Maya Forbes, the writer and director of the movie, *Infinitely Polar Bear*, chuckled during her interview on the *Kamla Show* as she recalled the diagnosis her manic-depressive father gave to hospital staff. Not fond of the term “bipolar” and unwilling to circle the bipolar or schizophrenia options on his intake form, her father circled “other” and wrote what would inspire the title of his daughter’s movie years later: “Infinitely polar bear.”

The film—which stars Mark Ruffalo as Cam Stuart [inspired by Forbes’ father] and Zoe Saldana as Maggie Stuart—not only sheds light on the everyday struggles of living with bipolar disorder, but also the joys. Cam must raise his two daughters alone while his wife moves to New York to get an M.B.A., in an effort to improve the quality of life for her family. Cam’s relationship with his daughters is paralleled with how Forbes describes her relationship with her own father. Forbes strove to create a film that showed many sides to living with and loving a parent with mental illness.

Throughout the movie, Cam’s daughters yearn for their mother’s return in order to regain stability as their father experiences his manic episodes. Still, other moments are full of joy and small acts of love—like when Cam spends the night sewing a flamenco skirt for his daughter, or the time he brings flowers to give to his wife when picking her up from the bus stop.

Cam’s daughters are continually exposed to their father’s disorder. There are moments of tension as the girls are ashamed to invite friends into their apartment, which is filled with Cam’s unfinished and messy projects. The girls are clearly uncomfortable, too, when Cam offers to help neighbors with chores during his manic episodes—as he approaches with a disproportionate amount of gusto. Reflecting on her own childhood, Forbes believes that her experiences with her father, although difficult, helped her to become a self-reliant individual.

Much like what Maya Forbes found in her own experience, *Infinitely Polar Bear* shows viewers that mental illness does not imply hopelessness. Instead, the film tells a story of the positive effects of strong family bonds in the face of difficulties.

March Motivation:

“Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.”

- Arthur Ashe
Spotlight: Advanced Study of Clinical Interventions and Clinical Research

By: Cecilia Jakobsson

This semester I was looking to take a course outside of the standard classroom experience, one that combined research and theory with its working-world counterpart. In turn, I found discovered “Advanced Study of Clinical Interventions and Clinical Research,” a CAMS lab course taught by Dr. Richard Gallagher and Dr. Yamalis Diaz. This course offers students valuable research and clinical experience, and provides insight into the principles governing the evaluation, practice, and treatment of children and adolescents affected by mental health disorders and learning difficulties.

In conjunction with a 90-minute seminar, once per week, students have the opportunity to volunteer with a clinical or research team at the Child Study Center. Team placements cover a wide range of interests and fields under the umbrella. These placements include: Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, the Selective Mutism Team, Organization Skills for children and teens with ADHD, the Institute for Learning and Academic Achievement, the Dialectical Behavior Therapy Program, and the Autism Spectrum Disorders Program. The current CAMS advisor and NYU alumna, Emily Badin said, “Taking the course equipped me with the necessary skills and strategies to be able to enter into the field feeling extremely well-prepared!”

- Ashley Dreiss

Advanced Study of Clinical Intervention and Clinical Research was the best first step I took in my career as a clinical psychologist.” Emily was placed on the Dialectical Behavior Therapy team, and said, “[My] experiences confirmed my desire to become a clinical psychologist and inspired me to take the CAMS advisor position so I could ensure that other undergraduates could have a similar, great, experience.”

“The former CAMS on Campus President and NYU alumna, Ashley Dreiss, took the course as well, and found it especially beneficial in her current line of work. She was placed on the Autism Spectrum Disorders Team and had the opportunity to work alongside a psychologist. She is currently pursuing a Master’s degree in clinical psychology at Fordham University, while also working as a full-time assistant teacher at a K-8 school for children on the Autism spectrum. Ashley said, “Not only did this placement expose me to fascinating clinical work, but it also inspired me to pursue a career in this field. I can attest that this course equipped me with the necessary skills and strategies to be able to enter into the field feeling extremely well-prepared!”

Although it is just the start of the semester, I already feel more confident in approaching clinical research papers and critically evaluating the results and conclusions. I cannot wait to experience everything else that this class has to offer!

Adjusting Abroad: From NYC to Sydney

By: Rebecca Kiefer

NYU has an outstanding reputation for its study away opportunities. Every year, more than 3,000 NYU students choose to study abroad—this is a statistic the university prides itself on. However, there is no figure to reflect the time and effort it takes students to assimilate to their study away site’s culture, though doing so can be a daunting task.

I just completed my first month in Sydney, Australia. Sydney is known for having many similarities to Manhattan – like its Western politics and urban landscape. Additionally, Sydney is only one of three sites that speaks English as its main language. However, there are still many adjustments my classmates and I have to make in order to adopt an Australian way of living.

Sydney has a laid-back culture, especially compared to Manhattan. For example, Sydney is not a 24-hour-city. Libraries, restaurants, coffee shops and workplaces cannot be found open after 8 PM. Therefore, I am forced to finish my work much earlier in the day to prevent being kicked out of my study spaces due to closing times. There is also a citywide “lockout law” that prevents people from entering a bar after 1 AM, and liquor cannot be served after midnight. Living in a country that has its wifi and Internet data capped has also been a major adjustment. However, given those limits I find that I spend less time on social media and more time outside in the sun, experiencing the city!

While these differences may seem minute, they have entirely altered my lifestyle. These cultural changes were, and still are, an adjustment. While some are more difficult than others, with each change I find myself gaining irrepressible insight on what it means to be an Australian and to live in Sydney.
Spring Break Destination Quiz
By: Joyce Bae

Still up in the air about what to do over Spring Break? Take our Spring Break Destination Quiz and total your points to see where you should go!

How stressful has this semester been for you?
1 point: It has been a breeze!
2 points: I have had better semesters.
3 points: It has been hard but I enjoy it.
4 points: It was terrible. I am ready for a break.

How much money are you willing to spend?
1 point: Not that much, money is tight.
2 points: I saved up a couple hundred for break.
3 points: I would rather save but I am willing to spend.
4 points: I have money to blow!

How many friends are you planning to travel with?
1 point: As many friends as possible.
2 points: More than five people.
3 points: A few people.
4 points: No more than two people.

What is your favorite season?
1 point: Winter—I love layers and the brisk air.
2 points: Autumn is the most beautiful time of the year.
3 points: Spring is the time to enjoy the outdoors.
4 points: Summer. Summer. Summer. I love the sun on my skin!

What is the most important to you?
1 point: Being able to enjoy myself.
2 points: Discovering historic landmarks.
3 points: Being in a new environment with my friends.
4 points: Going somewhere exotic.

5-8 points: Stay in New York! Because of the hustle and bustle of the school year, you probably have not explored the city you live in. You should use the money you saved up for this spring break to try a five star meal, or an activity that usually seems pricey. New York City is a dream destination for people all around the world and you live here; make the most of it!

9-12 points: Washington D.C. is your perfect fit! It is close enough that travelling costs are cheap and there are a lot of historic monuments and museums to visit. You can go with a larger group of people or just a close-knit group of friends. With some luck, maybe the cherry blossoms will be in bloom!

13-16 points: Florida is the place for you! Take a trip to the beach or even Disneyworld. Dance to your heart’s content in one of the most traveled spring break destinations. It is close enough that you can make it a budget trip, or you can go all out!

9-12 points: Take a trip to the Maldives. You have the funds and you have had an incredibly stressful semester. Take this trip to relax in the sun, and maybe swim with some turtles. You deserve it!

Interview with Dr. Beata Lewis
By: Sophia Wu

Before crossing paths with CAMS, Dr. Beata Lewis attended Harvard College, and then Harvard Medical School. It was there that she began to learn about mind-body medicine and nutrition. She discovered mind-body medicine’s long history, which emphasizes the connection between stress, thoughts, emotion, and physical responses. Fascinated by these connections, Dr. Lewis pursued a general psychiatry residency at Columbia University. To further enrich her training, she was also trained in hypnosis and even traveled to India to study meditation and yoga (twice!).

Dr. Lewis believed that working with children in particular could offer the unique opportunity to better understand mental illness at its roots. She also believed that complementary and alternative medicine were important options for children, as lifestyle-based treatments (e.g. exercise, mindfulness, and nutrition) can often be especially effective.

Dr. Lewis first found out about CAMS when she was a child psychiatry fellow, here at NYU. This is where she crossed paths with Dr. Jess Shatkin, founder and director of CAMS and the child and adolescent psychiatry fellowship. With Dr. Shatkin’s support, Dr. Lewis and Dr. Marianne Chai developed the CAMS course, “Complementary and Alternative Mental Health.” They have been co-teaching the course ever since.

In both her teaching and practice, Dr. Lewis focuses on the prevention of mental illness. Emotional education, a major component of prevention, can improve one’s quality of life and reduce vulnerabilities to mental illness. In practice Dr. Lewis explores her patient’s emotions and thoughts, as well as provide them with information about ways to optimize their lifestyle (e.g. though sleep, exercise, and nutrition). She has incorporated elements of this education into her own lifestyle, using dance, yoga, spending time outdoors, and playing with her twins as ways to relax and enrich her life.
Coping with Anxiety
By: Alexis Brandon

People often experience anxiety before first dates and class presentations, but when it becomes an almost daily recurrence without any trigger, it is no longer considered an appropriate reaction to stressful events. With the added burden of midterm exams and papers, it is possible that your anxiety levels may rise. If you find that your heart is constantly racing, your palms are sweating, your breaths become shallow, and your mind is filled with worries, you may be experiencing anxiety.

One widely discussed and suggested coping mechanism is to take deep breaths, slowly inhaling through your nose and exhaling through your mouth. Regardless of how many times you have seen this referenced in pop culture, breathing exercises do actually work! They force you to divert your attention away from the stress and onto the simple task of natural relaxation response.

Another method that requires little effort is to picture yourself in a place you would rather be. Whether it is on the beach, in your bedroom at home, or in a park surrounded by five golden retrievers—this thought activity figuratively takes you out of a difficult situation. Even further, the positive emotions we associate with the places we love serve as a natural way to shift from a negative to a more positive state of mind.

One of the more recently popular ways of managing anxiety is to attend a yoga or mindful meditation class. Yoga to the People is a donation-based studio (the suggested donation is $10 a session) on St. Mark’s Place. You can also find free, quality videos on YouTube by yoga instructors and meditation experts that allow you to practice in the comfort of your room. Anxiety can often take a toll on your basic self-care. In times of stress, do your best to eat well and get 7-9 hours of sleep each night. Rest and nutrition tend to fall by the wayside when you’re stressed, but giving those areas attention can make a huge difference on how you feel, both mentally and physically. Try to plan your schedule so healthy habits are your top priorities, not your last. Try to be wary of avoidance behaviors—like watching Netflix instead of studying or talking a nap to put off an assignment. While it is important to take breaks, spending a disproportionate amount of time on them can leave you scrambling to get all you need done—it will only add stress down the road.

It is important to remember, too, that you do not have to face your anxiety alone. Friends, family, and even professors are often willing to lend an ear or helping hand if you need it. Additionally, NYU’s Wellness Exchange is a great resource for students who are seeking support. They can be reached 24/7 at (212) 443-9999.

Joining the Conversation During Eating Disorder Awareness Month
By: Annie Levinson

February 26th marks the start of National Eating Disorder Awareness Week. With aims to promote awareness, reduce stigmatization, and extend a helping hand to those who may be suffering, the National Eating Disorder Association (NEDA) is filling February 26th through March 4th with incredible opportunities to get involved in supporting the cause all over the country. To kick the week off, 67 national landmarks—including the Empire State Building and LAX Airport—will be lit up in blue and green, the signature colors of eating disorder awareness.

According to NEDA, about 30 million Americans will struggle with an eating-related disorder in their lives. These disorders have one of the highest mortality rates among all mental illness, and yet those who suffer from them are often hidden from the public eye. NEDA’s Awareness Week is aimed at changing this for good.

To join the conversation, consider making a post using the hashtag #NEDAwareness on your social media platforms. Consider adding a body positive photo, some words of encouragement for those who may be suffering, or even just share the link to NEDA’s website, NEDA-awareness.org. Their website is full of resources, volunteer opportunities, and also has an online screening test that is completely free and only takes about three minutes to complete. In addition, you can find a list of NEDA events in New York during the week, including walks, performances, or exhibitions related to spreading awareness.

In our NYU community, Lucy Quigley, a sophomore, wrote a book about her own experience with an eating disorder, entitled You Are Worthy. She will be hosting a book release event on March 4th, from 2-4 PM in Palladium’s multi-purpose room. For more information about this event, go on Facebook and search for “You Are Worthy Book Release NEDA.” NYU’s Wellness Exchange can provide support during Eating Disorder Awareness Week and beyond. You can call 24/7 at (212) 443-9999.
Grand Rounds Schedule

Where: 1 Park Ave at 33rd St, 7th Fl.

**March 3:** Treating the Developing Brain: Insights from Preclinical Human and Rodent Studies
BJ Casey, PhD
Director, Fundamentals of the Adolescent Brain (FAB) Lab, Professor of Psychology, Yale University, Adjunct Professor, The Rockefeller University and Weill Cornell Medical College
Live stream broadcast available – NYULMC only

**March 10:** Early Identification and Interventions in Individuals at High Risk for Psychosis
Christoph Correll, MD
Professor of Psychiatry and Molecular Medicine, Hofstra Northwell School of Medicine, Investigator, Center for Psychiatric Neuroscience, Feinstein Institute for Medical Research, Medical Director, Recognition and Prevention (RAP) Program, The Zucker Hillside Hospital, Department of Psychiatry
Live stream broadcast available – NYULMC only

**March 17:** Trends in the Prevalence of Childhood Mental Illness
Jane Costello, PhD
Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Co-Director, Developmental Epidemiology Program, Duke University
Live stream broadcast available – NYULMC only

**March 24:** Computational Psychiatry: New Tools to Guide Research and Clinical Care
Glenn Saxe, MD
Professor, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, NYU School of Medicine

Upcoming CAMS on Campus Events

**March 23rd:** Screening of Screenagers with a talkback from the director, Delaney Ruston
Where: Silver, Room 401
When: 6:00PM—9:00PM

**March 30th:** CAMS Spring Mixer
Where: Torch Club (18 Waverly Place)
When: 6:00PM—8:00PM

**April 26th:** Broadway Show
Stay tuned for more details!

**May 4th:** End of the Stress-mester
Where: Kimmel, Rooms 905-907
When: 3:00PM—5:00PM

**May 13th:** NAMIWalks
Where: South Street Seaport
When: 10:00AM

This newsletter was created by the CAMS on Campus Committee:

Joyce Bae
Alexis Brandon
Dana Couto
Cecilia Jakobsson
Rebecca Kiefer
Annie Levinson
Molly Prep
Sophia Wu

To get involved, email mep488@nyu.edu

Why you should get involved in writing for The CAMS on Campus Newsletter:

“Who wants to become a writer? And why? Because it’s the answer to everything. ... It’s the streaming reason for living. To note, to pin down, to build up, to create, to be astonished at nothing, to cherish the oddities, to let nothing go down the drain, to make something, to make a great flower out of life, even if it’s a cactus.”

—Enid Bagnold