**Mind Your Head**

**For more info and support visit** [**www.fxu.org.uk/mentalhealth**](http://www.fxu.org.uk/mentalhealth)

**Introduction**

Hello, and welcome to Mind Your Head!

This booklet has been made for you the students, to help you through times when you are feeling particularly stressed or anxious. We also hope this helps you understand mental health more, from living with anxiety and depression to how to help a friend.

You will find advice, tips, and suggestions on different self-care techniques within this booklet. From the top ten ways to feel more optimistic to how to make a colour lamp simply with a glass of water, there is a lot of small things you can do to make a big difference to your life.

Self-care is incredibly important and there is a lot you can do for yourself, but there are also many services available to you. Within this booklet you’ll find out information about all the services that are there for you.

When it comes to the stigma around mental health we have found there is a lot of misperceptions and have addressed these misperceptions within the booklet.

Everyone is different, and everyone’s mental health is different, but within this booklet you will find there is something to help everyone. This is not a cure, but what it can be is a support for you when you need it most.

For more information and advice on help that is available for you please feel free to contact me on Jaime-lee.Cunningham@staffs.ac.uk. The Staffs Students’ Union are here for you, always.

Lots of love,

Jaime-lee Cunningham

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**Be Stress Free With Our New Free App**

We realise that sometimes student life is not all plane sailing and fun. Sometimes it can get really stressful. Whether you are juggling revision with trying to earn money, making friendships work or just coping with the pressure of everyday life, learning how to deal with stress is a vital life skill.

This is why we have teamed up with the experts at Health eLiving Partnership (HeLP). They have created a fantastic app that helps you learn to cope with stress and stressful circumstances. The apps are really simple, just a series of games that you can play anywhere on your phone, tablet, or online. Based on decades of proven research the therapies the app provides really do help!

The other good news is it’s free. The FXU partnership with Help means you can download and use the app for free: so no stress there then!

To get started follow these simple steps below:

For Apple iOS devices go to: https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/be-stress-free/id1048928580?mt=8

For Android devices go to: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.help.stressfree

Alternative to play on line go to: [www.feelstressfree.com](http://www.feelstressfree.com)

Once you have downloaded the app you will need to sign up. Set up a password and validate your email address by clicking on the email you’ll receive. Then you are ready to go.

Remember, managing stress is really important. By learning to cope with it now you will be able to perform better, achieve more and live a happier life.

**Know Your Head**

The following list was written for the FXU by a mental health professional, so you can mind you head and that of your friends and family. When it comes to mental health it is better to know and understand.

**ADHD** (Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder)

*A group of behavioral symptoms that include inattentiveness, hyperactivity and impulsiveness.*

**Anxiety**

*Anxiety is a feeling of unease, such as worry or fear that can be mild or severe. It can result in panic attacks, anxiety attacks and a strong desire to stay safe. Which can cause isolation.*

**Bipolar Disorder**

*Characterized by episodes of depression (feeling very low and lethargic) and mania (feeling very high and overactive). This is not the same as mood swings.*

**Depression**

*Depression can manifest as lasting feelings of sadness and hopelessness, losing interest in things previously enjoyed, insomnia, lack of appetite or sex drive and unexplained aches and pains. It may also overlap with the symptoms of anxiety.*

**Eating Disorders**

*Eating Disorders are characterized by an abnormal attitude towards food that causes someone to change their eating habits and behavior. This can refer to Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia and Binge Eating.*

**OCD** (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder)

*OCD often refers to a repetitive behavioral or mental act which if not done causes unwanted and unpleasant repeated thoughts, images or urges which cause feelings of anxiety, disgust or unease.*

**Panic Disorder**

*Panic Disorders cause regular and random panic attacks, often for no apparent reason. These usually manifest as nausea, sweating, trembling and heart palpitations. Although terrifying, they should not cause physical harm.*

**Psychosis**

*Psychosis is an umbrella term used for a range of mental health symptoms that a person might experience. When an individual experiences a psychotic episode/experience they might perceive or interpret events differently from the people around them. This could include experiencing hallucinations, delusions or flight ideas.*

**PTSD** (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)

*An anxiety disorder caused by a very stressful, frightening or distressing event. It can manifest as a drug or alcohol dependency, distrustfulness, suicidal thoughts, nightmares/flashbacks/insomnia, extreme anger, self-harm and other issues.*

**SAD** (Seasonal Affective Disorder)

*SAD is a type of depression which has a seasonal pattern. This often manifests as very low moods, lack of interest in life, sleeping more and a desire to be less active during winter months.*

**Self-Care, Sixty Four Ways**

* Take a ‘mental health day’ off.
* Have a warm drink.
* Write in your journal.
* Go for a walk.
* Have breakfast in bed.
* Have a massage.
* Play with an animal.
* Give yourself a hand or foot massage.
* Get some exercise.
* Go to the movies or a show.
* Write some poetry.
* Go window shopping.
* Walk in the rain.
* Tune into yourself and find out what you are feeling and what you need.
* Plan something fun – an outing treat, celebration or holiday.
* Dance.
* Stop and smell the flowers.
* Meditate or pray.
* Watch a funny video.
* Relax with a good book.
* Make a list of things that make you happy.
* Go to a park and swing on the swings.
* Wake up early and watch the sunrise.
* Make a special meal just for you.
* Sing.
* Visualise a safe. Relaxing scene and imagine stepping into it and soaking up the peace.
* Give yourself a facial.
* Write down everything you love about yourself.
* Notice your achievements and give yourself credit for them.
* Give yourself permission to sit and relax, especially when you are tired.
* Read an inspirational book.
* Listen to a positive, motivational CD.
* Take a warm scented bath.
* Sit in the sun.
* Phone a friend.
* Go to the beach or bush.
* Buy yourself some flowers or a plant.
* Spend time in the garden.
* Write a letter to an old friend.
* Play your favourite music.
* Do something creative just for pleasure.
* Write about your special accomplishments in your journal.
* Explore nature.
* Have a spa, swim or sauna.
* Cook something special.
* Go to bed early.
* Watch the sunset.
* Buy yourself an affordable treat.
* Plan a get-together with friends.
* Listen to the birds.
* Go to the library.
* Say soothing, loving things to yourself.
* Draw or paint a picture.
* Have a foot bath.
* Write about how you are feeling.
* Browse in a book store.
* Do some yoga.
* Ask someone for a hug.
* Burn essential oils in an oil burner.
* Ask for the help and support you need.
* Play some calming music.
* Create quality time for you by taking the phone off the hook.
* Lie on the grass.
* Eat something nourishing.

**Relaxation exercises**

<http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22> – Online free meditation and mindfulness

Stress relief

* NHS suggests.
* Exercise is the miracle cure we’ve always had, but many of us have forgotten to take our recommended dose for too long. Our health could now be suffering as a consequence.
* Exercise is no 'snake oil'. Whatever your age, there's strong scientific evidence that being physically active can help you lead a healthier and even happier life.
* People who do regular activity have a lower risk of many chronic diseases, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke and some cancers.
* Research shows that physical activity can also [boost self-esteem](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/mentalhealth/Pages/Dealingwithlowself-esteem.aspx), mood, sleep quality and energy, as well as reducing your risk of stress, depression, dementia and Alzheimer’s disease.

**Relaxed breathing**

Practice deep breathing at a regular time and in a quiet place where you won’t be disturbed. Loosen or remove any tight clothes you have on, such as shoes or jackets. Make yourself feel completely comfortable.

Sit in a comfy chair which supports your head or lie on the floor or a bed. Place your arms on the chair arms, or flat on the floor or bed, a little bit away from the side of your body with the palms up. If you’re lying down, stretch out your legs, keeping them hip-width apart or slightly wider. If you’re sitting in a chair, don’t cross your legs.

Good relaxation always starts with focusing on your breathing. The way to do it is to breathe in and out slowly and in a regular rhythm as this will help you to calm down.

* Fill up the whole of your lungs with air, without forcing. Imagine you're filling up a bottle, so that your lungs fill from the bottom.
* Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.
* Breathe in slowly and regularly counting from one to five (don’t worry if you can’t reach five at first).
* Then let the breath escape slowly, counting from one to five.
* Keep doing this until you feel calm. Breathe without pausing or holding your breath.

Practice this relaxed breathing for three to five minutes, two to three times a day (or whenever you feel stressed).

**Deep muscle relaxation**

This technique takes around 20 minutes. It stretches different muscles in turn and then relaxes them, to release tension from the body and relax your mind.

Find a warm, quiet place with no distractions. Get completely comfortable, either sitting or lying down. Close your eyes and begin by focusing on your breathing; breathing slowly and deeply, as described above.

If you have pain in certain muscles, or if there are muscles that you find it difficult to focus on, spend more time on relaxing other parts.

You may want to play some soothing music to help relaxation. As with all relaxation techniques, deep muscle relaxation will require a bit of practice before you start feeling its benefits.

For each exercise, hold the stretch for a few seconds, then relax. Repeat it a couple of times. It’s useful to keep to the same order as you work through the muscle groups:

* **Face**: push the eyebrows together, as though frowning, then release.
* **Neck**: gently tilt the head forwards, pushing chin down towards chest, then slowly lift again.
* **Shoulders**: pull them up towards the ears (shrug), then relax them down towards the feet.
* **Chest**: breathe slowly and deeply into the diaphragm (below your bottom rib) so that you're using the whole of the lungs. Then breathe slowly out, allowing the belly to deflate as all the air is exhaled.
* **Arms**: stretch the arms away from the body, reach, then relax.
* **Legs**: push the toes away from the body, then pull them towards body, then relax.
* **Wrists and hands**: stretch the wrist by pulling the hand up towards you, and stretch out the fingers and thumbs, then relax.

Spend some time lying quietly after your relaxation with your eyes closed. When you feel ready, stretch and get up slowly.

**Societies and Sports Clubs to Check Out**

Stress is something that is very hard to deal with at times, and something that can help is having a group of people around you doing something outside of your studies. Staffs Students’ Union sports clubs and societies offer you so many extracurricular activities to do you’ll find yourself wanting to join them all! This is a great and easy way to get a secure people around you who will be there at the same time and place often each week, in a safe environment of your peers. You can see all our sports clubs and societies, as well as join them, here: http://www.staffsunion.com/activities/clubsandsocs/

**Ten Ways to Think and Feel More Optimistic**

**Do Something Good For Someone Else:** Giving back shifts your focus outward and often helps put things into perspective. You can volunteer your time, your skills, your resources — whatever you’re comfortable with! It is also a great way to meet new people and broaden your horizons!

**Go Outside:** Be it for a walk around the campus grounds or else reading a book on a bench outside – going outside and no longer being in a closed-in environment is a great mood lifter.

**Have A Hobby and Share It with Others:** We all need that something which we do purely because we love it – rather than for work or university. Be it gaming, cooking, sailing, drawing, or anything else in-between: make time for it. Making time for your hobby is making time for yourself – and why not check out the many sport clubs and societies to share your passion with others!

**Look for the Positive**: If something goes wrong don’t see it as a failure. Instead take from the situation what you have learned to be moved forwards with you as a learning curve. This can be understanding how to get a higher grade in your next essay or else being more prepared for a future job interview. Just because something didn’t turn out how you hoped it would doesn’t mean it is inherently negative!

**Make a ‘Happy’ List:** This is really simple, but also fun! Every night just before you go to bed write down three great things that happened that day. They could be in a private journal that you can then read through again or else post them as bullet points in a Facebook status! This will help you appreciate the good things that happen each day and forget the bad.

**Make a Specific ‘Get Happy’ Playlist:** Music feeds the mind, body, and soul – and if you play your tunes right can change a bad day in to a good day! It is easy to listen to your emotions (My Chemical Romance anyone?) but it is far better to listen to the opposite of what you’re feeling. Make a playlist of happy songs, even if they are silly like S Club 7 or Disney! Music affects us greatly, so think before you play.

**Meditate:** Meditation is a great exercise to do to separate yourself from a situation and take time to relax. There are some great app’s available to download directly on to your phone. Something that can be done alone or with others, very easy to learn, and with so many different types of meditation you are sure to find the one that suits you!

**Sleep for Seven to Eight Hours:** Staying up all night either studying or having fun might seem like a good idea at the time, but the next day you’ll regret it! Try to get at between eight and nine hours sleep a night. It will leave you mind and body feeling well rested.

**Smile and Laugh:** It might sound almost too simple but watching a silly video on YouTube or doing anything else to give you a moment of happiness and a genuine smile acts like an instant (though temporary) emotional booster. Remember you can laugh and smile – you have it in you, sometimes it just needs some help!

And our number one top tip is… **Find Love!** It doesn’t have to be for another person, but having love in your life in any form will make you more optimistic and boost your spirits. Be it your friends, a pet, a hobby, music, art, or yourself!

**Five Bad Habits to Break**

## Step Away From Social Media: Most people would be happier (and less stressed) if they checked their phone less. [A study of college students at Kent State University](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0747563214005822) found that people who check their phones frequently tend to experience higher levels of distress during their leisure time (when they intend to relax). Stop checking your smartphone randomly. Instead, give yourself specific times to catch up on social media and email.

**Cut out Caffeine:** This might sound like hell for a lot of people, but don’t let your little morning boosts fool you! Those who give up caffeine often find themselves to feel more awake during the day and attentive, with fewer emotional and physical drops in energy. Give it a month for the caffeine to leave your system and you to feel the difference!

**Saying Bad Things About Yourself:** Saying such things as ‘I’m useless’ or ‘I wish I was beautiful’ might be something a lot of people do, but breaking this habit can boost your confidence and thus your optimism. This isn’t about instead saying ‘I’m beautiful’ (though just so you know, you *are* beautiful so feel free to tell everyone) but instead not saying the negative. It doesn’t need replacing because it just doesn’t need to be said in the first place. Start with not saying the bad, and grow in to thinking the good.

**Stop Saying Bad Things About Other People:** This can be anything from commenting on a person’s outfit to calling them a silly name, or even being negative about a celebrity. By actively being negative about others you open yourself up to negativity about yourself, but also push people away from you. You’ll find yourself happier and mentally healthier for this.

**Eat Healthy and Care for Your Body:** Take away every night will drag your body down, and as such also drag down your mind. Get a low calorie ready meal, thrown together salad, or a homemade dinner with ingredients. It is easier to eat healthy than you think for all lifestyles and types of people.

**Colour Therapy**

Colour therapy can easily be applied to day to day life by the smallest and easiest changes made by a person. By changing the colour of the clothes they were to give themselves a set energy, or by filling their room with a certain colour, they can create a spark of a certain emotion or trait within themselves. Whether or not this is on a spiritual level it has obvious benefits, for example, is someone has a wall hanging on their wall that is black it will increase negativity, especially in the winter. Changing this to yellow can lift the mood of those with depression or S.A.D. (Seasonal Affective Disorder). It is not a cure, by no means, but it is a small thing the person can do for themselves as a lifestyle change to aid their mental health.



Why not try making yourself a light jar to cast some colour over your bedroom or living space? Simply get a glass jar (a pint glass also works well!) and fill it with water. Next, you need to either paint the outside in a thin layer of paint in your chosen colour or else tinted clear plastic wrapped around the outside with elastic bands. Then all you need to do is cover the top and put it on a windowsill! Watch the sunlight stream through the window, hit the jar, and fill your space with a bright glow.

During the evening or winter months, you can put your jar in front of a bright lamp to create the same effect! Lamps are also a great way to add more light to a room to brighten it up, not just so you can read your university textbooks but also, to give your mental health a small boost! Even opening curtains and letting sunlight in makes a difference. Remember; small things make just as much difference as big things!

**Tips for Helping Others**

**Do:**

* Act sooner rather than later
* Be direct and honest; talk openly
* Be positive; encourage your friend
* Listen carefully
* Show empathy, be supportive
* Take care of yourself
* Be available
* Be patient
* Express concerns in specific terms
* Feel confident that your friend can get better
* Be aware and non-judgmental
* Ask what you can do to help
* Trust your instincts
* Ask questions, be responsive
* Educate yourself
* Pay attention
* Take talk of suicide very seriously
* Be natural, be yourself
* Invite your friend out for walks, activities and fun
* Remind your friend there is hope

And most importantly you are not expected to help or care for anyone also. There are details of different people you can contact to ask for help in the back of this booklet, please use them if you need to. All of the services are here for you.

**Do not:**

* Wait to see if your friend feels better
* Act shocked
* Be critical, sceptical or dismissive
* Agree to keep secrets
* Be patronizing or overpowering
* Lecture
* Take over your friend’s life
* Respond negatively
* Avoid the concern or issue
* Judge your friend
* Give up or get discouraged
* Get defensive or angry
* Tell your friend to ‘snap out of it’
* Ignore your friend’s concerns
* Suggest you have all the answers
* Be afraid of being wrong
* Joke about the situation
* Ask “why”
* Overextend yourself
* Try to diagnose your friend
* Manage the situation alone

**Support services**

If you’re struggling with any form of mental health difficulties or you just need a bit of extra support, there are a range of services there to support students. These range from Students’ Union and University services, to external services and charities. These services are also there to offer advice, so if you’re not sure whether this support is what you need they can offer advice on who to go to and whether their services will help. These services are also there to support those of you who may have caring responsibilities or those who may be worried about another student at university.

**The Student Enabling Centre**

The student Enabling Centre offer a range of services to support students through their time at university. Their counselling service provides the opportunity for students to talk in a confidential and supportive setting.

**Contact details**

Counselling - Student Enabling Centre (Stoke campus)
Cadman Courtyard (Cadman building)
College Road
Stoke on Trent
Staffs
ST4 2DE
**t:**+44 (0)1782 294977
**e:**counsellingreception@staffs.ac.uk

Counselling - Student Enabling Centre (Stafford campus)
One Stop Shop, Ground Floor, Beacon Building
Beaconside
Stafford
ST18 0AD
**t:**+44 (0)1785 353302
**e:**counsellingreception@staffs.ac.uk

**University Mental Wellbeing Support**

Mental wellbeing support offers one-to-one emotional and academic support for students to ensure you have all of the support you need at university.

**Contact details**

Lisa Benson
Student Wellbeing Advisor
Cadman Courtyard, College Road, Stoke on Trent. ST4 2DE

**t:** 01782 294517
**f:** 01782 292786
**Minicom:** 01782 294564
**e:**l.j.benson@staffs.ac.uk

Heather Brown Student Wellbeing AdvisorD001, One Stop Shop, Ground Floor, Beacon Building, Beaconside, Stafford.

**t:** 01785 353302
**f:** 01785 353330
**e:**h.e.brown@staffs.ac.uk

**Student Advice Centre**

If you are experiencing any form of mental health difficulties The Student Advice Centre can help ensure this does not affect your studies.

**sac@staffs.ac.uk**

**Stafford**
Student Advice Centre,
Beacon Building,
Beaconside,
Stafford,
ST18 0AD

Tel: 01785 353311

**Stoke**
Student Advice Centre (Above the Ember Lounge),
College Road,
Stoke-on-Trent,
ST4 2DE

Tel: 01782 294629

**Anxiety UK**

**Website:** https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/

**Telephone:** 08444 775 774

**Opening Hours:** Monday to Friday 09:30-17:30

Anxiety UK works to relieve and support those living with anxiety disorders by providing information, support and understanding via various resources and services.

**B-Eat**

**Website:** https://www.b-eat.co.uk/

**Telephone:**  0345 634 1414

**Opening Hours:** Monday to Friday 14:00-16:00

Beat is the UK's leading charity supporting anyone who is affected by eating disorders or struggling with food, weight and body shape. B-eat provide information, support and encouragement to seek treatment and recovery for people of all ages in a range of ways including over the phone or online.

**Changes**

CHANGES is a user-led mental health charity providing a unique recovery service to those in mental distress.

Changes Wellbeing Centre
Victoria Court
Booth Street
**Stoke**ST4 4AL
**01782 413 101
stoke****@changes.org.uk**

**Mind**

Mind provide support and advice to anyone experiencing mental health difficulties.

44 Church Street

Stoke on Trent, Staffs, ST4 1BL

**Phone:** 01782 746731

**Website:**

**Opening hours:** Monday to Saturday: 8.30am - 4.30pm

**Rethink**

**Website:** https://www.rethink.org/home

**Telephone:** Advice and Information Line: 0300 5000 927

**Opening Hours:** Monday to Friday 10:00-14:00 (excluding bank holidays)

Rethink is dedicated to helping those diagnosed with mental health problems understand and manage their illness. It provides information around symptoms, medication and your rights. Rethink has a dedicated helpline with trained staff to talk you through any issues surrounding mental health. They also have a specific section of their web page about supporting a loved one with a mental illness.

**Samaritans**

**Website:** http://www.samaritans.org/

**Telephone:** 08457 90 90 90

**Opening Hours:** 24/7

Samaritans provide confidential emotional support for anyone in need, no matter what you are experiencing. They can help you explore your options, understand your problems, or just be there to listen.

**GP**

If you think you need extra support your GP is a great place to start. They can offer advice on who to speak to and the different options available to support you such as NHS adult mental health services.