

Peace Over Pressure

July 5th, 2025

We gathered at the University of Guelph for an interactive and engaging workshop centred around reclaiming rest, the importance of implementing boundaries and an open dialogue about the pressures that come with hustle culture.

Youth and elder adults alike, shared their thoughts and experiences with the collective group and engaged in safe, open dialogue. We were honoured to have a youth keynote speaker, Yurilee Padua deliver an inspiring and motivational speech on her expertise as a nurse in a correctional setting and her experience learning to prioritize self care and implementing healthy boundaries in the workplace.



Furthermore, we were joined by our charity founder, philosopher, author and professional speaker, Srinivas Arka. Srinivas shared a moving speech addressing a couple of prepared questions.



Arka addressed the following questions:

Question 1:

Society places such an emphasis on work ethic and “hustle culture”, it is so glorified that people begin to align exhaustion and lack of boundaries with being more successful.

1a. How harmful is this kind of thinking?

1b. How do we move away from this way of thinking and truly be successful in today’s society?

Question 2:

Where does responsibility to others end and responsibility to ourselves begin?

Think about people pleasers and how they often aim to help or impress everyone around them

always striving to be good support to others, at what point is it time to be responsible for ourselves and our own wellbeing? This question asks you to consider the balance between taking care of ourselves and others.



Here are excerpts from Arka's responses:

"Your input counts, your valuable presence counts. Someone has to take a step and move in a positive direction, not just expect someone else to initiate change. You may be the one, it will start from you."



"When something isn't working, we have to contemplate, why isn't it working? What can be done? Human created problems can be resolved by humans. We have the ability to bring major changes, but someone has to take the initiative and take that first step, and the world will receive you."

"When you open your eyes, you have limitations but when you close your eyes your inner visions become infinite."

"Intellect is unidirectional where as intuition is multidirectional."



Throughout the event attendees participated in engaging activities, including icebreaker bingo followed by a lively game of trivia. Winners received prizes generously donated by a local yoga studio, a local Pilates studio and Booster Juice Rossland in Ajax. The event consisted of two musical guests, Minju Gu a flutist in the Guelph area and Joy Shuster and her orchestra students from Guelph Youth Music Centre's Youth String Orchestras.

We closed out our youth event with a delicious pizza dinner.

We had an eventful and engaging day where community members socialized, enjoyed some meaningful dialogue and ultimately came together with the shared goal of growing in their mental wellness journey.



TESTIMONIALS

"I think it was really great event and really insightful to not only hear from the speakers and the keynote speaker, charity founder Srinivas Arka, but from everybody else in the audience. I think the great thing about CCA-Canada is that there are so many different types of people, like older and younger, from different cultures, and you get to hear different perspectives, which is really important for me. I think particularly this topic came at a really great time for me because I have a lot of things going on right now with work, figuring out school, and different passions I want to pursue. So I think taking this time to take in everything from this event and hear from everybody was really helpful to me and learning about how to be okay with yourself, happy with what you've accomplished, and not compare yourself to others. It's so easy to just say that, but you have to take the actual actions to feel that way. I think this was sort of my first step into accepting all of that. People telling me that it's okay to take a step back and have the time to relax. You don't always have to be go, go, go, which has always been my sort of mentality. I've always really enjoyed being busy until it gets to a point where I don't have any time for myself to really relax or think about what I'm doing. I've taken on so many different projects that now it's just a bit ridiculous. I think definitely taking more time for rest and not feeling guilty about that. That was something that was really important that was talked about today that really resonated with me. That's the whole point of living is that you're supposed to enjoy it. You are completely able to say no to things that make you uncomfortable and that you feel like you're not setting boundaries within yourself."

~**Elizabeth Webster**

Student, Western University, Biology



"I was actually co-hosting today's event. I saw the opportunity online and I was really passionate about the topic today. I wanted to come and share my thoughts as well as hear from some other people and see what I could learn. I personally feel like I learned a lot and I'm going to be taking a lot with me. I hope that all the attendees felt the same. I think that we had some really meaningful conversations. I definitely learned that other people are going through similar challenges and that this is a universal experience. It was also nice to hear from some more mature people in the community and hear that these feelings of hustle and trying to figure out what you're good at, what you like, getting into a career, those feelings don't last forever. Definitely saying no more. I think that that was the big point today and it's something that I definitely need to take into my own life. Not feeling guilty when you say no to things and prioritizing your self-care."

~**Holly Williams**

Student, University of Guelph, Bachelor of Arts,
Criminal Justice and Public Policy



"I basically learned about the initial event here that I believe was all the way back last year and I just loved it. I loved the discussions. I loved the meditation aspect, so I've come to every event that's been held here ever since then. It was really great to explore and have a discussion about what we value in society and really go deeper into the idea of boundaries that has become a very big buzzword lately, but it was really important. I felt that to have a discussion about it and to really reflect on what that means and how to find that healthy balance in a world of pressure, in a world of connecting with other people and others' ideas and assumptions and how to explore that and be at peace within."

Having those healthy boundaries and how to set them in a kind and considerate way to others as well, was really vital to explore.

I also gained a deeper understanding of where we're at in society right now, and a deeper self-understanding, and in a sense, permission to listen to your intuition, listen from within. The charity founder, Srinivas Arka, gave a very powerful keynote address today, and because we're often pulled in so many directions about what we should be doing, where we should be in life. As Srinivas spoke about in his talk that at the end of the day, we can't be our best and we can't give our best if we're not at our best within. And learning to listen to that intuition, listen to where our heart is guiding is all part of navigating life today. So very powerful talk."

~Karim Mosna

Podcasting and Storytelling Workshop Facilitator



"I really liked this event. This is my second time attending CCA-Canada events at University of Guelph. It's great seeing everyone come together and the topic that we learned about today was really good. I really recommend it especially for youth transitioning from high school to university. This topic is not something, I've been hearing about it. It's good that I came out to this event because this is something that I struggled with myself, especially in my field of work. Sometimes saying no to people can be really difficult, but it's just learning how to say no to people like in a kind way. No is not a bad word. I will continue to use the skills learned today throughout my life. I work with people who sometimes have really severe mental health issues, and I have to be able to say no and stand firm. It's important to be able to set boundaries especially in a hectic workplace. Sometimes you'll get yelled at, sometimes people will swear at you. So you have to be able to stand firm."

~Meidi Seeneevassen

Student, University of Guelph, Bachelors of Arts Psychology

"I have attended a lot of workshops related to mental health, and I found that personally, this was one of the best ones in terms of keynote speakers and engagement, how they interact with the audience. I love the Kahoot; I love the icebreaker bingo. I thought everything was really interactive and fun. This was a great way to learn of how to say no, the art of saying no was really helpful and setting boundaries to look out for yourself. I learned about the difference between hustle culture and burnout. Saying no sometimes is important if you need time to rest. Maybe you don't have to go out that night and you can sleep in, stay with your dog or have some nice dinner with your family."

~Kellyanne Mangali

Student, University of Guelph, Bio-Medical Sciences

"I thankful I was able to have a chance to perform here today, and I didn't know much about this event or this organization, but through the speeches and how we were interacting with each other, I was able to learn a lot today. My actual goal, I am actually working really hard right now to find out who I am. So I am having a hard time a little bit, trying to see what I really want to do in the future, what I really like to do. Throughout this whole event here, I was thinking I should have more self-confidence. I should have some more time for myself. The main reason for me to be here was to play the flute, but I'm really thankful that I'm here. I was able listen to all the different ideas. I am a person who always focuses on work, work, work. And through this event, I started thinking it's ok to take a break, to listen to who I am and just enjoy what's around me, not only work, work, work, study, study, study, but actually see what I want to really do with my life. I want to do what I really want to do, what I really like to do. So hopefully I can put into practice all the things I learned today into my real life. hopefully I can become a better person."

~Minju Gu

Student, University of Guelph, Bio-Medical Sciences



"This event was very insightful. Yuri's speech was very insightful. It was nice to hear from someone who has such a heavy job that requires a lot of time and energy and to talk with her was very nice. It was great to hear from charity founder, Srinivas Arka and I was able to speak with him individually. Overall, it was a very enjoyable experience, getting to talk to new people, getting to know people of all age ranges. I already do take time to myself, but to really prioritize that and saying no is definitely a hard thing. It's difficult to say no to things and really take time for yourself. I think it's just very vital for our well-being. I think speaking with others is really nice about these kinds of things and how we're feeling, how life is going. It's really important to have community and to speak with each other and check in. But also, making sure your needs are being met without getting too overwhelmed with what other people have or are doing."



~Samantha Tersigni

Student, University of Guelph, Bachelor of Arts Theatre Studies

See more pictures from event

SUPPORTERS



Arka Mahaganapathy
(AMG) UK



uOttawa
Pre-Pharmacy Club



Mental Health
Matters



Med Games



For Youth Initiative



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