SHAC expands group and workshop offerings

Making our services available to the largest possible number of students is a goal that guides our work here at SHAC. This winter, we hope to expand both the ways in which we deliver our counseling services and the numbers of students who may access them.

Two sessions of a USO Group (Understanding Self and Others) will be offered, along with two sessions of an Expressive Arts Group. Registration is required for these groups.

In addition to the therapy groups, two workshop series will be offered. These are open to anyone and registration is not necessary. The first, offered by Drew Weis, is Resilient: Body, Mind, Spirit, and focuses on developing understanding and skills to manage distress. In the second offering, the Perfectionism & Procrastination Series, Nate Page will explore the underlying elements of perfectionism and procrastination and how to change destructive mindsets and behavior.

For information, please contact npage@carleton.edu or talk with your SHAC counselor. Information is also available at https://apps.carleton.edu/studenthealth/counseling/groups/.

Be a hero: Get a flu shot

During the 2015-2016 flu season, The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that 5 million cases of flu illness, 2.5 million flu-associated medical visits, and 71,000 flu hospitalizations were prevented by flu vaccination.

According to CDC research, only about two out of five people in the United States reported getting a flu vaccine this season as of early November.

Here on campus, our fall student flu clinics were very successful, with over 430 shots administered. Almost 22% of students on-campus this fall were vaccinated, a 17% increase over last year’s numbers. Hopefully some of those that were not vaccinated on campus were able to receive the shot in town or at home over winter break. Staff and faculty, along with their families, also had the opportunity to receive vaccinations on campus.

If you haven’t yet received your shot, it’s not too late. CDC recommends that flu vaccination efforts continue throughout the flu season. While the sooner you are vaccinated the sooner you will be protected when the flu emerges in your community, vaccination in December or beyond can be beneficial during most flu seasons. Contact

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This new year, try a little kindness

Many of us start the new year with plans to make ourselves better: exercise more, eat a more healthy diet, stop procrastinating on homework. Those are definitely worthy goals. But how about showing ourselves a little kindness and focusing on self-acceptance?

According to Srini Pillay, MD, self-acceptance is defined as “an individual’s acceptance of all his/her attributes, positive or negative.” This isn’t always such an easy task, and our psychological well-being can suffer when we focus on our negative attributes instead of noticing the positive.

Pillay states that two kinds of meditation are particularly helpful in achieving greater self-acceptance. The first, mindfulness meditation, involves observing, but not judging, your emotions as they arise. This can calm your amygdala, resulting in lowered emotional response in your brain to stress and anxiety. In the second type of meditation, loving-kindness meditation, we practice compassion with ourselves. This can help us achieve self-acceptance by changing the activity in the parts of the brain that process and perceive emotions. It can also lead to greater connectivity in the brain.

For more information, visit: http://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/greater-self-acceptance-improves-emotional-well-201605169546.

Light box loans now offered

Long, dark winters in Minnesota can be hard on people who may suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Light therapy can be an effective treatment for SAD.

SHAC has traditionally had light boxes for student use here in our space. This winter, we will be offering smaller, more portable light boxes that can be borrowed by students for a period of 3 weeks. During that time, the student can determine whether it might be useful to purchase one. Most retail for about $100.

There is no charge for use of the light box, but students will be asked to sign an agreement stating they will be responsible for damage to or loss of the unit.

It will be important for students to read the instructions included with the light box, as different models are used in different ways. SHAC providers are always available for consultations before a student begins light box therapy or to follow-up on its effectiveness.

Winter skin: Scratch, scratch, itch, itch

Walking across campus during the winter can wreak havoc on our skin.

Dry skin can be caused by a variety of factors, but one of the most common is the cold, dry winter air. Indoors, our furnaces heat the air and remove moisture, causing our skin to get dry, flaky, and itchy. Taking long, hot baths or showers frequently and washing your hands often can also contribute to skin dryness.

But you don’t need to let Old Man Winter get the best of you. When you’re outside, cover yourself with gloves and a scarf. When your skin does get dry, ease the symptoms by restoring moisture to your skin by using an ointment, cream, or lotion 2 to 3 times a day, or as often as needed. Moisturizers help lock in moisture, so they work best on damp skin. After you bathe, pat your skin dry then apply your moisturizer. Avoid skin care products and soaps that contain alcohol, fragrances, dyes, or other chemicals. Take short, warm baths or showers, limiting your time to 5 to 10 minutes. Instead of regular soap, try using gentle skin cleansers or soap with added moisturizers.

For more information about caring for dry skin, visit https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000751.htm