

SLA NEWSLETTER

Official Newsletter for the SLA Community



WARM WELCOME

By Daniela Humajova and Aini Abdulahi
(Chief Editors)

Have you noticed how warm it feels to stand in the sun, and how cold it is in the shade? How daffodils are blooming with beauty, painting the world with colour? As the gentle breeze of March starts filling the streets, leaving the winds of winter behind, we would like to welcome you to the flourishing new issue of the SLA Newsletter.

Every new season brings new possibilities. In spring, days are getting long again conquering the endless dark hours. Let's use them to inspire us, to increase our daily efforts and pursue our dreams. If you had difficulties getting through the ceaseless winter, this is your chance of renewal and new perspectives. Whether you want to start a new hobby, improve your grades, or travel more – you got this!

March also prides to be the month of mental health awareness. It's an incredibly important topic to talk about, as mental health affects every little aspect of our life. Let's use March (and the rest of the year) to start caring about ourselves more. After all, spring is time for cleaning. So, clean the self-doubts, worry, anger or any negative emotions away.

Let yourself be happy.

NEWS AND UPDATES INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- 2 - The Importance of Mental Health
- 3 - Time Management During Assignments and Exams
- 4 - How Seniors Care for Their Mental Health
- 5 - University Mental Health Services
- 6 - Upcoming Events
- 8 - SLA Success Story
- 9 - SLA Appreciation

THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL HEALTH

By Aini Abdulahi (Chief Editor) and Aurel Marian (Senior SLA)

Taking care of your mental health is extremely important in order to be able to make the most of your everyday life. As students, it can sometimes feel like we don't have the luxury of caring for our mental health properly when we have assignment deadlines and exams looming over our heads constantly. Nevertheless, it's part of our duty to ourselves to make time to take care of ourselves physically and mentally!

Caring for your mental health will in turn drastically benefit your daily life by:

- Improving your mood
- Reducing your anxiety
- Create an enhanced sense of inner peace
- Improving your relationships
- Increasing your self-esteem

We have put together some information and resources that might help you or someone you know, to improve your mental health. Whether you're stressed because of your studies, work or simply in life, there are a couple of breathing exercises put together with a step-by-step guide each. The first one is for stress in general and the second one is for the overthinkers who find it hard to clear their minds without thinking about something else.

Making simple and small changes to your everyday routines can be much more beneficial than you could imagine! These changes can include:

1. Talking about your feelings
2. Keeping active (working out, going on walks)
3. Keep in touch with your loved ones
4. Ask for help when you need it
5. Schedule time to take breaks
6. Indulge yourself in a hobby

Besides those exercises, you can find some more general information in the "How to stimulate your vagus nerve" link, where for example one of the advices is to try singing, humming or chanting (who knew!) to improve your overall mental health, have a look as you might find something interesting and useful in this section!

- [Breathing exercises](#)
- [How to stimulate your vagus](#)
- [Meditation exercise for overthinkers](#)



TIME MANAGEMENT DURING ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS

By Daniela Humajova (Chief Editor)

Five different deadlines are creeping in, a tutor asked you to bring the first assignment draft to your seminar next week and you haven't even started yet, one of the students you're supporting reached out to you for additional help with their exam preparation, and your Senior SLA is chasing you to submit an OU blog.

Sounds familiar? Sometimes, when there is so much to do it can feel like we can't slow down. With that we're risking a burnout, demotivation and far more stress than a person should deal with.

In times like these having a good time management is essential. No matter what, you always have the same 24 hours in a day available to check things off your 'to-do list', and spend time with your family, friends or to simply relax and take care of yourself. By planning your time wisely, you'll be able to be more productive, efficient, and accomplish more, while enjoying some extra free time!

Here are some useful time management tips how to do it:

Don't procrastinate

Procrastination is an enemy of a good time management. Sometimes we put things off so much, we can't get back and get things on track again. Also, dealing with the snowball effect of what happens when you procrastinate on everything important can be extremely stressful. I know it can be hard, but you might be only a different thinking and a little extra effort away from winning. Write down a small 'to-do list' every morning to make sure you have something done every day. Trust me, a tiny bit of extra effort a day can help you in the long run.

Calendar It!

Use a physical planner, iPhone calendar, or a vision board – anything that you can have on your sight all the time. It will help you to remember what you need to do and when, and therefore prevent you from forgetting.

Set your own deadlines

Imagine you need to work on a three thousand words essay by the end of this month, which can seem as a lot. However, if you break it down into smaller sections, which you can work on week by week, it doesn't seem so scary anymore, right? Break down big assignments into smaller achievable tasks you work on consistently, and I guarantee you'll never get stressed about them anymore.

Don't forget to take breaks

Remember, taking a break is just as important as hard work. Our bodies need to recharge, and gain new energy in order to be productive, and maintain a good mental and physical health. For each hour of work, take 15 minutes break. Get some fresh air, brew some delicious coffee, or grab your favourite book. Even a small break every now and then can make a huge difference.



"It's not enough to be busy... The question is: What are we busy about?"

- Henry David Thoreau
Poet and Philosopher

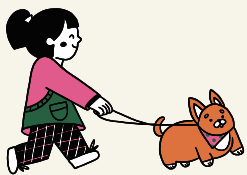
HOW SENIORS TAKE CARE OF THEIR MENTAL HEALTH

By Senior SLAs



Mindfulness is a type of meditation in which you focus on being intensely aware of what you are sensing and feeling in the moment, without interpretation or judgment. Practicing mindfulness involves **breathing methods**, **guided imagery**, and other practices to relax the body and mind and help reduce stress.

When I feel overwhelmed, I find it's best to just take a step back, **take a few deep breaths** and allow myself to do something different than the thing that's been stressing me out. This allows me to calm down and handle the situation better. If I don't this, I find myself spiralling into more and more stress.



Going for **walks**, **spending time outside**, and **doing yoga** is what works best for me, and helps to clear my head from negative feelings. I also do a lot of **journaling**, which helps me to organise my thoughts, express how I'm feeling, and explore my emotions a bit further.

I try to take a step back from all this digital world and **switch off everything** and either take a walk outside, sometimes I even do **meditation through breathing exercises** or simply by getting together with my closest friends. To cope with stress I tend to also dedicate myself to **cooking** or occasionally **baking**, which surprisingly is very rewarding because you learn something new (if you try new recipes) or you get to eat your favorite meal.



I enjoy **spending time with my loved ones** when I'm feeling down or stressed as they have the ability to lift me up! I also try to go out and experience new things by going to **art exhibitions**, or **reading a new book** to make feel creative and inspired again to persevere through life!

When I feel stressed, the best remedy for me is **watching my favourite comfort movies**. Just taking time to sit, relax and breathe on my own, watching a movie that makes me calm and happy is such a peaceful experience. Whenever I'm watching my favourite movie it feels like I've blocked the real world out and entered a new world with the movie characters, it's so great!



UNIVERSITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

By Daniela Humajova (Chief Editor)

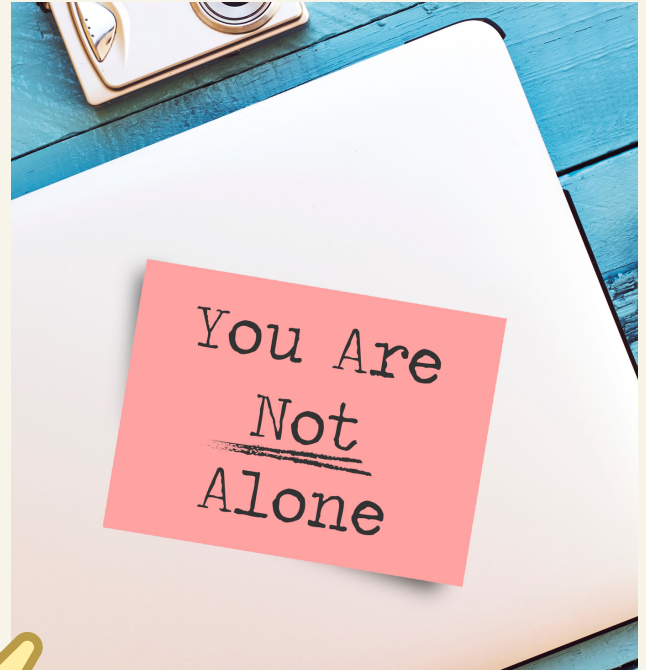
Counselling and Mental Health (CMH)

Based in **Sunny Hill House**, as a part of Student Support and Wellbeing, CMH is a team of mental health professionals, that holds a confidential space of compassion and support for students. The team offers you guidance and orientation on emotional wellbeing and mental health.

They can also help you understand what Mental Health support is available (both within MDX and outside) and coordinate your access to it.

Moreover, CMH provides a series of individual and group sessions, both online and in person, to help you cope with current issues that are impacting your student journey like stress, anxiety, low mood, or procrastination.

Find out more about CMH [here](#).



Middlesex Canine Teaching Assistants

Interacting with animals is scientifically proven to reduce stress and anxiety. At Middlesex University, we have our own very special canine teaching assistant dogs! Just as the CMH, they are part of Student Support, and are on a mission to improve the mental health of Middlesex University students :).

You can find them in Sunny Hill House **every Monday 10:00-12:00**, and **every Thursday 13:00-15:00**!

They are waiting for you with open paws to give you a big pre-exam cuddle!



NETWORKING WEBINAR

By Aleksandra Filipova (Senior SLA)



Ever heard of the word "NETWORKING"? If you said 'NO' then you probably have not started thinking about your future career yet. If you said 'YES' then you are probably well on your journey of finding a job after university.

Dr Giannina Warren, the Programme Leader of BA Advertising, PR and Branding, has been invited to speak. As an industry professional, she uses networking as a tool to advance her career. Thanks to Giannina's networking skills, I have had the privilege to meet many other industry professionals while studying Advertising, PR and Branding. She has kindly agreed to share with us some of her favorite tips and tricks of networking with us.

REGISTER
NOW!



**FOLLOW THE
LINK PROVIDED
IN THE EMAIL
TO REGISTER**

NETWORKING

WEBINAR

WITH DR. GIANNINA WARREN

**3 MARCH 2022
12:00-13:00**

It is no secret that networking can be intimidating for some.

Join us to learn more about networking and how it can impact your career. With some exciting tips from the Programme Leader of BA Advertising, PR and Branding



online

MORE EVENTS TO LOOK OUT FOR

The Student Success Festival

The Student Success Festival is back **from 28 Feb - 6 March**, and the university has prepared a lot of fun and exciting activities for you. You can get involved in treasure hunt to win big prizes, join one of the amazing online sessions including getting advice from the Apprentice's Tim Campbell.

Find information about the treasure hunt and all special guests, along with sign-up information [HERE](#).

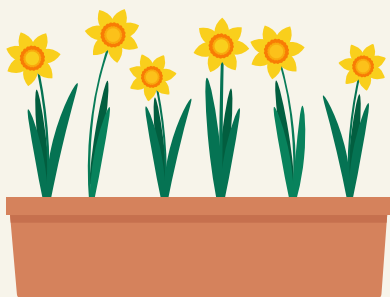


The Employability and Development Alumni Led Sessions

The Employability and Development Sessions led by MDX Alumni are back!

There are series of sessions led by successful MDX Alumni sharing their tips and lessons on life after uni. The sessions will be running this March and they'll cover various topics such as managing and preventing stress, creating positive habits for your wellbeing, freelancing, and how to look for opportunities!

Find out more [HERE](#)



SLA SUCCESS STORY



Rudy started as a Student Learning Assistant who was very proactive in helping students and academics. She developed into a dynamic Senior SLA who eventually joined the PAL team. The role allowed her to blossom with passion and drive, overseeing many administrative tasks and gaining employability skills.



SLA APPRECIATION



By Senior SLAs

**ALESSANDRO
CABONI**

Alessandro's efforts go beyond his own studies, he is a great example for showing consistent professionalism and punctuality! He continues to maintain a positive and engaging attitude, well done!

Alex is one of the newest members of the SLAs, yet he managed to catch up to the rest of the cohort's standards! He has been involved in a number of events making himself known around the university and is always happy to help others.

ALEX POPOVICI

**ELENA
ZORETICH**

Elena is consistently performing very well as an SLA and is extremely caring and empathetic. Her OU Blogs are also great and fun to read!

Sukritha is an exceptionally good SLA. She's pro-active, always involved in SLA events, and we always hear amazing feedback about her from the lecturers and students. Well done :)

**SUKRITHA
REDDY**

LAIMA BULLE

Laima is always on time with her OU blog posts, always replies to my emails and always does everything that's asked from her. Well done Laila :)