

Calm & Confident

Your Guide to Exam Wellness

Huron



WELLNESS
SERVICES



Table of Content

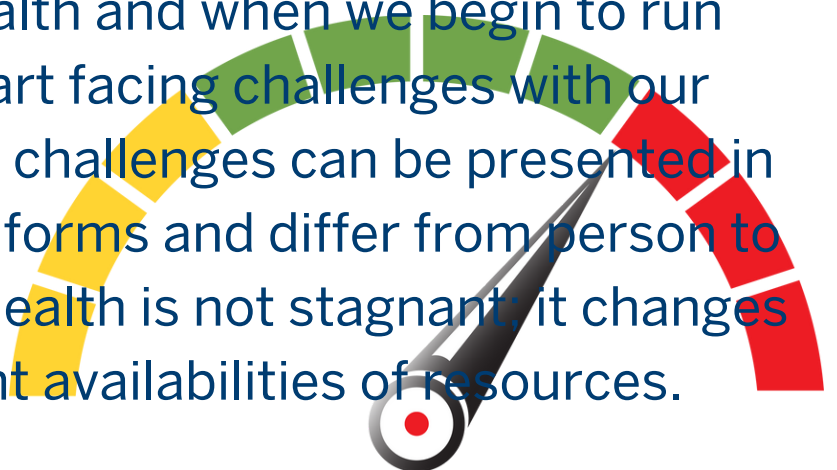
What is Mental Health?	01
Risk and Protective Factors	03
Mental Health as a Continuum	06
Counselling at Huron	09
Building Peer Support	10
Mental Health Resources	11
Self-Care Activities	12
Resources	20

What is Mental Health?



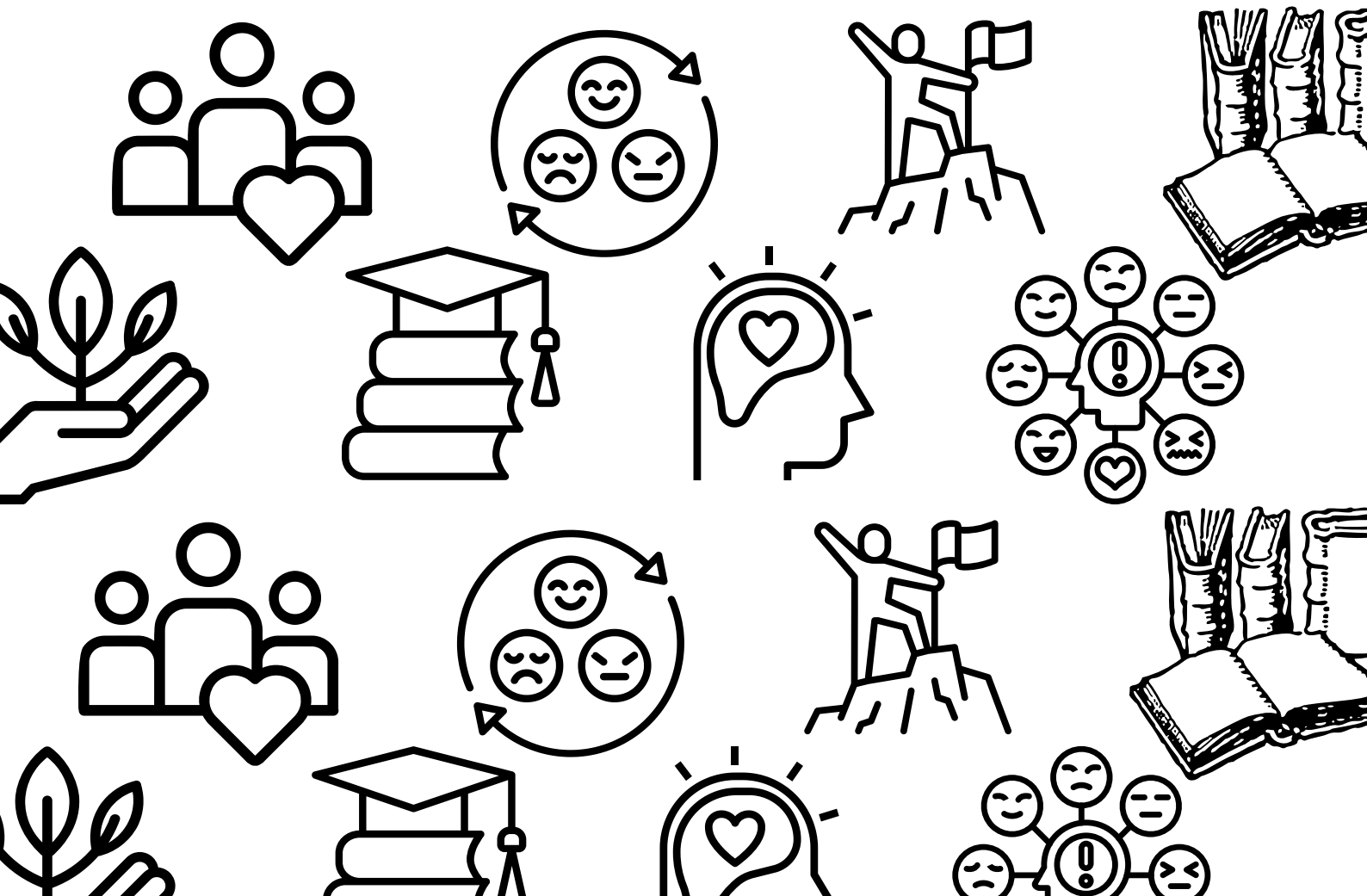
Mental health has been defined differently by different people and organizations, however, an overarching theme that they share is a state of overall wellbeing. This includes psychological, social, and emotional well-being.

Our overall wellbeing can be thought of as fuel that drives our mental health and when we begin to run out of our fuel, we start facing challenges with our mental health. These challenges can be presented in different shapes and forms and differ from person to person. Our mental health is not stagnant; it changes based on our different availabilities of resources.



What is Mental Health?

But why is mental health important for you? Being a university student has its own stressors that we need to cope with. We need sufficient resources to help us better interact with the stressors while also improving our quality of life. This is important in helping us make the most out of our university experience while being able to succeed academically, socially, emotionally, and psychologically.



Mental Health as a Continuum

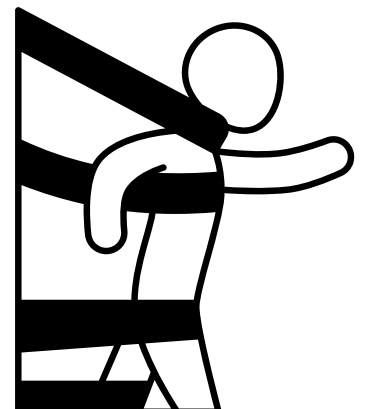
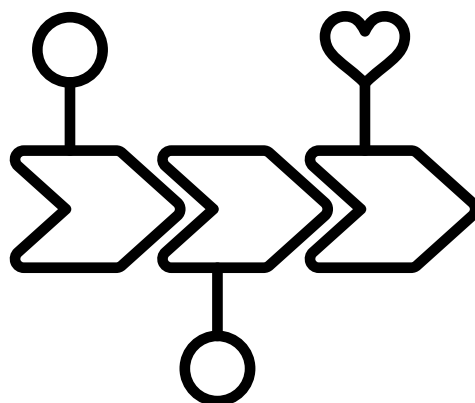
It is hard to explain mental health using binary terms of being mentally healthy or not. Instead, mental health can be described using a continuum because it is continuously changing under different conditions. The continuum explains the increased functional impairment and severity as mental health challenges are faced. Mental health questionnaires generally consist of emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing which are presented on a scale from not having as much clinical significance and not having significant life impairments to clinically significant and causing significant life impairments. The Canadian Armed Forces created a famous continuum with four states; healthy, reacting, injured and ill. People can fall under any of the states and in-between states, but everyone will be present on the continuum.



Mental Health as a Continuum



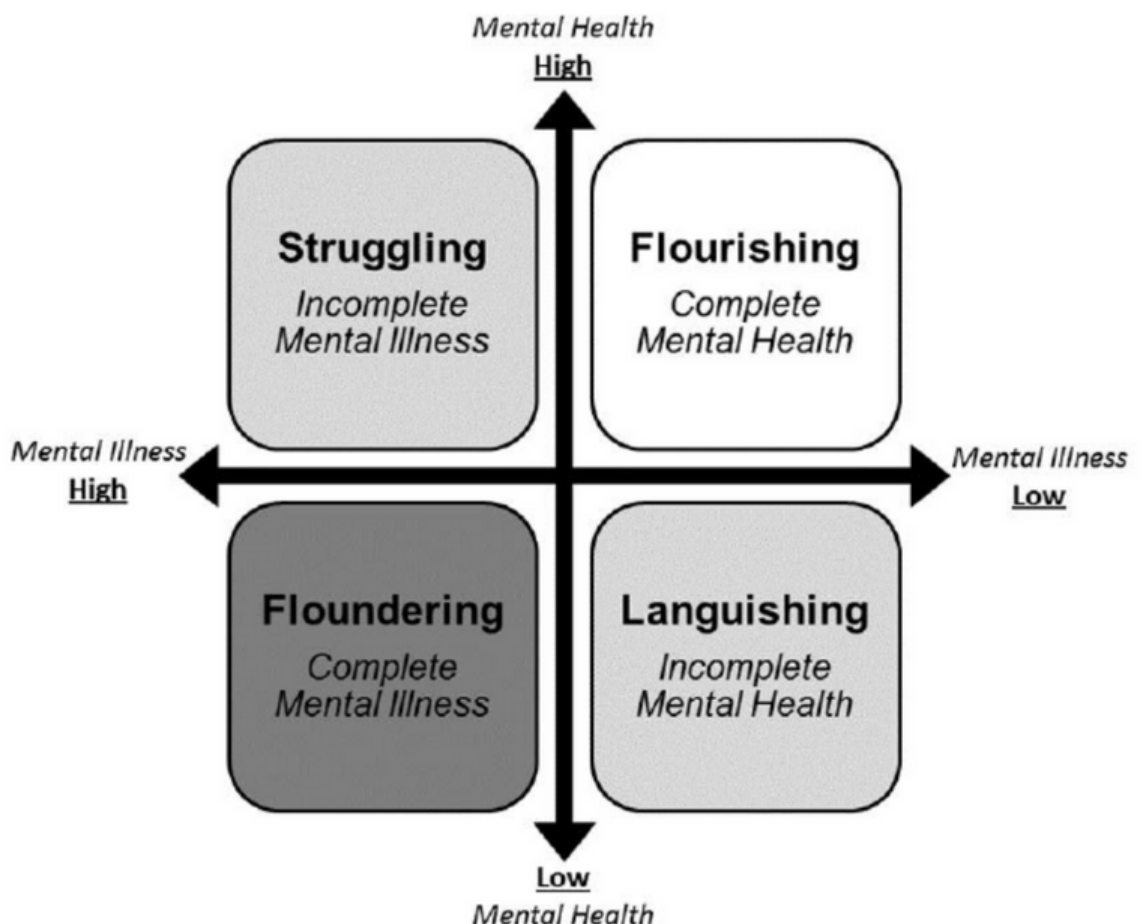
People in the healthy state have daily struggles but they have developed coping mechanisms that can help them return to their healthy baseline state. Those in the reacting state may have more stressful struggles that affect them emotionally, psychologically, and socially but they can return to a healthy baseline with self-care, support, and coping mechanisms. Those who are injured may be overwhelmed, which inhibits the effectiveness of coping mechanisms and support. Thus, professional care like counselling may be helpful in learning skills. People in the ill state may find it hard to regulate emotions and may be withdrawn with life disruptions making it important to reach out for professional care.



Mental Health as a Continuum

There is a common misconception that mental health and mental illness are the same thing; however, they are not. Mental health is a state of emotional, psychological, and physical well-being whereas mental illness is a health concern that causes distress and functional problems. Poor mental health does not indicate a mental illness and vice versa, but an untreated mental illness with can negatively impact mental health. Unlike mental health, mental illness is not experienced by everyone, but it can still vary from person to person.

The Dual Continuum Model addresses both mental health and mental illness. There are 2 continuums of flourishing to languishing mental health and serious to no mental illness symptoms which creates four quadrants of different states. Resources should cater to both continuums to address the four quadrants.



Risk and Protective Factors



Mental health is not affected by a single factor; multiple factors interact to create resources that drive our mental health.

These driving forces are known as protective factors. There are different categories of protective factors, including individual, familial, and social factors. Individual protective factors include our positive self-esteem, resiliency, optimism, and self-control. Familial protective factors include support from our family, appropriate familial boundaries, and having positive role models as we grew up. In university, social protective factors can be significant as we are usually away from our families, and we are exposed to a new social environment that can help shape our personalities. Social protective factors include having prosocial friends, positive role models in university, feelings of belongingness, and engaging in social activities.

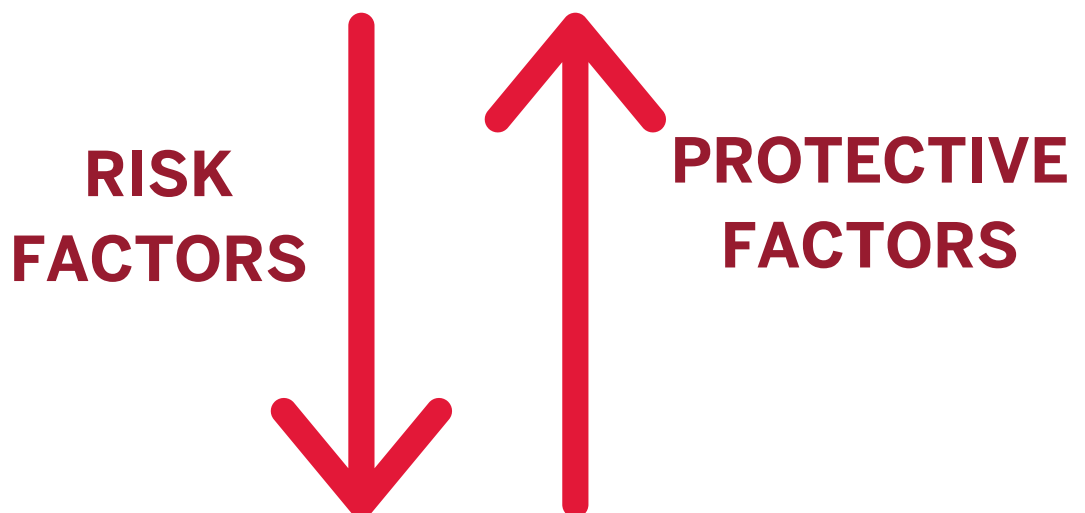


Risk and Protective Factors

However, we are also exposed to factors that can reduce our resources that aid our mental health; these are called risk factors. Just like protective factors, we have many risk factors, such as individual, familial, and social. Individual risk factors include predisposed genetic factors, poor self-esteem, and low self-efficacy. Familial risk factors include low parental monitoring, parental abuse, and familial criminality. Social risk factors include peer rejection and bullying.



In order to improve mental health, we should strive to increase our protective factors and decrease our risk factors.



Risk and Protective Factors

Taking care of your physical health can be a great way to improve your mental health. This can increase your protective factors and decrease your risk factors. For instance, exercise has been seen to increase positive self-image, positive mood, and quality of life. Exercise also seems to improve sleep quality, which is a challenge associated with some mental illnesses.

It is also important to develop coping skills to better manage stress and remain mindful to focus your attention on the present. Coping strategies are best used when they are practiced daily, and they may vary from person to person. Two main types of coping skills include problem-centered and emotion-centered. Problem-centered coping involves changing the situation you are in by identifying and minimizing risk factors. Emotion-centered coping skills involve managing your emotions and adjusting to the situation at hand. There are both positive and negative coping skills, the negative ones being harmful habits, substance abuse, self-harm, and avoidance. However, it is important to build on positive coping strategies that you can form with a counselor.



Counselling at Huron

Counselling is strengths and solution-focused so that you leave with strategies and ideas you can apply immediately.

At Huron, three social workers provide counselling to students. Social workers are professionals who assess your social environment to identify goals and how you can better cope with struggles. This can be incredibly helpful as university students may face increased stressors academically and socially. Having a strong support system on campus is important to feel safe and motivated to tackle any problem that you may face.

Counselling services are offered at no cost to enrolled students. For students with physical accessibility concerns, counselling services can be accessed in an alternate space or virtually.

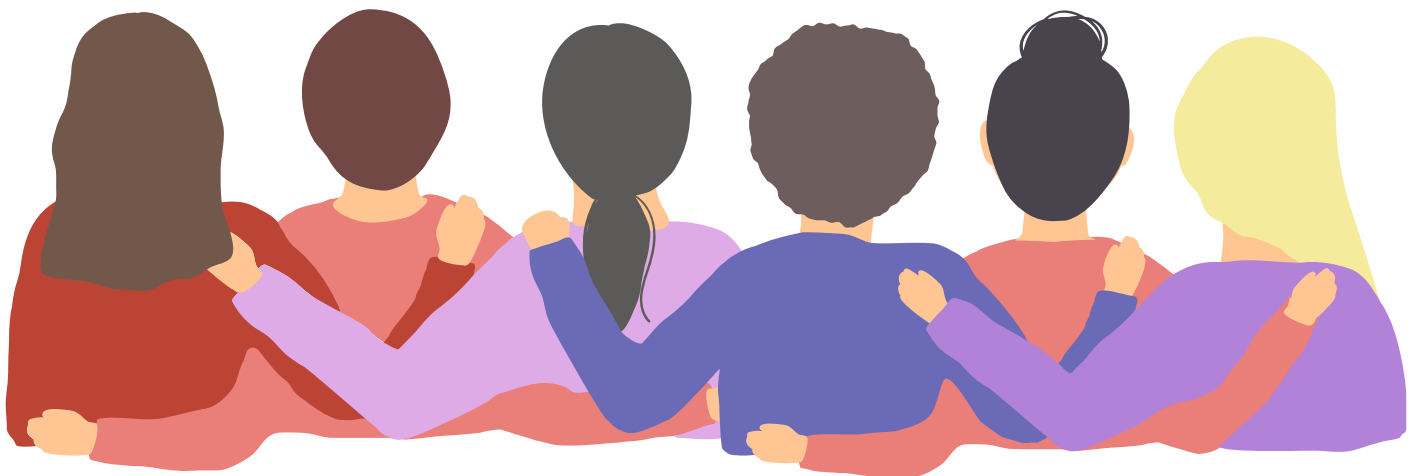
There are also drop-in counseling sessions that last 15-20 minutes to discuss resources and helpful strategies with longer follow-up sessions being scheduled as needed. Drop-in times for this semester are Mondays from 1:30-2:30pm and Thursdays from 9:30-10:30am.



Building Peer Support

Sometimes it is just easier to talk to someone who is in a similar situation as you, someone who understands your struggles. For this reason, peer support can be an important step towards your well-being. Peer support at Huron is with students who are passionate about talking about well-being but are also learning skills along the way themselves. They are trained to hold conversations regarding how you are feeling, how you are navigating different situations, or just how your day has been. You don't need peer support because of a massive change in your life, it can be used just as a check-in to see how everything is going.

If you are unsure about how to start a conversation during peer support, don't worry! A tip is to just book a meeting with a Wellness Peer Educator and they can help guide the conversation, relieving you of some pressure.

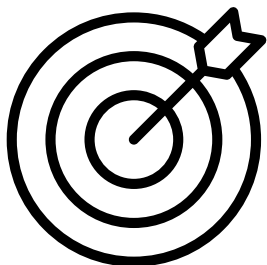


Self-Care Journal



I am proud of myself for:

Some skills I was able to work on were:

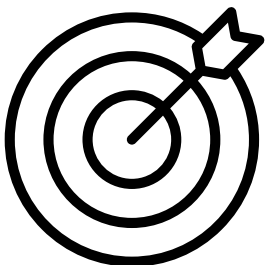


Self-Care Journal



Personal Goals

Academic/Professional Goals





Self-Care Journal

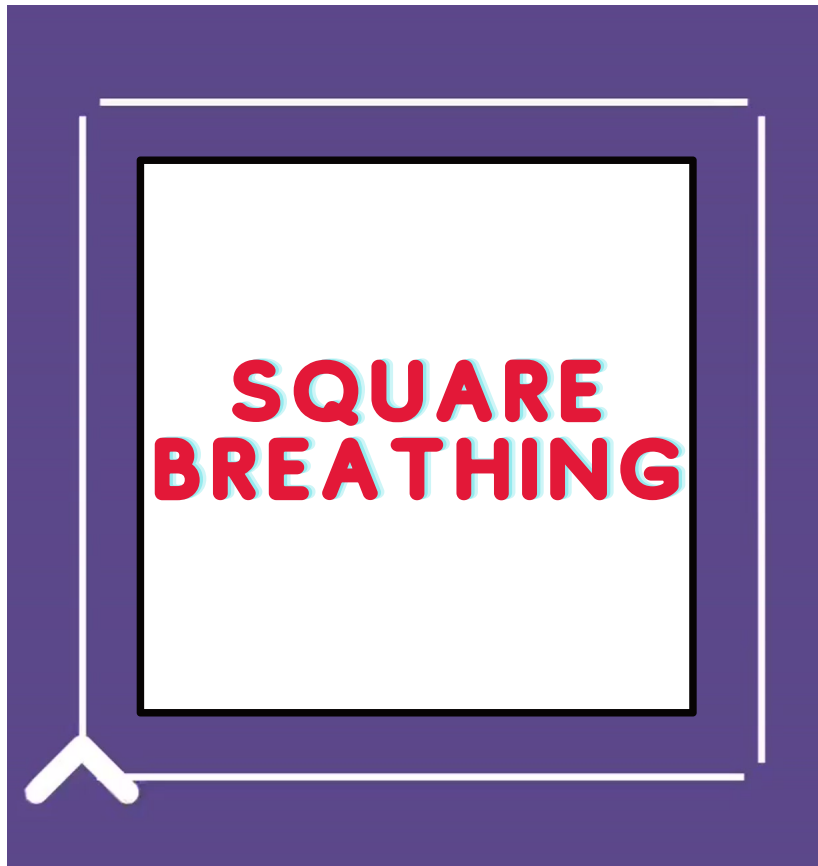
Goals for the Exam Season

Goals to Take Care of Myself



Hold


**Breathe
In**



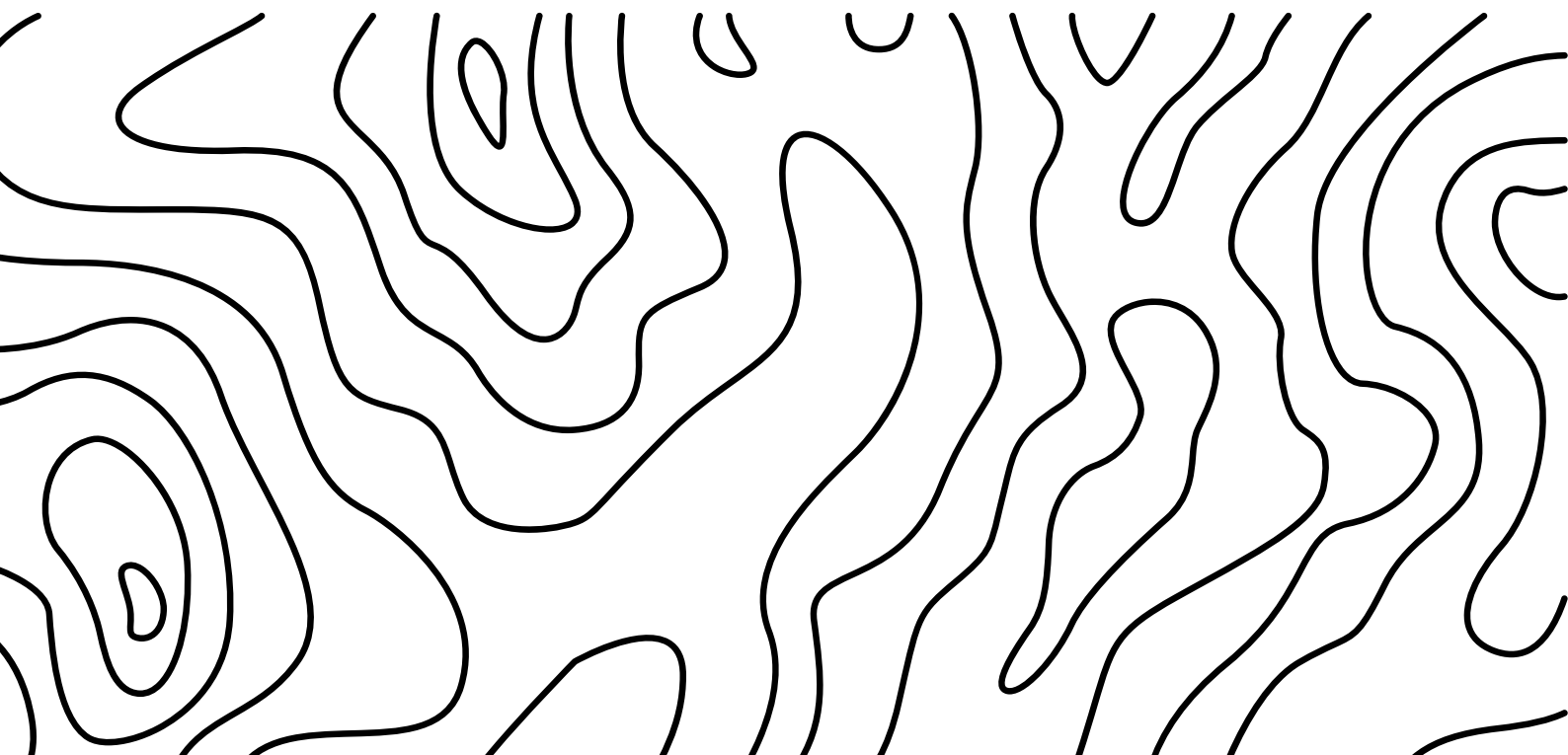
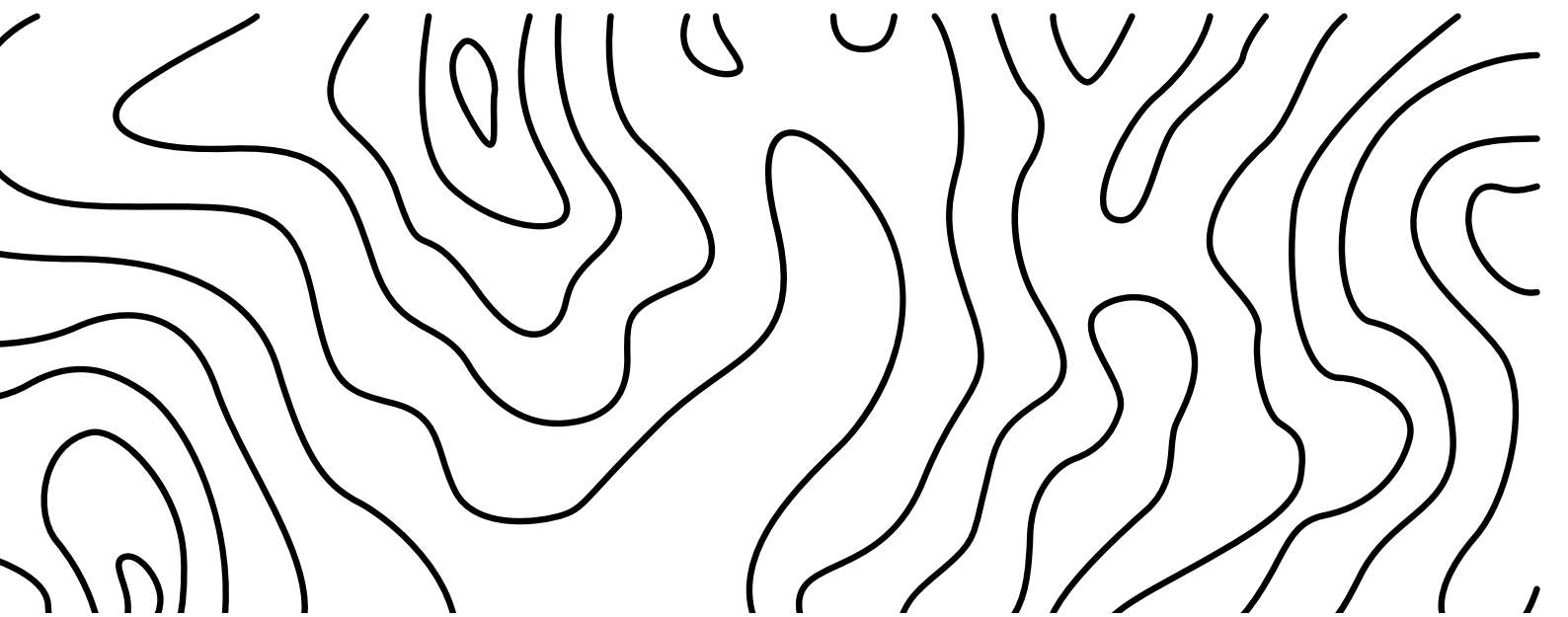
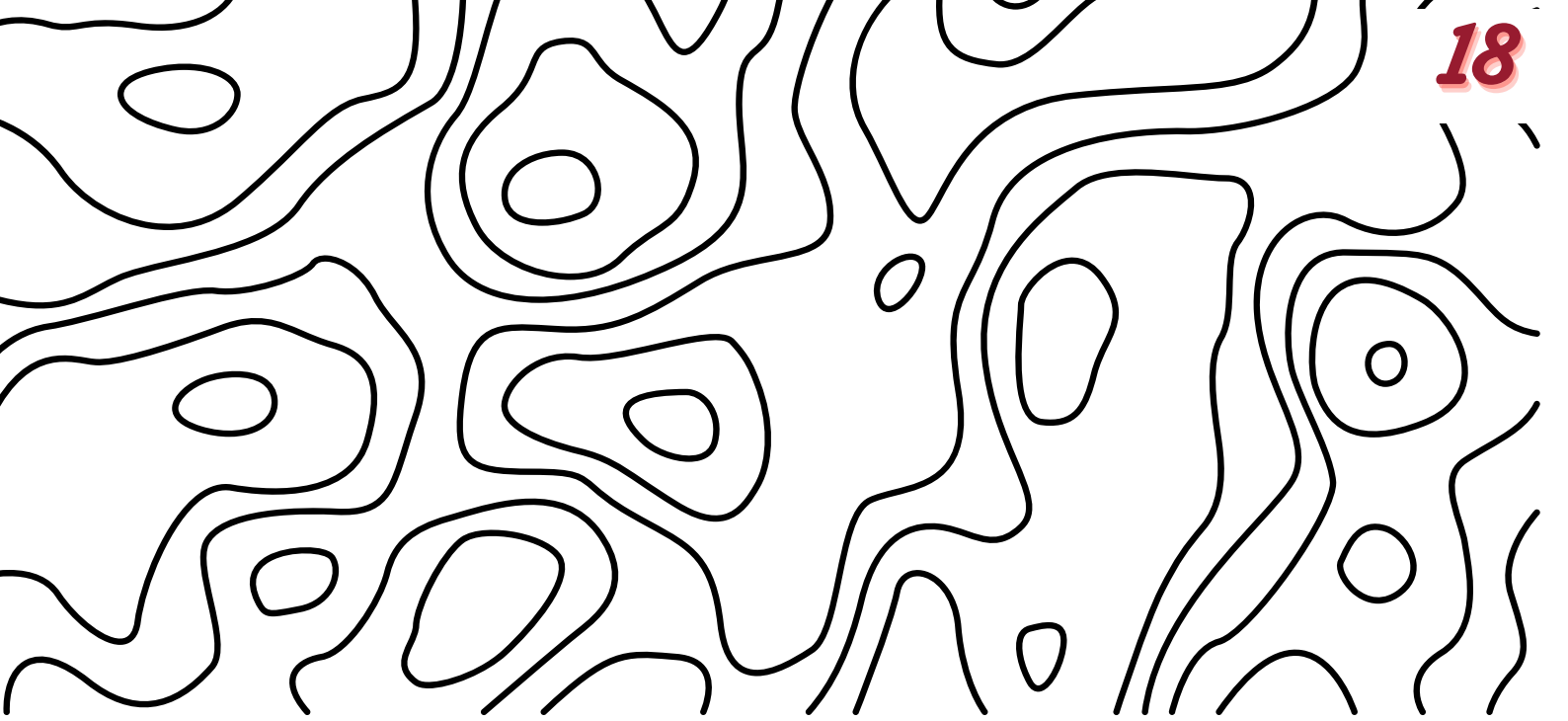
**Breathe
Out**

Hold

Self-Care Checklist

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun







Resources

**Book an
Appointment**



**Drop-In
Counselling
Link**



**Self-
Help
with
TAO**



**Wellness
Service
Website**



**6 REASONS
TO TAKE THE
FIRST YEAR
TOOLKIT**



**Reach
Out
Website**



Happy Studying!

Huron



WELLNESS
SERVICES