

Staying positive, keeping well

Your University at your side

Mental Health and Wellbeing at the University of Wolverhampton:

- provide free and confidential individual counselling
- offer non-judgemental support and understanding
- are professionally trained
- are experienced in dealing with a wide range of problems

Counselling can:

- help you to develop your strengths
- offer you the chance to focus on and understand your difficulties
- enable you to make positive decisions and changes
- help you to develop the skills and resources to cope
- help prevent small problems from becoming bigger

Get in touch

You can make an appointment to see a counsellor by filling out the Contact Us form at www.wlv.ac.uk/SSW, alternatively, you can come along to one of our drop-in services. For more information go to the web address above and click on the Mental Health and Wellbeing option. From here you will find a wealth of useful information and self-help tools as well as our Drop-ins and Group activities.

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Tips on how to look after yourself through the good times and the bad



Introduction

It's healthy and usual to feel a wide range of emotions: happiness, joy, sadness, anger and anxiety to name but a few. These feelings only become a problem when they stop us doing what we want to, prevent us from achieving our aims and generally interfere in our lives.

Our state of mind can be affected by all sorts of things including lifestyle, relationships, past experiences, biological and genetic factors. There are ways, however we can look after ourselves and have a greater influence over our moods. So this leaflet is all about promoting positive mental health.

On a daily basis

- Pay attention to your physical needs. Find a way to get some exercise and eat properly
- Get outside – blue skies can lead to blue-sky thinking, but any fresh air is a good idea!
- Interact or have contact with someone else. Even a brief chat can lift your spirits. Make time for friends and family.
- Learn or try something new. Open yourself up to new experiences.
- As structure can help, try to get into some sort of routine. This includes regular bed times.
- Through planning, try to get some balance between work and play.
- Include treats (these don't have to be chocolate or sweets. They could be some leisure activity a soak in the bath, or going for a walk etc.).
- Avoid too much of anything, especially alcohol or drugs. Alcohol is a depressant. Even a small amount of alcohol before bed stops us getting enough deep sleep.
- Plan something to look forward to.
- Try to keep your sense of humour Allow yourself to see the funny side in misunderstandings and embarrassments. Laughter heals!
- Consider keeping a diary Writing can be helpful when coping with new experiences.
- Challenge negative thinking and try to think positively; consider how much your lifestyle affects your moods.
- Learn to say 'No' when you mean 'No' and 'Yes' when you mean 'Yes'.

- Practise some mindfulness exercises.
- Increase how much you value yourself (your self-esteem). A high self-esteem helps us get through our difficulties. A low sense of self-esteem can mean we feel helpless, powerless, angry and even depressed.
- If you stop being able to do normal social and academic things, seek help. Don't wait until the problems have grown impossibly large!

Tackling stressful situations

It can be useful to remember the following:

- Acknowledge your thoughts, feelings and reactions, and work out what might be helpful in the situation.
- Translate worries into concerns and then into a plan of action. Taking control can make you feel better
- Remember how you have coped with difficult situations in the past.
- When you are not feeling so stressed, think of ways you might take care of yourself when you do feel at a loss. How do you generally deal with stress? What could you do (instead of say eating, drinking or even using drugs) to help yourself feel better?

“I feel more able to cope with my issues, and feel more positive and energetic. I have learned a lot about the kind of person I am”

Seek help early! Sometimes simply talking through a problem can help you find a solution.

You might like to read:

Rosenthal, H. and Hollis, J.W. (1994) *Help Yourself To Positive Mental Health*. Philadelphia: Taylor and Francis Group

Useful websites:

The Royal College of Psychiatrists
www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/atozindex.aspx

Advice from Mind:
www.mind.org.uk/information-support/mental-health-a-z/

Useful leaflets:
www.ntw.nhs.uk/pic/selfhelp/

Health A-Z at:
www.nhs.uk

Free meditation exercises:
<http://franticworld.com/free-meditations-from-mindfulness/>

