

# Keeping your

- Mind-Well



# University



# Welcome to our wellbeing for Leeds students!

Going to Uni can be a once-in-a-lifetime experience, but it's not without its challenges. It's totally normal to feel anxious or stressed out at times and you wouldn't be the first student to think about quitting.

The trick to staying well and coping with student life is spotting signs early and seeking help to get back on track. Let's talk about some common issues faced by students and what you can do to feel better.

MindWell

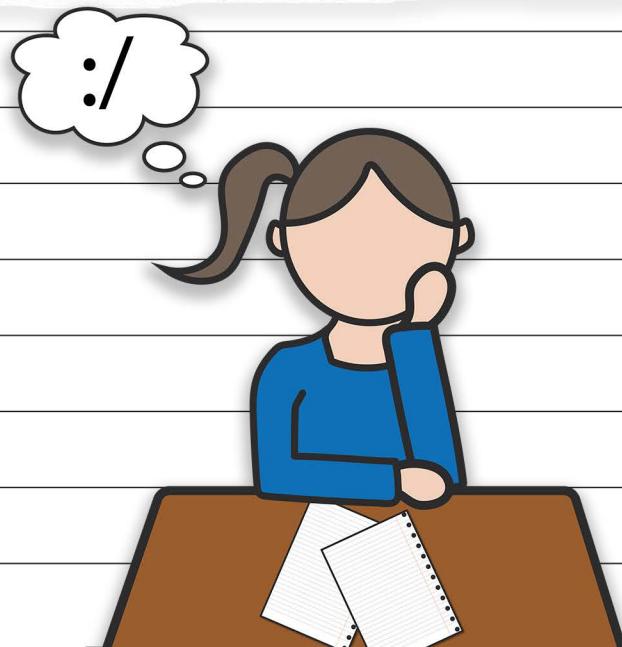
# Not feeling your best self?

## stress, anxiety and feeling worried

Everyone feels stressed or anxious from time to time, especially when facing a challenging or unfamiliar situation, like worrying about exams, meeting new people, or figuring out what you want to do after graduation. You might feel uneasy, nervous, or even have physical symptoms like sweating and a racing heart. It's a natural reaction to situations our brains perceive as stressful or dangerous and helps keep us safe from harm.

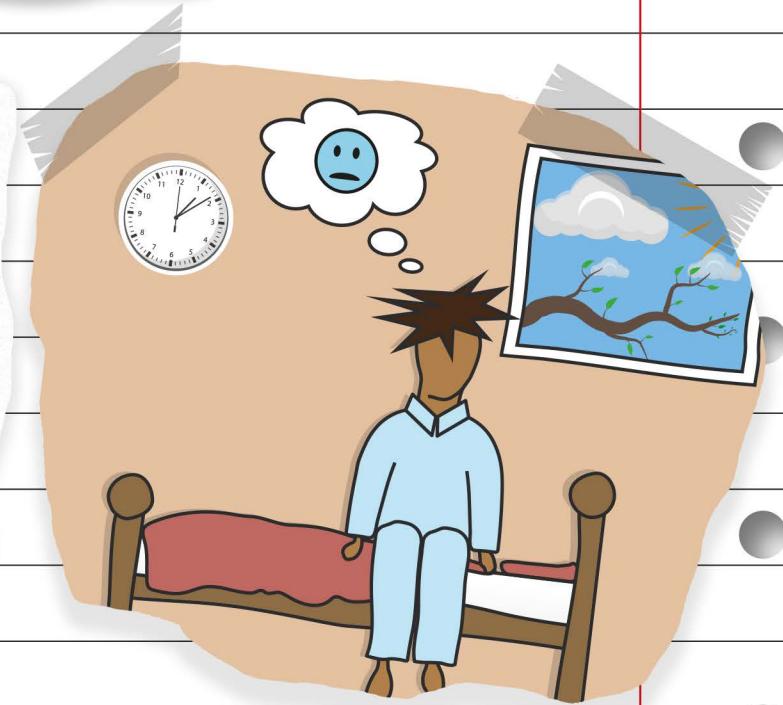
If under control, feeling a little anxious or stressed can even help us be alert and focused when we need to perform at our best – like those dreaded end of term exams!

Anxiety and stress can become a problem, however, when it happens too often, feels overwhelming or goes on for too long. Some people can find it hard to control their anxious thoughts and this can start to affect their day-to-day life.



# Depression and Feeling low

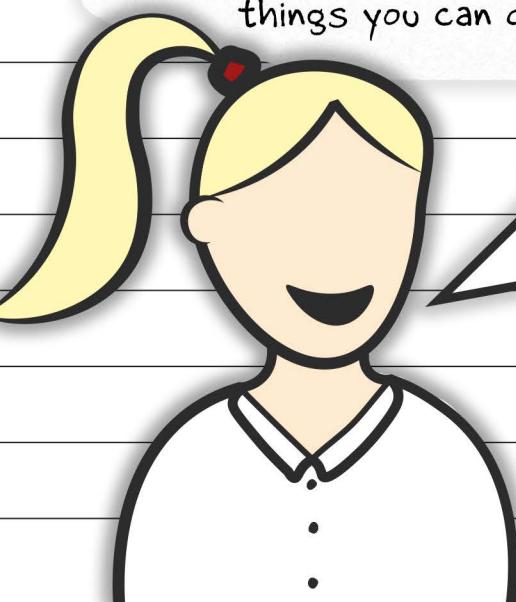
Everyone feels low or down from time to time and that's normal – we can't be happy 100% of the time and we might have good reason to feel sad. Feeling low is particularly common after a distressing event or major life change like the death of someone close or a relationship breakdown.



Low moods tend to lift after a few days or weeks. If they continue and won't go away, it can be a sign of depression. Depression is when we feel low or negative for long periods of time. Someone experiencing depression may think too much about events in the past and feel hopeless about the future, which can start to affect their daily life.

If you think you may be experiencing depression, there are lots of practical things you can do to help you cope and feel better soon.

Remember, mental health is just as important as physical health. If you're struggling with mental health issues, know that you're not alone, and help is available.



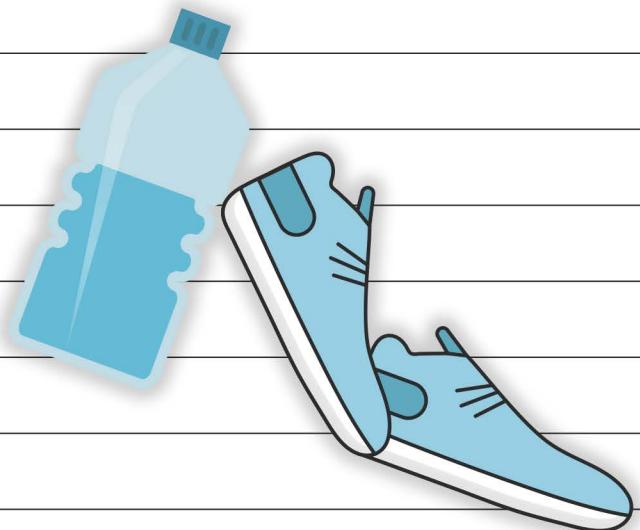
# You're human, not a machine!

## How to stay physically well while studying

Student life can be tough. With the pressure to do well academically, meet deadlines and make the most of your university experience, it's easy to forget that you're a human being with needs, not Chat GPT! It might feel like you don't have time to prioritise things like getting enough sleep or exercise, but taking care of your physical wellbeing is key to feeling well and thinking clearly.

### Get Moving!

Try to take at least 30 minutes of exercise every day – go for a walk, run or move your body however you can. Anything that involves movement and raises your pulse. Mindwell has videos and resources to help you keep active at home or in halls.



### Get a good night's sleep

Sleep is essential for physical and mental health. Adults need an average of seven to nine hours of sleep. Not getting enough sleep can affect memory and mental processes like learning, concentration, and problem-solving. Getting a good night's sleep recharges you for the day ahead and can help you feel stronger and better able to cope.



# Eating and Drinking

Eat well – it's easy to turn to sugary or processed foods when you're busy studying but eating a well-balanced diet with lots of fresh vegetables can really make a difference.

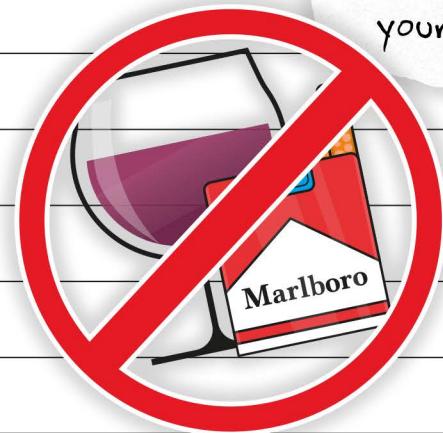
Keep hydrated – drink 6 to 8 glasses of water

Limit caffeine – try to drink no more than 2 cups of coffee or 4 cups of tea a day and don't drink caffeine after 6pm – have decaff, herbal teas or water instead.



# Alcohol, Drinking and drugs

Try to limit or avoid smoking, alcohol or drugs – we might feel like turning to some of these in times of stress or as a way of joining in at social events. Unfortunately, they can make you feel more anxious as well as affecting your sleep and physical wellbeing. If you decide you'd like to change your substance using habits, find help in Leeds for alcohol or drug use and stopping smoking.



# Be kind to your mind

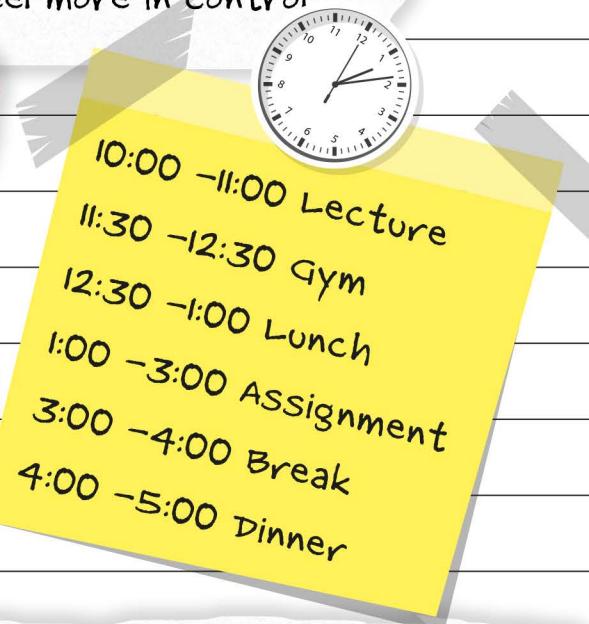
## How to stay mentally well while studying

It's easy to get caught up in the whirlwind of deadlines, assignments, and exams and forget the importance of connecting with others, relaxation and having fun. This can often lead to feelings of stress and anxiety, which can take a toll on both our mental and physical health. Here are some tips for managing stress and anxiety to help you feel more in control.

### Organise your time

Break assignments down into smaller, more manageable chunks and set some SMART goals with deadlines you can achieve. Review your to-do list each week to help reduce last-minute stress. Check out if your college or university offers study skill support to develop these skills.

Keep a structure to your day – it's easy to feel overwhelmed sometimes when juggling your studies with other areas of your life. Keeping to a routine can help you to focus and create a sense of normality – try to get up and go to bed at the same times, for example, and eat at regular times.



Try to prioritise – decide what needs doing now and what can wait. Think about which tasks will make the biggest difference and try to concentrate on one at a time. Don't try to do everything at once. If you're feeling very stressed it can help to pick one task now and focus on that.

# Reduce the pressure

Feeling some pressure can help you to feel motivated when working towards a deadline or sitting an exam, for example. But everyone can have days when things can get too much.

Take regular breaks while studying – taking a break can help you feel more relaxed and better able to cope with any pressure. Get up and move around, go for a walk outside or take some gentle exercise. Open the window if you need some fresh air. It's also important to plan for some time to rest and recharge between terms whilst also meeting your study deadlines.

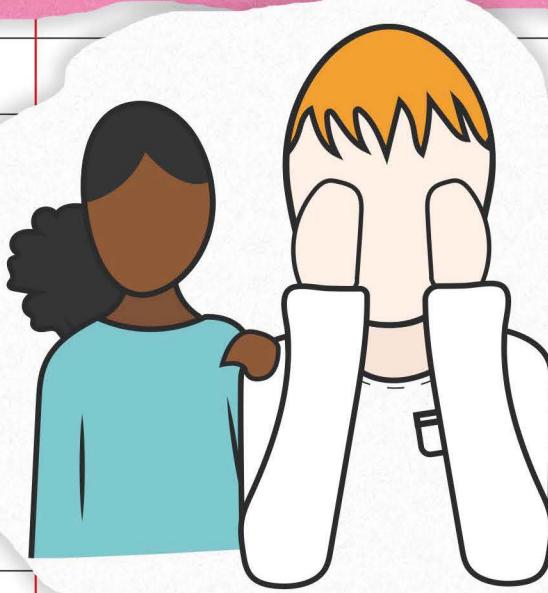


Create time for yourself each day – build in at least 30 minutes each day to shut off and do something you enjoy – read a book, watch your favourite TV programme, take some exercise or listen to music.

Be kind to yourself – leaving home for the first time, adapting to new ways of learning and trying to develop new relationships is a big deal. Adjusting can take time. Hang in there! And remember being at college or university is about developing yourself; it's not about being perfect all the time.



# Talk to someone if you're struggling

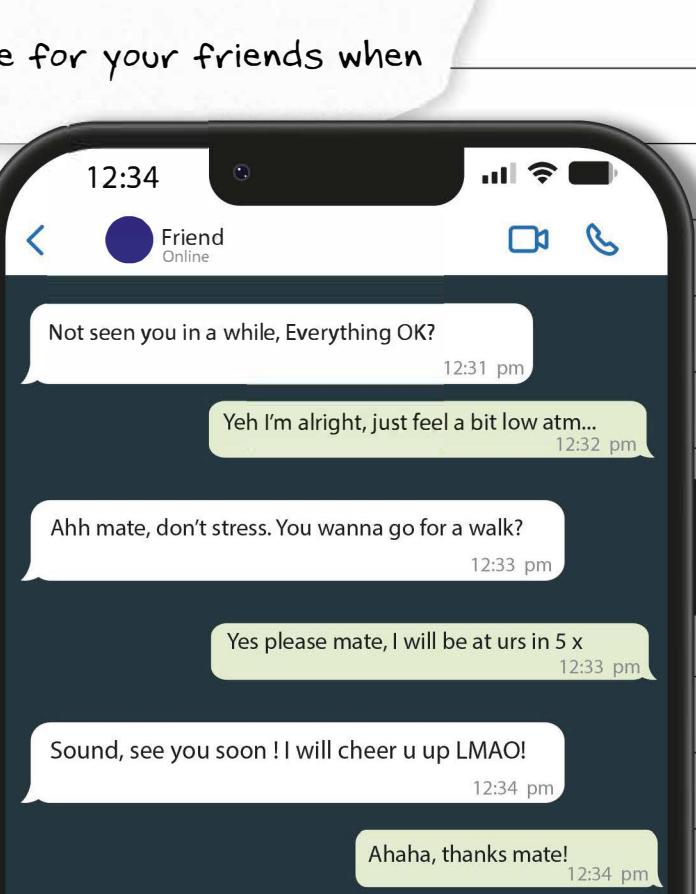


## Stay connected

make a plan to meet new people – make sure to nurture relationships with people you connect with. stay in touch through whatsapp or meet for a coffee when you need a chat. Be there for your friends when they need a chat as well.

stay in contact with your old networks – it's also important to stay in touch with your old support network whether that's your family or school friends. consider who supports you and is a positive presence in your life? Find ways to stay in contact whether that's a phone call, online message or a catch-up chat by zoom.

Don't keep problems to yourself – talking things through can relieve some of the pressure and help you feel more supported. whether you're feeling stressed about exams, family or money worries or breaking up with a partner; another person can often see a problem in a different way and suggest things that might help. Try talking to a trusted friend, family member, your tutor, student wellbeing team.



## Be kind - look out for your fellow humans

worried about that friend who's stopped coming to lectures or talking to people  
and rarely leaves their room?

It's only natural that you want to be a good friend to someone you care about. If you're concerned about someone it can be difficult to know how to talk to them about their mental health. You may be worried that you don't know what to say, might say the wrong things, or, that you might upset them by bringing it up.

Learn how to spot the signs someone might be struggling and follow our TALKS technique to help you to start a conversation.

# Looking for more help?

Remember, it's okay to ask for help and you don't have to face your challenges alone.

You can register and talk to a GP about your mental health as well as your physical health – around one third of all GP appointments are related to mental health.

You can also contact your university/college student wellbeing or safeguarding team to discuss support for your mental health.

Leeds Arts University

Leeds Beckett University

Leeds City College

Leeds College of Building

Leeds Conservatoire

Leeds Trinity University

Leeds University of Law

Northern School of Contemporary Dance

University of Leeds

The mental health, wellbeing and bereavement services featured on Mindwell can be accessed by students in Leeds (subject to service criteria). You may need to register with a Leeds GP to access some services.

## Finding support in Leeds

This includes Leeds Mental Wellbeing Service which offers support and psychological therapies for common problems like anxiety, stress, panic attacks and depression. You can self-refer to this service through the

service website:

Leeds Mental Wellbeing Service

# How to find help in a mental health crisis

click on Need urgent help? from any page on Mindwell to find services that can support you in a crisis. There's always someone to talk to. Or call one of the numbers below:

Connect Helpline – Leeds-based survivor-led service that supports people in crisis or emotional distress. Open every night. 0808 800 1212 (freephone)

West Yorkshire 24 hour mental health helpline – The West Yorkshire helpline provides confidential support, advice and information for anyone over 18 who is concerned about their mental health, or is worried about a family member or someone they care for. 0800 183 0558 (freephone)

Night Owls – confidential support line for children, young people, their parents and carers who live in Bradford, Leeds, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield.  
0800 148 8244 (Text 07984 392 700)

Samaritans helpline – whatever you're going through, the Samaritans will listen. Open 24 hours a day to help you find a way through. 116 123 (freephone)

You can also download our crisis sheet to find help if you, or someone you are worried about, is having a mental health emergency. Keep a copy folded in your bag, or bag or download it to your phone

# Helpful Links

Bereavement support

Caring for someone?

Gambling

Help for alcohol and drug use

Help for domestic abuse

It's Our Day: Student Breakfast club

Panic attacks

self-harm

student sex workers

Support for LGBT+ communities

Support for sexual assault

Young people's support groups

# Books

Finally, if you're interested in learning more about mental health, below is a list of recommended books and other resources. Knowledge is power, and the more you know, the better equipped you'll be to take care of your mental health!

Best for academic performance: Be Well, Learn Well: Improve Your Wellbeing and Academic Performance

Best for staying resilient: Why Has Nobody Told me this Before?

Best for people battling trauma: The Body Keeps the Score

Best for anxiety: Hope and Help for Your Nerves: End Anxiety Now

Best if you need a hug: The Comfort Book

Best for those short on time: How to Be Your Own Therapist: Boost your mood and reduce your anxiety in 10 minutes a day

Best for recovery from addition: The Unexpected Joy of Being Sober

Best for battling burnout: Burnout: The secret to Unlocking the stress cycle

Best for forming new habits: Atomic Habits: An Easy and Proven Way to Build Good Habits and Break Bad Ones

Best for healthy living: The Health Fix

Best for understanding a therapist's perspective: Maybe You Should Talk to someone

Best for feeling regret: The Midnight Library

Best for navigating relationships: Attached: The New Science of Adult Attachment and How It Can Help You Find—and Keep—Love

Best for introverts: Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking

Best for feeling hopeless: Reasons to stay Alive

Best for overthinkers: Me vs Brain: An Overthinker's Guide to Life

Best for practicing self-love: Loving Bravely

# Apps and online communities

calm - designed to help with your sleep, meditation and relaxation

catch it app - learn how to manage feelings like anxiety and learn how to turn negative thoughts into positive ones.

Daylio - track your fitness goals or create a mood diary

Drinkaware - stay on top of your drinking

Exhale - emotional and wellbeing app for and by black, indigenous women of colour.

Feeling Good: positive mindset - relax your body and mind with a series of audio tracks designed to help you build confidence, energy and a positive mindset.

Headspace - meditation and mindfulness made simple

Pzizz app - helps you quickly calm your mind, fall asleep fast, stay asleep, and wake up refreshed.

My possible self - for help with everyday challenges, including CBT techniques

side by side - is Mind's online community where you can feel at home talking about your mental health and connect with others who understand what you're going through.

Sleep station - online sleep treatment. Available through GP referral.

streaks - to help you form good habits

stress and anxiety companion app - helps you handle stress and anxiety on-the-go. Using breathing exercises, relaxing music and games designed to calm the mind.

Togetherall - is a safe online community to support your mental health, 24/7.

we hope you find our zine helpful and informative. Remember, taking care of your mental health is an ongoing process, and it's important to prioritise your wellbeing every day.