

# Well-Being Resources at MSU for Graduate Students

## Physical Well-Being

**Recreational Sports and Fitness Services.** <https://recsports.msu.edu/> Rec Sports' mission is to promote each participant's learning experience by engaging the university community in healthy lifestyles through sport, fitness, and recreational opportunities. You can join an intramural team, participate in a virtual or in-person exercise class, or work out in one of our on-campus facilities.

**Active Spartans** <https://healthpromotion.msu.edu/fitness/activespartans/index.html>

Exercise promotes optimal health and well-being and is integral in the prevention and treatment of various physical and mental health conditions. Our program aims to make physical activity accessible and welcoming for all students. If you're not sure where to begin or looking for new physical activity options, the ACTIVE Spartans Program is for you! The ACTIVE Spartans Program is an exercise program that matches you with a Physical Activity Mentor (PAM) who will:

- Develop an individualized exercise plan with you
- Learn creative and consistent ways to participate in physical activity to make exercise a consistent part of your life
- Be given support, motivation, and accountability

The program is offered in-person or virtually. Fill out this [Online Registration Form](#) to help the VEP staff understand your goals, motivation to exercise, your health history, and assess your current fitness levels. They will then reach out to set up a free one-on-one session to create a personalized plan for you.

**Nutrition Services.** The Nutrition Program for students at MSU is focused on supporting all people within our campus community to achieve eating competence. The work we do in nutrition counseling sessions, outreach programming, and health communication promotes a non-diet approach using the eating competence model and a weight-inclusive approach to support health. The Nutrition Program provides services guided by a belief that students are capable of making wise, well-informed decisions about nutrition when provided the information, education, and support necessary to do so.

<https://healthpromotion.msu.edu/nutrition/>.

**MSU Student Food Bank.** The MSU Student Food Bank was founded to help students who are dealing with food insecurity. Food insecurity refers to having limited food availability with a reduction in the quality or variety of food intake, that often results in disrupted eating patterns. A lack of food security can be a considerable obstacle to academic success. Currently, the Food Bank is open by appointment and you can pick up food as often as once a week. Check here for details on how to set up an appointment: <https://foodbank.msu.edu/distribution/index.html>.

# Emotional and Mental Health

## Resources through CAPS

**MSU Counseling & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)** is the place on campus for students seeking help for a wide range of concerns, including: depression, anxiety, stress management, homesickness, adjustment or acculturation, relationships, gender and sexual orientation issues, substance abuse, traumatic experiences, eating or body image concerns, and other mental health concerns. CAPS provides short-term individual therapy as well as a variety of support groups, some specifically for graduate students. CAPS also provides a referral service to help students find mental health providers in the community. If you are in crisis, call CAPS' main number any time 24/7 to be immediately connected to a crisis counselor: 517-355-8270. You can learn more about the services offered at CAPS and how to access them here:

<https://caps.msu.edu>.

**CAPS Connect** is a brief consultation program that is confidential, completely free, and available to all enrolled MSU students. Join us virtually during the scheduled times - sign up in advance to chat with a CAPS Counselor! CAPS Connect provides a place to talk about concerns. You can have someone listen to you and offer support, or you may prefer to receive expert suggestions about solutions and resources.

<https://caps.msu.edu/services/CAPSConnect.html>

**Support Groups at CAPS for Graduate Students (Virtual).** The following groups are available just for grad students. Click here to learn more about when the groups are offered and how to get started:

<https://caps.msu.edu/services/groups/index.html>.

- **ACT: Make Your Experience ACT (Acceptance & Commitment Therapy)**  
Many grad students experience anxiety or depression. This group aims to help grad students learn mindfulness skills, connect to their values, and strengthen psychological flexibility in their relationship with themselves and others. The group offers a mixture of support, experiential learning, and action-oriented work. Virtual format.
  - Thursdays from 3-4pm. Begins Sept 21, can join later. In-person format.
- **Gender Identity and Attractionality (GIAA)**  
This support group for graduate students addresses life and relational issues related to romantic and sexual attraction, sexual orientation and gender identity, particularly for LGBTQ+ (including questioning) students. Topics are based on student interests and could include exploring identity and identity development, trust and connections, dealing with heterosexism, cissexism, internalized homophobia and/or transphobia, dating and dating technology, attraction and romance, family dynamics, faith and identity, balancing academics with life, and intersectional identities. Virtual format.
  - Wednesdays from 2:00-3:30pm. Virtual format.
- **Graduate Student Support Group** This is a supportive space where graduate students can gather, share and empower one another through shared experiences. Themes for this group explore key stressors as they relate to graduate studies, purpose, sense of belonging, “creative differences” with your advisor, juggling multiple roles and responsibilities, challenges with completing dissertation or thesis and impacts related to diet, sleep, and emotional well-being. Whatever your concerns, we can listen, offer support or help you come up with strategies to make the most of your time in grad school.
  - Fridays, 10:00-11:00am. Begins Sept 22, can join later. Virtual format.

CAPS also offers a wide variety of workshops, support groups, and therapy groups that are open to all MSU students (undergraduates and graduate/professional students). Click the link above for the full list. One workshop series that may be of particular interest is the Cultivating Concentration Workshop:

**Cultivating Concentration Workshop.** This is a four-part workshop series that focuses on improving concentration, attention and motivation to complete academic and work demands. It is offered in a virtual format and will run in three consecutive sessions held on Tuesdays from 11-12pm.

- Workshop Session 1 starts September 19
- Workshop Session 2 starts October 17
- Workshop Session 3 starts November 14

#### Online resources at CAPS

- Mental Health Self-assessments: <https://caps.msu.edu/services/self-assessments.html>
- Psych Hub videos about topics such as understanding/coping with anxiety and depression: <https://psychhub.com/our-partners/michigan-state-university-counseling-and-psychiatric-services/>
- How to help a friend in distress: <https://caps.msu.edu/services/help-a-friend.html>

## Resources through Health4U

**Health4U** is focused on helping MSU faculty, staff, graduate assistants, and retirees explore the fundamentals of a health-promoting lifestyle. We provide access to high quality, evidence informed, and culturally conscious health education and support. We offer health and wellness courses, coaching services and departmental services. On our website you will also find articles, resources, and recipes published by Health4U staff: <https://health4u.msu.edu>.

**Employee Assistance Program (EAP).** The Mission of the MSU Employee Assistance Program is to support and enhance the emotional health of the campus community. EAP provides emotional assistance to employees and their families as they attempt to work through life changes, expected and unexpected events, chronic physical and emotional health issues, and work/life balance concerns. The EAP offers six free sessions of counseling for graduate students who are benefits-eligible (i.e. those funded by assistantships). <https://eap.msu.edu>.

**Emotional Wellness Resources** <https://health4u.msu.edu/wellness>

**Emotional Wellness courses/workshops:** <https://health4u.msu.edu/wellness/courses>

## Other Resources for Emotional/Mental Health

**Wellness Coaching.** <https://healthpromotion.msu.edu/fitness/wellnesscoaching/index.html>. Free individual and group wellness coaching available to all MSU students through the Health Promotion Office. Wellness coaching is a positive, proactive and supportive process that explores your life in meaningful ways, helping you to feel better about yourself and enhance your well-being. A wellness coach recognizes that you are the expert in your own life and in that role, they support you in creating lifestyle changes aligned with your personal goals and values. A wellness coach works with you in a collaborative process to enhance your strengths and turn your challenges into victories, establishing appropriate action plans, offering support when you struggle, and celebrating when you succeed. During your sessions your coach will support you in:

- Identifying one or more priority areas that you would like to change.

- Recognizing the benefits of creating new, positive habits.
- Identifying barriers to performing at your best and come up with manageable solutions.
- Creating an action plan that incorporates realistic strategies and goals
- Successfully implementing your plan by providing accountability, problem-solving strategies, skill-building, and referral to other campus resources if needed.

**KORU Mindfulness Meditation Classes.** In four weeks, you will learn research-validated methods to manage your stress and work more mindfully with thoughts and emotions. You will attend four online 75-minute classes that include small group discussions. You will also complete 10 minutes of daily practice and some light reading.

- Koru Basic Mindfulness and Meditation is from 5-6:15pm on Feb 2, Feb 9, Feb 16 and Feb 23
- Koru-2 is from 5-6:15pm on Apr 6, Apr 13, Apr 20 and Apr 27
- 4-hour Koru retreat will be held on April 9 from 10:30-2:30

These offerings are open to all currently enrolled MSU students and registration details can be found at: <https://stateofmindfulness.simplybook.me>. Contact Dr. Debra Duxbury MD PhD, Certified Koru Mindfulness Teacher, at [mindfulness@msu.edu](mailto:mindfulness@msu.edu) with any questions.

**Developing Resilience.** This resource is a Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) for the Postdoc Academy, an NIH-funded project with folks from MSU, Boston Univ, Univ of WI-Madison, and Northwestern. The MOOC is largely for postdocs, however, in past offerings we know senior graduate students and staff are also taking it. From evaluations of participants, it is quite popular and people have found it very helpful. <https://www.postdocacademy.org/developing-resilience/>

## Intellectual Well-Being

**Dissertation Support Groups.** The Dissertation Support Group is a 6-week group for graduate students who would like some extra support maintaining motivation and/or making effective progress in the writing of their dissertation. ***This group is open only to students who are actively working on and writing their dissertation.*** The group utilizes a short-term, solution-focused model to help manage the anxiety and stress that often prohibit effective writing. Please note that this group does not focus on the technical aspects of writing, and there will be no review of written work in this group. The group provides participants with a supportive, structured environment that helps to mitigate the sense of isolation and frustration that often accompany the dissertation writing process and to promote the accountability, risk-taking and creativity necessary to complete a terminal degree. A weekly discussion topic will also provide group members with an opportunity to discuss some of the most common barriers to effective writing such as procrastination, time management, stress/burnout, and writer's block. Contact Dr. Meg Moore for more information: [akehimeg@msu.edu](mailto:akehimeg@msu.edu).

**Graduate School Write-ins.** Graduate School Write-Ins are co-sponsored by the Graduate School and The Writing Center @ MSU. The write-ins are hosted and facilitated to provide writers with an opportunity to write in a shared writing space where other writers are present, and a writing center consultant/staff member is present to provide consultations for writers who would like to have a consultation appointment during the session. Along with this, the write-ins provide an opportunity for facilitators to promote and share information about upcoming events hosted by the Graduate School, Writing Center, and other campus partners such as the University Outreach and Engagement Office and to provide resources and information that can be used to form graduate writing groups, have writing center appointments or attend workshops (provided by the Graduate School) that cater to graduate students

based on goals they may share during the write in. Write-ins are typically held once a month on Fridays from 9:00am-1:00pm. Check the grad school calendar for the next session: <https://grad.msu.edu/calendar>.

**Teaching Communities and Fellowships:** The Graduate School collaborates with academic units to offer several year-long funded fellowship programs for people interested in participating in communities of practice with other graduate students. While in each of these fellowship programs, graduate students undertake year-long inquiry projects related to student learning in their disciplinary contexts. <https://grad.msu.edu/teaching-communities-and-fellowships>

**Graduate Teaching Assistant Teaching Learning Community (GTA TLC).** The GTA TLC meets twice a month (Wednesdays from noon to 1pm) in the Fall and Spring semesters to present and discuss best practices in teaching and learning, new and emerging pedagogy and current research in teaching. Anyone interested in learning about best practices in teaching from GTAs in various instructional settings is welcome to join and contribute their knowledge and practices in the teaching space. The GTA TLC wants to empower and recognize the many teaching efforts and innovative practices GTAs have developed and address any challenges that arise. Please check the Graduate School Calendar to register: <https://grad.msu.edu/calendar>

**#iteach Commons.** A digital site, <https://iteach.msu.edu/> is designed for educators by educators at MSU. The site aims to create a single centralized resource on a campus that is often challenged by its decentralized nature. It is also home to the **Thank an Educator initiative** which aims to elevate and celebrate the high-impact practices and contributions of all educators through a peer-recognition program. There is a huge community of educators who contribute to teaching, learning, and student success across MSU. It's important to us to draw your attention to this expansion of the definition of "educator" because when at #iteachmsu educator certainly include in-class instructors but is intentionally much broader to also include roles such as TAs, ULAs, instructional designers, academic advisors, librarians, coaches, etc. For more information on the functions of this space as a platform, check out the **Getting Started playlist**.

**The Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL)** ([cirtl.net](http://cirtl.net)) is a network of 21 universities across the United States advancing STEM undergraduate education by helping prepare future STEM faculty in the use and assessment of evidence-based instruction. CIRTL runs online courses, workshops, events, and more to teach STEM grad students and postdocs effective, inclusive, evidence-based approaches to teaching and learning. <https://grad.msu.edu/cirtl>

**Center for Statistical Training and Consulting (CSTAT).** Did you know that MSU graduate students can receive free statistical support for their dissertation research? CSTAT collaborates on research projects and provides statistical support services to MSU affiliated faculty, staff, and graduate students, and off-campus clients. CSTAT also offers training and education in data management, statistical methods, and responsible conduct of research. For example, we:

- provide expertise and guidance on study design, statistical methods, interpretation of results, and conduct statistical analyses
- participate in grant proposal applications with design and methods considerations and sample size determination
- provide research data management services
- collaborate on manuscripts and serve as co-authors

CSTAT also offers workshops and consultations on a variety of statistical topics and software. Check them out for more details: <https://cstat.msu.edu>.

**Office of the University Ombudsperson** offers a confidential place to discuss both academic and nonacademic concerns including, administrative issues, workplace issues, or any concern that may relate to Michigan State University students. We also interpret and explain university policies and procedures. Here, you can speak freely because the Office of the University Ombudsperson offers an environment where you can talk with a confidential and impartial resource about a complaint, conflict or problem. We are not part of any formal University process. We do not take sides in disputes. We operate independently of the University. Contact us at any point in your academic journey and together we will define the problem, explore options, outline strategies, review policies, inform you about applicable resources, and manage expectations while upholding the values of respect, integrity, diversity and freedom from bias or harassment. While keeping strict confidentiality, the Office of the University Ombudsperson further provides University officials with general information about trends and emerging student needs to assist the University in proactively improving its policies and practices. <https://ombud.msu.edu>

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## Social and Community Engagement

**Center for Community Engaged Learning.** In partnership with campus and community, the Center for Community Engaged Learning advances community engaged learning at Michigan State University and prepares students for lifelong civic and social responsibility. You can find many opportunities for volunteering, community-engaged research, democratic engagement, philanthropy, advocacy, and more! <https://communityengagedlearning.msu.edu>

**Graduate Certification in Community Engagement.** MSU's Graduate Certification in Community Engagement is an initiative of [University Outreach and Engagement](#) and The Graduate School. The Certification is designed to help graduate and professional students develop systemic, respectful, and scholarly approaches to their community engaged work. With approval from their Guidance Committee chairperson and University Outreach and Engagement, students tailor their program of study to strengthen their scholarly and practical skills in community-engaged research and creative activities, community-engaged teaching and learning, community-engaged service and practice, and/or community-engaged commercialization activities. <https://grad.msu.edu/community-engagement>

**Council of Graduate Students (COGS)** is an authorized student government on campus representing our graduate/professional students at various levels across Michigan State University. Their mission is to improve and advance graduate education in order to ensure the vitality of intellectual discovery. COGS accomplishes its mission through advocacy, innovative research, and the development and dissemination of best practices. Supporting education is critical to achieving the highly skilled workforce needed for the U.S. to compete effectively in the 21st century global economy. Email: [office@cogs.msu.edu](mailto:office@cogs.msu.edu). Website: <https://cogs.msu.edu/>. The COGS website often has a list of social events and other ways to engage in community and scholarship together: <https://cogs.msu.edu/upcoming-events/>

**The Gender and Sexuality Campus Center** is dedicated to leading and collaborating on university-wide initiatives that prepare students to thrive in our diverse world, and enhancing the campus climate and support services for students marginalized by their sexuality or gender! So when asked who is the Center for, it's for everyone! <https://gsc.msu.edu/>

**The Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP)** is a National Science Foundation program that supports recruitment, retention, and graduation of underrepresented U. S. minorities in doctoral programs of the natural and social sciences, mathematics, and engineering. Graduate students, post-docs and faculty who participate in building the AGEP Community at MSU will

provide a key to changing the culture of U. S. colleges and universities to embrace building world-class STEM and SBE faculties who fully reflect the diversity in race, gender, culture and intellectual talent of the U.S. population. <https://grad.msu.edu/agep>.

**Collegiate Recovery Community (CRC)** is housed in the Health Promotion Department. MSU's Collegiate Recovery Community (CRC) serves students in or seeking recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction. The mission is to provide a safe and supportive campus community in which students in recovery from addiction can achieve their academic, personal and professional goals. The CRC and its services are designed to empower students to thrive in the fullness of the college experience, free from alcohol and other drugs. <https://healthpromotion.msu.edu/recovery/index.html>.

**Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS)** hosts a virtual coffee hour every week. Check this page for updates about times and dates, which rotate to accommodate students calling in from different time zones: <https://oiss.isp.msu.edu/about/feature/weekly-coffee-hour/>.

**Student Parent Resource Center.** <http://studentparents.msu.edu>. The MSU Student Parent Resource Center offers a supportive environment to obtain information and resources for ALL students who are parents and their families on and off campus. Services offered by the SPRC:

- Advocacy for student families
- Academic and family support
- Guidance for communicating with faculty and advisors
- Financial assistance for child care, infant to age 12
- Support in researching quality child care
- Student Parents on a Mission (SPOM) peer organization
- Pre-finals child care
- Community Resource Guide
- Student list serve with up-to-date information about community resources and opportunities for families

**Local Community Events.** East Lansing and Lansing have many opportunities for socializing and community engagement. From festivals and farmers markets to concerts and community service projects, there are lots of ways to get off campus and explore. Though everything has been impacted by COVID, people are still finding safe and creative ways to connect.

- East Lansing: <https://www.cityofeastlansing.com/133/Community-Events>
- Lansing: <https://www.lansing.org/events/>
- <https://www.517living.com>

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## Spiritual Well-Being

Many **religious and faith-based groups** in the greater Lansing community offer resources specifically for MSU students and some have groups just for graduate students: <https://www.religiouslifeatmsu.org/organizations>

**Registered Student Organizations (RSO).** MSU has hundreds of student organizations and some of them are founded on a shared sense of religious identity or belief system. You can search for an RSO by typing a certain faith, religion or belief system into the search bar: <https://msu.campuslabs.com/engage>.

## Nature trails and parks

- Fenner Nature Center: 2020 E Mt. Hope Ave. Lansing, MI 48910
- Woldumar Nature Center: 5739 Old Lansing, Rd. Lansing, MI 48917
- Check this link for a more comprehensive list of trails and parks on campus and in the Greater Lansing area: <https://health4u.msu.edu/articles/2018-take-a-hike>
- Rec Sports has a map that gives you many options for walks or runs on campus with distances included: <https://recsports.msu.edu/fitness/joggingmap.html>

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## Occupational and Financial Well-Being

**PhD Career Services** can help at every state of planning for life after graduate school. If you are in need of one-on-one help in your career planning or professional development, it might be time to schedule an appointment. You can get help with writing resumes/CVs and cover letters, preparing for interviews, and learning tips for successful networking. Find directions for scheduling an appointment here: <https://grad.msu.edu/phdcareers/advising>

**Professional Development Workshops and Resources.** The Graduate School guides students and postdocs to the resources they need for planning and professional development. Our program offerings and resources provide the key skills that all graduate students need before completing their degree with foundational skills: <https://grad.msu.edu/professional-development>. You can also look at the Grad School calendar and filter the options by topic, professional development area, and audience: <https://grad.msu.edu/calendar/>. Professional development areas include career development, community engagement, leadership, mentoring, research, teaching and writing.

**MSU WorkLife Office** (<https://worklife.msu.edu>). The WorkLife Office accomplishes our mission by offering guidance and education in five areas:

1. **Career Transitions:** For faculty or staff, career transition concerns may include: tenure clock stoppage for parental leave; taking on a new role at MSU; advancing or changing careers; among others. The WorkLife Office offers consultation and connects you to seminars and workshops to assist in these matters.
2. **Relocation & Community Connections:** If you are new to Michigan State, the Greater Lansing area, Michigan or the United States, the WorkLife Office can help connect you to campus and community resources.
3. **Family Care:** Resources include, but are not limited to, consultation to determine the best care for you and your family's needs; identifying emergency childcare; sharing best practices for elder care.
4. **Workplace Assistance:** We offer guidance for talking with supervisors about flexible work arrangements, recommendations for resolving conflict in the workplace, and identifying MSU policies which may apply to your workplace setting, among others.
5. **Research:** We provide access to cutting-edge research about best practices for work-life synergy and develop research specific to MSU's community.

**Financial Wellness.** The career dimension of wellness is not only concerned with employment, but also with employment that provides personal satisfaction and fair and adequate financial remuneration. It can also be a challenge to feel financially well while still pursuing graduate education. Click here for a guide to Financial Wellness for graduate students:

<https://grad.msu.edu/sites/default/files/content/lifeandwellness/docs/Financial%20Wellness%20-%20Final%20Draft%20Designed.pdf>



**Emergency Fellowship Funding.** The Graduate School has a limited amount of Emergency Funding available to graduate students for unusual or unforeseen emergency expenses. This funding available for graduate students for unusual or unforeseen emergency expenses and is only for graduate students pursuing a degree program. Students need to be enrolled for the semester in which they receive funding. Please be aware that emergency funds are intended to provide one-time-only support. Please note: If awarded, this fellowship does not provide student health insurance or tuition/fee waivers. Click here for details: <https://grad.msu.edu/emergency-fellowship-funding>