As the holidays are approaching, what better movie series is there to watch than *Home Alone*? In both the original (1990) and sequel (1992) films, Mr. and Mrs. McCallister foolishly lose sight of their son, Kevin, who is forced to fend for himself in two of the country’s biggest cities: Chicago and New York. By the time the McCallisters realize Kevin is gone – in both movies – it is nearly impossible to retrieve him. Is the issue here that the McCallisters are simply super forgetful when they must prepare for holiday family vacations? Or is something deeper going on?

The way Kevin’s family treats him in both movies suggests that he is often neglected and bullied. Quite possibly all throughout the years. Clearly, Kevin is aware that he is the family’s target and does not know why. He often exclaims, “My family hates me!” and we have to wonder whether he truly believes this. What is Kevin really experiencing, and how could it affect him later in his life? Since there has been no follow-up movie, we have no choice but to investigate these questions ourselves.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2016), approximately 1 in 4 children suffer from at least one form of abuse. Additionally, a longitudinal study conducted by Silverman et al. (1996) showed that 80% of these children “met the diagnostic criteria for at least one psychiatric disorder at age 21” (CDC, 2016). What if Kevin was one of these children?

Sadly, the film outlines a variety of risk factors contributing to Kevin developing future mental illness, including the lack of attention he gets at home, how rudely his family talks to him, and the physical roughhousing inflicted on him. He is often too afraid to react to these instances or stand up for himself, so he continues to internalize feelings of anger and frustration. There is a huge likelihood of him taking out these feelings on himself or in other situations in his life as he grows, which is extremely unhealthy for his personal development. However, effective coping strategies and a close support system could help him get through these difficult times and lower the risk of acquiring mental illness.

We can only hope that all these instances of abuse happened in the movie entirely due to holiday stress and were not everyday occurrences. If they were, however, we can only hope that Kevin worked through these family problems as he grew older and that now, at the age of thirty-five, he leads a happy, mentally stable life.

By: Allie Degan

*Article contains sensitive material*
Gallatin Mental Health Art Festival

By: Rebecca Cohen

Mental health was put in the spotlight at the NYU Gallatin Mental Health Arts Festival on Tuesday, November 28th. The purpose of the festival was to encourage student engagement by creating a community for students to be comfortable sharing artwork created in response to mental health issues. Performances included, but were not limited to, vocal, instrumental, dance, and a showcase of displayed artwork. Students were able to come together as a community and explore mental health issues through the expression of music and art.

One of the featured artists Caitlin Monahan said, “The Mental Health Arts Festival was a way to celebrate the expression of people’s mental states in an environment that was accessible for students.”

Katherine Facchini was involved in the event planning of the art festival. She decided to become involved with the project because she is interested in fostering creative work. “Mental health is very important and it affects many people I know. Mental health is talked about, but not often focussed on in the art world. The Gallatin Mental Health Arts Festival brings it to the forefront,” Facchini said.

Taking Time for Yourself: An Abroad Photo Story

Photos by Julia Moses, Written by Kiran Khatau

Maybe it’s a cliché to say this: but studying abroad changed me.

Unlike most NYU students, when I went abroad I didn’t know anyone particularly well. Going from having a solid group of friends in New York to knowing no one in a new city was a bigger shock than living on a new continent.

Maybe that’s why I learned to appreciate something I never had in the past: I learned to love taking time for myself.

That’s not to say I didn’t have friends or people who cared about me.

But for the first time, ever, I understood the appeal of taking time away from everyone and everything and taking a night just for ME.

Don’t get me wrong. Take all the opportunities you can while you’re abroad. Go on that volunteer trip. Plan a last minute weekend vacation with people you barely know. Be a tourist for a day in the new city you’re living in. But don’t forget that it is okay to relax on the beach by yourself, or curled up in bed for a day.

Finding Sanctuaries

By: Talia Bush

*Trigger Warning: Article Contains Sensitive Material: Sexual Assault

By any other member of the NYU community. For example, if you live off campus, in the Lower East Side, and you are raped in your bedroom by a peer student, NYU cannot take any action on this case, because you are not on “NYU Campus”. This is a serious issue. NYU often says, “New York City is our campus!” but not in this case. Therefore, a few students decided to take it upon themselves to test NYU’s support system in place for those who have experienced sexual misconduct. The results are shocking.

S.P.A.C.E (sexual misconduct prevention, assistance, counseling, & education) is NYU’s “sanctuary” for any survivor, or those who seek to learn more about sexual abuse. This small organization is meant to support anyone who needs help and connect them to health professionals and counselors. While the acronym seems to be all encompassing for what someone may need, the reality is utterly lacking. This “space” is actually a room with a few small round chairs, a television and a table. On this table are colored pencils, and outdated pamphlets from 2008. These pamphlets are not conducive to creating a supportive space. They state that drinking alcohol or using drugs “increases one’s risk or vulnerability to sexual violence,” creating a loophole, stating that it is more acceptable to violate someone who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, rather than teaching members of our community that in any case it is unacceptable to violate someone.

For survivors experiencing serious mental health affects, NYU states that these students can receive therapy through the counseling and wellness center; however, what is not clearly stated is that there is a ten session cap for these therapy visits. Many studies show that therapy is most conducive to healing and processing from trauma when a long-lasting relationship is built between the patient and therapist. With a ten session cap, can these relationships be made?

When these students, curious to see what the process was like, called the 24 hour hotline for sexual misconduct support services, they noticed it was the same number as the 24 hour hotline for general wellness exchange. So, when someone picked up the phone on the other line, a process that was meant to be totally confidential, the first words stated were “What’s your N number?”. Not, “Are you okay?” or “I’m here to help and get you through this.” When the student asked

NYU needs to reconstruct this S.P.A.C.E program in order to create a place of comfort and reliability for survivors and those looking to be educated. Rather than victim blaming, and preaching preventative methods such as “wearing more modest clothing” we should be teaching our community to respect each other’s bodies, to support each other, and to understand that sexual misconduct is not a result of how you dress, or how you walk, or how you speak. It is due to the fact that our society is not properly spreading and teaching ideals of respect to our young children.

A special thank you to Zoe Costomiris, Ava Solina, Sonia Agarwal, and Haley Shea for their investigations, which helped inform this article.

#METOO
What to Watch and Read in 2018
By: Kayla Jennings-Rivera

I have changed my whole perception of the world after watching the following films and reading the following books. I highly recommend these works if you’re interested in exposing yourself to mental health issues and global problems. Each unique piece has been eye opening and is a must-read or see!

Wonder
I saw Wonder in theaters and was blown away. However, I’ve heard the book is worth reading and recommend doing that first! The story gives us perspective on how choosing kindness can go a long way.

Lion
I finally watched Lion after it was made available on Netflix. It’s a beautiful film about identity and made me think about the most important things in life and the impact of family.

First They Killed My Father
This is a powerful biographical and historical film about the Pol Pot Regime. This is a subject I knew little about and I was interested in learning more. The film is amazing in every aspect and a must-see!

Girls Like Us
You must read this memoir! You can’t make it through 2018 without reading it. Girls Like Us is a memoir about the exploitation of girls around the world. Reading it will make you happy, angry, sad, and every emotion in between. I strongly recommend the book and sharing it with everyone you know!

SAD in Winter
By: Ericka Barroso

The city lights are twinkling. Everyone is in a festive spirit and the city is overrun by tourists looking for that perfect Christmas photo, but you are not feeling in a celebrating mood, and that is okay! Despite being the “most wonderful time of the year,” winter tends to bring high levels of SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder) with it too. While ironic at first, it makes more sense when remembering the changes in the weather as well as the reduced sunlight we receive. This leads many to feeling a lot more upset than usual despite the festive environment going on outside of their windows and not really wanting to do that many activities regardless of how fun they might appear.

While we do not know for sure what causes SAD, some theories think it could be related to a lack of serotonin (which affects our mood), or even melatonin (which affects our sleeping patterns). In short, there is so little sunlight out there that our biological clock gets a bit confused sometimes. You may have noticed feeling sleepy, thinking it was nighttime and then realizing it was truly only 4 pm! These all lead to a person feeling down often, having low energy, problems sleeping and weight gain amongst others. Because of all this, SAD is labeled as a type of temporal depression. So, what can you do if you are feeling a bit blue?

We know it is cold outside, but getting as much sunlight as you can is recommended! Vitamin D supplements also help out and even artificial light has been proven to lighten the mood (pun intended). This is called light therapy (or phototherapy). Also, remember, if you feel like the symptoms simply do not go away, it is never a bad idea to visit a professional, or call the NYU Wellness exchange at 212-443-9999.

Symptoms of SAD

- Oversleeping
- Depressed, suicidal ideation
- Lack of interest in normal activities and social interactions
- Weight gain
- Washing and grooming
- Carbohydrate craving
- Fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating
- Increased irritability
- Increased crying
- Suicidal thoughts
- Decreased sex drive

CLASSIC SYMPTOMS
OTHER SYMPTOMS
The Nervous System and the Brain Crossword Puzzle
Created By Ericka Barroso

Across

1. belief that specific areas of the brain are meant for specific functions and parts of our body
3. synapse is strengthened the more it happens
5. relay stations between the motor and sensory neurons
7. the lobe in which the amygdala is located
8. coordinated higher functions
9. gap between axon terminal and dendrite
11. famous brain injury patient with damage to frontal lobe
13. the ability of the brain to change and repair itself
14. drug that enhances performance of neurotransmitter

Down

2. produce the myelin sheath
4. Chemicals that carry neural information across synaptic cleft
6. where the axon meets the dendrite
10. type of brain imaging, measures blood flow while
12. language impairment caused by brain damage

Answers on last page.
Understanding Anxiety

By: Hannah Brown

*Trigger Warning: Article Contains Sensitive Material: Anxiety


It would be easy for most to understand that what I’ve described are panic attacks and generalized anxiety, respectively. You know how to describe them, you may even know the science behind them, but unless it’s happened to you, you don’t know how to feel them.

What I ask, for the next three minutes or so, is for you to imagine yourselves in the following situations, and fully let your minds enter the worlds I describe.

Anxiety is sitting down for a math test, knowing the answer, but not being able to make your pen write the numbers. Sometimes the question is as basic as 1+1; you desperately want to be able to write 2 because you’re a smart girl and the answer is obvious. Everyone around you says “come on, it’s 2” but this only reinforces the fact that you, even with your rational knowledge, are somehow disconnected from reality. Let’s call these irrationalities: The key to the pain of an irrationality is that you know it makes no sense, but no matter how hard you try, it remains your reality.

When you have anxiety, these situations are normal, and you know how to work around them. But sometimes, when the irrationalities increase in number, it’s like a wall goes up around one side of you. You can still move, you can still function, but every so often you bump into this wall and the pain stops you for a minute, but you can pull yourself back together. However, if more irrationalities start to occur another wall goes up. You can still get out, but the positive and calm thoughts are on the outside of the walls, so your ways of getting to control as the walls begin to take over that makes is all the more easy for that fourth wall to shoot up. Now you are trapped and losing oxygen fast. It’s getting hard to breathe.

But there’s still hope: in the corner of every wall is a small opening that leads to the outside calm, and sometimes, if you think of even one nice thought, you can squirm your way back to the calm, to reality.

But sometimes, even your own nice thoughts turn on you, and this is when reality truly washes away. This is a panic attack.

Every time you try to activate a nice thought, it becomes cemented and morphs with the wall. Soon this has happened to all the escape corners. And by soon I mean almost immediately. Sometimes you don’t even have time to think the thoughts; all of a sudden, and in this way it really does feel like an attack, all possible glimpses of calm, reality, or rationality are blocked by cement. Any reminders of them seem foreign to you and emphasize that you are in your own, distorted reality now. You are not yourself anymore, you have lost all control. The power of the walls has completely taken over. You are alone and helpless with no oxygen. You lie there, eyes closed, gasping and gasping, waiting for the walls to fall down. It’s only a matter of time now, there’s nothing more they can do to you.

After a few minutes, you open your eyes and they’ve begun to crumble. You can breathe again. Slowly, you can start to touch calmness and positivity again until you step fully back into reality.

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*Source: [40 Million Americans Struggling with Anxiety](https://www.40millionstrong.com)"
Thank You to the Entire CAMS Department!

A Big Thank You goes out to the entire CAMS Department for such a successful semester. Special thanks go to our advisor, Margaret (Maggie) McDonald for being so supportive, and to our new CAMS on Campus E-Board who worked so hard to plan all our amazing events.

Happy Holidays, and a Wonderful New Year!

This newsletter was created by the CAMS on Campus Writing Committee:

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Have original photography? Please submit!

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

“If there’s a book that you want to read, but it hasn’t been written yet, then you must write it.”

—Toni Morrison

Crossword Answers:

1. phrenology 2. aphasia 3. forebrain 4. temporal 5. plasticity
6. hebbian learning 7. myelin sheath 8. interneurons
13. synaptic cleft 14. neurotransmitter 15. agonist

We hope the crossword was more enjoyable than finals!