



# Center for Counseling and Wellness Services at Rowan College of South Jersey

*College is an Exciting Time of Change and Personal Growth*

*Vol. 6 No. 1*

*September 2021*

## **Message from the Director:**

### **Welcome back to RCSJ!**

The fall semester has arrived and, with it, the opportunity to return to campus for in-person classes. The past 18 months have presented many challenges and significant losses that have impacted our collective physical and mental wellbeing. Our society has weathered the experiences of COVID-19, remote classes, zoom sessions, masking requirements, physical distancing, isolation, economic pressures, racial injustices, and political polarization; and those experiences have left their mark on us all.

This issue will present ideas on how to care for yourself and cultivate resilience so that you have the strength to move forward towards the future of your choosing.

Best wishes for an enjoyable, healthy, and successful semester!

*Lois Y. Lawson-Bridgell, Ph.D., MSW, LSW*  
Director, Center for Counseling and Wellness Services

**"Despite difficulties, always keep optimism. 'I can overcome these difficulties.' That mental attitude itself will bring inner strength and self-confidence."**

**DALAI LAMA**

**"Wellness is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."**  
— *The World Health Organization*



*Photo by Dan Meyers on Unsplash*



## **September is National Suicide Awareness & Prevention Month**

Suicide is a national health problem and currently ranks as the second leading cause of death for individuals 10-45 years of age.

### **What Students Can Do?**

- Learn how to recognize the warning signs of mental health issues.
- Talking is critical. This is especially important if a student notices or has a gut feeling that another student is struggling.
- Practice self-care and manage emotions.
- Access help and learn how to be a better support for others.

(MacPhee & Ponte, 2019)

<https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/September-2019/Suicide-Prevention-for-College-Students>

***For some, the weight of the last 18 months has pushed them to the brink of contemplating suicide***

*Magellanhealth.com/issues/summer-2021/features/suicidal-ideation-in-the-wake-of-covid-19.asp*

### **Suicidal ideation in the wake of COVID-19**

Impacts from COVID-19 have contributed to suicidal ideation more than doubling in the U.S.<sup>1</sup>

A recent study showed that  
**11% of adults**  
seriously contemplated suicide in June 2020 — a finding that was reported more often by certain groups.<sup>2</sup>

**VS**

**26%** Young people age 18 to 24  
**19%** Hispanic people  
**15%** Black people  
**31%** Unpaid caregivers for adults  
**22%** Essential workers

1. National Institute of Mental Health; 2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# How to Maintain Mental and Physical Health in College

Photo by Tim Gouw on Unsplash



It can be tempting to put on a brave face when you are struggling. Especially in today's world where everyone is putting their best face forward on social media, it can seem

like you are the only one who is grappling with their mental health in college. When you talk to friends, family, professors and/or reach out for counseling assistance, you will discover that **you are not alone.**

## Take care of your body and your mind, for a balanced approach to overall health:

- Get proper rest. Lack of sleep can reduce your ability to concentrate and to excel in class, so try to get as much sleep as you need.
- Eat a balanced diet.
- Make time for self-care and schedule time for endorphin-creating exercise.
- Recognize the risks of substance use.
- Value sexual health and safety.
- Don't isolate yourself.
- Find more advice at: [www.stetson.edu/administration/student-counseling/media/101-Wellness-Tips-for-College-Students.pdf](http://www.stetson.edu/administration/student-counseling/media/101-Wellness-Tips-for-College-Students.pdf)

### References:

[Bestcolleges.com/blog/mental-physical-health-college/](http://Bestcolleges.com/blog/mental-physical-health-college/)

[Educationcorner.com/mental-health-college.html](http://Educationcorner.com/mental-health-college.html)

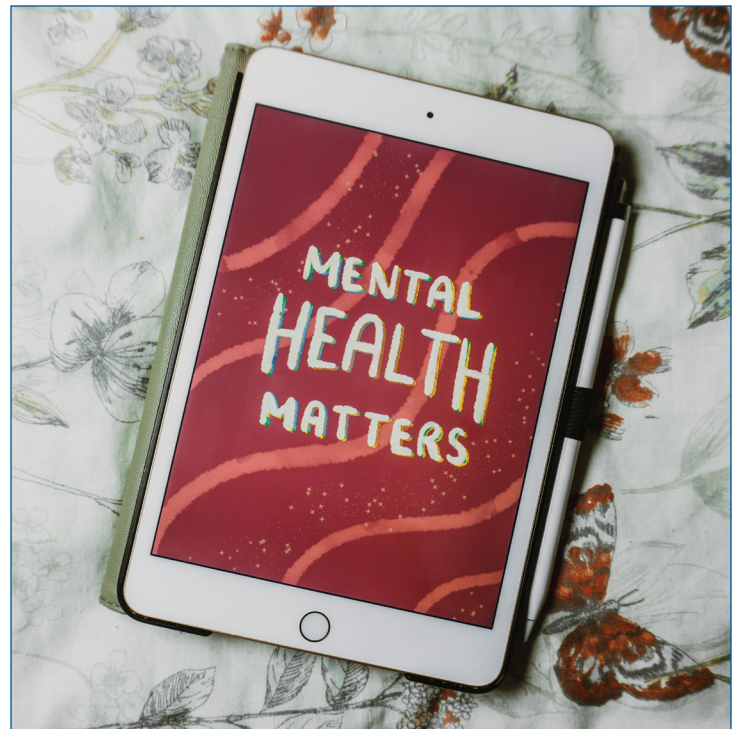


Photo by Emily Underworld on Unsplash



Naomi Osaka

**Mental health for athletes at the top of their game has been brought to the forefront in 2021, largely due to athletes like Naomi Osaka and Simone Biles.**

Dr. Brian Hainline, the first Vice President of the United States Tennis Association (USTA), said the group wants to make mental health services “as readily available to athletes as services for a sprained ankle — and with no stigma attached.” The USTA believes the changes will help the athletes’ overall health and wellbeing while sending an important message to society about destigmatizing mental health offerings.



Simone Biles

### Reference:

[yahoo.com/gma/sloane-stephens-talks-mental-health-080015907.html](http://yahoo.com/gma/sloane-stephens-talks-mental-health-080015907.html)



# Strategies for *Successful* Online Learning

## Stay Organized

- Organize all class assignments and information:
- Take notes from readings, videos, and online lectures, just as you would in a face-to-face lecture class.
- Keep a copy of anything you submit in the event a technology problem requires you to resubmit it — (*discussions posts and papers*)

## Work Space

- Select a quiet and comfortable space to work (*do not use your bed as your study or work area*).
- The space should be private, well-lit, with a desk and chair.
- Coffee shops are enticing to set-up study time, but they often can be distracting with people coming and going, and an increase in overall environmental activity. If you choose to study in a coffee shop, have a set space you go to.
- Having a regular, designated space devoted to studies can signal to your brain that it is time to study.

## Manage Time Wisely

- Just as you attend in-person classes at a regular time each week, be sure to schedule enough time in your calendar or planner to study the materials in your online course, and complete assignments.
- Set specific times to check when work is due and if there are any updates or changes in assignment deadlines. Update your calendar with changes that might occur.

## Communication

- Use the course email and group chat forums, to stay in regular contact with your professor and classmates should you have questions about content and assignments.

## Eliminate Distractions

- Turn your cell phone off (*or at least switch to silent*) to avoid losing focus every time a notification or text message pops-up.
- If you cannot resist surfing the web or checking email, download a website blocker.



Photo by Prateek Katyal from Unsplash

## How You Learn Best

- Keep a regular sleep-wake schedule to stay alert and focused during your scheduled review of class material and assignments.
- If you are a visual learner, print out materials to lectures to review.
- If you learn best by listening, build time into your schedule to play and replay all audio and video- based content.

## Actively Participate

- Contribute to discussion boards or post questions about a project you are working on.
- Read what other students and you professor are saying, and if you have questions, ask for clarification.
- Check in as often as you can. If you feel you're falling behind, speak up. Do not wait until an assignment is almost due to ask for help.

## General Health and Wellness

- Keep a regular sleep-wake cycle and do not use your bed as your study and work space.
- Limit caffeinated beverages including energy drinks, to stay up into the early morning hours to complete work. You should be sleeping during this time.
- Taking online classes means that you may be more sedentary than usual. Remember to take breaks and move around.
- Keep healthy snacks on hand including: almonds, fruit salad, Greek yogurt, air-popped popcorn, apples and peanut butter, and homemade trail-mix.

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### Reference:

[USF.edu/images/student-affairs/counseling-center/covid-19/distance-learning.pdf](https://usf.edu/images/student-affairs/counseling-center/covid-19/distance-learning.pdf)

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Photo by nicollazzi xiong from Pexels



Photo by Daniel Schludi on Unsplash

## FDA Approves First COVID-19 Vaccine Approval Signifies Key Achievement for Public Health

On August 23, 2021, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the first COVID-19 vaccine, known as the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, now marketed as Comirnaty (koe-mir'-na-tee), for the prevention of COVID-19 disease in individuals 16 years of age and older.

### Reference:

<https://www.fda.gov/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/covid-19-vaccines#news>

## Please remember . . . RCSJ Cares!

**Do you need someone to talk to and who will listen? Someone who is non-judgmental; someone you can talk to confidentially?**

**We are here for you.**

**Whenever you need to talk, the CWS is ready to listen.**

## About the Newsletter

Your ideas and suggestions are welcome! Contact Dr. Lawson-Briddell at [llawsonb@rcsj.edu](mailto:llawsonb@rcsj.edu) or call 856-464-5236 for your suggestions and ideas.

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## The Center for Counseling and Wellness Services

### Mission Statement

Rowan College of South Jersey is committed to efforts to promote the success of our students. In this endeavor, the College offers an array of supportive services. The primary mission of CWS is to provide short-term, solution-focused assistance in order to facilitate the student's college adjustment and success.

*To find out about upcoming Counseling and Wellness Services events, check out the RCSJ Portal and the Counseling and Wellness Services Facebook page.*

## Counseling and Wellness Services

### Hours

Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

*(summer hours may vary)*

Contact the office to schedule an appointment

### Location

College Center, room 206

### Contact

856-464-5236 or

[counselingandwellness@rcsj.edu](mailto:counselingandwellness@rcsj.edu)

*(Walk-in consultation available for immediate needs)*

### Professional Staff RCSJ—Gloucester Campus

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**William Leonard, Ph.D.**

Intervention Teams Consultant

**Diane Mussoline, EdS, LMFT**

Executive Director of Behavioral Services

Rowan Choice

Rowan University Center

### Additional Information

[RCSJ.edu/gc/CWS](https://www.rcsj.edu/gc/CWS)



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