

 Mind Solent



Student Mental Health Toolkit



Student mental health

Student life is meant to be one of the best times of your life, but students are also one of the hardest hit populations when it comes to mental health...



...this guide will feature tips to help you, or a friend, who is struggling with student life...

The preparation

Whether it be before you move, start your course, or in the initial couple of weeks;
It is often easier to prepare for moments you might feel low, than find solutions when you hit those lows.

Seek advice

Contact the Student Union, or any advice service, on what is available to you and what support can be offered.

If you have a diagnosis, you might be entitled to some disability allowances.

New hobby?

Is there something you've always wanted to try, what better time to start than when you're moving somewhere new.

Before you move, take to Google and see if you can find somewhere for that hobby.

Having something independent of your studies can also be good for wellbeing.

Local services

If you are going to University of Portsmouth, University of Winchester, University of Southampton, or Solent University; We are your local Mind!

The back page will also feature other local services, if you are from outside our region, check for your local Mind here: <https://bit.ly/FindYourLocalMind>

Bring comforts

A lot of change can be very overwhelming, so bringing stuff from home for your room can be hugely beneficial.

Photos, familiar scents, or anything that reminds you of home. How about a self care box?

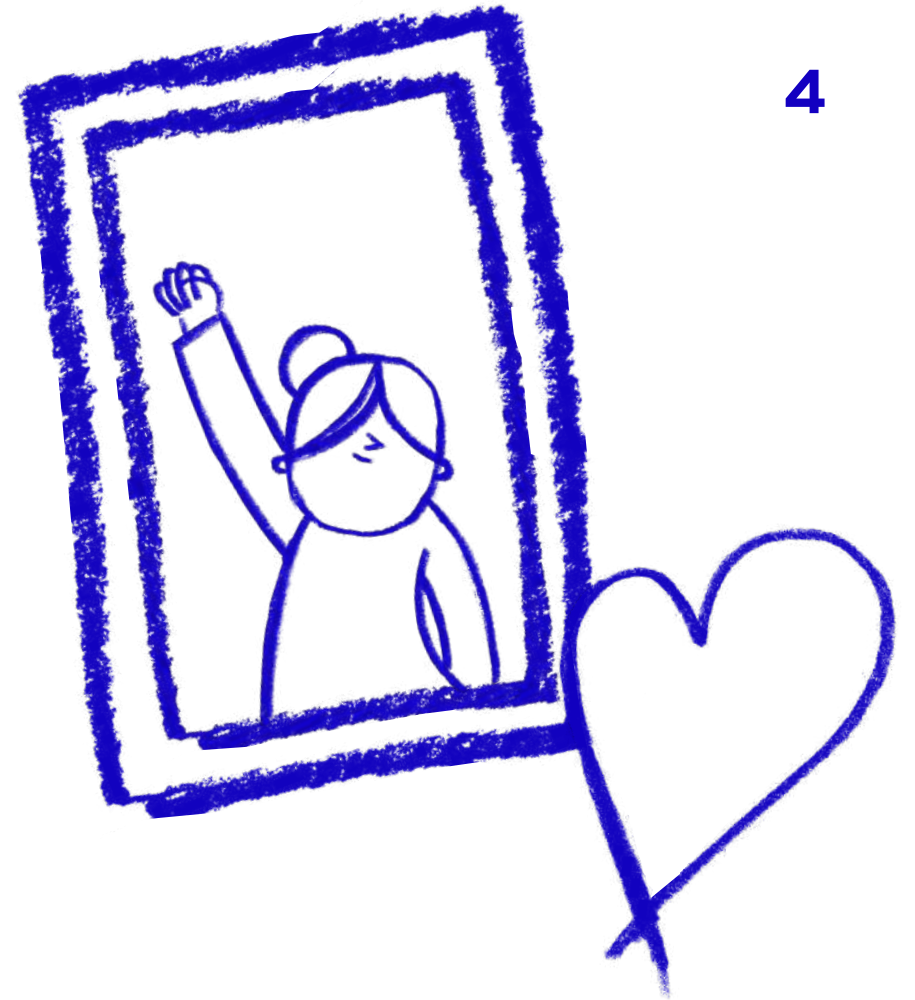
(see next page)

Self care box

A self care box is a grounding technique designed to help you when you are on the brink of an anxiety attack, or just feeling low.

A shoebox, or the care packages you get on your first day in halls, is perfect.

However, any box, or even drawer will work.



Decorate with...
Pictures and happy memories

Self affirming notes
(get loved ones to write some)

Material and accessories that are calming

Put in...
Puzzles and games to distract you

Sweets for taste, distraction and good memories

A perfume, or something with a familiar scent

A list of songs that make you happy

Freshers

Being a fresher at University can be an intense experience. You're moving to a new place, a lot of the time away from home for the first time, and are around all new people.

Everyone feels the same

One of the biggest things to remember when you're starting University is; Everyone is in the same boat. Everyone is moving somewhere new, everyone is nervous, everyone wants to make friends.

If you think someone is cool, tell them, pushing yourself to make first contact could be doing them a favour too.

Open communication

If you are struggling, it is a huge help to have at least one lecturer on your course that you can tell when you're having a tough day and maybe have to miss a lecture, or get some extra help.

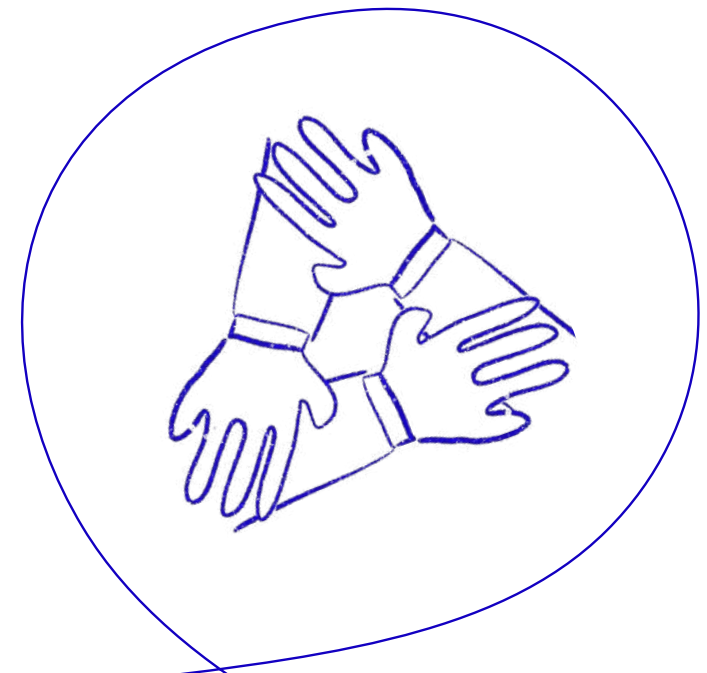
Take social media with a pinch of salt

You may feel like from looking at social media that everyone is having a much better time than you, but remember; People don't post the times they are alone in their bedroom.

Everyone is different

The 'Uni Experience' is different for everyone, what everyone else does might not be good for you. Whether that be different clubs, societies, partying less, working, or anything.

For some people, University isn't for them at all, and it is okay if you find that for you.



Deadlines & exam season

While most courses see mini deadlines spread throughout the year, a lot of pressure often comes down to a few weeks in each term with multiple deadlines, followed by exams a few weeks later.

Whether you turn your room into a study zone, or are an all-nighter at the library; These tips could help you.



You CAN get deadline extensions for mental health reasons

Always leave yourself time to take a break and come back to it later

Studying with a friend (even if you are doing different things) can be massively beneficial for wellbeing

Try studying in different places - Find your ideal surroundings

Set small goals which keep you on track, but don't pile the pressure on, with breaks or treats as awards for reaching them

Remember some easy and minimally disruptive grounding techniques (see next page)

Grounding techniques & breathing exercises



54321 game

5

things you can
SEE

4

things you can
HEAR

3

things you can
TOUCH

2

things you can
SMELL

1

thing you can
TASTE



Muscle relaxation

- Scrunch your face up, then relax it
- Tense your arms in front of you, then relax
- Tense your shoulders and chest, then relax
- Tense your legs out in front of you, then relax
- Take one deep breathe



Breathing techniques

- Inhale through your nose gently for two seconds
- Hold your breathe for one second
- Breathe out through your mouth for four seconds
- Repeat for one minute or until you feel calm



Panic attack

- Focus on your breathing and take long, deep breaths from your belly button
- Stamp your feet to bring your attention from your mind into your body
- Use your senses: stroke something soft or smell perfume or minty gum
- Find somewhere quiet and safe to recover and have something to eat and drink

Mature/stay-at-home students

New students aren't just those who are 18/19, moving away from home for the first time and only have their studies to concentrate on. Mature students of all ages also start studying at a later age, some with families and other responsibilities, while some younger students study in the city they grew up in and stay at home. Both situations can come with unique challenges that can have severe affects on mental health.

Ensure you have your own space

Whether you are a mature student with a family, or a younger student staying with parents, ensuring you have your own space to study is very important.

Communicating and having systems with those who you live with to provide you that space is also important.

Societies and common interest groups

It can be tough to connect with other students when you aren't living in halls, or shared housing, but there are probably students in similar situations to you if you can find them.

Whether it be contacting your student union about, for example, students who are also parents or joining societies with common interests to you.

Make the most of your time 'in town'

Most Uni timetables don't cover full days, at least not all the time, whether that be long gaps between lectures or ending early in the day. In those times, make the most of being around the Uni and in town.

Whether it be taking some time for studying in the library, or getting to know your classmates, it is a great chance to feel more connected to the Uni.

You are NOT any less of a student

It can be tough connecting with being a student in either of these scenarios, especially as a mature student.

Feelings of being 'too old', or fears of starting a whole new career, but none of it makes you any less of a student; In fact, it makes you a very strong one.

Students on placement

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Whether it be consistent placements like student nurses, placement years like a lot of the Sciences, or periods of placement; A lot of courses now involve some period of being on placement. These can be very challenging, especially those that are for long periods, involved doing unsocial hours, or even some that involved moving away to yet another new place to get used to.

Keep a group chat with your friends

In some cases, going on placements means moving away from the friends you've made on your course over the previous year or two. Many of whom, will also be going on placement.

So, keep a group chat with some of them to stay in contact and be honest with how you are feeling, with that you might help them not feel alone too.

Finding the time even in anti-social hours

While it isn't easy at all, finding some time for a quick meal or coffee with a friend before shifts could be a huge help. Your friends will want to be there for you, just as you would for them.

You could even ask one of your more experience colleagues for a coffee before a shift, they would have had placements too and know how you feel.

Remember that you are always learning

The whole point of placement is that you are always learning, no one is expecting you to be perfect and know everything as soon as you arrive.

The whole point of placement is to gain experience, and learn from the people around, and they know that is why you are there as well. Do not put the weight of the world on yourself.

Out-of-hours mental health support

Certain hours may affect your ability to find mental health support with certain services being 9-5, or daytime.

Make yourself aware of services that are open 24/7, or out-of-hours, and put them into the contact book on your phone.

Support available

University of Portsmouth

The University of Portsmouth and the Student Union offer a selection of wellbeing and mental health support. This includes a Wellbeing Service, the 'What'sUp' app and Chaplaincy. For more info on any of that, [click here](#).

Solent Mind also offer a wide range of [support in Portsmouth](#) with [PositiveMinds](#) providing daytime support, [the Harbour](#) as an out-of-hours crisis service, mental health education with [Solent Recovery College](#) and more.

University of Southampton

The University of Southampton offer support for their students including one-to-one wellbeing chats, and the ability to raise concerns for another student, all through [the Student Hub](#).

Solent Mind [support in Southampton](#) also offers an out-of-hours crisis support service in [the Lighthouse](#), as well as horticultural therapies through our garden centre and cafe [Mayfield Nurseries](#) and [Peer Support groups](#).

University of Winchester

University of Winchester can be found quickly on the [Student Unions Wellbeing page](#), with links to information on Chaplaincy, a Nightline, and Counsellors & Mental Health Advisors.

Talking therapies and wellbeing workshops from [iTalk](#), delivered in partnership with Solent Mind and Southern Health, is one of the services we provide [in Winchester](#).

Solent University, Southampton

Solent University have a [Therapy and Mental Health team](#) which can offer a range of support from urgent support, to talking therapy and concerns about a friend.

All Solent Mind support to the left for the University of Southampton also applies to Solent.

Other places to go for support

Samaritans

Open 24/7 for anyone who needs to talk.

Email jo@samaritans.org
Call 116 123 or

[Learn more >](#)

Shout

Confidential 24/7 text service offering support if you are in crisis and need immediate help.

Text 'SHOUT' to 85258 or

[Learn more >](#)

Papyrus HOPELINEUK

Confidential support for under-35s and others who are concerned about them. Open daily 9am–midnight.

Email pat@papyrus-uk.org
Call 0800 068 41 41
Text 07860 039967 or

[Learn more >](#)

Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)

Provides listening services, information and support for anyone who needs to talk, including a web chat.

Call 0800 58 58 58 or

[Learn more >](#)



Other places to go for support

Steps 2 Wellbeing

Talking Therapy in Southampton

Call 0800 612 7000 or

[Learn more >](#)

Talking Change

Talking Therapy in Portsmouth

Call 0300 123 3934 or

[Learn more >](#)

iTalk

Talking Therapy in Winchester, Eastleigh, the New Forest, Fareham and Gosport.

Call 0300 123 3934 or

[Learn more >](#)

Solent Mind Support Line

For help in knowing where to turn, access to our local crisis services or for wellbeing advice, give our support line a call.

Open 9am-7pm on weekdays and 10am-2pm on weekends.

Call 023 8017 9049 or

[Learn more >](#)



We are
Solent Mind

We're here to make sure that anyone with a mental health problem in Hampshire has somewhere to turn for advice and support.

[Donate now >](#)

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solentmind.org.uk