

14EAST

March 11, 2026

**Managing Our Mental
Health**
P. 2

**Good Coffee, Good
People**
P. 5

**Fifty Years of
Compassion and
Commitment**
P. 8

**Chicago's lesbian bars
provide a much-needed
safe space for queer
women**
P. 11



**Finding rest in an
overly-connected
world**

Managing Our Mental Health

BY FRANKIE TYNDALL

SPJ Panelists Share Their Tips and Tricks

As school starts up again, the pressures of balancing school life and personal life increase. It is a stressful time for many students, which can take a toll on their mental health – but balancing a job is another challenge to tackle.

“coping with a stressful day at work is to especially focus on being in the moment of where you are.”

On September 16, the DePaul Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) hosted an event called “Managing our Mental Health” to discuss

the topic of mental health and ways to manage it for students. Although the five speakers were of journalism or media reporting backgrounds, there were many things that all kinds of students can learn from them.

This particular panel was for DePaul alumni to share their experience on managing mental-health struggles. The panel included Nate Burleyson, Lina Gebhart, Alexandra Murphy, Grace Golembiewski and Hillary Flores. The speakers have backgrounds in news reporting, writing, radio managing and documentary making.



Alexandra Murphy, a current Chicago news reporter at Becker’s Healthcare, said that stories can get very personal and intense for a journalist. She, and the other panelists, had to learn to manage that stress. Throughout the panel they shared methods for students to practice healthy habits and where to find on-campus help.

Students can often get overwhelmed with balancing classes, clubs, social life and other school involvement. Especially for journalists, who constantly need to be in the loop, one might get lost in all the work to be done that you forget to take a moment for yourself.

Grace Golembiewski, a DePaul documentary film student graduate, told a story from when she worked for Radio DePaul where she would take time out of her personal life to tend to work. As Golembiewski said, “the news never stops,” so she too felt like she never could stop. She felt as if there was no line between her life and work life. From this realization she had to make the difficult decision to create that separation for the betterment of her mental health.

Golembiewski’s advice for t It may seem difficult at first, but making the conscious effort to be present and find simple joys can make a bad work day better. “Find the good in your life,” she said, which may seem like a small change, but it can make all the difference for your mood and mental health.



There was a strong work-life separation speakers, as Murphy emphasized the importance quality time away from work.

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The balance can look different for different people, but Murphy said she likes to wind down by disconnecting from screens and news to practice mindful activities like reading or journaling.



Managing one's mental health isn't easy! It can be hard to identify for yourself why you're struggling and how to help yourself, which is why it's important to remember that there are people around you that are there to help and support you. When asked about support systems as a student, Murphy said that her team did regular check-ins to make sure everyone was doing well mentally. She also said advisors and professors are a great resource for students. Your professors are there to look out for you.

Hillary Flores, the founder of La DePaulia, also gave advice for when you are struggling alone, which is to "be your own best friend." That is, to speak to yourself kindly and empower yourself when stuck in a stressful state of mind. There are many times when you might not have the ability to talk to someone – maybe it's the time of day where your friends or family are busy – but it's important to be able to find some comfort in your own presence.

So what, as non-journalism students, can we learn from SPJ? This panel is meant to remind us of the importance of mental health awareness and self-care. Although it may seem like newscasting and reporting is a whole different level of overwhelming, they understand the best the struggle that any student faces with workload. They were in our same position and if you are ever struggling with your mental health, try out some of these tips and advice and remember that you aren't alone.

Ideas for Rest

Journaling

Remove the mental clutter by writing a few pages about it



Yoga

These movements stimulate circulation and help release tension with strain.



Go for a walk

Sometimes, a good walk is all you need to feel refreshed.



Listen to relaxing music

The right music has the power to take away all your worries.

