

UNDERGRADUATE MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

WITH APPROXIMATELY 1 IN 4 UNDERGRADUATES EXPERIENCING MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS, THIS POSTER EXPLORES SOME OF THE STRESSORS STUDENTS FACE DURING THEIR UNIVERSITY STUDIES.

IS SOMEONE IN YOUR COHORT STRUGGLING? KNOW SOME OF THE SIGNS*

- BEING ABSENT
- SLIPPING GRADES
- SOCIAL WITHDRAWAL
- DISHEVELLED APPEARANCE
- POOR SLEEP PATTERNS
- INCREASED IRRITABILITY
- CHANGES IN APPETITE
- INCREASED DRINKING

**Sometimes, the signs are not evident or hard to spot - one of the difficulties is differentiating general student life vs. those attributed to depression.*

*Looked through the list but can't relate? These are just some of the causes of stress and anxiety and what you are feeling is completely valid. Help *is* available!*

SUICIDAL THOUGHTS? CALL SAMARITANS NOW ON 116-123 OR EMAIL JD@SAMARITANS.ORG

FINANCIAL CONCERNS
 Managing personal finances, whilst not wanting to miss out on social opportunities with peers can be very difficult. In some cases, like city living costs can be very high.
 Tip: Some universities have hardship funds students can apply for. Budgeting and deciding - what is essential? may also help!

AWAY FROM HOME
 Being away from home for the first time can be very difficult and fending for yourself for the independently can be overwhelming.
 Tip: Try to schedule regular calls for check-ins with home friends and loved ones.

EXAM STRESS
 With the time pressures often associated with exams, as well as the perceived impact on the future, exam periods often result in increased anxiety.
 Tip: Try to treat revision like a job, making time to exercise and eat well "out-of-hours".

A+ GRADE PANIC
 Being in the top percentages of your school classes, to middling at university can lead to feelings of impostor syndrome and inadequacy.
 Tip: Try not to compare yourself with others.

LITTLE FISH, BIG POND
 With the increasing size of academic cohorts, it is often easy feel like "just one of the crowd".
 Tip: Academic tutors and teachers are there for *you* and can point you in the direction of help.

JOB PROSPECTS
 The fear of what is next and competing with peers for jobs can be daunting, including wondering whether your time has been well spent.
 Tip: Careers advice is available at universities to help with the transition.

ISOLATION
 With deadlines and coursework looming, university work can often be a lonely task.
 Tip: Think about joining study groups and university teams/clubs.

FEAR OF MISSING OUT
 FOMO as well as peer pressure, can lead to a packed schedule with little downtime.
 Tip: Sleep deprivation can impact wellbeing. Make sure to take some time out for you.

LIVING WITH OTHERS
 Living with housemates you find difficult can add stress, whether it's loud music at 2am or who takes the trash out.
 Tip: Try to have a chat and discuss what behaviour is causing issues and set boundaries.

WHAT CAN UNIVERSITIES DO?

SIGNPOST RESOURCES
 Great resources often exist, but they are not always visible. More apparent, consistent signposting is needed to ensure that students are fully aware of the help available to them.

SEE STUDENTS FAST
 When students are experiencing a mental health crisis, the speed that the student is seen is incredibly important. Wait times need to be kept to a minimum with priority given to those most in need.

TRAIN STAFF & CREATE LINKS
 Staff need to be fully aware of the reporting routes and help available to students to be able to advise on next steps. Having personal tutors to provide an approachable, familiar face for the student is important so that student has someone they can talk to.

MANAGE THE TRANSITION
 The transition from home to university is a difficult one. Hosting classes on financial management, how to cook etc, to create a smoother transition is useful. Talking about mental health in welcome week is also necessary so students understand the strains.

WHAT CAN STUDENTS DO?

SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE
 Speak to a medical professional about how you are feeling. This may lead to intervention such as medication or counselling to help you manage your mental health.

REACH OUT FOR HELP
 If you feel able, talk to a friend, family member, your personal tutor, or one of your lecturers and let them know you are in need of help. They will be able to provide support and guidance. Your peers will likely be experiencing similar feelings.

FOCUS ON YOU
 With the pressure on exams and grades, it is easy to forget that looking after yourself, such as working out, going for a walk and eating well can also help your wellbeing (and often grades too) as well as studying hard.

SEEING OTHERS IN DISTRESS
 Seeing members of your cohort struggling can be difficult. Sometimes it can be hard to know what steps, if any, you should take. Try to regularly check in with them, and let them know what help is available and encourage them to reach out.