

# Self-help Resources for Students

Acknowledging that things aren't going well can feel like a difficult first step, but you've done the right thing. Maybe you've decided to try to manage things yourself, or you've been signposted to a support service and are waiting to hear back; whatever your circumstances, trying some of the following self-help guides and worksheets might help to improve things.

Remember the problems that you are having are understandable and you are not to blame. It's also unlikely that things will change overnight, no matter how much we want them to. Remind yourself that distressing emotions serve a purpose and don't last forever. It may not feel like it now, but things will improve and by using some of these guides, you're giving yourself the best chance for that improvement to happen sooner rather than later.

It's also important to keep talking about it, whether this is with a family member, a friend, your supervisor, your College Wellbeing team, a professional from a dedicated support service or someone over the telephone. Talking about your problems with someone else can really help. Feeling down, stressed or anxious can feel like a very isolating experience, but you're surrounded by people who want to help.

## Self-help Guides

If you are awaiting further support or want to manage your difficulties yourself try one of the following:

- Student Minds
- Northumberland, Tyne and Wear (NTW) NHS Foundation Trust
- Moodjuice - if you want a slightly more in-depth self-help approach
- Centre for Clinical Interventions (CCI) - for extended self-help programmes

These guides predominantly use a Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy approach to help individuals learn basic strategies to understand and manage their difficulties.

**Pick one guide you want to focus on and try reading only a few pages at a time.**

### Student Minds

Provides advice for some of the common issues students face as part of university life including:

Starting university, exam stress, LGBTQ+, looking after your mental wellbeing, year abroad, student finance, support through a family health crisis, coping with student life plus a monthly newsletter, Mind Matters.

[www.tinyurl.com/mindresources](http://www.tinyurl.com/mindresources)

### Moodjuice

Medium length guides that focus on the following:

Life skills, healthy living, relationships, feelings and behaviour, finding meaning.

The website also includes a "Not too sure try here" link which leads to a 5-module programme on "Overcoming Problems".

[www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk)

### NTW NHS

Short guides that focus on the following:

Abuse, alcohol, anxiety, bereavement, controlling anger, depression and low mood, depression (A Guide for Partners), domestic violence, eating disorders, comfort eating, health anxiety, hearing voices and disturbing beliefs, obsessions and compulsions, panic, post-traumatic stress, postnatal depression, stress.

[www.tinyurl.com/ntwnhshelp](http://www.tinyurl.com/ntwnhshelp)

### CCI

Information packs made up of several modules which focus on different difficulties, including:

Improving assertiveness, depression, body dysmorphia, self-criticism, distress intolerance, health anxiety, low self-esteem, bipolar disorder, disordered eating, panic attacks, perfectionism, procrastination, social anxiety, worries.

[www.tinyurl.com/ccipacks](http://www.tinyurl.com/ccipacks)

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## Worksheets

Use the below worksheets to learn some quick techniques that could help you reduce your feelings of stress or anxiety. These techniques can also be a good way to equip yourself for the future.

### Worry Time

Worries can really get in the way of university life, distracting us from our work, our friendships and keeping us from getting a good night's sleep.

Rather than being overwhelmed by our worries, try using the Worry Time technique to reduce the frequency and intensity of your worries.

[www.tinyurl.com/worrytime](http://www.tinyurl.com/worrytime)

### Behavioural Activation

To cope with stress and manage our mood, we need a balance of necessary, enjoyable and routine activities. When we feel stressed, the temptation is to focus entirely on that work and neglect other activities which make us feel good, or which would usually be part of our routine.

How many times have you recently cancelled on social plans, or skipped a meal because you've been studying? Though work feels important, your mental health is more so, and you can't do a good job in your studies if you're not well in yourself. Make sure to dedicate time to enjoyable and routine activities alongside university work.

[www.tinyurl.com/activatebehaviour](http://www.tinyurl.com/activatebehaviour)

### Calm Your Body Down

Stress, anxiety and low mood often come with unpleasant physical sensations, such as a fast heartbeat, breathlessness, shakiness, sweatiness, nausea, dizziness, among others.

Using deep breathing techniques and practicing progressive muscle relaxation at least once a day can help reduce some of these sensations.

#### Deep breathing:

[www.tinyurl.com/deepbreathe](http://www.tinyurl.com/deepbreathe)

#### Progressive muscle relaxation:

[www.tinyurl.com/musclecalm](http://www.tinyurl.com/musclecalm)

### Thought Challenging

When people feel stressed, anxious or down, the way we think about ourselves, other people and our world changes and becomes quite negative. At the time, it can feel like an accurate assessment of what's going on, but sometimes our thoughts are unrealistic and illogical, making us feel worse.

Learning to recognise our unhelpful thoughts and challenging them to come up with a more balanced thought can be a helpful way to help us think more realistically and feel better.

#### Thought diary:

[www.tinyurl.com/thoughtdiary](http://www.tinyurl.com/thoughtdiary)

#### Unhelpful thinking styles:

[www.tinyurl.com/unhelpfulthinking](http://www.tinyurl.com/unhelpfulthinking)

#### Vicious cycle:

[www.tinyurl.com/circularthinking](http://www.tinyurl.com/circularthinking)

#### Thought challenging:

[www.tinyurl.com/thoughtchallenging](http://www.tinyurl.com/thoughtchallenging)

### Sleep Hygiene

Sleep is heavily linked to wellbeing, so give yourself the best possible chance to get the rest you need.

Set yourself a specific bedtime and spending the hour before bed doing something relaxing like reading something unrelated to university work, getting a warm bath or shower or listening to music. Don't use electronic devices in this hour, as screens emit light which tells your brain it's daytime.

[www.tinyurl.com/sleepwellbeing](http://www.tinyurl.com/sleepwellbeing)

These resources can help to manage mental health difficulties but it is important to ask for help if you are feeling overwhelmed and it is always a good idea to raise it with either your supervisor, a member of your College Wellbeing Team or advisors at either YUSU or the GSA.