



R U WELL?

THE OFFICIAL WELLNESS PUBLICATION OF STUDENT COUNSELLING

Volume 1 Issue 1 September 2009



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn



Are you well?

To be able to answer the question R U WELL? you need to know what wellness is. Wellness is concerned with what is necessary and desirable for functioning at your best in all areas of life. A person's wellness is an ongoing process of seeking to improve the quality of life. Wellness is created through the choices that an individual makes in seeking to take active responsibility in promoting a positive lifestyle and making maximum use of his/her potential.

Why is wellness important for Rhodes students? To be academically well, one needs to be well in other areas. Lack of wellness in one area can drain our energy and leave us battling to give our full attention to our studies.

The five areas of wellness are physical, academic, social, emotional and spiritual wellness.

Physical wellness includes exercise, proper nutrition, adequate sleep, and making responsible decisions in the areas of health, sexuality, alcohol and drugs. Your physical self-concept also forms part of your physical wellness.

Academic wellness includes the process of striving towards the goals you have set with regard to your studies and career. It involves the desire to learn from challenges and to develop a mind that encourages intellectual growth and creativity.

Social wellness includes the process of creating and maintaining positive, interdependent relationships with others for both recreation and support.

Emotional wellness includes the ability to recognise, express and manage your own feelings and accept a wide range of feelings in others. It involves the development of positive self-esteem and the integration of attitude with behaviour. It also means caring for and supporting others.

Spiritual wellness refers to the ability to create and discover meaning and purpose in your life and demonstrate your values through your behaviours.

R U WELL in these five areas of your life?
Remember: The single most powerful investment you can make in life is an investment in yourself. This is the only instrument you have with which you can deal with life and contribute to the lives of others.

BREATHE

EDITORIAL

Welcome to R U WELL?!

What is the aim of R U WELL? you may ask.

Well, it is an up-to-date, informative, fun-filled, stimulating newsletter that seeks to engage, inform and challenge you to focus on your wellbeing. Each quarter we will be discussing a range of issues relating to your physical, academic, social, emotional and spiritual wellness (as discussed on page 1). Student Counselling needs your help to get conversations going about 'WELLNESS' and in this way not only touch the lives of students on campus, but also cause a ripple effect in the community.

While you are sinking your teeth into these wellness articles, don't forget to catch up with our regular features, namely the group therapy calendar, the staff/student wellness interview, and the wellness message from the Dean of Students. Don't be one of those people who need permission from the rest of the world to be a happy, successful human being. You don't. You only need YOUR permission! With this first edition of R U WELL? we want to challenge you to give yourself permission to be WELL! R U physically, academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually well? If not, Student Counselling is here for you, to provide an immediate, professional and confidential counselling service.

R U READY to be WELL?!

Wellness greetings...
Dr Colleen Vassiliou
(Head: Student Counselling)

Dr Colleen Vassiliou - Counselling Psychologist

Message from the Dean of Students

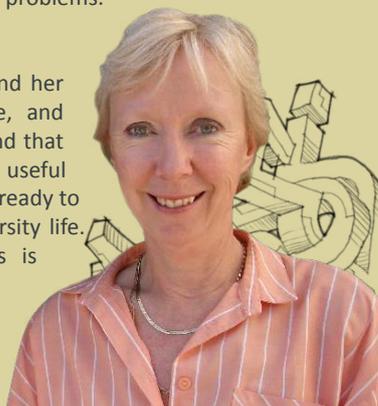
Health matters – and your health is very important to you, and to us. For this reason, I am really pleased to see the launch of our Counselling Centre's new in-house "wellness" newsletter, which will, I am sure, be a useful resource of practical hints for keeping mentally and physically fit and healthy.

Each of us needs to take responsibility for our own wellness, and this includes ensuring that we eat the right foods, get regular sleep, and find the balance between hard work and good fun. The Dean of Students Office occasionally attracts a little bit of criticism for over-protecting our students, and looking after them a little too much. Some say we should stand back a little, and let students learn to cope with their problems the hard way, by letting them make mistakes, because being an adult means taking this kind of responsibility, and adjusting to the stress and anxiety of the real world.

We would like to find the middle ground between a hands-off and a hands-on approach, and this publication will, we hope, be a useful tool to achieve that balance. It will give you tips to help you cope with your own fears and worries, ranging from simple time-management skills to vital strategies to cope with conflict management or relationship problems. And more.

I congratulate Dr Vassiliou and her team for this fine initiative, and hope that all our students find that RU Well is an interesting and useful resource in keeping well and ready to face the challenges of University life. Remember – your wellness is YOUR responsibility as well as ours.

Prof Vivian de Klerk
DEAN OF STUDENTS



Each of us needs to take responsibility for our own wellness
find the balance between hard work and good fun

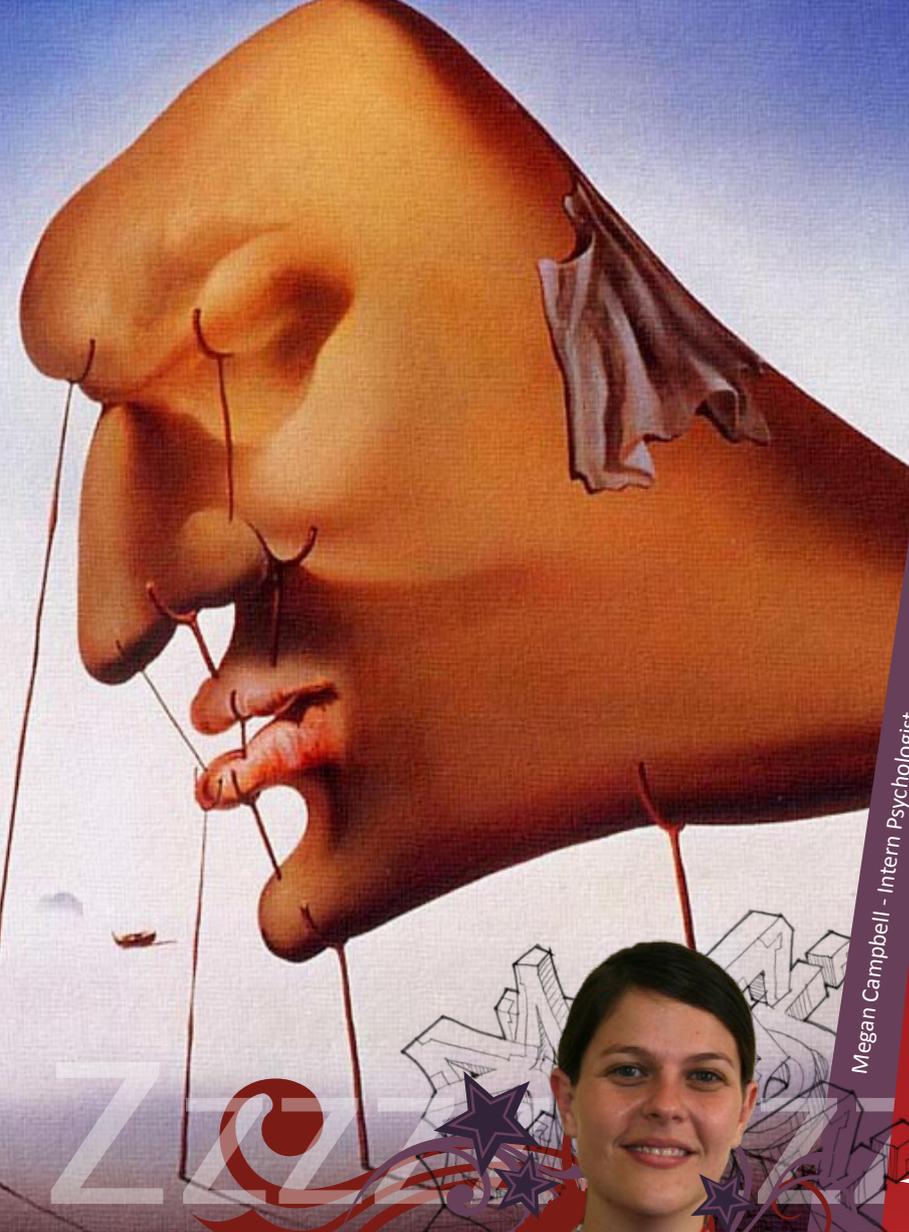
being an adult means taking this kind of responsibility
adjusting to the stress and anxiety of the real world

help you cope with your own fears and worries

simple time-management skills to vital strategies to cope with conflict or relationship problems

Front Row: Dr Colleen Vassiliou; Graham Kingma; Matthew Leaver; Lisl Foss; Megan Campbell
Back Row: Rea Buys; Samantha Fox; Delvene Gelderbloem; Tanja Smuts; Sarah Green
(Dana Labe absent on day of photo)





Megan Campbell - Intern Psychologist

Healthy Sleep Hygiene 101

Sleep is essential for optimal wellbeing! Sleep deprivation leads to a decrease in motivation, academic performance, alertness and concentration, and results in mood swings and extreme emotions such as increased anger, impulsivity and sadness. In severe instances sleep deprivation can escalate into insomnia, causing significant distress and social, interpersonal and professional dysfunction.

The quantity and quality of sleep is affected by numerous factors, including stress and worry, exercise and activity levels, caffeine and alcohol consumption, and pragmatic issues like time management.

Sleep hygiene is the practice of behaviours that promote good sleep and daytime functioning.

To improve sleep hygiene:

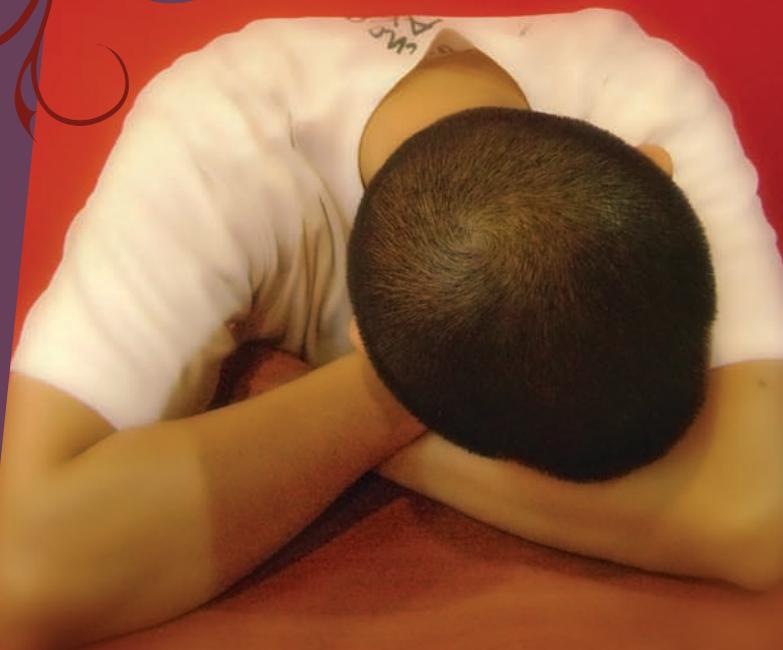
1. Keep to regular bedtimes and rising times.
2. Aim for uninterrupted sleep between midnight and 06:00 am.
3. Limit napping during the day.
4. Avoid lying in bed waiting to fall asleep.
5. Reduce caffeine and nicotine intake.
6. Avoid alcohol and sleep aids.
7. Limit excessive noise and light in your bedroom.

Physical Wellness

THE HEALTH SUITE

The health suite offers opportunity for physical exercising at all levels of proficiency from beginner to advanced. The facility is well equipped for both aerobic and strength training, and is extensively used by "social/lifestyle" exercisers as well as competitive sports people. The aerobics and indoor cycling classes are particularly popular with social users who are allowed to progress at their own pace. Capable instructors and personal trainers are on hand to give advice and assistance.

Contact: Felix (046) 603 8367
F.Munyai@ru.ac.za



Academic Wellness

Becoming a successful student

Finally, you get to leave home and be free! No more parents, no more nagging teachers, no more curfew! University seems like the Promised Land and nothing can stop you...

But nobody said it would be this different. Nobody explained the adjustment one has to make from being in Matric to being a first-year student. There's more work, too, but there's nobody constantly checking that you are actually doing it, and everyone else just seems to be getting on with it. Even if you're in your second or third year, or even a postgrad, the academic demands seem to increase as you go along.

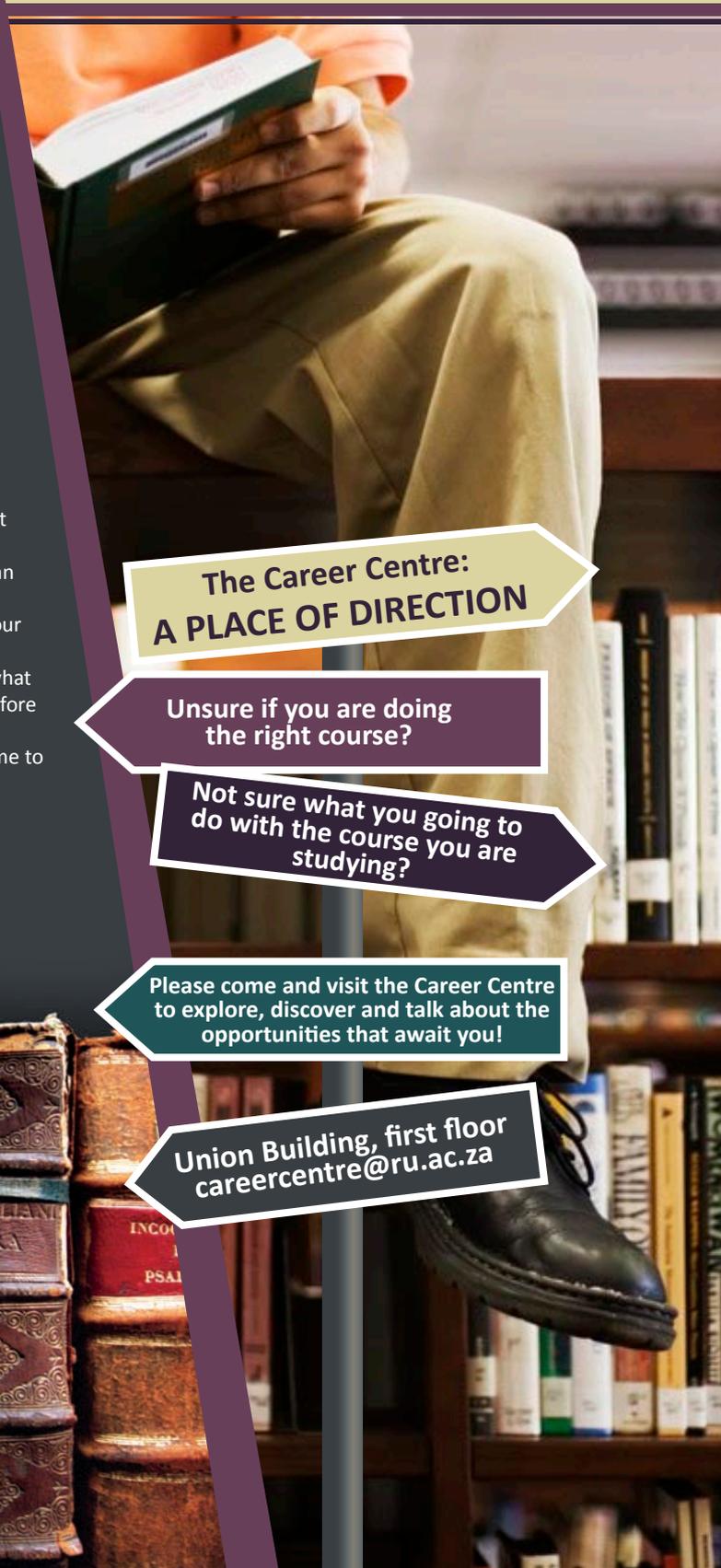
These are some of the reasons why the Student Counselling Centre is running a study skills group in an effort to address the academic difficulties current students might be experiencing. Covering areas such as listening and reading, memory, time management, exam writing and stress management, the study skills group aims to equip students with the necessary strategies to ensure a successful academic career.

Some useful tips on becoming a successful student:

- Maintain good work habits by organising your academic and social life accordingly.
- Adjust your working conditions by studying in a suitable environment with minimal distractions (e.g. the library).
- Work within your concentration span – work for as long as you can and take regular breaks.
- Manage your time well – keep weekly and monthly planners on your wall, crossing off tasks as they are completed daily.
- Improve your memory by repeating and creating meaning from what you learn every day as opposed to trying to learn everything just before tests or exams.
- Make sure you eat, sleep and exercise properly, also scheduling time to relax and spend time with friends.



Rea Buys - Intern Psychologist



**The Career Centre:
A PLACE OF DIRECTION**

**Unsure if you are doing
the right course?**

**Not sure what you going to
do with the course you are
studying?**

**Please come and visit the Career Centre
to explore, discover and talk about the
opportunities that await you!**

**Union Building, first floor
careercentre@ru.ac.za**



We all know someone like this: The one who manages to “get it right” whenever he goes out. He has the “mojo”, the x-factor – that certain something that makes it seem like luck is always on his side when it comes to having close encounters of the female kind.



Social Wellness

Matthew Leaver - Clinical Psychologist

How to hook up every night

(or, actually, how to be okay with the fact that you don't)

We all know someone like this: The one who manages to “get it right” whenever he goes out. He has the “mojo”, the x-factor – that certain something that makes it seem like luck is always on his side when it comes to having close encounters of the female kind. We see these guys in movies, the music industry, Axe commercials, and we even have one or two live ones in our residences. Although they are relatively few in numbers, their actions seem to be the standard of what guys should strive for. What most people don't know, or perhaps don't talk about, is the stress it creates.

“Hooking-up anxiety” is not a recognised psychological diagnosis, but stress about whether or not one is going to successfully negotiate oneself into a sleepover is not uncommon. It has the potential to turn a pleasant evening out with friends into an experience similar to studying for Economics II; an exercise that yields entirely unpredictable results no matter how much effort you put in.

There are different ways of dealing with this – one being to drink the stress away, a favourite tactic amongst Rhodents! The advantage of this is that you forget your worries and transform into a charming and intelligent creature of the night, at least in your own eyes. A disadvantage is the danger of overdoing it and spending the evening chatting up a barstool. Also, going too heavy on the drinking could affect one's “performance”, so if you are actually able to make it back to your room with someone, “sleep over” might be a literal description of what happens. Something to think about before you self-medicate with Crackling!

Another problem with stressing about hooking up is the potential for seeing women as currency with which you can purchase respect (yes, guys can have self-esteem issues too) rather than thinking about whether you like her or are attracted to her. Going easy on yourself and enjoying a night out no matter what happens is never a bad plan – it is usually when we are not trying that we come across as relaxed and probably a little more impressive. You may end up actually enjoying yourself, and who knows where that might lead!



Healthy Relationships Workshop

Do you have healthy relationships?

I'm not just talking about your relationship with your boyfriend or girlfriend, but with your friends, colleagues, lecturers, mother, father, brother, sister – all the different people in your life?

Would you like to gain the tools to make your relationships healthier?

The Counselling Centre is running a Healthy Relationships workshop, consisting of five seminars, with small groups of no more than eight students. Each week a topic is presented followed by a group discussion. The topics are:

- The five languages of love
- How to be heard: Assertiveness training
- Conflict resolution: Compromise vs. win-lose
- What are my expectations in a relationship?
- What makes a relationship toxic?

So, if you want to acquire the tools for healthy relationships, come and join us!
All are welcome.

Samantha Fox - Intern Psychologist





...although we may share many common feelings throughout the **process of grieving**, each of us will deal with the situation in a **unique and different way**.

Sarah Green - Counselling Psychologist

Emotional Wellness

When someone dies...

Unfortunately, the loss of a loved one is a reality that all of us will have to face sooner or later.

Your reaction to the loss may be influenced by the way in which the person died, particularly if the death was sudden or accidental, and it is helpful to realise that although we may share many common feelings throughout the process of grieving, each of us will deal with the situation in a unique and different way.

What is normal? In the first few hours or days after losing a good friend or close relative, many people feel stunned, as they cannot believe the reality of what has happened. This may soon give way to a sense of emotional numbness that may help you get through all the practical arrangements that have to be made, such as funeral arrangements. Even though it is painful and difficult to attend a funeral, it is one way of saying goodbye to a loved one and starting to work through your feelings of loss and distress. After a while, a dreadful sense of yearning or pining for the lost person may be experienced. This may result in difficulties concentrating on your academic work or even problems sleeping and being able to relax. Some people feel very angry towards others for not preventing the death, or resentful towards other friends who did not do enough. You may even feel anger towards the person who died. Alternatively, some people feel guilty for not having done enough and will spend a lot of time thinking, "If only I had..."

It is helpful to remember that death is usually beyond our control, and although it is necessary to experience these emotions and to ask ourselves questions, we need to be kind to ourselves. Don't forget to take time out and to look after yourself. If you need some ideas or help in doing this, the psychologists at the Counselling Centre are always willing to assist you. The Centre provides a confidential service that is always available to you while at Rhodes.

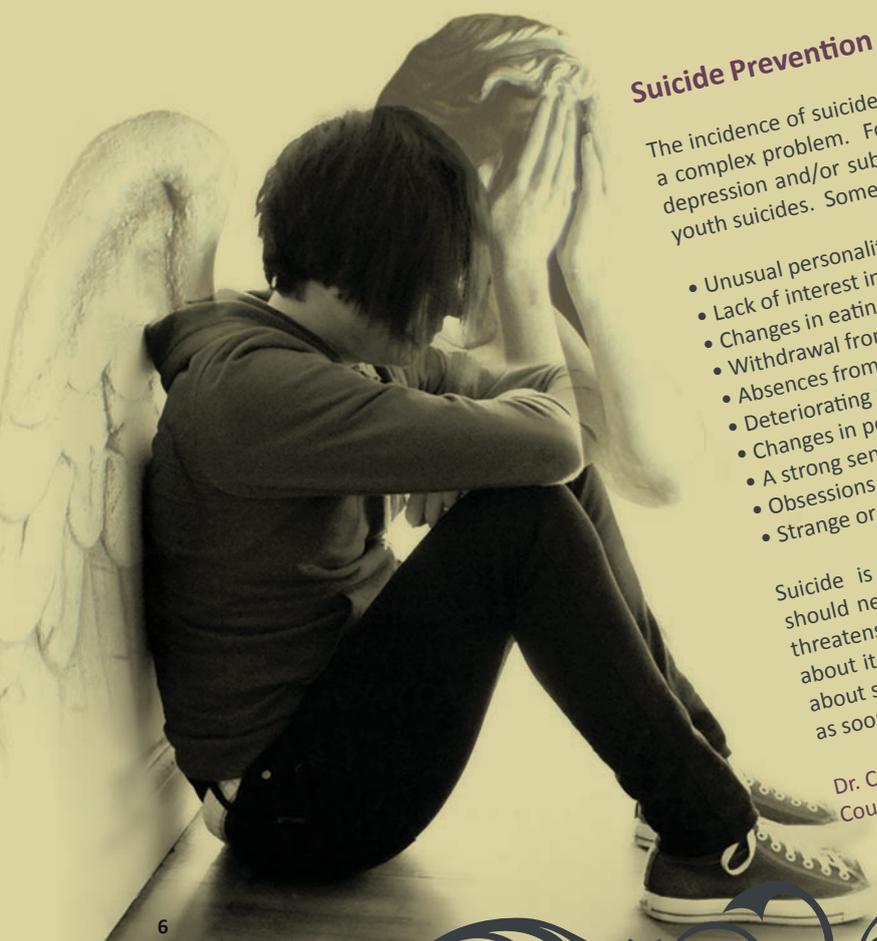
Suicide Prevention

The incidence of suicide among the youth is skyrocketing. Everyone agrees that suicide is a complex problem. For every suicide there is a distinct reason. Many suicides involve depression and/or substance abuse, with alcohol being suspected in more than half of youth suicides. Some warning signs to look out for include:

- Unusual personality changes;
- Lack of interest in previously enjoyable activities;
- Changes in eating and/or sleeping patterns;
- Withdrawal from friends and family;
- Absences from school or work;
- Deteriorating performance at school or work;
- Changes in personal hygiene;
- A strong sense of guilt, shame or emptiness;
- Obsessions with death (suicidal ideation); and
- Strange or unusual behaviour.

Suicide is a growing crisis. Suicide threats should never be ignored, since a person who threatens suicide is in the very least thinking about suicide to get professional help as soon as possible.

Dr. Colleen Vassilliou
Counselling Psychologist





Tanja Smuts - Clinical Psychologist

Strengths and resources

Try the following exercise...

Without thinking about it too much, name three of your weak points. And now identify three of your strengths.

For most of us it is easier to identify our weaknesses than our strong points. We are more easily in touch with our weak areas, because we spend a lot of time judging ourselves for our shortcomings, even though doing so makes us feel miserable.

Knowing your strengths and deliberately finding new ways to use them at work and play leads to a greater sense of fulfilment and self-efficacy. It also makes us happier, kinder and more productive.

Come and explore your own strengths in our Strengths and Resources Group.

Lisl Foss - Counselling Psychologist



Me, myself and I

If you were asked to define yourself, you would probably not find it an easy task.

There is so much to "me" that it is not easily captured in a single statement. The ideal is that different aspects of "me" are acknowledged, accepted and engaged in a healthy dialogue, striving towards integration.

If you are interested in discovering more about yourself, you may want to join the Self-Reflection Workshops presented by the Counselling Centre.

Creative art expression is used as medium, although no art experience or skill is needed.

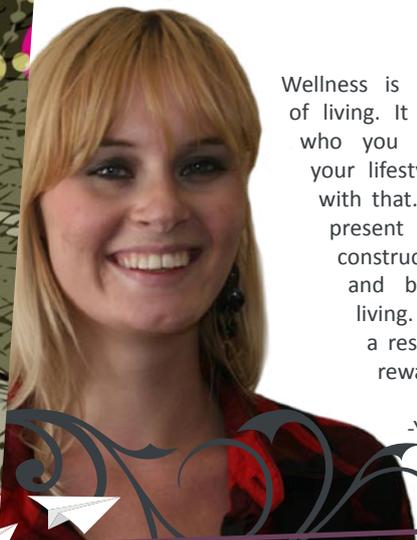
For more information, contact the Counselling Centre.

Whatever our season of life, it offers its own opportunities and challenges for spiritual growth. Instead of wishing we were in another season, we ought to find out what this one offers.
John Ortberg



Spiritual Wellness

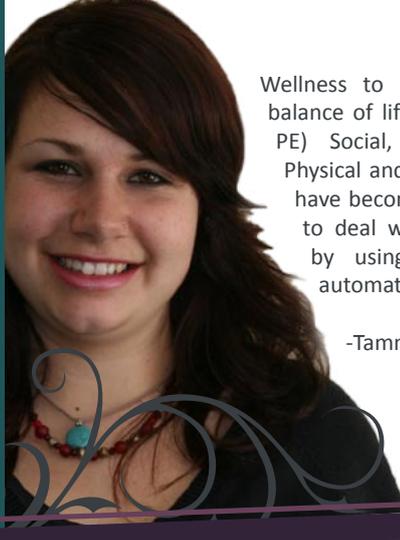
SAY WHAT?



Wellness is mastering the art of living. It is about knowing who you are and shaping your lifestyle in accordance with that. It is about being present and consciously constructing your unique and balanced way of living. Wellness is both a responsibility and a reward.

-Yolande Botha

So what does wellness mean to you?



Wellness to me is a conscious balance of life. Balance of (SMS PE) Social, Mental, Spiritual, Physical and Emotional. Once I have become aware and begin to deal with my weaknesses by using my strengths, I automatically become well.

-Tammy Dickson

Goodbye to the SAN... HELLO TO OUR NEW HEALTH CARE CENTRE

We open Monday to Friday
08h00 - 12h30 and 14h00 - 17h00
Weekends and public holidays
09h30 - 12h30 and 14h00 - 16h00
Vacation times: Monday to Friday 08h00 to 12h30 and 14h00 - 16h00 for emergencies only

Our purpose is to provide comprehensive holistic health care.

Our services include:

- Treatment of minor ailments
- Family planning
- VCT / Comprehensive care, treatment and management of HIV
- Follow up and monitoring of non-communicable diseases
- Pregnancy advice
- Inpatient care for acute illnesses

YOUR HEALTH MATTERS TO US

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 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.

Group Therapy Calendar Fourth Term 2009

Monday	15h00	Bereavement group
Wednesday	11h00	Adjustment support group
	12h00	Strengths and Resources Group
	13h00	Rape Survivor support group
	13h00	Bipolar/Depression group
	15h00	Self Reflection using Art Therapy group
Thursday	11h00	Study Skills Group
	15h30	Healthy Relationships Group
Friday	09h30	Wellness Group
	14h00	Study Skills Group



Is someone sending you rude smses, nasty facebook notes, horrible emails? Does your ex-partner keep calling after you've told them to stop? Is someone making jokes in the dining hall about your HIV status, sexuality, religion or race? If the answer to any of these questions is yes, than you are being harassed and you should consider reporting the matter to the Student Harassment Officer.

LARISSA KLAZINGA
l.klazinga@ru.ac.za | 046 603 8181

Meet our friendly secretary: Delvene Gelderbloem

"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