Jian Zabalerio ([00:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=GPhQxysTSuw7TznuZGtWN5EnIxNUe8WkVz1O626G-DxmF2_t-eyM_WXMiCM-gsndUQwzYyucxWqKHYCvgnEgtAYoato&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=0.84)):

Your worth is not equivalent to your performance. You are a loved, important person in this world and to our Princeton community. Sometimes it can be so hard not to get bogged down by the stress and pressure that it's Princeton and it's students. Find things that make your heart truly happy. Take time to do those things, or spend time with those people every single day or week. You matter.

Jake Camarillo ([00:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=v0LLhfXsSBlfiLiL4VKMOLVVS8G3K5TlAXtRgVdo76CMX6PJSvD0MQWrWiyVDCcJOsghB59ZPnhUkASa932Ny3QqAc0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=26.88)):

Don't completely shut yourself off from others. In my experience, that's by far the easiest way to let your grades and relationships slip. During any given semester, I recommend identifying people integral to your life. If you have friends, text them every so often and remind them of your existence and that you still care for them.

Karen Blake ([00:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=QYdazckKApKMJ6-WaWD3MDElMYeFJWDvte5l2djlLajkFqA9SzzNMmgxikFjMtUaSmFpE13vTcH2VsTaY6YaMyt7GJ8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=46.23)):

I know you hear this a lot, but you really can't do your best unless you take care of you. It took me about three years to realize that. It's not easy, but if you really want to enjoy your Princeton experience or life in general, you need to invest time into taking care of yourself. For a period of time, it's going to be an everyday struggle, but eventually you will learn to do it as just part of your everyday life. No effort needed. Your health comes first, then academics, and then everything else.

Jake Camarillo ([01:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=RSjQ0aNnmdtiperGa8tGQXvRptK9CPFqjmgJ2ReoO9ImRhEw6d8sVM3oB5QwHfsHzwhxHDafDG9zsRDGvjjN_I5fRbE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=71.16)):

This is to all first-generation low-income students of color. Please take the initiative. There are things that we're advised to do from the second we get here. Go to office hours, take advantage of resources like McGraw, but don't internalize because we don't come from a culture where these things are normalized.

Jian Zabalerio ([01:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=bu_ux9oehPsI39kk4ZzlZskCQiX9Rw84jZNRyCuIy_Bs61rNPc996DlCfMGiyh57umMT1MNwn-znXV2cGkKIM1ocBG4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=89.27)):

If you can, get off social media or take a break at least. I already struggle with feeling inadequate and social media heightens that, so I feel a lot better when I'm not engaging much with it.

Karen Blake (01:45):

As a black woman, from a lower income community in the south side of Chicago, I have seen firsthand the stigmas behind mental health treatment in communities of color. I just want to emphasize that there's nothing wrong with asking for help and seeking treatment if you know that you have struggles. At the end of the day, your health is more important than anyone else's opinion.

Vivian Slee ([02:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=EnRo7umFes3if1k_MUeI0jtZK9Pv2DCYEK7GRr9xoyovhuSD9U_HTl_eqf4QYnBdLUWVWqjkWkMqwHHmTkf9H1HmAVE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=124.92)):

Hello, everyone. Welcome to Meet Princeton, a podcast to introduce prospective students and their families to Princeton University brought to you from the office of admission at Princeton. My name is Vivian and I'm a senior assistant Dean in the office of admissions. And I'm so happy that you've tuned in to join us to hear from current student voices and others about our community and about what it's like to be a student at Princeton just now. Oh, we're recording in April. This podcast will come out in May, which is also mental health awareness month. Those quotes you just heard in our prologue. Well, the voices come from my lovely colleagues in the admission office, Jian Zabalerio, Karen Blake, and Jake Camarillo who have joined us on the podcast this week. And the quotes themselves while anonymous are drawn from students on campus and can be found in the mental health resource guidebook. This is an amazing resource for students put together by the undergraduate student government's mental health task force. The chair of that task force is actually our student guest, so we'll hear from him in just a little bit. They put it together in collaboration with the Student Chapter of Letters to Strangers, which is a nonprofit that works to de-stigmatize mental health and increase access to affordable quality treatment and they worked in collaboration with Dr. Calvin Chin, director of counseling and psychological services to create the guidebook. We were so fortunate to have met with Dr. Chin for this episode. So let's just listen to hear what he has to say.

Dr. Calvin Chin ([03:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=XAbpsL6oJycoNtUsMToioISRFho_Hk8L6OQ8QCmRuht_TeSUxqs2uqtKyW3RCcs2q_4IUiUt4IzKWywgovyYLDcEgcU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=222.09)):

My name is Calvin Chin. I am director of counseling and psychological services here at Princeton, and I've been at Princeton since 2013. So our office provides free individual counseling, crisis intervention groups, outreach, psychiatric evaluations, medication management, and I oversee the counseling service. And so I maintain a small caseload of students you might see, but most of my responsibilities are supervising 24 psychologist social workers, psychiatrists, and psychiatric nurse practitioners who make up the staff of the counseling service. When students first come to Princeton, they are told about the different resources that are available on campus to support their mental health and wellbeing. I think one of the things that Princeton is really good about doing is really making sure that the sort of holistic nature of like a student's experience is really appreciated and that includes attending to not just their academic performance, but their overall sort of mental health and wellbeing.

Dr. Calvin Chin ([04:56](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=nHW3re-YMyUbZFyM--mhrZmKvVPVyl7tZqRkQ1oTcNmPSrr-gyTlgd_ZhjmPzIeDPnIo9BnvYatvKlw9RQi_i7myu58&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=296.64)):

And that starts from day one. When they get to Princeton, even before they go off on their orientation trips throughout direction or community action, we meet with all of the incoming students to present a program on caring for yourself and others. And in that program, we try to really challenge the idea of effortless perfection. We try to encourage students to reach out for help when they need it and we also try to help students figure out a way to sort of live a life that really follows from their own values. So effortless perfection is a myth and it's similar to sort of like what a duck is like when they're swimming along a pond. So normally when you see a duck above the water, they look like they're just sort of floating kind of gracefully on the surface of the pond, but if you looked under water, you see that they're really kicking their feet like really furiously to sort of maintain that motion. And it's similar to sort of the phenomenon of effortless perfection.

Dr. Calvin Chin ([06:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=tVRwzsnVEllFD94DVV0HGTpr9qNtwxS2B-dXopItSsIyE5ai_K2HeH7xQrfoWs7yCK-dAuExRfrRR6ExfexGiOvBsUM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=367.8)):

I think that oftentimes from the outside, it can seem as if everyone else is doing really well and is just sailing along and not only are they sailing along, but they're doing that without a lot of effort. And the reason it seems that way is that from the outside, we don't have access to what one's internal experiences. We don't see what's going on underneath the water level and so it can feel really isolating. It can feel really distressing if you imagine that everyone else has it very easy and is accomplishing everything without a lot of effort and you're the only one that's struggling.

Dr. Calvin Chin ([06:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ezbt0VFHYal7W6XDLINvClWSfVwUtUIO1vD5ajaBFZ8Sda1c2N8lWRY6sbURs4sI6LVh6mh9MMLuyisyGVNEo2m8XsI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=407.78)):

And so one of the things that I think the university has taken on is really trying to sort of pierce that myth of effortless perfection to encourage students to talk about their own vulnerability, so that people know that they're not alone in their feeling, so that people realize that the doubts that they have, the insecurities that they have are universal. And the more that people feel encouraged and validated in sharing their experiences, that's how we can get rid of this method of effortless perfection and people can feel like they can show up fully themselves and be okay.

Dr. Calvin Chin ([07:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=jCfNMI5xScUTMKFU6P6bLHzBQzwfVdZ0OobEJhKNx4_j8fd5B6xY52_qe_KvMDmRqFaUqSra315sZBhCxh2dpXQU8rs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=444.58)):

One of the things that we did this year as part of orientation that I thought was so interesting and we did this because of COVID, we couldn't have our normal sort of orientation session with each of the residential colleges and so we did sort of this mass orientation with all of the incoming first years. And Zoom allows you to sort of ask polls, do these polls that are anonymous. And so in the poll that I created as part of the program, I asked students if they've ever felt sort of insecure or if they've ever failed. And something like 98% of students have experienced failure. Huge, almost all students acknowledged feeling insecure, feeling a little bit anxious about coming to Princeton and I think that was so powerful for everyone to see when I showed the results of that because I think that in their own minds, they may have thought like, "Why I'm the only one that's feeling insecure," but to sort of see like that it's universal, I think is really powerful and helps to sort of combat that myth.

Dr. Calvin Chin ([08:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=u6QYC9VPe3NpLa-uM98ZFAeGYXyUgBkSO2135nLXlwXR8GgkdHOMfVSHnf8sLzSUtA1pqDc6erds4zKCR7Wcu4-2XUc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=513.66)):

One of the things that I think is so lovely about Princeton is how much people really want to look out for one another and take care of one another and that's what a student I think will experience when they get here. There are so many friends, there's so many people that really just want the best for other students and they're looking to sort of be helpful in any way that they can. And I think that that helps sort of promote these conversations that helps people begin to talk about it if they've never talked about it.

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:09:04]

Dr. Calvin Chin ([09:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=znf6WjJt6Q3NbGUUzx9tsfAl40abgjVW9zLiYGPemQnVEENl_P7--R7pewEWaKv6-H3hVbwKwkyHg4W7qYgVn38UzkQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=543.8)):

One of the things that we say all the time is that the Princeton experience is a marathon, it's not a sprint. And so, it's important to savor all of the things that happen outside of the classroom and outside of the work experience.

Dr. Calvin Chin ([09:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=dHLdQDUainPOhYuXL5JJZ7CHzog2ThXb8klI-yTHKOK-5PnasNAT1JcykTFNkaTGiODGWr34f_lbyK_l31LxJW3iMLg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=557.69)):

Part of getting the most that you can out of your time at Princeton is to carve out time to hang out with people, is to carve out time where you're just sitting in the garden at Prospect, enjoying the beauty that exists there, right? Those moments become so precious and should be celebrated and should be prioritized just as much as all of the work and all of the other things that one can achieve here.

Vivian Slee ([09:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yp3isTngbUXeM22Bdagk-tBU5evuN9fgm4MA35J9OnTSPe4aYfHRiKAq8b0zHvI7sqS4hLvhWzVXe5WMl6W2hsijrso&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=590.43)):

Hey, Bryant, how's it going?

Bryant Blount ([09:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=u5q-YctuHXVPMzDOGqHH_d6QKV-zutiU3jmq-O3VDJIXJZdH1IJLg0bl4VofRcLnakBvqHnq1L0hScaZ1jGtMWDBmMo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=591.97)):

Going well, Vivian. Spring has sprung.

Vivian Slee ([09:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=iaXcuAqjKRsqf7R_J279GBRY1gP_OgHLmzSM_MovTVj41NO6BOnzEFURlI1dC3ZT0r2vJKdEelI8OaqO2pFRkIuJ54w&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=594.87)):

Oh, it certainly has. End of April, here. Gosh, we've come a long way since those wintry days. Well, I think you had a very good conversation with Allen Liu. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

Bryant Blount ([10:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=mpuqCt9qHZ6IhDNY4jQ0mIzuMAgIpA1JEaz4JAl4Ltne6w_C0rg4mFq7Ca-lxhnGmpc9Zg_nA29Q5rH4Xjf8mqF7ZCo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=608.01)):

Yes. And we've talked to many students now, and Allen is probably the first ORFE major we've spoken to, and Princeton has a wide variety of engineering majors, but one of the more interesting ones is the operations research and financial engineering, if only because of that fun acronym, and Allen, in keeping with all Princeton students, is very multi-dimensional.

Bryant Blount ([10:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=8m6cTA2mwsoJ3kWQ1wGkxb1R9C2lUKU0fMVX71aJJzzgy5nHNuxNBYtYV_EUPzrpdLgejRHzMAHFu8Tgp1Y1l159eI0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=628.52)):

It was interesting, actually, to talk about probably the complete opposite of operations research and financial engineering, and hear about his growth and his, I think, passion for mental health and supporting initiatives that promote positive mental health and support students, his fellow students, on campus.

Vivian Slee ([10:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=nXTJfMkPOOylt4HLl2-MCMcHESYUQgwTWFXqETBCpKpJLm3GvmGO5kf1n5MIhfClqd6h2QeVaq_A32i5z29ccy36lrM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=645.63)):

Yeah. I had to look at the mental health resources guide book that he helped to create with a few other students, and it's very impressive. It's about the counseling and psychological services at Princeton, whether it's off-campus care or on- campus care, and it really is a wonderful guide for how students can access the care or the help that they need and how to ask for help when they do need it. Is this something that... when you were a student, was it something that was discussed much?

Bryant Blount ([11:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-gkXm38n04FMH7D831_YUpfSA5daU9azxAzPM09_hgR-55YDqD1AlLd4D1AaDIvBQ1-zuhPKPrLkcIGlfW-70e_GCfA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=675.94)):

You know, I think in general, the generations of students that are coming to Princeton now just have a far greater vocabulary, understanding, and familiarity with things like mental health and its importance, right?

Vivian Slee ([11:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=OaVal6VYK1I8XVMIjIYLyEXbNtqxdSfb-M0zEj03zQ1qdcUz8O5GTaHu269T3CNkOKBj16QyUkB10c0gM_Gm2r1LgJs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=688.31)):

Yeah.

Bryant Blount ([11:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=c74rvsYDcB8V88RxSkzUqg_GyDZyJk1cj_u0ns7Nik2EfAksFUAsUGEgFHJaYGMFTUeURyYnrOVrJrYk4fAwqh7VR40&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=688.93)):

I don't think that that term really would've made sense when I was a student, even though I think aspects of it, certainly, Princeton has always cared about and supported. However, naming things is powerful, and I think that the initiatives that continue to pour forth from both student centered services administratively, again, the focus of the institution, particularly in a difficult year like this, have been instrumental in helping support it, provide support.

Bryant Blount ([11:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=VS9YEMKgTVFDt2WvUPDmKKDfqj4GEC68A6IFeA-S-bmjAzlR05oSPDsFQsa9xba4J288aiyWY2zprGHyn1HfNZYQSfI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=714.74)):

And as I've said in the past, we've talked about people like directors of student life and the residential colleges, we've talked about academic advisors. Themes like mental health are now incorporated into their messages or their trainings to students in the same way that we might talk about alcohol safety, for example, right?

Vivian Slee ([12:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ZTQmJ4Dz3YBhhX9QxNNxBEd_KkZEeHs4WGRlXxqy-e8TfuuN-NbnNtZLc8e4ZLZUycYh6--NFRGvrHmgUYCW4EuSYvE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=734.5)):

Right, right.

Bryant Blount ([12:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vXRfXi0bgb7OUlIiaNS4WYxuZOybXNcBmQxHxdKeBF98Cb0uoDiFmJcamJ9bGQwsKpurGuTTMbDa3sHwUNds356-PkA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=737.22)):

Whereas that's been on college campuses and spoken about in a certain way for 30 years, this is just now blossoming, probably, into the same sort of stream of consciousness, I guess, that those other forms of health and wellbeing have.

Vivian Slee ([12:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=LO9cshHEMEsyktPMxiI79wzNNEOI7_Q510LU1uhqt4pbkZSTkU87lHATtFTqP3z3OefGrojPbokNcjK6HsoI50T4BHI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=752.58)):

One of the things that they talk about also, I think, is self care. And I'm just curious, do you have any self-care routines that you'd want to share with our listeners?

Bryant Blount ([12:40](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=GL28lXklsc5Y8qqCVEuwjsoMAIl3G_hUJGYzZVunbp_dDxqFF2XsM2098G1FjGFTAb3N_ZG-F55cU7cAEJG29HIortM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=760.64)):

Sure. If anyone is now a serial follower, you'll know that when it was colder, we spent a lot of time talking about cooking and trying new recipes and nourishing ourselves. I think that now that the weather's improving, I am a... probably not expected for this podcast, but I'm a motorcyclist, so I will probably be-

Vivian Slee ([13:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7W7m59EkOMqyTC2oTLNsLRCO9sPeSZeXlgF51LG2eIStv8T4HnrnEVA8l9mKTpDdJ2vh2XBvEJMILOw5sTE_w5sNino&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=785.07)):

I did not know that. Really?

Bryant Blount ([13:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=opCkqegumNmTQyD-xKpmz4Gp5Ou3Z20FITFENKFZKGVAH_0laeu0tUnI-RJNFazrWh7mXkkCDWsQ66ML7eRicAupktw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=787.56)):

Really. Yeah.

Vivian Slee ([13:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=bE_96sI9YjYJOD8PEbJpMMlIwL_siPIVIaX-_lupTSqi8HLbuqaTaxAOdysdTCcLl2B-yAKM4dwOYNUs9RLwNxT3hIM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=789.13)):

The things you learn.

Bryant Blount ([13:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=IAAQHaUQw0smnr24J4ME7tiDu_Mf_eWqGG_xrfU7ZspRZ4saWLVFGDnTc4Fl3ActzB4bH3wlo7c0VjTXgCjCgNBS4jA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=790.43)):

Dropped my bike off for service this week. And-

Vivian Slee ([13:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Zu9km848Vdkc-DW-dsNwTvimRsnyQVA79ZejJjO8eA8amhyX4GHP5MW9OaZMsKFaVYDCPJjREyrO2uoKXorNXhyEP24&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=792.31)):

Wow, wait. What kind of motorcycle do you have?

Bryant Blount ([13:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Lk-5o35azQSYU4FJXLbv1XIekaS-kTIi63Jk2MDI3GcvI57tKqKoeqrrsQNsYNHrW2jhsc0NErXEw-VnnbIZIUt5r10&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=794.78)):

I have a Triumph Bonneville, a modern classic.

Vivian Slee ([13:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=HZ75GoHNO2m_1kDnSspii8c2WygXkHWERRS1kaVWE6W9eA8BAFHx32qEzyc-2Z-8ZC7_v2CTn-WYSfgPBO-XZgYK2Rw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=797.84)):

Is it? Okay, I don't know anything about motorcycles. It sounds very cool. I have to look it up after our chat.

Bryant Blount ([13:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=9rDbjqDgzUpgbCxoFSkWzAyxIeLKeobsn89XFy5OdTiSOf-nzzGrUnC8Y118X-KaaXWO6Wii3-rMP8nMjftajxiDacc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=804.29)):

It's a great way to be in the world, to spend time and to be... I think one of the things that comes up in the lines of mental health and self care is mindfulness, right? And not worrying about every other thing or, not stopping, but really... through different methods, sometimes spiritual sometimes meditation, to center oneself. And for me, actually, in some ways, riding a motorcycle in the way that you have to focus and the way that there are no distractions, right? You can't be texting on a motorcycle.

Vivian Slee ([13:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ycmY4TP2-o_Y7iA1Dt6sCpwSyiXgTq8gk8VIY4K_TD9B_ETNoWZ5j7rTcoOYKgq2gIdCCRs3n1_uTWcDKBmQrYwh228&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=837.5)):

Yeah.

Bryant Blount ([13:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ff2vLDfYD7fm7HCihGfX8c3_z2MKAdwAMuNxZe3xQdML7UdgTqFyR7nQn0oe6z7K_RUx43ZqDIZNskaDlfYC5amUBIM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=837.56)):

Or at least, you ought not to be. There's not the radio, there's not the GPS, there's simply the road ahead-

Vivian Slee ([14:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4Inj51JDjYAALxoz0n_xj0QAoRWdtS9yazLytqufbn1Oqew8r49Dy7hAPiNJLgUWHFyx12ZZCb4a2YlTW3cAqAxtCZ4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=850.11)):

That's so true. Yeah.

Bryant Blount ([14:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=h_zk2ntgAWpdazyidgqmgMPrERWEHf6oGpTH4anF98FS8qO2-aETOG_LdbCxAYpv407EpYwPZbhJwDLHm7zhvMU0LfY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=851.93)):

and the environment around you. And you notice it in a much, much more present way, I feel.

Vivian Slee ([14:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=a-m-mZ5_2efpEBu35MToG2vxDAEA83mYD_j5KcRrNUyScgotUgdUh4Jrfx8iqcjNcTkfvmYy-XN_RiGBLyosIVk8DpA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=857.85)):

I did not expect you to say that. I think I expected you to say, "I go for runs," or "I like to garden," the way that most of us say, I think. We also spoke with Dr. Calvin Chin, who's director of counseling and psychological services at the university, and had a great conversation with him.

Bryant Blount ([14:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KrqNaeyzhMz2C_Z5Xv0hYydz0V7y6zADCLQDPOrzNZ-b6d16ZZfkjPxSctzn0Th5gCGJU_svztRciTDUOFVkIz2ULsE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=875.59)):

He's been a great addition to the Princeton community, Dr. Chin, bringing through his expertise. I think more his just approach... I know Calvin and Allen in fact have worked together on building programming, and Dr. Chin is one of the biggest advocates, I think, of increasing, and partnering to increase, that student's access and understanding of these resources.

Vivian Slee ([14:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=c8KrYRU3n1KpzJEEDQzoVFmhVCtzA28BGeQyMq_JZu5PgEmjvhf9YXHVEPhHXnZnP4NNDu42V3kVXZSmx42O4kT1bL0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=897.75)):

Yes, Dr. Chin is pretty amazing. Now, we've heard a bit about our student guests, but could you please introduce him to our listeners?

Bryant Blount ([15:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=nd_WqpIlLR0qvC_0rZ7yLnYi8rd4WV3yBoHiuEWMV7BP9SOkDxwWZHLKR6Rw-Cmq5jQDBTdTM6avaFHL0dgk5LbqAy4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=905.66)):

Allen Liu is a junior at Princeton, majoring in operations research and financial engineering, ORFE, with certificates and applied and computational mathematics and finance. Outside of class, he's involved in campus leadership and serves the undergraduate student government as a youth counselor, chair of the mental health task force, and as a member of the academics committee. He is also active in the performing arts as a violinist in the Princeton university orchestra and the Princeton triangle club. On a free day, he loves going on runs on campus, trying out coffee shops in town, and playing chamber music for [inaudible 00:15:40]

Allen Liu ([15:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=aSH5a0fO71nq3qAc59VvF_D_ZQRnDFnwf9nQy9PcKXPR6EjSuBtricEYeeGJYCRaqY_lgLi5gj8qy0d0moi0Mz6Yn_4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=947.38)):

My name is Allen. I am an operations research and financial engineering major. I'm currently a junior, and I'm from Chattanooga, Tennessee. I think the mindset I was trying to develop was, this is the perfect place to fail. I guess what I mean by that is one of the reasons that I had chosen Princeton is because there is such a broad array of opportunities that really have pretty low barriers to entry to most people.

Allen Liu ([16:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=hTVMnDoQobtDqWnlv2odj1VnFnblMIT4SIYLwwD_ya_iNTyLQgxtp8fZGo0WQJNaMQ71LLEhAvjr7qh_MV1pdVIR5b8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=984.25)):

I really wanted to try to take as broad of a range of classes as possible to experiment in different extracurriculars. One of the challenges is definitely finding my niche early in college, and so I started out as a math major, for instance, and I think I took honors real analysis for about a month. I realized that pretty quickly that that was not a path I necessarily wanted to take, and so I switched into the school of engineering and I'm now an ORFE major with operations research and financial engineering. One of the major reasons I switched is that coming into Princeton, I knew that I did want to work in industry after graduation.

Bryant Blount ([17:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UvGQMxvSs23i-WzKSoI7VeznfDO1PgMM07DapHVPX07MHkOjp8leJdG2rStE-9Nr0WTvaofkKU8pOMNmVTcuoSS3e28&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1030.97)):

Industry refers to careers outside of academia or in other professional settings.

Allen Liu ([17:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=oOOr1FIIg-Yj0GOH9MfvbCy9G3fdCLoXEsAZX8x5w6-dKMlAJqLWBuF2_SGcTt8ncFmRKfpOFVYpROm6edQZFMzk6YA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1035.93)):

Having looked at some of the coursework in the ORFE department, I felt that a lot of it was a lot more applicable to what I would want to what I'd want to do after Princeton. So, a lot of stats, machine learning, financial mathematics, those were topics I was really interested in. I definitely started to build relationships pretty early on during orientation, and so, one of my first circles was my community action group.

Allen Liu ([17:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-cLSeK51ofThR3ewG5e27Tuhzv1jVl8r1WQNLXC6-XWbzUo2Baa50UIh-2p2ON2dRPEOfED9LjjpV4imPx-5SmQuszg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1059.22)):

There was a group of probably 12, 14 of us that I became really close with, and then we definitely stayed in touch during freshman year. I'm still very close to number of people in that group. Once classes started, definitely bonded with a lot of people in classes over doing problem sets together, working on projects, and I guess in terms of extracurriculars, it was very interesting, because I was involved in such a wide range of things that-

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:18:04]

Allen Liu ([18:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6AhoHBv5t19zHBxQkrh8IzehJBWqCvkQz1mwpd1DNxZZkXmKAwp_kq-M_WDb7f6OLaiSIymHm1YYraxDLLdHgSYK0R8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1083.51)):

I was involved in such a wide range of things that I met a lot of people during first semester. I think to be honest, a lot of those friendships probably came from very incidental interactions, so planning an event with somebody or being in a meeting with somebody every single week.

Allen Liu ([18:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=k9P7UnxCSD_QR7d7spG3nenB-bv1CqvVTTH4bfslGkLo4lNLkutvCJU7zoR-ab8TEhPuMjIqHIoD3Fc0S-QfEYuYLd0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1101.96)):

I actually play several roles within student government right now. I founded the Mental Health Task Force. I think at this point it's been almost two years, but we have done a lot of advocacy in terms of making resources on campus more transparent, supporting students during COVID, and so there was kind of a big transition from in-person counseling, seeing off campus counselors in person, group therapy, all of those services had to transition online, and then we had students kind of scattered all over the world. And so I guess one of our big projects was identifying ways to make those services more accessible during the semester, even when we were off campus.

Allen Liu ([19:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6thLizWb9RON9mrECpkUVbmBwJthDLNFrruncUCHAZQ2ttl9Ia5PcZBGgA_a0J4DPFDwcNwgpSVxKkYMLFYOpWlpRHI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1143.9)):

And even moving into this semester, it has been a pretty isolating semester for some people by nature of the pandemic and the restrictions that we're facing. And so basically thinking about ways to make people's lives easier, providing the support that's needed, that's the type of work that we've been doing. I think mental health advocacy is actually something that very much was not on my radar when I came to Princeton. When I got here, I very much wanted to take advantage of every single opportunity I had. And so as I said, that meant becoming very heavily involved in the extracurricular scene, doing very challenging class work and then also engaging very actively in social life on campus. And so I think for a lot of my freshman year, I overextended myself and I think I was taking on probably too much in terms of coursework and leadership roles than I was capable of handling at that point.

Allen Liu ([20:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=RsMnF3nf1j1hm6bHGk0hnP6DGhnAVaCtCVzf9Ht758yQdxsYpCtKI3I42r1t7Ff4gI5ZjAWxUo2sD57laxor3D9VV_c&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1201.81)):

And so during my freshman spring, towards the end of the semester, I realized that I was falling behind on some of my coursework because I realized that I had put off a lot of work earlier in the semester, or I hadn't really kept up with my classes that well. And so there were a few classes that I did not do as well as I had hoped in. That definitely had an impact on me because I actually had felt quite confident coming out of my first semester at Princeton. My second semester, when I really tried to stretch myself, I felt that I failed basically, and that was something that had an impact. I mean, that was something that really kind of brought me down for a bit, and so the summer after freshman year, I was kind of processing all of this and realizing my grades weren't what I'd hoped they had been this past semester.

Allen Liu ([20:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=wCgFZjr2HQXTViDfOxEMSV0A4VCcVYPolEiLBEpme1-9kXpVjcTX1FbTAKlLsXwsUZtMba0wrqJ0oSQUac11WImZD2Q&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1250.26)):

Am I really capable of doing everything here that I want to do? Are there certain things I need to drop? And I think those questions and that experience definitely impacted my mental health. I did find support during this time, and some of my close friends at Princeton were extremely supportive of me. Actually there even a number of alumni that I spoke to after my freshman year that helped me navigate the situation. But I think the whole process of finding support from my peers and then also seeing counseling, that made me realize, I guess, how important it is to have a support network, especially in a very fast paced and challenging environment at Princeton. And I really wanted to see how can I make sure that all students here have access to support when they need it? I think that was something that was important for me, and so that really inspired the advocacy that I would go out to do in mental health.

Allen Liu ([21:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=QJLrpnjzBxIGWjNeMIfroqZd8QPnrNwNZexVDVeUDeLzEKIWRRw9WRQXyZOXqf9TQodYC5F8cvaERyTf48HeZsgEEi4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1306.3)):

I think that we have a tendency to push ourselves very hard and to overextend ourselves, so honestly I do think that we need to remind ourselves more that wellbeing is very important. I am very grateful because I think that people seem to have become more willing to talk about the difficulties that they're facing, be more open about their mental health. Definitely in my time here, I've noticed that, but I do think we could do even more.

Allen Liu ([22:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=kxiB1Mc6WJbJU_idOknNoLbSHDBMqfPi3DM3mtCDeMpzHnVMjgHIohel8hwc9UtP0TeJoohEUbOk1M-3cI0ZMzqX7rg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1332.16)):

I personally do feel like extremely fast paced culture is something that is difficult to change, and I think it's one of the very great things about Princeton. When I came here, the amount of energy I saw on campus was something that definitely felt very exciting to me. As a task force, we definitely think about ways that even if your life is moving, at 120 miles an hour, how do you kind of periodically check in with your friends? How do you periodically check in with yourself to make sure that you're doing well?

Allen Liu ([22:40](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7js5Z3MwdwnVdBf85O9V5niZD_xe1KYlxhDaMxpIxGG3gspx8jLV7-hqvLPfHJKFPTsuVgNEPx7KVuvdRfLN9PekrhY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1360.06)):

I think that the way that we've tried to create a supportive environment is providing opportunities for peer support. When we made a guidebook on Princeton's mental health resources about a year ago, one major part of the project was collecting testimonials from students, and so we had dozens of students submit quotes about what their experiences with mental health and finding help on campus had been. And we included basically all those quotes in the guidebook, and I think that those gave very concrete tips and also shared very relevant experiences about getting support at Princeton. I think during the pandemic, one area that we have also worked with counseling and psychological services on is providing group sessions. Some of them are focused on stress from academics, some of them are much more so targeted to specific groups of students on campus that may have had certain experiences. I think promoting those opportunities as well has been something that we've focused on.

Allen Liu ([23:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=TIJbxmdSBF3GvEvIEYw_OohTQmhVeruU7Z3wx3kkSud0j8ARqUVEMftlLszii3r7qC6ddJWh7krTKaWUn_D_Ay-2vBg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1426.75)):

We've also worked on a number of initiatives to help students meet each other during our virtual semesters. And so working with Letters to Strangers... Letters to Strangers is another mental health organization on campus that does a lot of great advocacy. And then with another USU committee, we organize to meet a stranger type of events where students were matched with other students that they may not have known before and then asked to set up virtual conversations. And so I think the scope of our work has definitely been trying to find ways for students to support each other. And for me personally, I have a counselor that I see pretty regularly. She has been incredibly helpful and I've been seeing her since freshman spring.

Allen Liu ([24:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ubxxyGNw6-_fcxrVuLgmbB0LHoVKYFwZMxHs3oO8acXU_VRyWe8EAG0hq5h1_Br_qPOqKo2vO9LPK9lPoOyNP9BV6mI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1479.71)):

So I think the orange bubble refers to the idea of Princeton is very much an insular community and kind of exists solely within the confines of its campus. I guess along those lines also, when you're at Princeton, it's almost as if the world beyond Princeton feels irrelevant. It doesn't really exist. That's something that I really felt freshman year, and I think just being extremely involved in campus life definitely made me feel as if Princeton and this campus, this is the entire world to me. Being away during the pandemic, I think it definitely challenged that stereotype for me. So in the year we were off campus, I've seen a lot of my friends become super involved in community service during the 2020 election. Quite a few people I know worked as poll workers, and I think seeing my classmates engaged in a lot of activities completely unrelated to university, that was definitely one thing that challenged that stereotype. I'd also say that part of the orange bubble stereotype is the idea that Princeton exists solely within this campus.

Allen Liu ([25:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Okghsm2480twLbuCRINuy0FpKk9b0IKnwUnhtAzzK1bWVOBLSvPAIsROVz-ypoDnV1PEsktq26JewcmOanTIGArGtg8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1550.3)):

But I think the community was definitely very robust, and so even though I was away from campus for essentially a year, I still felt very much connected to the people I had worked with or been close with on campus. I actually connected with some new friends during the pandemic, and I think definitely recognizing that the community isn't just restricted to this campus or to the four years we have here. It's something that's very permanent.

Allen Liu ([26:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=C-zjo4D6EL-mmo-5lVTNZAKB9_OKLAzAkgi-UHX2HQhhRK4SjheN_wwgLmEJnUW79eYfHB6I0khuKIj0jG-sed0uts8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1576.09)):

This is a place where you come and can pretty much get the best of everything, no matter who you are on campus. And I guess what I mean by that is in so many of our departments we have world-class faculty. I think in a lot of my classes... I had professors whose papers I had read in the past just out of interest, and now they're teaching my behavioral finance class or another class I'm taking, so that's one example. A lot of our student organizations are well-known very much beyond our campus and have very long histories as well. And so I think what I would tell somebody who's considering Princeton is that you pretty much have access to the very best and almost anything you want-

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [00:27:04]

Allen Liu ([27:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ptxddgh3CusJJ-kmbx8eX4hLhX8hOeQf5g3OXS9ZLP5Q7XvT-DWLHPW7jtW0RamvKmetzLO_cO2jcvQJnGniNo_l1NU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1623.8)):

... the very best and almost anything you want. And unlike at a lot of the other schools, if you want to experiment with something new, if you want to take advantage of a resource in an area that you may have never explored before, that's something that you can do.

Vivian Slee ([27:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ojqgoc3ACE9rffv5oJiVAkJVMXgagMz76ja22jleO4X3S5pGBoAm7CNahItRgpWZngakIz1vzgbdNalyGmQOGy9r934&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1635.91)):

We hope you enjoyed listening to Allen's experiences on campus, especially in how he managed his own challenges and became a great advocate for mental health care. We also hope that if you're a student who's listening to this right now and you're struggling, maybe just feeling anxious or lonely, like so many of us have during this difficult year, that you'll reach out for help, reach out to the adults around you, to parents, family, friends, teachers, counselors, or religious leaders, scout leaders. And also, please remember that you matter. The mailbag will return in our next episode, so for all of the prospective students who have burning questions about admissions, and I'm sure that many of you have similar questions, and if you'd like to hear those questions read and responded to live on air, please submit them to the mailbag section of the Meet Princeton webpage on our admission website.

Vivian Slee ([28:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=U8AasBICO9u7OagJuCGlvuGGQNBH2ur0HVttNKX2GgwAytghGRlMHhmOPmrkB79llwqvO5qw_E9zMAZLN54H7Un6i_c&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1703.42)):

Meet Princeton's audio engineer is Nick Donnoli of Orange Box Pictures. Mary Buckley and myself are executive producers. Brian Blount is our co-host and consultant. And Veronica Salazar is our editorial consultant. Original music was composed by Molly Truman, who is also our sound designer and engineer from the class of 2024. We'd also like to give special thanks to our guests, Dr. Calvin Chin, and guest student, Allen Liu for their wonderful contributions to this episode. And a big thank you, especially, to our listeners for tuning in. I'd like to leave you now with my really thoughtful, smart, kind, and fun colleagues, Jian Zabalerio, Karen Blake, and Jake Camarillo, as they share their own tips on self care and ways that they've looked after themselves in college and beyond. Thank you so much again for listening. We hope you'll join us next time on Meet Princeton.

Jian Zabalerio ([29:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=oXhgRZ8fHT376ARSyxzdeNU5qLqmF7DeuZaD3i45PwCfPQECPXVwVetVHBzwhwvUeuWUW73cyeBJqkPtnwiaG4kp3D0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1756.36)):

My name is Jian Zabalerio. I'm an admission officer, and I was originally born in the Philippines, but most of my life was spent in New Jersey, in Morristown, New Jersey, actually. When I was in college, one of the things I did to center myself was make sure that I would eat a meal with company. I remember in freshman year, I would just kind of go through my day, get all my agenda done, and I realized that didn't really bring me joy. So when I actually took the time to schedule in a 12:00 PM lunch before my 1:00 PM class or 6:00 PM with my roommates, even if it was only 15-20 minutes that we could fit in, I just felt so much better, because it was just so nice to connect with somebody and talk about day or just commiserate on our worries about the exam. It's just great having company. I definitely leaned into my community, but it also took work to do that. I thought that community, friends with kind of just happen, but it doesn't. You have to schedule it in the same way you schedule in your classes, working out, making a phone call, whatever the case may be. It takes effort. And that was a big lesson that I took away from college.

Jake Camarillo ([30:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=E0gAcb8voI2X06wyfUX96z-f78GMSBWsRbZvWhruaZboTKvLnragr9p-gjoJ-Vol8QbcxC90RdsROoqqJRAOFFhKgBg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1828.63)):

Hey everyone. My name is Jake Camarillo. I'm an admission officer with the office. It's a fantastic question about how do I take care of my mental health? One of my favorite things to do is get on a weekly FaceTime call with my family back home in Arizona and cook with them. We actually will share recipes for our meal prep, decompress by reflecting on how the week went and the individual challenges that we're facing, because realizing that we're all functioning adults and there are things past the surface that we typically can see, and realizing that we need an outlet every once in a while. So relying on those friends and family members that are with you, it's extremely important when the going gets rough.

Jake Camarillo ([31:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=hxZlGhI27XokkAc4RWYepBWqB09dhOLgfmBMrKfRcKUwnCVq0_FmimLIb4xbU_6HnCapU1XQB5BHVcs2pAO0kDwQuuM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1869.88)):

I've recently taken up golf, to be honest with you. There's something beautiful about just being out in the open on a course with time to reflect and think about the little things that go into the game. I know it can be very frustrating for individuals, but for me, I don't take myself too seriously. And being out there, just trying something new, meeting people, it's been a great way to reintegrate, especially after these times of being isolated during the pandemic and finding ways to have this community as well.

Karen Blake ([31:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=P-CEfagLFNTR8ROZB_Ruo_VW6ajtGq0ZOeu1mPhi31U03K1Jb4H6kIxCcOb-t-ICYX19XHhKjs4llQuPjswdhbrlfQE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1899.11)):

Hi everyone. My name is Karen. I'm an admissions officer here at Princeton. I am originally from just outside of Detroit, Michigan, so suburbs, pretty much. Something that I definitely do at least every few weeks, or maybe multiple times a week is doing my hair. So I've recently started kind of experimenting and kind of getting into my natural hair journey. So I will actively spend time, at least a couple of times a week, where I'm just moisturizing and re-twisting my hair. I usually just ... it's a nice kind of moment just to be by myself. And then another thing is that I try to keep my house clean. I actually don't like cleaning, but I've noticed that when my house is messier, my mind is also messier and that makes me a little bit more anxious or stressed out. So I just try to keep my house clean for myself so that I can just be calm. I think I can sort of relate to students like that, especially people from communities of color. I think as a black woman in a predominately black family, it's not as talked about, I would say in terms of mental health. And I think a lot of times, instead of talking about mental health, people lean into religion, because Christianity is a huge part of black culture in a lot of ways. So I always think what's helpful, at least for me and my family is I try to use things that they understand to get them to also understand mental health. So my grandma, for example, she always is like, "Well, if you're feeling stressed out, you should just pray," or whatever.

Karen Blake ([33:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=AHGOjjPRVhjXFLvl91j_l70KvSHOO9zXwY11T_Gkx2mvR5bx9GR7ZpYUTs1w5RRH9zlo1my13AtMt3pCjdpYbq93irA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1986.13)):

And for her, that's almost like someone saying, "Oh, I'm going to meditate and clear my mind," or whatever. So I just try to use words or experiences or even their own tools that they use to kind of expand into what we would call a mental health conversation. So I think it's kind of important to just kind of meet people where they're at, because it is hard for people, especially from different generations, to have these sorts of conversations. So just kind of meeting people where they're at so you're able to actually connect on something, I think is my best advice for people. I think the last thing that I would just say to students is really just to remember that college is an amazing growth opportunity for you, and growing pains actually are real. It's not always smooth sailing when you're growing and changing.

Karen Blake ([33:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_bmiQtcxOUS5_hPYruYpPBUjz-L9KIVJ6He-Z_2qKnuI62bVNItvy-XEfZMckX7Hfhz5dda8NVjNUiQZGupa73GjuAk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2032.57)):

So I would just say to recognize that you're going to face struggles and challenges, and I know that might be difficult, especially for a lot of the students that we are admitting and reviewing because they're, of course, coming from huge successes in high school, being very academically talented and talented outside of the classroom as well. And I would just say don't let the challenges of going to a place where you don't know everything or things are new to you kind of stop you from actually kind of diving in and taking advantage of all of the experiences and opportunities that you can find at Princeton. So that's kind of my main advice, I would say. Don't be afraid to step outside of your comfort zone, and you might struggle a little bit, but each year that you do it, it gets easier and you get better at it and you'll realize how much you're growing from all of those challenges.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [00:34:47]