

COPING WITH STRESS AT UNIVERSITY

STRESS

In 2019 a study found that 80% of students experienced stress or anxiety while studying at university.

Whilst that might sound disheartening, it is important to remember that some stress when studying is normal and natural.

For example, getting stressed before a test or before a submission is a normal experience for students.

Stress can sometimes be helpful because it can drive and motivate us to do things. For example, doing a presentation in front of others or meeting a deadline.

Knowing how to reduce stress and how to notice signs of when stress is becoming too much for you to cope with is an important skill to learn. It will help you to be happy and healthy while at university.

SIGNS THAT STRESS MIGHT BE BECOMING TOO MUCH

Although we all get stressed for different reasons and experience stress differently, there are some common signs and symptoms to look out for:

- Being angry or irritable easily.
- Feeling overwhelmed or unable to cope.
- Lacking motivation or interest in doing things.
- Feeling tense or worried often.
- Feeling unable to enjoy yourself.

There are also physical signs of stress, here are some:

- Changes to sleeping or eating patterns (either too much or too little).
- Muscle aches and pains.
- Sweating and feelings of panic.
- Feeling sick or dizzy.
- Indigestion or heartburn.
- Feeling tightness or heaviness in your chest.



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IDEAS FOR STRESS RELIEF

There are many different ways to ease stress. It's best to find ways that suit you and fit into your day-to-day life. Here are some ideas...

Academic:

- Get a diary or calendar for the academic year to plan your work and deadlines on paper instead of trying to remember them.
- Make a to-do list for each day or week. Ticking things off your list can be calming.
- Book tutorials with relevant staff members to ask for academic support.

Health choices:

- Make sure you are getting enough sleep and minimise screen time before bed.
- Healthy food can also improve mood.
- Reduce alcohol intake.
- Take up a form of exercise that suits you and fits into your day.

Relaxation:

- Spend time in green spaces like the local park.
- Plan in time for relaxing each day.
- Try practicing mindfulness, meditation, breathing exercises.
- Take a bath or shower.
- Listen to a podcast or read a book.

WHERE TO FIND HELP

When you are feeling overwhelmed, it is important to remember that you are not alone. There are many sources of support available. Here are some ideas...

Speak to friends and family:

- It may be obvious but your friends and family can be great source of comfort and support.
- Experiencing stress is common, they will likely have been through it themselves and may be able to offer advice or guidance that helped them.
- Doing stress easing activities with family and friends can also be a comforting experience.

The university has a mental health and wellbeing team. You can self-refer for support from them via the university website. Just search "mental health and wellbeing" on the university's website.

Charities such as Calm, Mind and Samaritans have a lot of helpful information about stress and how to manage it on their websites.

If you are struggling with stress long term or are finding that relaxation and stress reducing techniques are not working, we

suggest you seek advice from your GP or doctor.

