**Reaching out**

You might struggle with reaching out to people online, especially if you do not know them well. Maybe you are worried that the other person doesn’t want to talk to you, that they will judge you for the question you have or you are just not used to communicating with people who you don’t know well online. Whatever the reason, keep in mind that everyone is in the same boat at the moment. The way we are keeping in contact and communicating with people rapidly changed and it takes some time to get used to the new normal. Others will probably feel similar to the way you feel and are unsure themselves.

With a lot of teaching and extracurricular activities being delivered online for the time being, we will all have to get used to this new normal. As more people are working/studying away from each other, we will have to get used to communicating online and that includes reaching out. Some things that could help anyone struggling could be:

1. If you are unsure about the video conferencing programs that are being used, maybe arrange with friends or family to use them privately before you use them so you can trial all the possible features. Trust me, it works!
2. If you feel anxious about making a call to someone, maybe schedule it as a meeting so it isn’t a surprise for the other person and you don’t feel like you will interrupt them. Or schedule regular meetings with a workshop group or whoever you are working with to take the pressure off. Some things might be able to be conveyed in an email or a message so you don’t have to speak on a call.
3. If you are struggling with the content of some course but feel too nervous to contact a lecturer in person, you could post it anonymously on Piazza or contact friends or your programme rep to either help you directly or relay your message.

Whichever way you choose to reach out and stay in contact, remember again that everyone is in the same situation and other people will probably find it difficult as well. With the way the world works at the moment, we can all expect to be reached out to and to reach out to others online and chances are if you have a question, someone else might have an answer or if you feel like wanting to chat, someone else will as well.

If you feel that you are continuing to struggle with this and the nervousness about reaching out to people isn’t getting better as you get more used to it, there are different university services that might help you work through this nervousness. Some of them are:

The Chaplaincy has a Listening Service anyone can turn to just to talk about whatever is on their mind. The name ‘Chaplaincy’ suggests, that you have to be religious to use their offers, but the listening service is for anyone and everything. For more information, you can watch the [video on this page](https://www.ed.ac.uk/chaplaincy/support) and get in contact with the Listening Service via [Listening.Service@ed.ac.uk](mailto:listening.Service@ed.ac.uk). On this support page, they also signpost to a lot of other services which you might find helpful. Apart from the Listening Service, the Chaplaincy also offers Mindfulness Sessions and a Mindletter, a weekly mindfulness newsletter, as well as a Podcast called [Let’s Talk](https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/health-wellbeing/lets-talk) all about life in lockdown.

The [Student Counselling Service](https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-counselling) is a service supporting the mental health of students. They offer short-term counselling as well as a variety of self-help information.

The [Advice Place](https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support_and_advice/the_advice_place/covid19/) has more information about mental health and wellbeing during Covid as well as other issues you might be facing.