

Counseling and Psychological Services

COVID-19 & Adjusting Back Home

Unique Challenges to Consider

Acknowledge your feelings and emotions. Allow yourself time to reflect on your feelings and reactions to the current world around you. Being mandated to leave campus is still a disruption to your situation and routine. Remember [self-compassion](#) - be kind and understanding to yourself as you transition back to being at home.

Tips to Try

Take a break - have boundaries.

- You cannot be everything for everyone. Take time to reflect on what you can and want to be for others and then set boundaries. Kindly set boundaries with loved one and friends so that you can have time to be.
- Boundary setting and breaking patterns can be difficult, but with compassion and consistency you can establish them and feel more balanced.

Establish a routine.

- Try to practice good sleep hygiene, regularly eating nutritious meals, finding a balance between work and fun.

Be mindful of exposure to the news.

- Staying informed is good and when there is an oversaturation of it, it can be a little much.
- Take a break to watch a movie, read a book, take a walk, or spend time with loved ones to give your mind a break.

Connect and reach out for support.

- Technology allows us to connect with people globally! Take time to reach out to people and communicate. If you prefer to talk to a professional, there is contact information listed here for some resources to access professional support.

Resources

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**
1-800-273-8255
- **Crisis Text Line**
Text START to 741-741
- **OpenPath**
<https://openpathcollective.org/>
- **BetterHelp**
[betterhelp.com](https://www.betterhelp.com)
- If you want to find a mental health provider in your area, [Psychology Today](#) and [MiResource](#) are great resources to look for a therapist who accepts your insurance.



COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

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COVID-19 & Students with Limited Financial Resources

Unique Challenges to Consider

Students with financial burdens and limited family resources are in particularly stressful positions right now. With the global impact of COVID-19 on the economy, you are likely needing to re-evaluate priorities and next steps.

Tips to Try

- Make sure to check in with your student loan lender about changes to repayment requirements given the COVID-19 crisis as many are offering accommodations.
- If needed, make sure to also check your state's unemployment benefits as most have expanded.
- While your chosen future plans and job prospects may be negatively impacted, many fields and companies are seeing an increased demand for their products or services as a result of the crisis. Make sure to search very broadly in major search engines, such as Indeed, LinkedIn, Monster, SimplyHired, etc.; as well as Career Services - GWU
- Many organizations are offering free or highly discounted training online that could boost your resume and advance your career. Keep a lookout!

Re-evaluation does not equal failure!

- You may have had plans that fell through, a job offer rescinded, a graduate program delayed. While it is healthy to let yourself feel disappointment and fear, try not to personalize these global issues to your own actions or self-worth.
- Take a moment to lay out your values and priorities, to include physical health, mental health, financial health, relationships, etc. List some ideas for each area of priority that you do have control over right now and identify realistic action steps.

COVID-19 Resources & Support

- For some immediate financial and housing resources, check out the GW Student Association's COVID-19 Resources & Support website SA-GWU, which has links to:
 - The GW CARES Student Assistance Fund
 - A GW Student Mutual Aid Spreadsheet
 - DC's Mutual Aid Spreadsheet

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Getting Unstuck

Spring 2020

Getting Unstuck is a [three-session](#) workshop designed to help students increase their understanding of depression and provide them with the skills to recognize and manage their depressive symptoms. Each workshop is [1-hour](#) and the information builds on material from previous sections. "Getting Unstuck" is not a substitute for formal counseling and does not constitute mental health treatment. [No registration required.](#) You are welcome to join this free workshop series using the provided link!

<https://gwu.webex.com/meet/wmaxhd>

Three-Session Workshop | Virtual Sessions via Webex

Wednesdays

April 22, 2020 | 3-4pm

April 29, 2020 | 3-4pm

May 6, 2020 | 3-4pm

Thursdays

April 23, 2020 | 3-4pm

April 30, 2020 | 3-4pm

May 7, 2020 | 3-4pm



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COVID-19 & First-Generation Students

Unique Challenges to Consider

- Having to be your own advocate
- Setting, enforcing, and maintaining boundaries
- Loss of on-campus support/community
- Loss of identity
- Adjustment difficulties
- Access/knowledge of available resources
- Financial difficulties

Tips to Try

- Set up a good work environment. Consider ways you can limit distractions (closing doors, wearing headphones, working outdoors, etc.).
- Set communication rules and boundaries: headphones in = do not disturb
- Build a schedule that your family can reference. Be realistic, but also flexible - try scheduling study times and posting your schedule for others to respect your time.
- If responsible for younger children try explaining college and bring them into the experience (doing work together). Build in time to be with them.
- For every 2 hours that you are studying/working try to take a 30-minute break.
- Stay connected! Consider creative ways to maintain connections to friends, mentors, and other support systems.
- Put imposter syndrome in check. You belong here!
- Reflect on the ways you have shown resilience in the past and recognize the skills that helped you get through previous challenges that can be applied to the present.
- Self Compassion - You are doing the best you can, be gentle with yourself as you shift and adjust.

Additional Online Resources

- [How to build community when you feel isolated](#)
- [What I have learned as a first generation student](#)

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COVID-19 & Graduating Seniors

Unique Challenges to Consider

As a graduating senior, before the COVID-19 crisis hit, you likely either had plans in place for post-graduation, were stressing about plans, or avoiding it as much as possible. With the global impact of COVID-19 on the economy, you are likely needing to re-evaluate priorities and next steps.

Tips to Try

Your self-care routine is naturally going to need to shift whether you are home in isolation, with many family members, or with other distractions and responsibilities.

- Get creative. Try things you never tried before, like meditation or journaling!
- Catch up with those good social supports!
- Whatever you do, try to give yourself permission to have designated time and space NOT speaking, reading, or thinking about the COVID-10 crisis. Your brain and body needs it.

Self-care is not laziness! In fact, self-care helps with motivation.

- Many hardworking students are used to "the grind." You may be telling yourself a lot of falsehoods about what you can and should be doing right now. Give yourself intentional time and space to recharge.
- It's best to try to maintain as much of a weekly routine as possible, and make sure to include some mindfulness activities and exercise in it.

You are resilient!

- While it's unlikely you've navigated something quite like this before, you have likely dealt with many other challenges and changes to plans in the past.
- It's important to take time to pause and reflect on what strengths, mindsets, supports, and strategies helped you through those previous times that you can draw on today.

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COVID-19 & International Students



Unique Challenges to Consider

- Re-acculturation - Having to adjust back to home after being in the US
- Reactions of others, not getting to see others
- Dealing with mixed emotions - both sadness for loss and excitement for returning
- Loss of time, readjusting to being back with family
- Loss or relationships/friendships at GW
- Loss of connections at home
- Adjusting boundaries to being back under parents roof
- Readjusting identities (if applicable), having to hide LGBTQIA+ identities if not out to family
- Adjusting to both online programming and classes being in a different timezone.

Tips to Try

- Keep in touch with the International Students Office (ISO) at GWU and with your adviser. They are still available to support you!
- Check out the virtual events set up by ISO, including the weekly podcast: [Events](#)
- Talk with professors - let them know if you need support, if you're struggling with time differences or just keeping up with work. They are the first line of support.
- Keep in touch with your friends - have video hangouts!
- Find spaces at home where can feel more safe, where you can feel more yourself, even in small ways.
- If you can, work to set up boundaries - talk to your family if they will understand your difficulties adapting to home.
- Find support, if not in your area, via online or phone services ([Befrienders](#); [Betterhelp](#))

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COVID-19 & Graduating Seniors

Unique Challenges to Consider

Traditionally, your final semester of your senior year is a major emotional adjustment full of uncertainties that can impact your motivation. There's a term for "Senioritis" for a reason. With COVID-19, your senior year is now ending in a way that no one could have anticipated. It is normal and natural for your motivation to take a hit during this time of major uncertainty.

Tips to Try

Have space for experiencing disappointment.

- Things have not gone as planned and it is okay to feel disappointment
 - Feelings of sadness, frustration, and being let down are okay during this unprecedented time.
- Trying to push through your feelings can lead you to feeling more drained.
- Take time to find activities you find enjoyment in and make space to experience your feelings.
 - Journaling can be a way to process your feelings, as well as making art and other creative outlets
 - Staying connected to friends is also important during this time

Be intentional during your final semester.

- Try to maintain your focus on what is important to you.
- Ask yourself, what is important for you to learn, be connected to and accomplish during this time?
- Determine what matters most to you during this time.
 - Goal setting can be helpful to organize tasks towards what you want to accomplish.
 - Goal setting helps you maintain motivation

Keep in mind that GWU is offering 2020 graduates to return in Spring 2021 for the bicentennial commencement in May 2021!

Stay connected during social distancing.

- Try to continue to reach out to friends during this time.
- Implement virtual "meet-ups" with your friends.
 - Google Hangouts, Netflix Party, and watching artists perform during Live Streams are some ways to still stay virtually connected with friends
- Suggest podcasts to your friend group to listen to and discuss.
- Begin a group chat and start a "book club" with your friends.

Begin to think of your next steps (when you feel ready).

- Continue to take time to process what you are going through.
- Recognize that COVID-19 has probably impacted your planning process and potentially your previously laid out plans for your future.
- Start to think what you want to achieve next after graduation.
- Begin to think of what your post-graduation routine will look like (determine things you can control during this time of uncertainty).
 - Create an exercise routine for yourself.
 - Begin/update your LinkedIn account

Additional Online Resources

- [Managing the stress of living at home for college](#)
- [Taking care of your mental health in the face of uncertainty](#)
- [Career Services - GWU](#)

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COVID-19 & Study Abroad Students



Unique Challenges to Consider

Feelings related to:

- Effort put in to going abroad (finding sites, applying, getting accepted, finding financial support, going through the efforts of moving)
- Moving and adjusting, just to be sent home
- Not getting to see friends at school
- Loss of the full experience
- Loss of the learning and benefits of being abroad
- Adjusting to the boundaries of being at home
- Adjusting to taking classes online from a different university, likely in a different time zone
- Competing feelings, in general, such as some relief if you were not having the experience you hoped for, mixed with loss and grief

Tips to Try

- Reach out to your host school. They may continue to offer support, despite returning home
- Keep in touch with your GW Study abroad liaison, as well as the study abroad office
- Check out the Study abroad website about re-entry, which may help you understand some of your feelings: [Study Abroad Re-entry](#).
- Learn a little about post-study abroad depression: [Study Abroad Depression](#) - While you may not have had the full experience, you are likely still experiencing some of these concerns.
- Work to maintain some structure of what your days were like, while being at home.
- Talk to parents, friends, and other supports about your feelings related to your experience, such as what you are sad you missed, happy you got to do, hopes for next steps, etc.
- Don't get sucked into the news. Information is good, but too much can lead to anxiety and overthinking.
- Practice some self-compassion. Each day will be different. You may go through lots of different feelings, motivation levels, etc.: [Self-Compassion](#)

Additional Online Resources

- [Online Student Resources](#)
- [Free Online Language Learning](#)
- [Museum Tours](#)

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