

Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Guide



This guide is designed to promote the Mental Health & Wellbeing of New College Durham students. Providing advice and guidance gathered from the Student Union, ASC and third-party organisations for the purpose of supporting New College Durham Students.

New College Durham – Students Union

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Anxiety – Self Help Sheet




WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Anxiety is a feeling of unease, like a worry or fear, that can be mild or severe. Everyone feels anxious from time to time and it usually passes once the situation is over.

It can make our heart race, we might feel sweaty, shaky or short of breath. Anxiety can also cause changes in our behaviour, such as becoming overly careful or avoiding things that trigger anxiety.



TOP TIPS TO COPE WITH ANXIETY

1 MAKE TIME FOR WORRIES

If your worry feels overwhelming and takes over your day, setting specific “worry time” to go through your concerns each day can help you to focus on other things.

2 CHALLENGE ANXIOUS THOUGHTS

Tackling unhelpful thoughts is one of the best things we can do to feel less anxious.

3 FACE THE THINGS YOU WANT TO AVOID

It's easy to avoid situations, or rely on habits that make us feel safer, but these can keep anxiety going. By slowly building up time in worrying situations, anxious feelings will gradually reduce and you will see these situations are OK.

4 UNDERSTAND YOUR ANXIETY

Try keeping a diary of what you are doing and how you feel at different times to help identify what's affecting you and what you need to take action on.

5 SHIFT YOUR FOCUS

Some people find relaxation, mindfulness or breathing exercises helpful. They reduce tension and focus our awareness on the present moment.

6 GET TO GRIPS WITH THE PROBLEM

When you're feeling stressed or anxious, it can help to use a problem-solving technique to identify some solutions. This can make the challenges you're facing feel more manageable.

<http://www.anxiety.org.uk> A site to specifically help people with anxiety

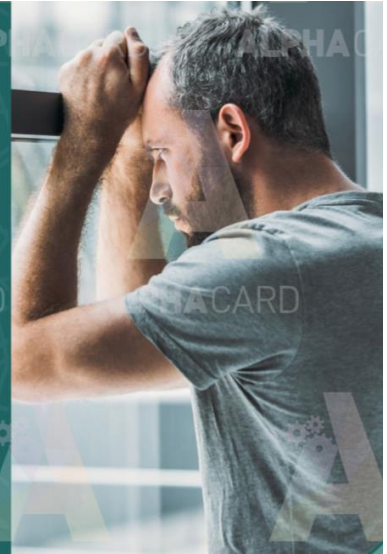
Low Mood - Self Help Sheet

WHAT'S LOW MOOD? AM I DEPRESSED?

Everyone feels low or down from time to time. It does not always mean something is wrong. Feeling low is common after distressing events or major life changes, but sometimes periods of low mood happen for no obvious reason.

You may feel tired, lacking confidence, frustrated, angry and worried. But a low mood will often pass after a couple of days or weeks – and there are some easy things you can try and small changes you can make that will usually help improve your mood.

If you're still feeling down or no longer get pleasure from things for most of each day and this lasts for several weeks, you may be experiencing depression. Support is available.



TOP TIPS TO BOOST YOUR MOOD



1 INCREASE HELPFUL ACTIVITY

Low mood can stop us doing important or enjoyable activities. Try listing these things and doing some each day. Start with easier ones and, as you progress, your mood should improve.

2 GET BETTER SLEEP

Low moods can make us feel tired. Tiredness can also have a bad impact on our mood.

3 BE KIND TO YOURSELF

Try to break big tasks down into manageable chunks, and do not try to do everything at once. Give yourself credit when you complete each bit.

4 TALK TO SOMEONE

This can be online, by phone or seeing someone in person, where permitted. Social Media can be a useful tool for staying in touch and communicating but take care not to measure yourself by other people's updates.

5 CHALLENGE UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS

The way we think affects the way we feel.

6 HEALTHY LIVING

Being active, cutting back on alcohol and making sure we have a healthy balanced diet can help boost your mood, and help our wellbeing.

<http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou>

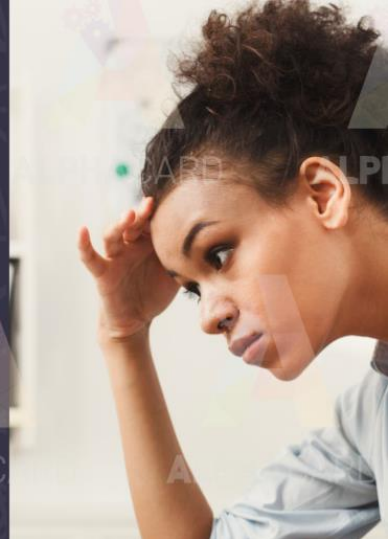
An NHS website to help people with mood and coping in the current situation

Stress – Self Help Sheet

WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is the body's reaction to feeling threatened or under pressure. It's very common and can be motivating to help us achieve things in our daily life, and can help us meet the demands of home, work and family life.

But too much stress can affect our mood, our body and our relationships – especially when it feels out of our control. It can make us feel anxious and irritable and affect our self-esteem.



TOP TIPS TO DEAL WITH STRESS



1

SPLIT UP BIG TASKS

If a task seems overwhelming and difficult to start, try breaking it down into easier chunks, and give yourself credit for completing them.

4

ALLOW YOURSELF SOME POSITIVITY

Take time to think about the good things in your life. Each day, consider what went well and try to list 3 things you're thankful for.

2

CHALLENGE UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS

The way we think affects the way we feel.

5

BE MORE ACTIVE

Being active can help you to burn off nervous energy. It will not make your stress disappear, but it can make it less intense.

3

TALK TO SOMEONE

Trusted friends, family and colleagues, or contacting a helpline, can help us when we are struggling. This can be online, by phone or seeing someone in person.

6

PLAN AHEAD

Planning out any upcoming stressful days or events – a to-do list, the journey you need to do, things you need to take – can really help.

Sleep – Self Help Sheet

UNDERSTANDING SLEEP PROBLEMS

We all have evenings when we find it hard to fall asleep or find ourselves waking up in the night. How we sleep and how much sleep we need is different for all of us and changes as we get older.

Sleep problems usually sort themselves out within about a month. But longer stretches of bad sleep can start to affect our lives.



TOP TIPS TO SLEEP BETTER



1 KEEP REGULAR SLEEP HOURS

Going to bed when you feel tired and getting up at roughly the same time helps teach your body to sleep better. Try to avoid napping where possible.



4 CONFRONT SLEEPLESSNESS

If you are lying awake unable to sleep, do not force it. Get up and do something relaxing for a bit, and return to bed when you feel sleepier.



5 WRITE DOWN YOUR WORRIES

If you often lie awake worrying about tomorrow, set aside time before bed to make a list for the next day. This can help put your mind at rest.

2 CREATE A RESTFUL ENVIRONMENT

Dark, quiet and cool environments generally make it easier to fall asleep and stay asleep.

3 PUT DOWN THE PICK-ME-UPS

Caffeine and alcohol can stop you falling asleep and prevent deep sleep. Try to cut down on alcohol and avoid caffeine close to bedtime.



6 MOVE MORE, SLEEP BETTER

Being active can help you sleep better.

Working from home – Self Help

Based on NHS Guidance, these 6 simple tips can help you adjust to working at home, feel more productive and take care of your mental health and wellbeing.



1. ESTABLISH YOUR OWN ROUTINE

Without a routine, the lines between work and personal time can get blurred and be stressful to get right.

Try to follow your normal sleep and work patterns where you can, and stay consistent. Eg 'Get up at the same time, eat breakfast, and get dressed!' Even schedule your "commute time" – and spend it exercising, reading or listening to music – before starting work. Most importantly, when your workday stops, stop

working. Shut down, stop checking emails and focus on your home life, try to go to bed at your usual time.



2. MAKE A DEDICATED WORKSPACE

When we live and work in the same space, it can create anxiety and stop us being able to focus. If you can, find a quiet space away from other people and distractions like the TV. Get everything you need in one place before you start and shut the door if you can. Even in a small or shared space, try to designate an area as your workspace. Lastly, get comfortable. While it might be tempting to sit on the sofa, it's much better to sit

at a desk or table. If you do not have office furniture like an adjustable chair, try using things like cushions to support you in your chair, or a box as a footrest.



HOW TO SIT AT YOUR DESK CORRECTLY

Scan the QR code for the link below:



3. STAY CONNECTED

Schedule video calls and pick up the phone instead of emailing. If you're struggling with working at home then speak to your colleagues or manager about your concerns. Try to remember, your colleagues probably feel the same as you, ask how they're doing and whether there are ways you can support each other. Make time to socialise virtually – schedule in a digital

coffee break or Friday online get-together.



4. GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK

Working at home can make us feel like we have to be available all the time. But just being "present" is no use to anyone if your mental health is suffering. Make time for breaks – try to take lunch and regular screen breaks. If possible, set a time to go for a walk and get some fresh air. Even just 5 to 10 minutes of short breaks each hour can really help your productivity too. Working from home means you might

be spending a lot more time without moving your body. If you're feeling stiff or tense, try doing some light stretching or exercise with these 10 minute home workouts.



ALPHACARD TRY A 10-MINUTE HOME WORKOUT

Scan the QR code for the link below:



5. SET BOUNDARIES

Setting boundaries with other members of your household is key to mental wellbeing while working at home. You can be more flexible when working from home, so enjoy it. But it can also be difficult if there are new distractions to deal with, like children at home, who may think you are on holiday and want to spend time with you. Have a discussion about your needs, especially with family. Remind them that you still have work to do and need quiet time

to do it, and share your schedule. Similarly, set boundaries with work, try to switch off from work when the day is over.



6. BE KIND TO YOURSELF

Be kind to yourself and acknowledge that you might not be as productive as you usually would be to start with, but by following these tips you should start to see a difference. Be realistic about what you can achieve given the circumstances and relax when your work is done.



FURTHER ADVICE AND SUPPORT

For more advice, visit
Mental Health at Work:



Useful Mental Health & Wellbeing App's

- **Mindshift** – A free app designed to help teens and young adults cope with anxiety. It can help you change how you think about anxiety. Rather than trying to avoid anxiety, you can make an important shift and face it. Lists symptoms of anxiety.
- **The Worry Box** – A cognitive-behavioural therapy application for people who experience anxiety and worry. It teaches you how to assess whether a worry you have is important or not, or something you can or cannot control
- **Wellmind** –A free NHS mental health and wellbeing app designed to help you with stress, anxiety and depression. The app includes advice, tips and tools to improve your mental health and boost your wellbeing.
- **CALM** – Calm is an app for sleep, relaxation, and mindfulness meditation, built to help you feel calm in a natural way that's in tune with your body's innate ability to switch from 'ready for action' to 'resting'.
- **SAM** – is a friendly app that offers a range of self-help methods for people who are serious about learning to manage their anxiety. SAM has been developed by a university team of psychologists, computer scientists and student users.
- **Breathe2relax** –An app that teaches a skill called “diaphragmatic breathing” to help users feel more relaxed. Diaphragmatic breathing, also known as “belly breathing,” is a common relaxation skill utilized in a variety of treatments for anxiety and PTSD.
- **Nature Sounds** – Relaxing night sounds app helps to reduce your anxiety and make you relaxed. Nature sounds are the perfect sounds for sleep, relaxing and meditation.
- **Happify** - Need a happy fix? With its psychologist-approved mood-training program, the Happify app is your fast-track to a good mood. Try various engaging games, activity suggestions, gratitude prompts and more to train your brain as if it were a muscle, to overcome negative thoughts.
- **MoodTools** - Designed to help you combat depression and alleviate your negative moods, aiding you on your road to recovery. The app contains several different research-supported tools.
- **Silvercloud** - Provides a wide range of supportive and interactive programmes, tools and tactics for mental and behavioural health issues. These programmes address wellbeing, life balance, time management, communication skills, goal setting, communication and relationship management, anger management, stress management, relaxation and sleep management, among many others.

Useful Mental Health & Wellbeing Websites

- **Samaritans** – <https://www.samaritans.org/>
Website to support Samaritans service which is a listening to ear to anyone who needs it 24hours a day, 365 days a week. Features Coronavirus resources to help with mental health during the pandemic.
- **Recovery College** - <https://www.recoverycollegeonline.co.uk/>
A range of free online mental health educational courses and resources. The content of the site has been developed by people with experience of mental illness. A new course “Coping during the pandemic” is also available which includes information on preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), advice on managing your concerns and supporting your wellbeing as well as advice on supporting children and young people.
- **Mind** - <https://www.mind.org.uk/>
Mind offers a wide range of information and resources about Mental Health for all ages. Featuring specific Coronavirus resources to help with mental health during the pandemic.
- **Kooth** - <https://www.kooth.com/>
Free, safe, anonymous online support for young people ages (11-18)
- **Hub of Hope** - <https://hubofhope.co.uk/>
National mental health database which brings together organisations and charities, large and small, from across the country who offer mental health advice and support, together in one place. Users input postcode to access all local support services.
- **NHS Every Mind Matters** - <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/>
Every Mind Matters gives you simple and practical advice to get a healthier mind and get more out of life – from how to deal with stress and anxiety, to boosting our mood or sleeping better. It will help you spot the signs of common mental health conditions, get personalised practical self-care tips and information on further support. You'll also learn about what you can do to help others.
- **Anxiety.org** - <https://www.anxiety.org/>
A dedicated team at is committed to making mental health information accessible, inclusive, easy-to-find, and easy-to-understand. We want anyone suffering from an anxiety disorder to have access to all the resources they need to understand and overcome their condition. Covers various conditions such as Separation Anxiety, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Phobias, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

- **NHS – Tees, Esk & Wear Valleys** - <https://www.tewv.nhs.uk/services/crisisadvice/>
Up to date information, advice and guidance on dealing with a mental health crisis. The page also provides links to the child services crisis information for under 18's and contact numbers for further help.
- **Moodjuice** - www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk
An Internet site developed by Choose Life Falkirk and the Adult Clinical Psychology Service, NHS Forth Valley. The site is designed to offer information, advice to those experiencing troublesome thoughts, feelings and actions. You can access and print off various self-help guides covering conditions such as depression, anxiety, stress, panic and sleep problems.
- **Stem4** - <https://stem4.org.uk/>
Supports positive mental health in teenagers. Covers topics such as Anxiety, Depression, Self-harm, Eating disorders and Addiction. It also promotes resilience.
- **Anxiety UK** - <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/>
A Charity user-led organisation, run by people with experience of living with anxiety, stress or anxiety-based depression, supported by a high-profile medical advisory panel. The website includes lots of self-help resources and dedicated helplines.
- **YoungMinds** - <https://youngminds.org.uk/>
YoungMinds exists so that young people have the strongest possible voice in improving their mental health. We need your help to make sure that voice is heard. The website has practical advice and guidance and YoungMinds has a dedicated 24/7 crisis helpline.
- **Students Against Depression** - <https://www.studentsagainstd Depression.org/>
A website offering advice, information and guidance to those affected by low mood, depression and suicidal thinking.

Health & Wellbeing Contact Numbers

- **NHS 111** – For free medical advice
- **Samaritans** - Durham 0191 384 2727 or National Freephone 116 123
- **CAMHS crisis team** 0191 4415733 (up to 18 years of age)

Wellbeing and Mental Health during Covid – 19 Guide

- **Wellbeing and mental health during Covid-19:** A guide to looking after yourself and others. http://www.stopsuicidenenc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID_19_booklet_network.pdf

Suicide Prevention & Support

- **Papyrus** - <https://papyrus-uk.org> HOPELineUK 08000 684141
Prevention of young suicide. Information and training and support for young people to lead prevention.
- **Suicide prevention training** – A short training course designed to equip people of all ages to spot potential signs of someone who may be struggling and thinking about suicide. https://www.relias.co.uk/hubfs/ZSACourse3/story_html5.html
- **CALM** – Campaign against living miserably. They run a free and confidential helpline and webchat – 7 hours a day, 7 days a week for anyone who needs to talk about life's problems. They also have advice if you are worried about someone close to you. <https://www.thecalmzone.net/>
- **SOBS Survivors of bereavement by suicide** – A service for over 18's who have been bereaved by suicide. <https://uksobs.org/>

Domestic Violence

- **Women** can call The Freephone National Domestic Abuse Helpline, run by Refuge on **0808 2000 247** for free at any time, day or night. The staff will offer confidential, non-judgemental information and support.
- **Men** can call Men's Advice Line on **0808 8010 327** (Monday and Wednesday, 9am to 8pm, and Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9am to 5pm) for non-judgemental information and support
- If you identify as **LGBT+** you can call Galop on **0800 999 5428** for emotional and practical support.

New College Durham – Student Wellbeing

New College Durham care about each and every student and if you need help and support on any mental health & wellbeing or safety issue please use the safeguarding portal below. <https://safeguarding.newdur.ac.uk/>

Guide Produced by New College Durham Students Union

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