How Quinnipiac students navigate mental health on campus

By ZOELIS BAUZA
Contributing Writer

Starting college can feel intimidating, especially with meeting new people and stepping out of your comfort zone. One of the biggest issues people underestimate is their mental health; some choose to ignore it while others struggle to understand it. Mental health is defined as the state of your emotional and psychological well-being. It can be affected by school obstacles, personal issues and environmental factors.

Being harsh on yourself is a major factor because you might have high expectations, but that shouldn't be a reason to not take a break once in a while.

While poor mental health can be difficult to manage, self-care and prioritizing your mental well-being can help. Mental health can reflect how you think, feel and act. That's why at Quinnipiac, it's encouraged to seek help to understand that feeling vulnerable isn't a flaw but something normal.

Quinnipiac offers academic support services if you struggle with class assignments or classroom settings. Even with students who have disabilities, you are able to get accommodations to feel more comfortable in classrooms.

Students on campus balance different roles and responsibilities while also managing schoolwork. For many, adjusting to a new environment can be challenging as they navigate academics, social life and the pressure that comes with college. Because of this, there are available resources to further help your learning experience. Such as connections with alumni students and employers, assistance with internships and job searching and interview preparation to feel at ease when stressed about how to gain experience on campus.

First-year Political Science major Alex Fritts is hardworking and used to struggle with OCD. Although he just started his journey here, he always makes sure to attend at least one event on campus to feel more connected and meet new people.

"For stress and workload, I feel like those go hand in hand, but I will power through it; I'll cut down on personal and side activities that aren't as important," Fritts said.

Stress can look different for people; he chooses to have his work done before he can enjoy a day for himself. This creates a schedule and routine for his mental state.

Students typically feel the need to work hard when first starting college, wanting to maintain good grades, a high GPA and balancing the time to socialize at club events. It isn't always easy; sometimes professors assign too much work, or you're caught with group assignments. That is why the school has worked hard to build an environment where students can easily express their mental state and emotional feelings.

Counseling services are available from Monday to Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. With this support, you can ask for guidance on how to socialize and develop strategies for dealing with anxiety, depressive and traumatic experiences.

In 2022, Quinnipiac started a new approach to help students who experience mental health struggles by starting a four-year commitment with the JED Campus organization. This program is designed to protect students'emotional health and prevent self-harm. Through this, they ask students to do quick surveys on how they feel and what the school can do better to support them.

This partnership allows the campus to give students a chance to take some time to relax and wind down after a long day. This program has offered free mental health training and created wellness events. Every Wednesday, at the Recreation and Wellness Center, they hold special events with no payment required. Students can socialize with one another and do mental health check-ins.

Sophomore marketing major Ashley Carillo, a student athlete at Quinnipiac, claims adjusting to school life and sports can be a difficult balance, but learning to find the right people to hang out with has been helpful. Even going outside to get fresh air and finding a comfortable spot has helped her relax when needing some alone time.

"The way I deal with stress is by running. Being on the cross-country and track and field team, I found that as my outlet for stress and anxiety, and all the pressure I feel," Carillo said. She claims doing things for herself makes her happy and helps her mental health.

Although maintaining a strict schedule is not always easy, making small tasks to complete each week is a great start. It can look like spending a whole day focusing on your schoolwork and having the rest of the week to relax, or prioritizing some of your work for a short time each day. It is important to have at least one day of the week where you are available to spend time with your friends or go back home to reset your mindset, eat proper meals and not think about your classes.

"I have been to a few Wednesday wellness events, and that is a great place if you need some positive reinforcement; they have a lot of goodies and good advice," Carillo said.

With the free counseling services provided, students can ask for biweekly or monthly meetings. This allows students to talk and feel comfortable sharing how they feel and understanding the transitions to college. Each counselor on campus focuses on different health departments to ensure you have someone who relates to your experience and provides you with reliable support systems.

Junior sociology and Hispanic Latin American studies double major Aslin Argueta has struggled with mental health in the past, but one of the things that helps her focus on herself is practicing meditation every week to feel refreshed and ready for classes. This exercise helps your body feel calmer and relieves your nervous system.

She has also been to the counseling services on campus, which has helped improve her mental state throughout college. Especially during the season change, she has depressive moments during fall and winter. During these moments when it gets cold, it makes students have a harder time waking up in the morning and feeling motivated to go outside because of that weather change. During this time, you can let go of any negative thoughts you might be holding and take a moment to think about all the good things in life.

When having a busy week, she focuses on finishing her work first, then has the rest of the time to relax and have time for herself. This looks like watching movies, shows and even cooking.

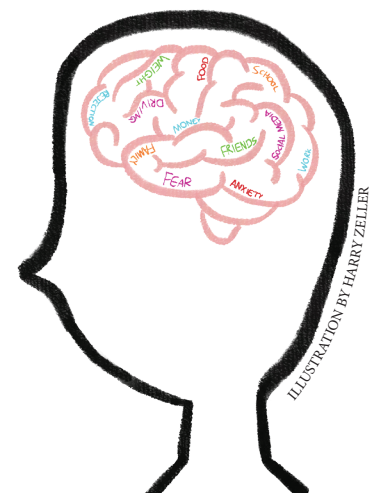
Doing things you enjoy can be beneficial because you're setting a boundary for yourself. While you're in school, you finish your work, but once you get home, you prioritize doing things for yourself.

"My first instinct was to reach out to counseling services. Jordan Nesi at Quinnipiac Counseling is the person I usually go with; she's been like my anchor in terms of managing my mental health," Argueta said.

These counseling services are designed to make students comfortable coming back and getting more help. So students are able to rely on professional therapists who understand what teens and adults go through and how it can be managed.

There are moments in college where you will feel lonely, unable to focus and feel emotional; your heart will feel heavy, and your mind will be filled with anxious thoughts. It's ok to seek help, hold yourself accountable and take a break. Quinnipiac University has it all: a CARE team, where you can submit a care referral to support you with any problem you may encounter. And if you see someone struggling and afraid to speak out, you can also make a referral on behalf of someone who might need it and benefit from it.

No one will ever know how you feel unless you tell them.



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'Star Wars X': Revenge of the Fanbase

By JAY BOOTH
Staff Writer

Disney is amazing at many things movie-making-wise, including making children's movies that are adored and staples for young children. Unfortunately, this also includes making what some say are unnecessary sequels to perfectly good standalone movies, such as "Inside Out" and "Frozen." These typically stutter in the box office compared to the original, but make enough money to make it worth attempting to milk movie-goers.

Now with Lucasfilm in their grasp, Disney has done the same to Star Wars and is prepared to do it again.

As divided as the Star Wars fanbase is over the prequels, the sequels unite almost every fan to say that they do not live up to the promise and magic of IV, V and VI, or even the prequels. From (spoilers ahead) creating characters just to have them disappear within a few hours of runtime, like Finn and Poe Dameron, bringing back Palpatine of all things and overall having too "well-written" a style that doesn't fit Star Wars' own creative style, Disney and filmmaker JJ Abrams have found a way to be very much at odds with much of the fandom.

After "The Rise of Skywalker" released in 2019, it appeared Disney's thirst for series-based Star Wars movies had been quenched and they would only be releasing TV series for Disney+. Some of them did extremely well, such as "Kenobi" and "The Mandalorian." Stand-alone movies came as well over the span of the years between "The Force Awakens" and "The Rise of Skywalker," like "Solo" and "Rogue One," which were generally well recieved by the fanbase and filled in space between the prequels and original three movies.

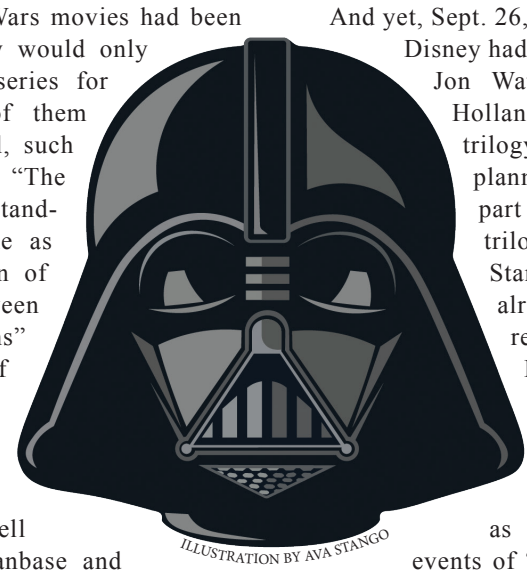
ILLUSTRATION BY AVA STANGO

But most importantly, the collective understanding was that Star Wars would be more TV series and standalone movies, including a very hyped up but never-started Darth Vader standalone film proposed by filmmaker and Star Wars creator George Lucas himself, that Disney never actually began the creative process on.

And yet, Sept. 26, it was revealed that Disney had assigned filmmaker Jon Watts (of actor Tom Holland's "Spider-Man" trilogy) to direct a planned "Star Wars X," part of a new and fourth trilogy continuing the Star Wars saga. It's already scheduled for release at the end of Dec. 2027 and is tentatively titled "New Jedi Order." Actress Daisy Ridley will return as Rey following the events of "Star Wars IX," but now without any Skywalkers for the first time in a Star Wars film.

It's going to be a hard task for Disney to satisfy the Star Wars fanbase for another film, which they learned the hard way with VII, VIII and IX. The question is if they've learned their lesson, which it appears they may somewhat have, as they have left Abrams away from the film.

If Disney's Lucasfilm is to redeem itself from the highly disapproved "Star Wars IX" and the controversial VII and VIII, it needs to take a brand-new angle in X that they haven't tried, one more in the style and feel of Lucas' original work. Obviously, it cannot be completely replicated, but staying true to the established emotionality of the first six movies that Disney has struggled to replicate.

But the main concern is with the existence of the movie itself. In most deliberations over it on social media platforms, the fanbase appears to think it unnecessary and dragging out an already complete saga. It won't be easy by any metric to combat this, no matter what the content of the film ends up being.

Whether they'll pull it off is yet to be seen, but much of the fanbase isn't thrilled at the idea and some are saying it's dead on arrival. But it will certainly end up being another box-office hit for Disney when it releases, and will continue the series now 49 years in the making.