is a part of the Open Campus (OC) Wellness Programme for staff and students. The objective of this newsletter is to share information on the interconnected dimensions of wellness and highlight other OC wellness initiatives in the hope that we can be better educated on the full circle of living well and be our best selves.

SOCIAL WELLNESS

No More Covid-19 Mandates...Yay?

The world is opening up in many ways even though we are still in a pandemic. Some persons would have suffered various levels of social anxiety as a result of being locked up inside for the better part of 2 years. "Those that chose to socially distance themselves or were encouraged to complete school or work from home became comfortable with those shifts in their behaviors" says Dr. Hillary Ammon, assistant professor of clinical psychiatry in the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania (Welsh, 2022). As an Open Campus staff member or student you may be accustomed to a virtual environment but the pandemic pushed things to a drastic degree. Many adjustments had to be made and we were operating in a "new normal." You may have created different routines and developed new habits to cope with the new environment.

Ways in Which Social Anxiety Manifests Itself

- Most obvious feelings - severe discomfort in social situations and the choice to avoid social outings
- When the brain is preparing for something new the body tends to produce a stress response (Smith, 2022).
- Physical feelings - racing heart, sweating, headaches, nausea, irritability/agitation, dizziness, and feeling flushed in social situations.

It may seem strange that you are feeling such symptoms, especially if you had no previous episodes of anxiety, but know that this is a normal response. After acclimatizing to less sociable ways of life, another shakeup is happening. With the lifting of covid measures and mandates you may be feeling out of sorts.

Pre-pandemic hugs, handshakes, closer physical spacing and no masks were commonplace in social settings. Now you may be wondering if it is safe to go back to those practices, especially in public spaces with strangers and acquaintances. You may also wonder if your own hesitation or apprehension about these things will be problematic to the person on the other side of the interaction, especially if they don't share your views.

Strategies for Dealing with Social Anxiety

- Start small - Take baby steps and slowly reintegrate into social settings.
- Connect with other people - Join a club of an activity you enjoy e.g. walking, hiking, dance. Reach out to people. Ask for help and offer to help as well.
- Try breathing exercises - Deep breaths can help calm the mind and body.
- Practice mindfulness - be present and pay attention to your thoughts and feelings
- Be compassionate to others and to yourself. Change takes time and you/others may not be responding as quickly as you imagine.
- Get help from a licensed professional if needs be - There's no shame in that.

Source: <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/why-you-may-experience-social-anxiety-as-you-emerge-from-the-pandemic>

Dayna Smith

Sports Activity Development Officer

Social Wellness 1

Spiritual Wellness 2

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SPIRITUAL WELLNESS

For some persons, spiritual wellness involves participation in organized religion. Religious tolerance refers to the ability to appreciate differing spiritual values, beliefs and practices from your own. The Caribbean region can be described as a melting pot of cultures with religion playing an integral role in Caribbean society. Some islands have more of a mix of faiths than others and persons may be more informed and accepting of doctrines other than their own.

April 2022 found multiple religions celebrating holy days or religious holidays. They include but are not limited to Ramadan (Islam), Vaisakhi (Sikhism), Passover (Judaism) and Easter (Christianity). In an effort to embrace the differences among us, let us familiarise ourselves and take a look at some facts about these organised religions, some you may or may not know.

Ramadan

Ramadan Infographic 2022

#4 More info...
Whilst fasting, Muslims abstain from things that can distract the spiritual self from connecting with the Divine. This includes:
- Food
- Drink
- Sex
- Gossip, impatience, bad manners etc...
Muslims engage in more spiritual acts such as prayer, reading the Qur'an and giving to charity.

#5 Useful lingo...
Ramadan Mubarak – Happy Ramadan
Suhoor – Pre-fast breakfast
Iftar – Meal to break the fast
Eid – Festival celebrating the end of fasting

#3 How fasting works
Fasting starts at sunrise and finishes at sunset. The length of fasts vary depending on the time of year and location in the world. In the UK this year, Muslims will fast for around 15 hours per day.

#2 Why Muslims Fast
It is one of the Five Pillars of Islam and is compulsory for Muslim adults who are able to fast. The aim is to become a better person through re-connecting with the Divine as well as your spiritual self, your families, communities & those you love.

#1 When is Ramadan?
This year, Ramadan starts on April 2nd / 3rd & will finish on either May 1st / May 2nd. Months in the Islamic Calendar start based on the sighting of the new moon – hence the variation!

#6 Do all Muslims fast?
No, there are many valid reasons why a Muslim might not be fasting:
- Illness
- Travel
- Breastfeeding
- Menstruation
- Medical exemption

#7 What can I do?
Act as you normally would! Most Muslims have been fasting for years & are very used to others going about their daily business. You can eat in front of us, talk about food... its all good! And it's absolutely fine if you keep forgetting that we're fasting and offer us something to eat/drink – we'll politely say 'no thank you'!
And yes, we don't drink water whilst fasting!

Created by @teachernudge

Source: <https://twitter.com/teachernudge/status/1508859177627750403>

Vaisakhi

History
13TH OR 14TH APRIL
Usually celebrated on the 13th or 14th of April every year which is also regarded as the start of the farming year.
Vaisakhi is a happy time in the Punjab as this is where farmers harvest their crops and reap the benefits a year of hard work.
PUNJAB
In 1699, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh called for all Sikhs to gather on Vaisakhi day at Anandpur in Punjab.
The country was under the tyrannical rule of the Mughal Empire. The Guru created a new saint-soldier army to protect the downtrodden and uproot evil.
The Guru asked for 5 Sikhs to sacrifice their lives. Those five were initiated through the "Amrit" ceremony and this formed the foundation of the new saint soldier army.
The army was named the "Khalsa" or the "Pure Ones". They were given a new identity with sovereign surnames of "Singh" for men and "Kaur" for women. They were also give the five K's as uniform.

Vaisakhi 1699 was a very special day for the Sikhs because it is on this day that the Khalsa was created. The Khalsa is the army of saint-soldiers that were created to bring peace, happiness and to protect the downtrodden.

The tenth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh tested the Sikhs to see if they would live up to the ideals of the Sikh faith by sacrificing everything. Five Sikhs passed the test and their names also had very special meanings. Daya (compassion), Himmatt (effort), Dharam (righteousness), Mokham (determined and strong) and Sahib (Mastery and Leadership).

The Guru initiated the Sikhs with a new ceremony and then asked the 5 Sikhs to initiate Him into the Khalsa too. This is an unparalleled act from the leader of a faith and it further instilled the fortitude required by the Sikhs to uproot the tyranny and evil that was occurring during this period.

Sikhs do not follow traditional Indian rituals such as bathing at sacred rivers, praying to deities or in certain directions, fasting etc. They believe in One God and the Sikh Scripture called Guru Granth Sahib. Jee is the 11th and eternal Guru who will be their guide for the future.

THE AMRIT CEREMONY
• Amrit is prepared by 5 Sikhs
• An iron bowl and a double edged sword are used
• Water and sugar are added to the bowl
• 5 Prayers are read to prepare the Amrit
• Those being initiated drink 5 handfuls
• It is then sprinkled into the eyes five times
• Then it is sprinkled into the hair five times
• Sikhs are then told to live the life of a saint-soldier by praying, earning honestly, doing good deeds and standing up for the downtrodden.

Celebrations
Sikhs celebrate Vaisakhi by going to the Gurdwara and performing selfless service.
The Nishan Sahib (flag) outside the Gurdwara represents freedom, justice and food and support for the needy. The community usually cleans it and replaces the cloth on Vaisakhi.
They will sing praises of God in the form of "Keertan" and will listen to discourses of historical events relating to Vaisakhi. Processions in streets also take place called "Nagar Keertans".
All food offered in the Gurdwara is free for all and there are special efforts made to cater for the thousands of Sikhs and other communities who attend.

EMOTIONAL MEMORIES
On 13th April 1919, British troops fired on an innocent crowd in Jallianwala Bagh, that had gathered for a peaceful protest. 1000 were injured. The day is a very sad reminder for Sikhs across the world.

SHARE SHARE Charity
Sikh History and Religious Education
www.sharecharityuk.com

SIKH Head Coverings
Men and Boys: Dastar (Turban), Dumalla (Turban), Patka, Rumaal
Women and Girls: Dastar (Turban), Keski (Small turban), Churni

THE SIKH 5 K's
Kes - uncut hair covered with turban/head covering
Kara - iron bangle that reminds Sikhs to do good and remember God in their actions
Kanga - wooden comb used twice a day to comb hair
Kirpan - small sword worn at all times as a reminder to stand up against oppression
Kashera - undergarment that represents modesty and self restraint to live a pure and honest life

Source: <https://twitter.com/DrTonyKainth/status/1381920468433788928/photo/1>


Passover (Pesach)

LET MY PEOPLE, PASSOVER

The Spiel

Most of us know the story of Passover from the epic film, *The Ten Commandments*. This holiday is a remembrance of the Exodus from slavery in Ancient Egypt. Families eat a special meal called a Seder that is full of unique symbolic foods.

Moses had to lead the Jewish people out of Egypt in a hurry. Since there was no time to bake bread that could rise, a crunchy flatbread called Matza was made instead. **This is why Passover is called the "Festival of Unleavened Bread".**



THE SEDER

Seder literally means "sequence" and is a 15 step ritualized meal that signifies the narrative of the Israelites' deliverance from slavery. *The Seder occurs during the first two nights of Passover.*

THE HAGGADAH

A special prayer book that outlines the 15 steps in the Seder sequence.

THE SEDER TABLE

THE FOUR CUPS	THE SEDER PLATE	THE MATZA	THE OPEN SEAT
Representing the four expressions of deliverance. <i>"I will bring out," "I will deliver," "I will redeem," & "I will take."</i>	Symbolic foods used to retell the Passover story. 1. Bitter Herbs 2. Parsley 3. Sweet Charoset 4. Hard Boiled Egg 5. Lettuce 6. Lamb Shank Bone	A special round matza is broken in half and called the Affikoman . It is hidden during the Seder for children to find.	The messianic prophet Elijah , is welcomed with an open door and seat at the table. Moses' sister Miriam , is honored with a cup of water.

The Numbers

- 8 DAYS & NIGHTS**
- 15 TH OF THE MONTH OF NISAN** (BETWEEN MARCH & APRIL)
- 13: 8 EXODUS TELLS THE STORY OF PASSOVER**
- 40 YEARS OF TRAVELING IN THE SINAI DESERT AFTER THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT**
- 1476 BCE IS THOUGHT TO BE WHEN PASSOVER FIRST TOOK PLACE**

THE FOUR QUESTIONS + 1

The youngest child in the family traditionally asks these questions.

THE 4TH Why is this night different from all other nights?

- Why do we eat matza instead of bread?
- Why is it that on this night we eat bitter herbs?
- Why is it we dip twice in salt water?
- Why is it that we eat in a reclining position?

THE TEN PLAGUES

Calamities inflicted to persuade Pharaoh to release the Jewish people from captivity.

- Nile turns to blood
- Frogs
- Lice
- Flies
- Pestilence
- Boils
- Hail
- Locusts
- Darkness
- Death of the firstborn

The Israelites were instructed to paint their doors with Lamb's blood so their homes would be "passed over", by the final plague.

THE LAST SUPPER

This famous scene in Renaissance art actually depicts a Passover Seder.

Next year in Jerusalem!

Source: <https://visual.ly/community/Infographics/lifestyle/let-my-people-passover>

Easter

Easter

FACTS



The history of Easter began in the 2nd century.

Happy Easter!

Easter is the oldest among Christian holidays.

The Easter Bunny sprung to life from legends.

As per the Bible, Jesus Christ was not alone on the day of the Resurrection.

Eastern and Western Christian would celebrate Easter at different times.

Easter comes after forty days of Lent in the Christian calendar.

The Holy Week before Easter Sunday has dedicated names and recognitions.

The concept of the Easter bunny giving eggs and candies traces its origin in Germany.

Western Christianity observes Easter on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the spring equinox.

In Polish folklore, the Virgin Mary offered eggs to the guard soldiers of Christ on the cross.

The official flower of Easter is the white lily.

Easter in medieval times involves throwing an egg in churches.

THE FIRST RECORDED USE OF DECORATED EASTER EGGS WAS IN THE 13TH CENTURY

The tradition of bunnies on Easter originated from Protestant communities in Europe.

Easter in the U.S. is celebrated by leaving children Easter baskets on the morning of the holiday.

Greek Orthodox followers paint their Easter eggs with the color red.

In some European nations, people burn Easter fires.

The tradition of egg painting is called the 'PYSANKA'

Pretzels also used to join in the Easter celebrations.

Early egg dyes were made using natural materials.

Source: <https://facts.net/easter-facts/>

PHYSICAL WELLNESS

This is your signal to take a break and move! Step away from the computer screen and get your body moving using the following guide to get some deskercise:

**DE STRESS
MONDAY** *Happy New Week!*

6 WAYS TO 'DESKERCISE'

Sitting at a desk hour after hour and day after day can take a toll on your body. Here are some simple exercises you can do to get your muscles working and your blood flowing (which can also get ideas flowing).



1 SIDE SWIVELS:

Sit upright with your feet hovering over the floor. Holding your desk with your hands, use your core to swivel the chair from side to side.



2 KNEE-UPS:

Raise your arms up to your shoulders. Bring them down while lifting a knee up as if you're breaking a twig over your knee. Repeat with the other knee.



3 BAG CURLS:

Start with your arm by your thighs. Bend your elbow and curl your arm up toward your chest, pause, then lower it.



4 CHAIR DIPS:

Grip a non-rolling chair on both sides and slide to the front edge. Start with your arms straight and legs extended, then dip by bending your arms. Push yourself up, then dip again.



5 STRETCHES:

Your back, neck, and shoulders deserve a break from sitting, especially if you've been staring at a screen. Stand up and stretch from your fingertips to your toes.



6 CHAIR SQUAT:

Sit on the edge of your chair. Stand up and sit down without using your hands. Make sure to stick your backside out and don't allow your knees to cross over your toes.

Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/263671753167260248/>

CAREER WELLNESS

April 28, 2022 is Girls in ICT Day



Girls in ICT *Access and Safety*



Image Source: <https://bit.ly/3LwwDB2>

International Girls in ICT Day is commemorated annually on the last Thursday of April. The day was created to “encourage and empower girls and young women to consider studies and careers in the growing field of ICTs, enabling both girls and technology companies to reap the benefits of greater female participation in the ICT sector.” (Caricom.org, n.d.) With technology becoming more and more integrated into all industries, job opportunities will increasingly require technology and innovation skills from candidates. According to UNWomen.org (n.d.), “65[%] of children entering primary school today will have jobs that do not yet exist.” So, early access to technology will better set up young people to compete in the job market, especially in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers. However, the following statistics show the glaring inequalities that exist:

- nearly 25% fewer women than men have access to the Internet across the developing world.
- less than 30% of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) professionals are women.
- Globally, in tertiary institutions, there is approximately half the number of girls studying STEM subjects compared to boys.
- 48% of women versus 55% of men use the internet daily globally.

It is no wonder that “Access and Safety” is the 2022 theme of Girls in ICT Day.

Questions to Ponder, Discuss and Create Plans For

- How can unequal access affect girls in STEM/ICT and what can we do to change this worldwide?
- How can we make our programmes and STEM/ICT related studies and workplaces more accessible and inclusive?
- What type of gender stereotypes and toxic workplaces have they experienced? How can we change these environments for the better? What is the role of an encouraging workplace?
- Are our online spaces created to make girls and women feel safe and prevent unpleasant online experiences for them?

These questions and discussions require multi sectoral and stakeholder engagement, action and support to empower young girls and women through technology. Youth must be invited to the table to lend their voice to strategies and implementation of activities to close the gap between men and women in ICT.

Sources:

<https://caricom.org/projects/girls-in-ict/>

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/international-girls-in-ict-day>

<https://www.itu.int/women-and-girls/girls-in-ict/international-girls-in-ict-day-2022/>

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CREATIVE WELLNESS

Montserrat English

Click to listen to the Mighty Arrow: Montserratian Soca and Calypso Musician



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gtGOInhvMz4>