

UWE Wellbeing Service

Self-Support

When you are feeling distressed or overwhelmed...

Do you find it difficult to know where to start? Does your brain feel like it is in overdrive? Do you either feel flooded with emotions or very flat?

Feeling overwhelmed is very common, especially in a University context when there are new challenges for you to overcome. Typical pressures include coursework, deadlines, and other people's hopes for you. You may have experienced friendship or family struggles. You may have health issues, or have experienced a significant loss. Being away from home, and from friends, possibly in a different culture can all be difficult to cope with.

"The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step" - Lao Tzu

Look after the fundamentals: Organise each day to include time out for a break; get enough sleep; take some exercise; eat well; drink enough water; see other people; take time out from social media; and take care with using alcohol, 'social drugs' and caffeine.

Review what 'being strong' is all about: Being strong is often perceived as doing it all yourself, not showing your emotions and battling on. Acknowledging your struggles and getting help is an important step towards supporting yourself. Try giving yourself permission to get some support.

Talk to others: As well as coming to the Wellbeing Service, there may be one or two other trusted people you can talk things through with; as well as offloading, discussing fears and worries is often better when shared with another person in a safe environment.

Learn some relaxation & calming techniques: Learn some relaxation techniques to help come back into yourself when you are tensed and hyped. Mindfulness practice, taking a gentle walk in 'nature' or doing something absorbing like sport or music can help you be 'here and now', instead of caught in busy past or future thoughts. Notice your breathing and try to slow it down.

Check your life is in balance: If you look at your life in terms of: Physical, Emotional, Spiritual, Intellectual, Social and Creative, to what extent do you support yourself with each of these? Are there some areas which you don't have, and if so could you take a step to include one action from each?

Do one positive thing (however small) different from your studies, that you enjoy each day.

Consider each day having enough **ACE**: *including* an **Activity**; some **Contact**; enough **Enjoyment**.

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Websites

- **Mind Body Green** - Simple breathing exercise to calm your body and mind
<http://tinyurl.com/ogew3fq>
- **Centre for Clinical Interventions** – Progressive Muscle Relaxation handout (PDF)
<http://tinyurl.com/ztdllo> Also see Calming Technique
- **Get Self Help** - Positive Steps (to Wellbeing) <http://tinyurl.com/gthl3to> and free download leaflets on many topics <http://tinyurl.com/z8oq5q8>
- **NHS Self Help Guides** (audio or written) – ALSO free relaxation recordings 'progressive muscle relaxation & 'mindfulness of breathing'
<http://www.nhw.nhs.uk/pic/selfhelp>
- **Mind** - How to cope with student life (pdf and booklet) <http://tinyurl.com/hvnjyv>

Video links

- **Daniel Siegel** - a useful introduction to how the brain works when we get activated into the Fight, Flight, or Freeze response. <http://tinyurl.com/h3cpeco>
- **One Moment Meditation** - Animated YouTube film that takes you through the basics of starting to meditate for self-care <http://tinyurl.com/n2aezwh>

Apps

- **Stop, Breathe, Think** - free App with lots of tools and ideas
<http://stopbreathethink.org>
- **Smiling Mind** – friendly programme of meditations <http://smilingmind.com.au/>
- **Moodscope** – Plot your mood charted on a graph. Daily motivational messages from others who have struggled with anxiety & depression <https://www.moodscope.com/>
- **Moody Me** – Mood Diary and Tracker by Medhelp from Apple apps store (to buy) has good reviews. <http://tinyurl.com/4fngzqm>
- **SAM** – a highly rated app to help you understand and manage anxiety, developed by UWE, Bristol <http://sam-app.org.uk/>

UWE library

The UWE Libraries hold 22 titles from 'Books on Prescription', especially relating to anxiety, sleep, self-esteem, obsessive behaviours, eating conditions, anger <http://tinyurl.com/zfdlbo5>