

In this edition:

- Everything is Procedural
- 10 Best Halloween Movies
- Educate for the Election
- and more...



The Handout

October, 2020

The Handout, Vol. 9, #2

Our Staff

Editor in Chief

Maribeth Griffin

Contributors

Caitlyn Archambault

Centennial Hall ARM

Sara Slaiby

Centennial Hall ARM

Gabrielle Christofor

Pinney Hall ARM

Audrey Redpath

Pinney Hall ARM

Tamia Scott

Grasso Hall ARM

Samantha Cross

Newbury Hall ARM

Elizabeth Hinds

Litchfield Hall ARM



Volume 9, #2

October, 2020

The Handout

October, 2020

Table of Contents

- 1 Everything is Procedural**
Making checklists – it's a great idea!
- 2 Sleep Hygiene**
Doing less on your bed gets you more in your head.
- 3 The Relationship Between Screen Time & The Brain**
It's a virtual world – how's that impacting our brains?
- 4 10 Best Halloween Movies**
And now for a little fall fun – see if you concur with this list.
- 5 Educate for the Election**
Time to vote – be knowledgeable & prepared.
- 6 How to Handle Isolation During Covid-19**
We're not talking Covid isolation, but feeling isolated during Covid.
- 7 How to Properly Wash Your Hands**
After masking up, hand washing is your next best tool to avoid the bug.

1 | Everything Is Procedural

Audrey Redpath, Pinney ARM



Atul Gawande is a surgeon and contributor to the *New Yorker* and an advocate for checklists as a tool to manage nearly any type of work. Dr. Gawande argues that surgeons, like all humans, are “inconsistent and unreliable,” because what they work on is complex. He looked to other fields that work with what he calls complex systems and looked in particular to checklists used by pilots for takeoff, landing, and emergency situations. Swapping to a checklist system for surgical safety in operating rooms yielded better results for the entire surgery team.

Basically, Gawande argues that experts need reminders and processes (that can be tracked and improved by short checklists) for any complex procedure. So that begs the question: if experts with decades of experience do better work with checklists guiding them, how might using them

more effectively help you in your schoolwork and other areas?

One super important distinction: we’re not talking about task lists, those long lists you make every week or every day dumping out new tasks to do as they come up. The checklists we’re talking about are templates you to copy and re-use for new instances as you need them, and that’s a major difference.

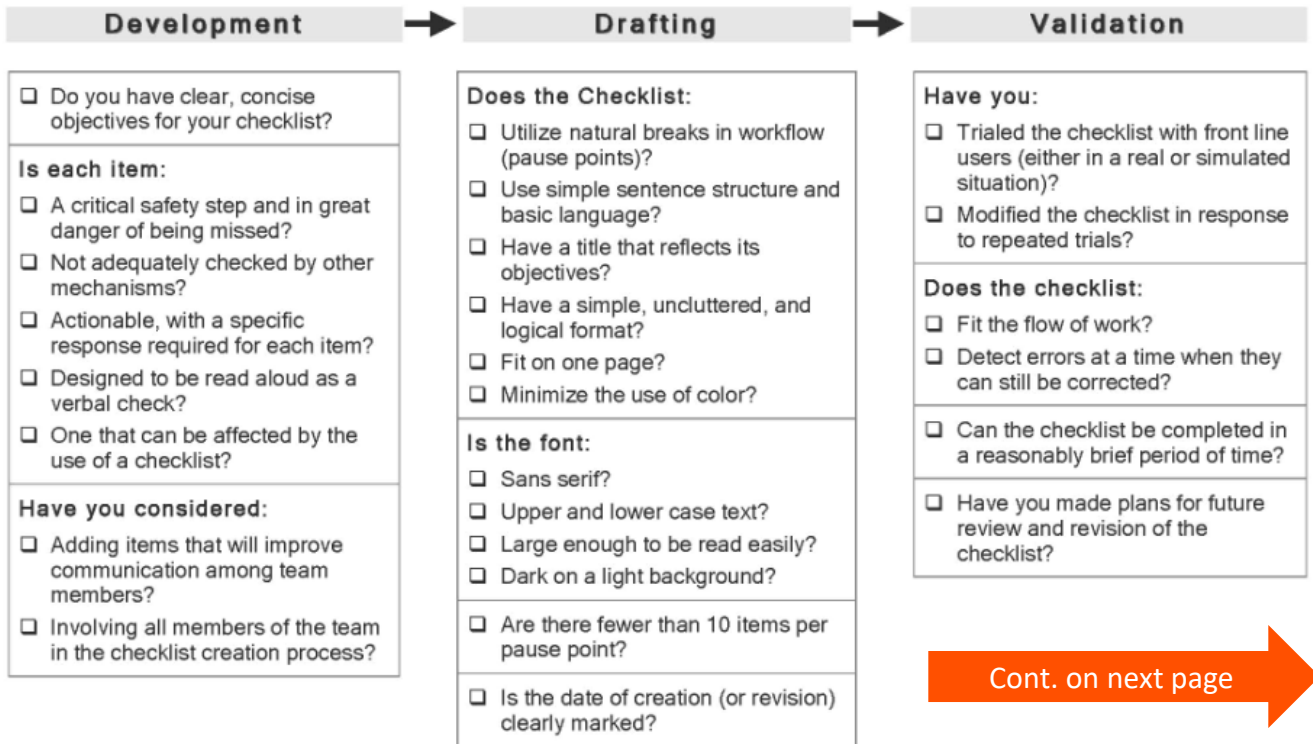
BUILD A CHECKLIST

Greg McKeown, another author like Gawande who advocates for what he calls “systematic discipline” suggests this checklist for creating checklists for things you do regularly:

- Observe your process (how do you approach this process now?)

Cont. on next page

A CHECKLIST FOR CHECKLISTS



- Record your process (write down the steps as a checklist)
- Refine your process (use that checklist and tweak what doesn't work)

Gawande goes much more granular with the whole process, shared above in his “checklist for checklists” and split between three phases (calling back to his review of pilot checklists phased in the same way.) Using one of these as guidance, I challenge you to map out how you approach writing essays, lab reports, or whatever the major recurring assignment is for your major courses.

Want to make a visually appealing checklist? Canva has a resource about developing and designing checklists [here](#).

Here's a hot tip too: all college students can get a **Canva Pro account completely free** through Github Education's [Student Developer Pack](#) (along with many other resources).

MIDTERM CHECKLIST

I want everyone who reads this to leave with something they can use, so I'll throw you a good academic checklist for free. Edit it to fit your study style, but take a look at this Midterm Checklist I use to get ready for each of my classes that have a test midterm or a paper midterm.

- Create a study schedule blocked from today to your midterm date**

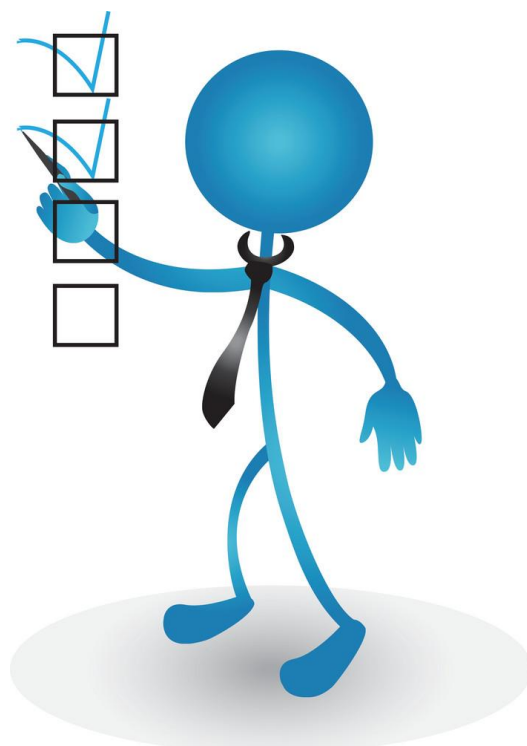
- **Organize Materials**
 - Syllabus
 - Module/Chapter Notes
 - Lecture Notes
 - External Reference Material or Previous Quizzes
- **Visit Professor Office Hours**
 - Send over or ask during meeting any questions you have about the test setup.
- **Schedule Breaks and Rest times**
- **Review**
 - Previous Quizzes and Tests
 - Notes and Materials
 - Test Yourself (Flashcards/Pre-test)
- **Get 8 hours of sleep the night before the test**

APPLY A CHECKLIST MENTALITY TO COLLEGE LIFE

Let's look at an example from an entirely different use-case. One thing I struggle with is knowing when to say **NO**. Turning down new projects, extra tasks, or bonus responsibilities in order to help my friends and mentors can be tough; every year it feels more like my default response is yes without thinking. Matt D'Avella (catch him on instagram at [@mattdavella](https://www.instagram.com/mattdavella) to see his video about this) suggests focusing on what opportunities are *worth* taking. Here's his layout:

- Does it excite the hell out of me?
- Would I do this regardless of money?
- What will I have to give up to do this?
- Will it contribute beyond myself?
- Will I grow from this experience?
- Will I regret not doing it?

What other applications can you apply this format to? Some people have checklists for self care, or for every project they work on. Others have checklists for what they consider a successful day, or for phone calls they have to complete for work. If you have one you really love or develop one based on this article, send me an email at redpath001@wcsu.edu and I'll try and share it as a resource for our community.



2 Sleep Hygiene

Sam Cross, Newbury Hall ARM



Everyone knows that they should shower and take care of themselves for proper personal hygiene. We all know that we need to brush and floss our teeth for good dental hygiene, but what is sleep hygiene? Let me start off by asking this: what do you do in your bed? Do you eat, watch TV, browse social media, and maybe study or do schoolwork in your bed? Do you find it easy to fall asleep at night? Maybe you're the type of person who can sleep anywhere.

Unfortunately, not all of us have that superpower. However, we can attain a power like it by practicing sleep hygiene. Your bed is a very special place; your bed's main purpose is to give you a place to sleep and to get intimate with your romantic partners—anything else will put a strain on you and your bed's future relationship. When you make your bed strictly for these two things, you trick your brain into “sleep mode” so you fall asleep fast and peacefully.

When you introduce other foreign acts into your bed (like studying), your bed no longer becomes a place for sleeping. It can be difficult to start the process of falling asleep because your brain might still be focusing on that test you studied for in your bed two hours ago. I first heard about sleep hygiene as a senior in high school and I immediately put it into practice. I started using sleep hygiene to my advantage and I was getting better sleep until one night I decided to study for a test in my bed. It was an AP Psychology test I studied hard for. I thought it wouldn't hurt to just look over my study guides in my bed, but I was wrong. I had a dream I failed the test the next

morning.

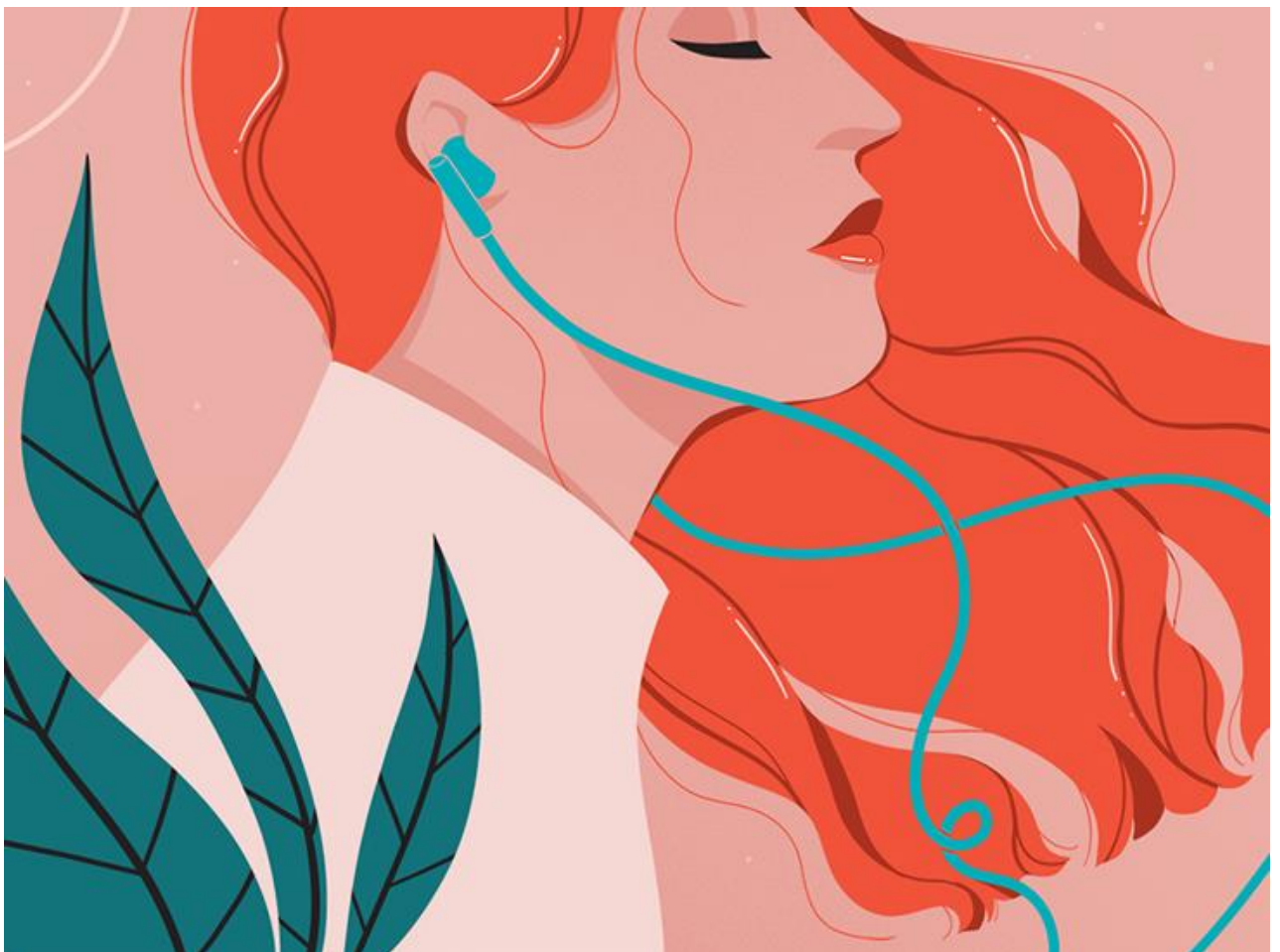
In a residence hall, your bed becomes a hybrid place. It might become a couch for you and your friend to sit on and watch TV together, or even a dining room of sorts. It can be unattainable for some students to only sleep and practice intimacy in their bed, especially in a residence hall, but there are ways to create space on your bed to protect your sleep hygiene. First and foremost: make your bed. When you make your bed and lay on top of your covers, the space is separated between sleep and relaxing/other activities. Establishing a bedtime routine can also help your brain get into “sleep mode.” For example, you could wash your face, brush your

Turn the page for more!

teeth, put on pajamas, turn off the lights, and get into bed. My nightly routine is to brush my teeth, take off my glasses, peel my comforter back, turn off my lights, and get into my pajamas and then bed. This routine again tricks your brain into “sleep mode.”

Some more tips for better, healthier sleep are to use a blue light filter on all your technology devices. Blue light is bad for your eyes. It is in the sun and in your technology; blue light can disrupt your melatonin cycles because it can mimic sunlight. Your brain starts producing melatonin two hours before the sun even starts to go down, so filtering

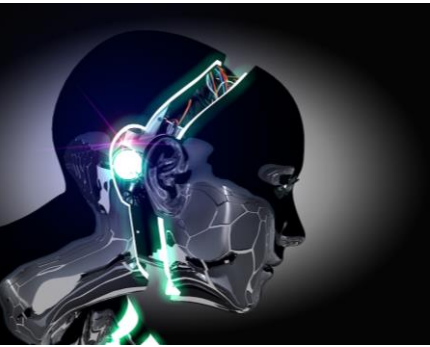
your blue light is very important. Try to go to bed and wake up around the same time every day; this again establishes a better routine. Try experimenting with ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response) videos and other sleep sounds to help you fall asleep faster. My favorite ASMR channel is Sand Tagious (the Kinetic Sand cutting channel). It can be difficult to honor your bed’s purpose, but if you practice, you and your sleep will thank you.



The Relationship

3 Between Screen Time & The Brain

Lizzie Hinds, Litchfield ARM



In a world where we have practically unlimited access to technology, we must evaluate the impact such access has on our minds. Instagram or BlackBoard? YouTube or our WCSU email? The decisions we make regarding our screen time have a direct impact on our brain function, mental health, and subsequent academic success. Managing the time spent on technology, and managing how that time is spent will significantly improve our ability to complete tasks, and enhance our academic performance drastically.

The science behind our brain's interaction with screens is relatively simple: neuroplasticity. This property is what allows our brains to change based on our mental experiences. If the majority of our time is spent staring at our phones or computers, our mind will adjust to favor that. If we are constantly watching shows with short and frequent scene changes, our brains will adjust to spending very little time focusing on one item. The result of such time occupation is a drastically altered mind. The amount of time needed to read a book increases, and focus is lessened. The desire to complete an assignment is replaced with the desire to play another level in our favorite game. Our brains work at high speeds, just like our internet does, making the combination of the two all the more changing.

It has been established that excessive screen time is damaging to our brain function, but what else does this entail? Higher anxiety, less sleep, and reduced academic drive are among the top consequences for overusing technology. The brain of a college age student is not yet completely developed, making these disadvantages even more detrimental. At a point in life when focus, progression,

Continue on next page

and time management are of utmost importance, delaying the mind by burying it in social media and television will not lead to success in a college career. Not only that, but emotional health also suffers when too much time is spent pointlessly scrolling.

But aren't we learning in a strictly virtual setting right now?

Yes, we are. However there is an important distinction that must be made when applying the concept of neuroplasticity to accessing educational information via electronics. The most significant point of the relationship between the brain and technology is how it is used. Passing time by staring at a cartoon is far less productive than passing time by accessing your online math homework. By using a device to pursue knowledge, you are encouraging your brain to repeatedly turn to education. Additionally, this gain in intellect will lead to academic success. Generally speaking, the more effort put into the process of learning, even via technology, the more likely a student is to achieve an academic goal. Additionally, when combining a high speed mind with a high speed computer, the relationship between the two can positively benefit the learning process.

While spending an excessive amount of time behind a screen is unhealthy, and we must find a balance between this time and our personal time, the disadvantages of using technology for education are far less likely and severe than using it for video games. Students are encouraged to use their brain, as a high functioning tool, to establish benefits between technology and the world of



“

By using a device to pursue knowledge, you are encouraging your brain to repeatedly turn to education.

”

academia. As the primarily virtual semester at WCSU continues, forming healthy habits, especially with our phones and laptops, is extremely important.

How can this positive relationship be established?

At this very point in time, many students spend more time on social media than they do on homework. How can that be corrected? First and foremost, establish a personal limit on your daily screen time. This must be within reason, perhaps a maximum of four hours each day. Additionally, set a specific time that technology must be turned off. If you go to bed at eleven, turn off your phone and laptop at ten. Not only will this limit how much time you spend staring at blue light,

it will help you ensure that all your necessary work for the day gets done before that time. It isn't inherently bad or unhealthy to check your feed, play a game, or watch a video, but prioritizing education and brain function is far more important.

Citation:

Doidge, Norman. "Screen Time, the Brain, Privacy and Mental Health." *Centre for International Governance Innovation*. 24 Apr. 2018. Web.



“I cannot endure to waste anything so precious as autumnal sunshine by staying in the house. So I have spent almost all the daylight hours in the open air.”

- *Nathaniel Hawthorne*

4 | 10 Best Halloween Movies

Caitlyn Archambault, Centennial ARM



What's better to do in October with the cooler weather settling in, than curl up with some hot cider and an awesome Halloween movie? Well if you ask me, absolutely nothing! Arguably one of the best seasons of the year, with some of the best movies of all time. From classics to current movies, you can't go wrong with anything you choose. The best part? Not a single person doesn't have a Halloween movie they don't like! You don't hear people say "Ugh! I can't STAND Halloween movies!" (You know, like some say about Christmas!) Think you've seen them all? Want to know what some of the best are? Well, here are some of the BEST top 10 Halloween movies:

10. The Conjuring (2013)

Your classic scary movie, perfect for

Halloween. Old House, middle of nowhere and haunted of course! What could go wrong? Guess you'll have to watch and see.

9. Get Out (2017)

Iconic, and some of Jordan Pele's best work. A thriller shocking to everyone. Looking for a good spook, curl up with this one. Maybe with a friend too.

8. Rosemary's Baby (1968)

If you ever want a real scare, look for some old horror movies. The lack of technology usually makes it better. Plus, what's scarier than a potentially possessed child?





7. Coraline (2009)

I understand not everyone will find this one scary, but I know I did. A classic of today's Halloween movies. This is a must on your movie watching for the month! What's creepier than dolls? Anything with button eyes! A kid's worst nightmare!

6. The Sixth Sense (1999)

Ironic? Who knows, but do you see dead people? I surely hope not! Yet another Halloween classic, a little kid talking to dead people. That's a no from me, but still an awesome movie.

Halfway there!

5. The Addam's Family (1991)

I can hear the theme song now. Need I say more? A truly puzzling family, who take Halloween seriously every day of the year!

Want something funny and friendly spooky, I'm sure there's a spot at the table for you!

4. Carrie (1976)

A haunting movie, that I must say sort of has a misleading title. This movie takes you on a ride you were not expecting to take. Your classic misfit gets revenge on bully story, but in a horrid Halloween way.

3. Scream (1996)

So many classics in the top 10, I love it. Do those scream masks freak anyone else out? Your typical slasher movie, with an iconic mask that kids still wear today.



2. IT (1990 or 2017)

Whether you like the original, the remake or the sequel, this movie is creepy all around. If you like clowns, you won't after this... at least I hope you don't. Either way we're all Lovers.

Coming to an end: a classic! You cannot go a single Halloween without watching this movie, Disney fan or not...

1. Hocus Pocus (1993)

You might think the hype is overrated, but don't say it too loud or they might put a spell on you. These sisters could be anywhere, especially if they smell children. Just promise me you won't go around lighting any black flame candles.

Happy Watching and Happy Halloween.

<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/holidays/halloween-ideas/g29579568/classic-halloween-movies/>

5

Educate For the Election

Gabby Christofor, Pinney Hall ARM

There has been discussion of the upcoming election for a while now. Everyone has their opinions on how the country should run, but to make a decision now, it is important to know the history of elections, what prevents certain people from voting, and how to educate others without spreading your own bias.

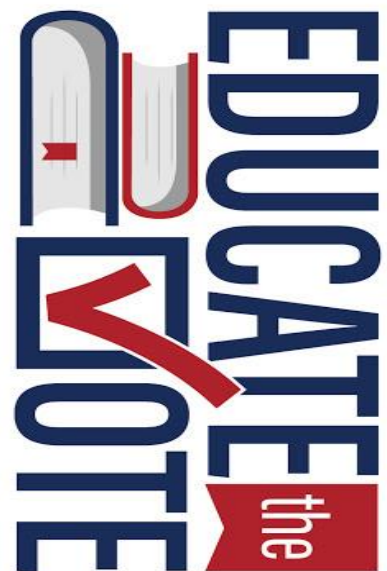
Voting has a notorious history of being discriminatory. From the very beginning in 1776, only white, male landowners were allowed to vote and voting was controlled by the individual state. There were poll taxes and literacy tests put in place with the ultimate goal of keeping African Americans ineligible to vote. In 1868, the 14th amendment, granting voting rights to all men born or naturalized in the U.S., and later the 15th amendment, ensured more people could vote- no matter their race- but America was still deliberately against African American men voting. Later in 1920, the 19th amendment was ratified, giving white women the right to vote, followed by a law in 1924 giving Native Americans citizenship and the right to vote.

A turning point came in 1965 when the Voting Rights Act of 1965 allowed all people, regardless of race, religion, or education, the right to vote. Poll taxes were eliminated and by 1966, literacy tests for voting became illegal. Before this, some men used the grandfather clause to avoid paying taxes, another discriminatory act against people of color. Even though these taxes and tests are

“

A turning point came in 1965 when the Voting Rights Act of 1965 allowed all people, regardless of race, religion, or education, the right to vote.

”



are gone, there are still obstacles for voting- especially for communities of color- that are in effect today.

Some good changes took place in later years when the Voting Accessibility for Elderly and Handicapped Act was passed and required polling places to be accessible to those with disabilities. Also, the voting age was lowered to 18, the Motor Voter law required states to allow people to register to vote when at the DMV, and laws got stricter regarding translation of voting materials.

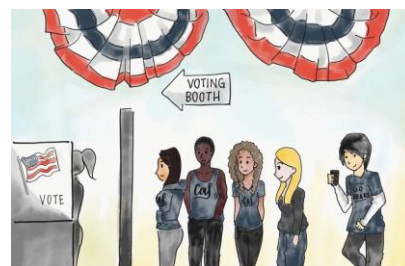
Taking a turn in 2013, the Supreme Court's ruling on the Shelby County v. Holder case allowed states to enact more laws regarding voter identification. Following the decision, 23 states created new voting policies leading up to the 2018 elections that influenced voter suppression. At the time, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg commented on the decision saying, "Throwing out preclearance when it has worked and is continuing to work to stop discriminatory changes is like throwing away your umbrella in a rainstorm because you are not getting wet."

Voter suppression continues to this day in many forms. In 2018, many polling places were closed, which targeted populations of color. The Georgia senate passed bills that decreased voting hours and restricted early voting on weekends in Atlanta, where African Americans make up 54% of the population. More examples of disenfranchisement include voter ID requirements (discriminating against those with P.O. boxes such as Native Americans living on reservations or the homeless), deleting eligible voters' names

from registration, lack of language access, partisan election administrators, and only wide coverage of results. There are many people that cannot vote for a plethora of reasons.

If you are eligible to vote, get registered and educate others. Here are some ways to educate others on the upcoming election without spreading your own bias:

- Watch speeches and debates with them. Before and after hearing what the candidates have to say, express your own opinions. Understand your own views of important issues such as social justice, but then dive deeper into subcategories under each issue like immigration policies, voting rights, or criminal justice reform.
- Look up the candidate's websites, their voting records, and their positions on local, national, and international issues. View their past to see laws and policies they voted on before.
- Research demographics of your state and consider which policies the candidates are proposing that will have the greatest effect – negative or positive – on your community. Research laws in your state that disenfranchise voters. Do the candidates care about all getting an equal opportunity to vote?



Continued on next page

- Research all parties, not just democrats and republicans. There are other parties such as the libertarian, green, and working families parties. Understand common ideologies and register for whatever party aligns with your views. Vote in primaries, state, and town elections! Change starts in a town or city first, and the policies your town has holds a great deal of weight on its constituents.

You have a lot of power in your opinions,

voice, and actions. Use that power to vote. Vote not only for yourself, but for the good of the community and those around you that cannot.

Works Cited

Carnegie Corporation of New York. "11 Barriers to Voting: Voting Rights." *Carnegie Corporation of New York*, www.carnegie.org/topics/topic-articles/voting-rights/11-barriers-voting/.

Carnegie Corporation of New York. "Voting Rights: A Short History: Voting Rights." *Carnegie Corporation of New York*, www.carnegie.org/topics/topic-articles/voting-rights/voting-rights-timeline/.

How to Handle Isolation During Covid-19

The article begins on the next page, then returns here!

4. Go Outdoors

Fresh air and exercise help with loneliness and stress. Spending time in nature and exercising releases feel-good chemicals in your brain to boost your mood. Take a walk if you can. Just keep a healthy distance from others. Wear a cloth face mask when you're in places where you can't stay at least 6 feet apart.

5. Take Care of Yourself

Now's not the time to slack off on sleep, exercise, or diet. Good self-care offsets anxiety and stress. Eat well. Go for walks if you can. Get 6-8 hours of sleep a night. Try deep breathing, stretching, meditation, and yoga. Have a daily routine. Have a regular wake-up and bedtime. Make time for exercise and relaxation.

6. Get Help

If you're having anxiety or feelings of depression or loneliness, talk to a professional counselor. They offer online sessions. You can also join an online support group. If you had anxiety or depression before the coronavirus outbreak and your feelings of fear and panic are getting worse, it's important that you reach out to your doctor or therapist. If you need help, please reach out.

We care!



6

How to Handle Isolation During Covid-19

Tamia Scott, Grasso ARM

The coronavirus outbreak may have you feeling lonely, isolated, stressed, and anxious. For this reason, it's important to take care of your mental health during times of decreased social interactions. It's normal to feel stress when faced with staying indoors and interacting less with people, especially when that is added to the underlying stress of worrying whether you will catch the virus. Whether you're socially distancing or required to stay home, these tips may help you feel better.

1. Be Social

Remind yourself that we're all still connected, even if we're apart. You can still get together with friends and family online or on your phone. Send emails and texts. Get in touch on social media. Pick up the phone and say hi. Maybe even plan a lunch date with a friend. The school has taken great measures to ensure your safety.

2. Change Your Mindset

Avoid thinking too much about the future or worst-case scenarios. Forecasting can trigger anxiety. Practice gratitude. Studies suggest finding something to be grateful for every day improves mood.

3. Get Busy

Take advantage of the slower pace and free time. Try a new hobby. Learn a new language. Do something that gives you a sense of purpose or accomplishment. Take on what you've been putting off, like spring cleaning, finances, or paperwork. Play uplifting music. Tune into TV shows and movies that distract you from current events. Do things that make you feel good.



Cont. on previous page

7 | How to Properly Wash Your Hands

Sara Slaiby, Centennial ARM



Washing your hands properly is single handedly one of the most impactful ways that you can stop the spread of germs. When you properly wash your hands, you are removing any microbes and/or germs that may be living on your hands. Therefore, when you touch all of the surfaces that you touch on a daily basis (door knobs, tables, writing utensils, etc.), you are limiting the number of germs that you transmit, and are washing away any of the germs/microbes that you pick up from that surface.

Handwashing, although a simple task, is most beneficial if you follow the CDC recommended technique. The CDC technique is as follows:

Begin by turning the faucet on warm or cold water, and fully wet your hands. Once

you've fully wet your hands, apply soap. The soap contains a type of surfactant, which is a substance that helps to lift the germs and microbes off of your skin. Therefore, the more vigorous you scrub your hands, the more germs and microbes that you will lift. The CDC recommends that you scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. This ensures that you are removing all of the microbes and germs from your hands. If you do not have a timer handy, and would like a quick fun tip for making sure you wash your hands for 20 seconds, the CDC recommends that you hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice, and it will equal about 20 seconds. While you are scrubbing your hands, be sure to scrub underneath your nails. Nails gather tons of bacteria that are often left on your hands.

Cont. on next page



even after washing with soap and water. Finally, when rinsing your hands, do not turn off the faucets with clean hands. Instead, rinse your hands, and grab a clean towel to dry off your hands. Using the towel, turn off the faucet so that your hands do not touch the handles. By doing so, you are preventing the spread of bacteria from the handles to your clean hands.

So why? Why does washing your hands help? What are the benefits of having clean hands? First things first, did you know that on average you touch your face about 23 times every hour? That is about 550 times every day. By touching your face, you are directly introducing the germs from your hands to your face. You're probably asking why you can't just use hand sanitizer instead. The answer is that hand sanitizers are useful if they

have more than 60% or higher alcohol content, and are within their expiration date! However, even if your hand sanitizer has more than 60% alcohol content, as well as within expiration date, they are still less effective than washing your hands with soap and water. This is due to the fact that washing your hands directly takes the germs/microbes off your hands, whereas hand sanitizer tries to disinfect all of the germs on your hands. Depending on the bacteria, the hand sanitizer may not be able to disinfect! (Still, it's better to use sanitizer than do nothing!) Overall, it is so important that you thoroughly wash your hands, especially in times like these! Staying safe and limiting the spread of germs/microbes are the keys to staying healthy!



Small acts,
when multiplied by millions of people,
can transform the world.

- Howard Zinn

About THE HANDOUT

The Handout is a product of the Department of Housing & Residence Life at Western Connecticut State University. There are 6 editions each year, 3 in the fall semester and 3 in the spring semester.

The ideas for and execution of the articles are the work of the Academic Resource Mentors, or ARMs, who provide academic coaching and resource referral to all members of the WCSU residence community.



Just a reminder that the
**Housing & Residence
Life Offices have
relocated!**

We're now in Pinney Hall, suites C21 and C24. Our phone numbers are the same, but you'll need to come to the Westside to see us!

**YOUR VOTE
IS
YOUR VOICE**

**It's too important to leave to others.
Be sure to register AND vote this
November.**



Take a listen to our new series, **Speak Its Name**. Episode 2 is coming soon, and features **Anna Adebambo**, SGA President and **Harrison Tagnidoug**, BSU President.

