

# R U W E L L E

THE OFFICIAL WELLNESS PUBLICATION OF STUDENT COUNSELLING

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## HIV Counselling and Testing

The University is committed to producing staff and graduates who have the knowledge and resources to resist HIV infection and promote interventions that will alleviate the impact of the virus on others. HIV Counselling and Testing is available free of charge to the University community.

### The arrangements are as follows:

- Testing and counselling will take place between 14h00 and 16h00 every weekday afternoon. Staff at the Health Care Centre will make special arrangements for those who are genuinely unable to attend the Health Care Centre during the prescribed times.
- The intern psychologists from the Counselling Centre will assist with the provision of pre- and post-test counselling at the Health Care Centre.
- Although clients will be required to book appointments for the pre- and post-test counselling, those who have not booked will be accommodated if space is available.

### Pre-Test Counselling:

- The purpose of the pre-test counselling is to ensure that the client has sufficient information to make an informed decision about having an HIV test. During the session the client will be given an opportunity to make a decision on whether he or she wishes to undergo the HIV test. Pre-test counselling will cover the following areas: what an HIV test is and the purpose of the test; the meaning of a positive and a negative result, including the practical implications such as treatment and care, sexual relations and psychosocial implications; the assessment of personal risk of HIV infection; safer sex and strategies to reduce risk; coping with a positive test result, including whom to tell and identifying needs and support services; and an opportunity to decide whether or not to undergo the HIV test.

### Testing:

- Only registered nurses or doctors are allowed to draw the blood needed for HIV testing. A rapid HIV test will be administered.
- Once the blood has been drawn and the test administered, the client will be asked to remain in the waiting-room until the result is available. The nurse who administered the test will give the result to the counsellor, who will in turn inform the client of the outcome.
- A confirmatory test will be performed in all cases where the rapid test indicates a positive result. In this case, a different rapid HIV test will be administered. If the second test is positive, the client will be informed of the result.
- If the second test is negative (contradicting the result of the first test), a venous blood sample will be sent to a laboratory for a confirmatory HIV test. Since this will involve some delay, the counsellor will arrange for the client to return as soon as the laboratory test result is available.
- There is no need to perform a confirmatory test in cases where the result is negative.
- If the test fails to work properly, another test will be administered.
- The client will only be informed of the result during the post-test counselling by the same counsellor who conducted the pre-test counselling.

### Post-Test Counselling

- In the case of a negative result, the counselling session will cover strategies for reducing risk and the possibility of having obtained a false negative result if the test was conducted during the 'window period'.
- If the client is given a negative result, but may have been exposed to HIV during the 'window period', he or she should be encouraged to return for another HIV test after three months.
- In the case of a positive result, the pre-test counselling will address the client's immediate emotional reaction and concerns; personal, family, and social implications; difficulties foreseen by the client and possible coping strategies; people with whom the client wishes to share the result, as well as his or her responsibility towards sexual partners; the client's immediate needs and the social support available; follow-up supportive counselling;



**RHODES UNIVERSITY**  
*Where leaders learn*

and follow-up medical care.

- A client who learns that he or she is HIV positive will be provided with the appropriate psychological crisis numbers to be used if necessary, namely the Counselling Centre's psychological emergency number (082 8030 177) and the Health Care Centre's after-hours emergency number (082 8011 409), as well as the relevant Life Line numbers (the National Crisis Line number is 0861 322 322 and the AIDS Helpline for those affected by or infected with HIV is 0800 012 322).

### Follow-up care in the event of a positive result

- Staff at the Health Care Centre will be available to offer medical care and advice to staff and students who are HIV positive. This will include advising staff and students of the medical criteria for antiretroviral treatment.



## EDITORIAL

Accepting responsibility for one's own health and wellness is extremely important, also for student populations. Students, and the youth in general, are confronted with specific age-related health challenges and risks like excessive alcohol and tobacco use, illicit drug abuse, high-risk sexual practices, unhealthy diets, exposure to risk of physical injury, as well as depression and suicidal behaviour as the result of life changes and the transition to a different living environment.

The learning environment of higher education creates its own issues, including:

- Leaving the home base;
- Adjusting to the higher education environment;
- Pressures of studying;
- Examinations;
- High expectations;
- Uncertainties about programme / career choice;
- Uncertainties about cultural values;
- Campus minorities / international students;
- HIV/AIDS pandemic;
- Widespread and excessive use of alcohol and drugs; and
- Sexual orientation and sexual behaviour.

The above challenges can be overcome by realising the importance of adopting a new and holistic view of students' needs. This has been well documented in the literature on student development and adjustment. Traditionally, providers of higher education have been interested mainly in one aspect of the student experience, namely academic learning. However, emphasis is shifting to the importance of viewing students in a holistic way and providing development opportunities based on this holistic view. The Wellness Model provides a conceptual framework for operationalising student development needs in a holistic way, including the students' physical, academic, social, emotional, spiritual and occupational needs. A systematic and comprehensive approach to the creation of a more supportive and life-enhancing environment for students is one of the goals of the Counselling Centre and the Health Care Centre. The intervention, either on an individual basis or in a group context, can only lead to holistic wellness and optimal health, through a professional multidisciplinary team approach. A student who is experiencing any emotional or psychological problems should make an appointment at the Counselling Centre, while any student who is experiencing a health-related problem or who requires more information on physical wellness is invited to visit the Health Care Centre.

Wellness greetings!  
Colleen Vassiliou

Colleen Vassiliou - Head: Student Counselling

## Message from the Dean of Students

During the April vacation, I attended the Rhodes graduation ceremonies, and had the pleasure and privilege of watching nearly 2000 students walk across the stage, kneel before the Chancellor to be capped, and stand proudly before the congregation while they were 'hooded' by the Registrar and received their Rhodes degree. They were dressed to the nines in formal or traditional attire, and their proud families were smiling from ear to ear, and clapping up a storm. What a special and happy moment for all.

It is really amazing how many of our students make the effort to come back to Rhodes for this celebratory occasion, and it made me stop to think.

Clearly the three years (or more) that these students have spent at Rhodes mean a lot to them, and the friends they have made here are particularly precious. As precious, possibly, as their degree. Clearly, also, a fair number of those happy students have had difficult experiences during their time at Rhodes. Many of them will have suffered bereavement, or serious illness; others have struggled with depression or considerable stress; others strayed from the academic path, failed some subjects, and disappointed themselves and their families.

Some had serious relationship problems, others lost their motivation, and others no doubt got into disciplinary trouble. The point that I'm trying to make here is that all of them made it in the end. All of them found help or advice somewhere, or devised strategies to help themselves, and all of them ultimately graduated.

They have all undoubtedly grown a lot, intellectually and socially during their time at Rhodes, and so will you, as long as you keep one eye on your personal wellness, and the other on that long-term goal: to walk across that stage and receive your degree.

Vivian de Klerk - Dean of Students



## GROUP THERAPY

offered at the Counselling Centre



Have you ever thought of attending a group therapy session?

If you are interested in being helped, come and talk to a psychologist and find out more about the benefits of Group Therapy.

It can be life changing!  
Take the risk - join a group!

- Monday**  
14h00 Study Skills
  - Tuesday**  
14h00 Assertiveness | 15h30 Healthy Relationships
  - Wednesday**  
13h00 Bipolar Group (At the Health Care Centre)  
15h30 Art Therapy
  - Friday**  
09h30 Wellness Group | 14h00 Study Skills
- For more information e-mail [counsellingcentre@ru.ac.za](mailto:counsellingcentre@ru.ac.za)





## Strategies for coping with a panic attack

Many people report having experienced one or more panic attacks at some point in their lives. A panic attack is a brief period of intense fear accompanied by physical sensations such as heart palpitations, dizziness, chest pains, difficulty breathing, and nausea. A panic attack often occurs at a time when the individual is under considerable stress, but may also occur for no discernable reason. Here are some tips to help you get through a panic attack:

- Take time out and slow down. Breathe slowly and deeply, and relax your entire body, head to toe. Then slowly resume your previous activities.
- Picture a relaxing scene using all your senses. Now put yourself in that scene, as if you were really there.
- Take a stroll or talk to someone.
- Focus on concrete objects around you and try to notice details or invent questions about every object you identify.
- Count backwards from twenty and with every number picture a different image of someone or something you love.
- Occupy your mind with an absorbing task, such as trying to remember all the movies that have starred your favourite actor.
- Take a deep breath and stretch your body from head to toe.
- Remind yourself that panic attacks are not dangerous and will always, always come to an end!

If regular panic attacks persist, you may want to consult a counsellor or therapist.

(Adapted from Depression and Anxiety Support Group Information Leaflet, 2001)



# Physical Wellness



Tanja Smuts - Clinical Psychologist

## Fun Walk-Student Health Survey: The Results

### Survey Overview

Rhodes University Counselling Centre conducted a short survey to seek the views of students towards a FUN WALK/ 'walking for health' initiative. The survey is part of the Counselling Centre's major drive to integrate wellness into the Rhodes University Student Culture. Below is the detailed and tabulated response.

### Results Summary

- An overwhelmingly 87.8% of students surveyed are willing to participate in the FUN WALK initiative.
- 36.7% of students surveyed prefer a walk in and around campus.
- 55.8% of students surveyed prefer the FUN WALK to be held on Saturday.
- While 40.1% of students surveyed prefer the walk staged between 8-9am.

With special compliments to the Wellness Leaders, The Counselling and Health Care Centre has therefore received a strong mandate to go ahead with the Fun Walk in and around campus on Saturday at 8am. For more information e-mail [counsellingcentre@ru.ac.za](mailto:counsellingcentre@ru.ac.za).

### Question 1: Would you be willing to participate in a FUN WALK/ 'Walking for Health' initiative?

Willingness	Yes	No
#	147	33
%	87.8	18.2

### Question 2: Which of the following do you prefer?

Walk Preferred	Fun Walk on Campus	Fun Walk in and Around Campus	Walking up to the monument	A competitive walk
#	45	54	29	19
%	30.6	36.7	19.7	12.9

### Question 3: Which day of the week should we conduct the FUN WALK?

Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Sat	Sunday
#	4	1	6	4	16	82	34
%	2.7	0.7	4.1	2.7	10.9	55.8	23.1

### Question 4: What time of the day should we conduct the FUN WALK?

Time Preferred	Before 8am	8-9am	1-2pm	5-6pm	After 6
#	14 or	59 or	20 or	25 or	29 or
%	9.5%	40.1%	13.6%	17%	19.7%

## Dear Students

This was written by an Alcoholic, something to think about next time you drink too much!

We drank for joy  
And became miserable

We drank for sociability  
And became argumentative

We drank for sophistication  
And became obnoxious

We drank for friendship  
And became enemies

We drank to make us sleep  
And awakened exhausted

We drank to gain strength  
And it made us weaker

We drank for exhilaration  
And ended up depressed

We drank to help us calm down  
And ended up with the shakes

We drank to get more confidence  
And became afraid

We drank to make conversation  
And became incoherent

We drank to diminish problems  
And saw them multiply

We drank to feel heavenly  
And ended up feeling like hell



Lella Bentley and Siobhán Sweeney  
Intern Counselling Psychologists

## Academic Wellness

Students should consider stopping by the RA Room (Union Building 1st Floor) on Mondays and Fridays at 14:00 to build on or develop their skills in the following areas: -

- Concentration
- Memory
- Listening and Note-taking
- Textbook Reading
- Study Hints
- Exam Writing
- Time Management

You can also find out what type of learner you are (auditory, visual, kinaesthetic, reader/writer), which will enable you to employ the study techniques that work best for you.

Learning how to prioritise your time with the use of a study planner and weekly/monthly schedules may prove to be of immense value during this exam time.

Managing

## ANXIETY AND STRESS

Sarah Green - Counselling Psychologist

Believe it or not, having some anxiety is a good thing. This is what makes you study and prepare for tutorials, seminars and exams. However, as with everything else, if there is a poor balance between work and relaxation, then academic commitments and demands can become overwhelming. To this end, there are a few things we can do to effectively manage anxiety:

- Use positive, self-affirming statements such as “I can be anxious and still deal with this situation”.
- Note and acknowledge (to yourself or a good friend) those situations in the past in which you have coped adequately.
- Challenge ideas and notions of being perfect – it is good to have goals, but trying to achieve perfection is a losing battle! How about trying to be “good enough”?
- Take regular breaks between times of concentrating and working hard.
- Set aside time to relax and have fun, especially when you have a lot of work to do. You need to have something to look forward to.
- Lastly, after you have completed the task that caused you all the anxiety, give yourself a pat on the back for persevering and facing up to the challenge.

Avoiding anxiety is not an effective means of managing anxiety. It is facing the anxiety that equips you to cope with it successfully.



## Healthy Relationships Group

During our time at university, when we are no longer attending school or living with our parents, we are often free to spend more time exploring what it is like to be in a relationship. Many of us experience our first long-term romantic relationship at university.

While you are in a relationship it is quite normal to sometimes experience misunderstandings and conflict and to feel confused or stuck! These relationship problems provide us with an opportunity to get to know ourselves better, but it is still helpful to get some pointers on how to deal with difficult situations.

To assist students seeking to improve their relationship skills, the Counselling Centre is running a "Healthy Relationships Group", which involves seminars on how to improve communication, resolve interpersonal conflict, and practise assertive behaviour. Students are also given guidance on how to deal with an unhealthy relationship that is making one or both parties unhappy.

For more information, e-mail [counsellingcentre@ru.ac.za](mailto:counsellingcentre@ru.ac.za) or call (046) 603 7070.

Lisl Foss - Counselling Psychologist

## Social Wellness

### Self-Reflection

Are you finding it difficult to adjust to the pressures of university, whether social, academic or even personal? Are there times when you feel overwhelmed, incapable and overworked, or even approaching burnout? Well, there are certain pressures that come with university life, as well as expectations that people have of students, and sometimes we get caught up in other things and neglect to take care of ourselves. As much as we all want to achieve success in everything we do, we must never neglect ourselves and must constantly reflect on where we are at the present moment. Ask yourself: Are you functioning to the best of your ability, or have you allowed everything else to take precedence over your life? Has your social life become more important, or have you set unrealistic goals or no goals at all, or are there other things that might be affecting your overall performance? By being in a state of constant reflection, you are able to identify those areas that are being neglected before they become problematic, enabling you to create balance and improve your life overall.

Penny Mathumbu - Intern Psychologist

### Health Care Centre

We open Monday to Friday  
08h00 - 17h00

Weekends and public holidays  
09h30 - 12h30 and 14h00 - 16h00

Vacation times: Monday to Friday 08h00 to 12h30 and 14h00 - 16h00 for emergencies only

Overall prevalence of HIV among students and staff at Rhodes is 1.5 % HIV prevalence among students is 0.2 %; among academic staff is 0 %; among support staff level 6 and up is 6.7 % and support staff level 1-5 is 12.9 % Students N=512 Academic staff N=98 Support staff level 1-5 N=177 Support staff level 6 and up N=117

Our purpose is to provide comprehensive holistic health care.

**HIV testing daily from 14h00-16h00.  
Make an appointment on (046) 603 8523  
and e-mail [healthcarecentre@ru.ac.za](mailto:healthcarecentre@ru.ac.za)**

## Test Your Strengths Online

If you have ever taken an aptitude or personality test, you probably paid more attention to the weaknesses pointed out by the test instead of the strengths you may possess in certain social or intellectual domains. Similarly, we often focus more on those parts of our courses that we do not enjoy or which we find difficult, instead of those parts to which we are better suited. This fixation with our shortcomings is not new, and has dominated psychological theory since the very beginning. However, there are exciting changes taking place in this discipline, including a shift in focus from what may be wrong with us, to what may already be right instead! By paying more attention to our strengths, we may be better equipped to make choices that are ultimately more satisfying and which bring us more success.

The best part about these new ideas is that they are being shared online, free of charge. Go to [www.authentic happiness.org](http://www.authentic happiness.org), register your basic details and try out some of the inventories and questionnaires online. The program tallies the results and presents them to you in an easily accessible form (you will not need one of us to explain them to you!). Best of all, the tests leave you feeling good about yourself for a change. They may also inspire you to try out new activities and skills, or even pursue a certain career that reflects the best you have to offer. I would recommend you start with the Values in Action (VIA) Strengths Test (use the longer version for a more comprehensive interpretation), and discover your top five character strengths.

Philippa Skowno - Intern Psychologist

# Emotional Wellness

## "I AM SO DEPRESSED...OR AM I?" - Unpacking depression

The word "depression" is common these days and seems to be used to describe anything from the feeling one has after arguing with a friend to a deep-seated dark mood that seems to never go away. There are many misconceptions about this difficult subject and how people can be helped. In this article, some myths about depression are unpacked, followed by a discussion of how to spot real depression.

### Three myths about depression

#### **Myth 1: It is just "feeling blue"**

We all feel down sometimes, but depression is something quite different. The symptoms of depression are listed at the end of this article, and a truly depressed person will experience some or all of these symptoms for a period of at least two weeks, and is unable to simply shake off these feelings.

#### **Myth 2: Seeking professional help is a sign of weakness**

Surprisingly, there are still some people who believe that seeking help is a sign of weakness. Most people regularly seek help in many other spheres of their lives without feeling embarrassed (e.g. having a personal trainer, going to the dentist, or seeking financial advice), but when it comes to a medically and psychologically treatable problem like depression, some people feel uncomfortable. This need not be the case and it is very likely that seeking help will aid in one's recovery.

#### **Myth 3: Taking anti-depressants means that you are crazy**

Since there are some biological aspects to depression, some (but not all) people are advised to take anti-depressant medication, which is designed to assist in their recovery. This is a fairly common treatment for depression and is best done in conjunction with psychotherapy. Generally speaking, a psychologist cannot force you to take medication, but should provide you with the available options so that you are able to make the best choice ultimately.

Only doctors and psychiatrists are allowed to prescribe these medicines, and only they have the expertise to advise someone to discontinue their use.

### How do I spot depression in myself or others?

There are some behaviours and symptoms that could signal depression in someone, BUT almost all of us experience at least one of these behaviours and symptoms at times. It is the combination of the following that might be a sign that someone is depressed:

- Depressed mood, for most of the day, for a period of at least two weeks
- Loss of interest in almost every activity
- Noticeable weight loss when not dieting, or weight gain
- Noticeable decrease in appetite
- Inability to sleep, or otherwise wanting to sleep all the time
- Feeling tired and without energy
- Feelings of worthlessness or inappropriate guilt
- Moodiness or irritability
- Inability to concentrate and/or difficulty making decisions
- Recurrent thoughts about death or suicide

If you think that this describes you or someone you know, please make an appointment at the Counselling Centre or join our Bipolar and Depression Support Group, which meets at the Health Care Centre.

Matthew Leaver - Clinical Psychologist



## Counselling Centre

Meet our friendly secretary: De'vene Gelderbloem

### Come make an appointment at Student Counselling

Should you require more information about the various group sessions, workshops, or if you encounter any emotional or psychological difficulties, please make an appointment to see one of our psychologists. Contact Student Counselling at (046) 603 7070 or e-mail [counsellingcentre@ru.ac.za](mailto:counsellingcentre@ru.ac.za) or visit us on the 2nd floor of the Steve Biko Building (Union Building).

Lastly, if you have a comment, question, idea, article or quotation you would like to share with us, please e-mail or place your letter in our suggestion box at Student Counselling.

**"You must take personal responsibility. You cannot change the circumstances, the seasons, or the wind, but you can change yourself. That is something you have charge of." – Jim Rohn**

## WHO AM I? - Developing yourself

Enrolling at university may seem to be a daunting task, as your sense of responsibility increases as the years pass. Even so, these years are a time for growth, change, and exploration. It is time for you to gain the life skills you will need to become successful, independent adults. In essence, you should strive to look at this opportunity as a means of preparing for the 'real world', allowing you to develop a true sense of self. Below are some tips to get you moving in the right direction!

### Developing Competence: "Can I make it here?"

Strive for competence in these four focal areas: intellectual skills, social skills, interpersonal skills, and physical/manual skills.

### Managing Emotions: "How do I deal with my feelings?"

Through situational experiences you will become aware of your own personal emotions, which may include caring, anxiety, optimism, depression, anger, shame, guilt, and inspiration. Remember to understand, manage, adjust and control your emotions so that you can develop a sense of self-control when dealing with provocation, new situations, and criticism.

### Moving Through Autonomy toward Interdependence: "From parents to peers"

Get to know your support systems at Rhodes (peers, hall wardens, lecturers, etc.) so you can begin to rely less on your parents.

### Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships: "Friends"

If you can develop tolerance for others and their value systems, you can learn to engage with others in a meaningful and satisfying way.

### Establishing Identity: "Who am I?"

Establish your own personal system of behaviours that work for you. Learn to understand and accept yourself, and also make changes where necessary.

### Developing Purpose: "Where am I headed?"

Ask yourself, "Where am I headed?" Do you have a future plan, are you taking steps to carry out this plan, and are you making use of all the opportunities available to you?

### Developing Integrity: "I know my values"

Clarify and establish the beliefs you hold dear to your heart and which will help guide you through the various experiences and circumstances you will encounter in life.

So, will other people shape you and determine your actions, or will you leave that exciting, fulfilling task to yourself? Believe in yourself and your abilities, strive for success, grab every opportunity, enjoy your time here, reflect on your experiences, and make the most of your precious time at University!

## Spiritual Wellness

Thirushni Sam - Intern Psychologist



# RU WELL?

## Wellness Leaders 2010



## EMOTIONAL WELLNESS DAY

5 May 2010

Students were requested to adhocly write down what they were feeling and in so doing start conversations about emotions, feelings and the right to express and be aware of each other's emotional wellness.



## Meet the Wellness Leaders!

### What are Wellness Leaders?

The Rhodes Counselling Centre have trained 45 students to act as 'Wellness leaders' to be eyes and ears on campus and in the residences.

They are the link between the Counselling Centre and Health Care Centre and the student population. Wellness leaders are trained peer counsellors who help students help themselves and help to refer them for professional assistance.

Wellness Leaders help to get 'wellness conversations' going on campus and assist the Counselling Centre and Health Care Centre in organising projects and campaigns that look at student's holistic development from a Wellness perspective.

Wellness Leaders wear badges that state RU WELL – and they can be identified in this manner. If you have any questionns about this, please e-mail [counsellingcentre@ru.ac.za](mailto:counsellingcentre@ru.ac.za).

