



# Student life and mental health

Explains how you can look after your mental health as a student, giving practical suggestions for what you can do and where you can go for support.

If you want to contact us with any feedback, email [contact@mind.org.uk](mailto:contact@mind.org.uk).

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# About student mental health

Studying is likely to bring a number of changes to your life. It can be enjoyable and interesting, but it can also be challenging.

You might face challenges such as:

- Meeting and working with new people
- Exams, presentations or deadlines for written work
- Managing your own finances
- Coping with homesickness
- Balancing the demands of studying with other commitments, such as caring responsibilities or work
- Leaving home, finding new housing and living with new people
- Maintaining relationships with family and friends, especially if you have moved away from home

“When I began university I'd been struggling with my mental health for years but had not got help, and starting university in a new city kick-started my path to diagnosis and recovery.”

Coping with new challenges can have an impact on your mental health. But there are lots of things that you can do to make your time as a student easier and more enjoyable.

Some of the things that might make you more likely to experience a mental health problem as a student are:

- **Stress** – becoming a student can be a stressful experience. Although stress isn't a mental health problem, it can lead to mental health problems like depression and anxiety. See our pages on [managing stress](#) for more information.
- **Lack of support** – you might have left home for the first time, or just don't have enough time to see your friends and family. Not having a good support network can make you vulnerable to developing a mental health problem.

You may already be living with an existing mental health problem and be receiving help and support for this. As you start life as a student you may find that your support changes location or you transition from [CAMHS \(Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services\)](#) to adult services.

It's important to continue your support if needed, become familiar with what this might be and how it will work while you are a student.

“I was sat in a hot, sweaty lecture theatre when suddenly I felt like I needed to escape.”

[Read Sophie's story about learning to cope with anxiety and panic attacks at university](#)

## Common mental health problems for students

The following mental health problems are the most common among students.

Our [A-Z of mental health](#) has more information about mental health problems, as well as a range of other relevant topics.

### Anxiety

Anxiety disorders are one of the most commonly diagnosed mental health problems among students.

Anxiety is what we feel when we are worried, tense or afraid – particularly about things that are about to happen, or which we think could happen in the future. Anxiety can become a mental health problem if it impacts on your ability to live your life as fully as you want to.

See our web pages on [anxiety](#) for more information.

### Depression

Depression is another common mental health problem among students.

Depression is a type of mental health problem that involves having a low mood or losing interest and enjoyment in things. It can cause a range of other changes too, and if affects your everyday living.

See our web pages on [depression](#) for more information.

### Suicidal feelings

Suicidal feelings can mean having abstract thoughts about ending your life, or feeling that people would be better off without you. Or it can mean thinking about methods of suicide or making clear plans to take your own life.

See our web pages on [suicidal feelings](#) for more information.

If you feel unable to keep yourself safe, it's a mental health emergency.  
[Get emergency advice](#)

# How can I prepare for student life?

This section covers some of the things you may be considering at the start of your student journey:

- [Deciding to become a student](#)
- [Planning your healthcare](#)
- [Managing your finances](#)
- [Managing your studies](#)

## Deciding to become a student

There are many decisions to make before your studies begin. These could have an impact on how enjoyable and worthwhile you find your course.

You are likely to face decisions such as: what subject to study, what type of course to take, and where? The [Universities and Colleges Admissions Service \(UCAS\)](#) can help you explore some of your options.

Going to open days might help you to get a better insight into the subject and what teaching methods the university or college uses. You can also get a feel for the place of study. Open days tend to run throughout the year. It's worth checking the calendars of a few colleges or universities that you are interested in. You may need to register for a place in advance.

Whether to study close to home, to commute or to move somewhere new is another decision that you are likely to face. Check out Student Minds' [Transitions guide](#) for some helpful advice on this.

It may be that you decide university is not the right option for you. For information on the alternatives that may suit you better, take a look at the [Not Going To Uni guide](#).

## Planning your healthcare

If you're currently receiving treatment for a mental health problem and you register with a new GP, the support you get may change. Your new GP or Community Mental Health Team (CHMT) may, or may not, do a new assessment. They might advise on a new treatment plan, or they may continue with your current treatment. The NHS has more information about [registering with a new GP as a student](#).

To minimise the disruption, it can help to plan early - even as soon as you've chosen a course or accepted a place. Talk to your current GP or CMHT about:

- The move and what this might mean for your treatment

- How your medical notes will be transferred
- What they can do to ensure that your new GP understands your medical needs
- Reviewing any medication you're taking that may affect your studying
- Writing a summary letter about your medical history for your new GP

You might also be considering if, how and when to tell your place of study about your mental health problem. [The University Mental Health Advisers Network \(UMHAN\)](#) is a network of mental health specialists working in higher and further education. Its website has information about telling your place of study and what protection you have.

## Managing your finances

Studying is likely to affect your personal finances. The money you receive and the way you get it may change. It's important to think about how you will pay for essentials like food, housing and tuition fees. And course costs such as books and other equipment.

I try to be sensible with my spending where possible – I always ensure I can afford to eat well and leave enough to treat myself from time to time.

The change in financial situation can be particularly difficult if you are a mature student used to earning a full-time wage. Or if you have children or dependents that you support financially. The [UK government website](#) has information about extra financial support you may be entitled to. [Save the Student](#) also has information about funding available to mature students.

## If you have a disability

A Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is available to students who have a disability, mental health problem or learning disability.

A DSA is a grant that you don't need to pay back. It can help you cover any extra study-related costs that you may have because of your disability. You need to have been diagnosed by a medical professional and provide proof of this.

The [UK government website](#) has more information about applying for a DSA.

Money worries may feel like more of a challenge if you are a care-leaver or don't have financial support from your family. Take a look at [Stand Alone](#) for information about applying for student loans and support from your local authority. [UCAS](#) also has information about dedicated funding for care-leavers.

Regardless of your situation, it can be useful to create a weekly or termly budget plan. This can help you keep track of your incomings and outgoings. Pick a method that you will find easy to use such as an app or spreadsheet. There are lots of templates online you could use.

Check out [The Money Charity's Student Money Manual](#), [Money Helper](#) and [Save the Student](#) for more advice on managing your finances.

You could also take a look at our [money and mental health](#) pages.

“I do part-time university with the Open University, so I have a full-time job alongside. It helps a lot.”

## Managing your studies

You may be returning to education after a break or continuing your studies straight from school or college. Whatever your situation, you may find that you have more responsibility for your own study than you've been used to. This can provide flexibility in how you structure your day, but getting used to planning your own schedule can be a challenge.

“I try to take a step back and assess my workload, write a list and take it one step at a time.”

Many colleges and universities run study skills sessions for new students. These can be a great way of learning how to plan and manage your time. They can also help you to understand some of the possible requirements from your new course, such as how to write a research proposal or reference other studies correctly. You could check your university or college's website to see what is available at your place of study.

“What I wish I'd known sooner is how adaptable university is. There is no right or wrong way to do it – because everyone is different.”

[Read Lizzie's story](#)

# How can I connect with other students?

For some people, studying is a time where they socialise with a wide range of people and have many new experiences. While this can be positive, it can also feel overwhelming. This section covers:

- [Meeting new people](#)
- [Living with other students](#)
- [Loneliness](#)

## Meeting new people

Being around so many other students creates a great opportunity to meet like-minded people. If you're finding it hard to meet new people, remember many other students will feel the same way. Here are some suggestions to help you get started:

- **Clubs or societies** can be a great way to get to know people and create a work-life balance. See what's on offer when you enrol or check in with your Students' Union.
- **Course forums or email groups** can keep you connected if you're studying online. Getting to know people online can also make it easier if the course has events like study weekends where you will all meet in person.
- **Volunteering** can help you meet people who share an interest with you. There are lots of different ways to get involved:
  - Your college or university's Students' Union may be able to help you to find volunteering opportunities
  - You could get involved in [volunteering](#) or [student fundraising](#) for Mind
  - [Do IT](#) can help match you with voluntary roles that fit your interests
  - [Student Minds](#) runs volunteering programmes you might be interested in
  - [The Royal Voluntary Service](#) also has specific opportunities for students, such as volunteering in the NHS

Meeting new people can seem more of a challenge if you feel less like those around you.

- **If you have experienced time in care** before studying, you may feel like you have less in common with your classmates. As well as meeting people in the ways described above, it can be useful to connect with groups outside of your place of study. These can help strengthen your support network. For example, the Rees Foundation runs [peer network events](#) for care-leavers at all stages of their educational, academic and work lives.

- **If you identify as LGBTQIA+** (meaning you may be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex or asexual) [Student Minds](#) has information for LGBTQ+ students. There's advice on starting conversations and what to do if you experience discrimination.

## Confronting my social anxiety at university

“...I quickly felt lonely, overwhelmed and, at times, quite depressed due to my social skills, or lack thereof.”

[Read Max's story](#)

## Living with other students

If you've moved away from home, it's likely that at some point you will have to organise your own housing. You may not always feel you have a lot of choice. Especially during the first year when university halls are the main option for most students. But you could think about if you want to live:

- With people who you can talk to about your mental health
- With a smaller number of people, perhaps in a smaller house or block of halls
- Closer to campus or somewhere with better transport links
- Near shops and amenities such as cafes and sports centres to make it easier to be sociable
- Somewhere quiet with more privacy

Renting a house or flat for the first time is a big deal, but there is plenty of advice and support out there. Check whether your university or college offers advice about accommodation, managing landlords and signing contracts. [Citizens Advice](#) also has information about student housing.

“I make plans to see classmates or friends during study breaks to ensure I don't become isolated or lonely. I also make plans each day to leave the house and get outside. Going for a walk is a useful way of relaxing and clearing my head.”

## Loneliness

Lots of students feel lonely. Social media can give the impression that all of your friends are having the best time, all the time. This comparison can make you feel lonelier and loneliness can have a big impact on your mental health. Remember that people usually only post photos of the positive times on social media. This can give a false impression of how great things are.

Take a look at the social media accounts or websites of mental health charities. There are some listed in the [Useful contacts](#) on page 24. Many have platforms to network and share experiences in a safe way.

You could try joining a peer support group, either online or in person.

- [Side by Side](#), is a supportive online space where you can share experiences and listen to others who have similar mental health issues.
- There might be groups at your institution specifically for students who are experiencing mental health problems. [Student Minds](#) runs [peer support programmes](#) and mental health campaign groups at universities across the UK.
- [The Mix](#) has an online community, for anyone aged under 25.

**Remember your peers are often in the same situation.** They'll appreciate you talking to them. Even if you're shy, maybe you could:

- Talk to someone, or just say hello, before and after each lecture or class
- Meet classmates in the library to plan a joint piece of work
- Chat to people you are living with while making food in a shared kitchen

For more tips see our pages on [how to cope with loneliness](#) and on [social phobia](#) (also known as social anxiety).

## How can I cope with the student lifestyle?

Student life can be full of new and exciting experiences. There's often lots going on. It's important to take the time to look after yourself. This will help you to cope with the changes in your lifestyle. Some areas that you could focus on are:

- [Managing stress](#)
- [Looking after your physical health](#)
- [Coping in an alcohol or drugs culture](#)

For more ideas, check out Student Minds' [Transitions resource](#).

### Managing stress

You might feel like there's a lot of pressure to do well academically. And pressure to be sociable.

Try to build up strategies to manage stress before it gets too much. This can make it easier to respond to additional pressure – for example, around exam times.

- **Try out some mindfulness exercises.** There's lots of evidence to suggest these can be really helpful, especially for managing stress. Take a look at our [mindfulness](#) pages for more information.
- **Try using a planner.** This can help to keep track of deadlines and key commitments and organise your study.
- **Take time out to relax.** Getting away from your desk, even for short periods of time, can help keep you calm.
- **Keep an eye on social commitments** to avoid overloading your schedule around deadlines and exams.
- **Try online support and apps.** There are lots of apps and websites available that can help you to manage your stress levels. For example, by offering a daily meditation or mindfulness practice. For more information on online support, including apps, have a look at our pages on [mental health online](#).

For more tips, see our pages on [managing stress](#). On the [Student Minds blog](#) you can hear how other students have managed stress.

## Looking after your physical health

Looking after your physical health can help you stay healthy and maintain concentration to study well.

### Try to get good sleep

If you're tired, things might feel harder to manage. Getting into a regular sleep routine can help you stay on top of university life.

See our pages on [coping with sleep problems](#) for more information.

“Tiredness is one of the biggest problems with the student lifestyle and it can contribute significantly to my mood. I feel more emotional and less capable when I am tired.”

### Eat a healthy diet

Eating a balanced and varied diet can help you feel well and think clearly. See our pages on [food and mood](#) for more tips.

You may face additional struggles looking after your diet and exercise if you have [eating problems](#) or a diagnosed [eating disorder](#).

Read [Mary's blog](#) on the Student Minds website. She talks about common misconceptions around eating disorders and how to make the student lifestyle work for you.

## Exercise regularly

Keeping active can help you improve your mental health. Even gentle exercise, like yoga or swimming, can help you relax and manage stress. See our pages on [physical activity](#) for more information.

“Rugby was the one thing that always gave me some release from the whirlwind of my mind.”

[Read Laura's story on rugby tackling mental health](#)

## Coping in an alcohol or drugs culture

While alcohol is often associated with the student lifestyle, you don't have to drink if you don't want to. Students' Unions and student-led groups offer a range of social events and activities that are alcohol free. Remember:

- Alcohol can worsen depression and contribute to other health problems.
- If you drink, try to make sure you have some days without drinking.
- Be careful if you are taking medication. Alcohol can interact with some medications and change how they work. Ask your doctor whether this might be an issue with your medication.
- Having a friend around when you are out can help to keep you safe when you are drinking or if you are using drugs. You could organise a buddy system.
- Don't accept drinks from someone you don't know. And always keep your drinks with you to help avoid your drink being spiked (with drugs or alcohol). [Frank](#) has information about drink spiking and what to do if you think your drink has been spiked.

For information on where to get help, see our page on [useful contacts for drugs and alcohol support](#).

Recreational drugs can also have a serious impact on your mental health. See our pages on [recreational drugs](#) for more information, or see [Frank](#) for confidential information and advice.

“I felt like I was the only one not enjoying myself...”

[Read Emma's story about surviving freshers and coping with mental health problems at university](#)

# What if I become unwell while I'm a student?

If you become unwell, there are lots of options you can consider. This page covers:

- [Support if you're in crisis](#)
- [Support on your course](#)
- [Taking time out from your course](#)
- [Taking a flexible approach to studying](#)
- [Thinking about alternatives](#)

See our pages on [support for students](#) and [seeking help for your mental health](#), for more information about getting help for your mental health.

## Support if you're in crisis

A crisis is any situation in which you feel you need urgent help. For example, you might feel in crisis if:

- You're having suicidal thoughts and feelings
- You're having thoughts about harming yourself or someone else
- You've seriously hurt yourself

Everyone experiences a crisis in their own way. You might feel that your mental health has been steadily getting worse for some time. Or perhaps something's happened in your life that's shaken your stability.

You might have a good idea what's likely to trigger a crisis for you. Or you might not know what's causing your feelings. But whatever your situation, if you start to feel unable to cope, or to keep yourself safe, it's important to ask for help.

When you begin studying, your university or college might ask you to give details of a trusted person. This might be referred to as a 'trusted contact'. This is someone they can contact if they're worried about your mental health.

Take a look at our pages on crisis services for information on [how to get help in a crisis](#).

If you feel unable to keep yourself safe, it's a mental health emergency.

[Get emergency advice](#)

“It was as though the colour had been sucked out of my world.”

[Read Karl's story about his experience of crisis care, depression and speaking out](#)

## Support on your course

If you do become unwell, it's important to explain the situation to your academic supervisor, tutor, or a welfare staff member. Do this as soon as possible. If it's hard to do so, ask someone you trust to do this.

Even if you have previously explained that you have a mental health problem, your place of study may not be aware that you're feeling worse. The sooner you let them know, the easier it is for them to help you get support with your academic work.

You may be able to have extended deadlines or re-sit exams.

## Take time out from your course

Each course is different in its approach to taking time off from studying. It may be possible to defer the course for a time. Or you could possibly repeat a term or a year.

Your university or college may need a letter from your doctor to explain how your mental health is affecting your studies. The process can sometimes be daunting. Having support from a friend or family member can help during this time.

A few weeks after starting uni, I realised that my course wasn't right for me. I hated the city, felt like a failure and struggled with my mental health. I decided to drop out and transfer to a different one. When I started at the right uni and course everything changed. My mental health improved, I made friends, and now I'm in a career linked to the degree I loved.

Take a look at [Andrew's blog on the Student Minds website](#). You can hear what he learnt from taking leave from his studies.

## Taking a flexible approach to studying

Your university might be able to make adjustments to how you study. For example, you may be able to:

- Complete your degree part-time
- Have longer deadlines for coursework
- Get more time in exams

There are also informal adjustments it can make to support you to stay well. For example, you could ask that meetings are at a particular time of day when your energy levels are at their highest. Or that meetings take place in a location where you feel most able to concentrate.

The [Student Minds blog](#) has more examples of adjustments other students have found useful.

It may help to start by thinking about what you would need to make it easier to continue your studies.

### Who can I talk to about my options?

It may be helpful to have a chat with someone impartial about your options. Even if it's just to get it clear in your own mind about what you think would help.

- You could talk to your **academic supervisor or tutor**. They should be able to explain your university or college's policy for taking time out. You could also talk to them about how you could take a more flexible approach to your studies.
- Your university or college's **disability service** can also support you around taking time out or taking a different approach to your studies.
- Your **Students' Union advice service or welfare office** can also give you impartial advice.

## Thinking about alternatives

You might feel that continuing your course isn't right for you, and that's okay. It could be useful to think about some alternatives such as:

- Trying a different course or location
- Studying a vocational course or apprenticeship
- Taking a gap year
- Starting work or re-starting work

[Not Going To Uni](#) has advice and information about alternatives to university.

“If you find yourself in a situation where you have to choose between university and your mental health treatment, my advice would be to choose mental health treatment. It's more important. You can always pick up where you left off with studying, but you can't really do that with your health because the longer you leave it, the harder it becomes to treat.”

# What mental health support can I get while studying?

There are many different individuals and organisations who can offer you mental health support. If possible, put this support in place when things are going well. It could make it easier to ask for help if you start to find things more difficult. Try thinking about who you feel comfortable talking to. You might want support from:

- [Your place of study](#)
- [Outside of your place of study](#)
- [Friends and family](#)
- [Online mental health support](#)

Whether you have an existing mental health problem or are starting to find things difficult to manage, considering your options for support can be helpful.

Support can vary, both in quality and how easy it is to access. So it can be useful to consider a variety of places and people that you can seek support from.

However difficult it may feel, it is important to be open with your university if you are suffering with mental health problems. You will be unable to receive the support you need and that is available without doing so.

## Support from your place of study

### The college or university disability service

Your college or university may have a disability support service. The service can support you to manage any health problem that affects your studies. This includes both physical and mental health problems.

You can arrange a meeting with the disability service to discuss any challenges that you might have with your studies. And look at what support the service can provide. The service may be able to arrange:

- **Mentoring** – this might be with another student or a disability specialist
- **Study skills training** – such as courses in coping with stress or planning work
- **Specific arrangements** – for your assessments or exams

You may also be eligible for **financial support** through the [Disabled Students' Allowance](#).

The [University Mental Health Advisers Network \(UMHAN\)](#) is a good source of information about the support you could be entitled to.

## Your college or university counselling service

Most colleges and universities have a free counselling service for students. The service can offer you advice about your circumstances. This is independent of your academic tutors or your GP.

You can usually self-refer to a university or college counselling service. You don't need to see your GP first or have a medical diagnosis.

“I would say that none of the places I went to, whether that was the wellbeing team, the support service for Psychology, or my GP, immediately changed my mental health as soon as I left the building.”

[Read this student's story](#)

## Student led support

Your place of study may have a Students' Union with a welfare officer or a Student Advice Service. They can offer free and independent advice or support. They can also refer you to external support.

Students' Unions and the staff they employ are independent of the university or college. But they are usually based in the same buildings.

## An academic contact

Your university or college should assign you an academic supervisor or tutor. They should give you support and advice about your studies. If your tutor knows about your mental health, they may be able to better support you and help you to get further academic support.

- **Some tutors will be proactive about meeting their students. With others, you may have to contact them to arrange a meeting.** Remember, they are there to support you, so don't feel shy about taking the first step.
- **Talking to your tutor early** can help ensure that the right support is in place. So if things do get tricky, they'll understand how they can support you.
- **Your department may have a welfare or disability liaison.** You could talk to them about your mental health, if you don't feel comfortable talking to your tutor.

Each place of study will offer slightly different support. It's always worth taking a look at your university or college's website to see what is available to you.

If your place of study is in England or Wales, you can use the support service finder from Student Space. Find out if you can access services such as:

- Mental health and counselling support teams
- Student advice services
- Support networks

Visit Student Space to use the [support finder tool](#).

“The tutors who I chose to open up to were supportive. As a result of asking for help I realised that with a few adjustments I would be able to finish my course, and nobody thought any less of me.”

## Support outside your place of study

### Your GP

Your GP can support you by:

- Referring you to local services
- Prescribing medication where necessary
- Helping you get treatment for your mental health

If you don't have a diagnosis, but are concerned about your mental health, you can always speak to your GP about this. See our pages on [seeking help for a mental health problem](#) for more information on support from your GP.

You can also find more advice from the [NHS](#) on student health.

If you are an **international student**, you might not be familiar with the National Health Service (NHS) and how to get support. The [UK Council for International Student Affairs \(UKCISA\)](#) has some useful information on looking after yourself and how to get medical treatment if you need it.

“I found having someone in healthcare validate how I was feeling extremely positive. Knowing that what I was experiencing wasn't just normal sadness, but that it also had a name, helped me understand myself and support myself better for the rest of the term.”

### Organisations and charities

There are some charities and organisations who specifically work with students. They could offer you support:

- [Student Minds](#) offers support for students and runs peer support groups across the country.
- [Students against depression](#) has information and advice for students experiencing depression.
- [Nightline](#) offers confidential telephone support overnight at universities across the country.
- [Young Minds](#) has information and support for young people experiencing mental health problems.
- [Propel](#) gives support, help and advice to young care leavers around moving into higher education.

Voluntary organisations and charities also give support to students.

- [Citizens Advice](#) – gives support on practical issues like housing, debt and benefits.
- [The Samaritans](#) – available 24 hours a day by telephone or email, to talk about anything that's upsetting you.
- [Local Minds](#) – offer a range of support services in local areas. Get in touch with one to find out more.
- [The Mix](#) - supports anyone aged under 25 with issues including mental health, housing and going through a break up. It has a free, confidential helpline, a counselling service, and an online community.

## Peer support

When you experience a mental health problem it can feel as if no one understands. Peer support brings together people who've had similar experiences to support each other. Many students find that meeting others with experience of mental health difficulties helps them feel less alone. And it makes it easier to talk about their own mental health.

- Your place of study might run peer support groups on campus, in your halls or on your course.
- You can usually self-refer to peer support programmes. You don't need to see a GP first or have a diagnosis.
- You can also get online peer support through communities like [Side by Side](#). Our pages on [staying safe online](#) have information which may help if you get support online.

Check out your college or university's counselling service, Students' Union or [Student Minds peer support programmes](#) for more information about peer support near you.

## Friends and family

### University friends and housemates

If your friends or housemates have been worried about how you're doing, talking to them might be a relief for all of you. If you're worried about how they'll react, talk to them about this. They may appreciate your advice on how they can help and what they can do to be supportive.

Student Minds provides [advice and support for students supporting friends](#).

“I have bipolar disorder, and when I experience manic episodes it can be difficult for people to understand what I am experiencing. For me, it was very important to let my friends know how they expressed themselves, what it meant for me, and what they could do to support me day-to-day or in crisis.”

## Friends or family back home

If you've moved away from home, it can be difficult to keep in contact with friends and family, particularly if you're an international student. Even if you haven't moved, you may not spend as much time with your family and friends as you used to. You may have less time than before or be making new friends. Or you may want to be more independent while studying.

However it can be useful to get support from old friends and your family. Particularly if you're feeling low or experiencing poor mental health.

To keep in contact while also having an independent or new lifestyle, try:

- **Using email or social media** – even quick forms of contact, like forwarding jokes, allow you to keep in touch
- **Writing a letter or card** – these can feel more personal and be nice to receive
- **Taking time to talk** – set aside a time each week to chat to a close friend or family
- **Inviting friends to stay so you can show them around** – they may then do the same for you
- **Keeping people up to date with what you're doing** – so they feel they're still part of your life – you don't have to tell them everything, just let them know what's going on

## Online mental health support

Visit our web page on [online mental health tools](#) to find ideas for looking after yourself and getting support online. Plus tips on getting the balance right between your online and offline life.

### Student Space

[Student Space](#) is a website set up by the charity [Student Minds](#). It helps you get the support you need, with information in both English and Welsh.

The website gives you:

- Access to student support services by phone, text, email and webchat
- Information and helpful tips to support your mental health while studying
- Guidance on how to find out what support is available at your university

# What happens when I finish my course?

Preparing for graduation and moving on after studying can be both exciting and daunting. You may be thinking about your future career or about the support you will want after completing your course. It's a good idea to think about the steps you can take to help you manage the move out of studying and look after your mental health.

This section covers:

- [Preparing for life after your course](#)
- [Maintaining your support network](#)
- [Arranging your healthcare](#)
- [Transitioning into working life](#)

[Save the Student](#) also has a helpful list of things to consider as you prepare to leave university.

## Preparing for life after your course

It's completely normal to have no idea what you want to do after your course finishes. This can feel stressful or affect how you feel about yourself. But it's important to remember that many people take months or even years to work out their next steps.

## How do I decide what to do next?

- If you're studying a course that could lead onto a specific career, relevant societies will have information about career options in your field.
- Make use of your university or college careers service. This is a great place to help you start thinking about what you might like to do when you finish studying.
- The [National Careers Service](#) or [Careers Wales](#) and [UCAS](#) have advice and information on planning a career.

## Maintaining your support network

When you graduate, it's likely that the support networks you have may no longer be as easily available. If you're moving away from the place where you studied, it might be worth thinking about the support that's available in the new place where you'll be living.

- **Stay in touch with course mates** – everyone finds this transition tricky, and hearing from an old friend can be reassuring.

- **Try online support** – you can access this wherever you move to. See our pages on [online mental health support](#) for more information.
- **Speak your local Mind** to find out more about the [support in your new area](#).

## Arranging your healthcare

If you're moving away from where you have been studying, you'll need to plan how the move might affect any support you currently receive. This could be from your GP or an NHS service.

- Visit your current GP and think about the process of transferring your care to a new GP.
- Find out where you can register with a new GP.
- If you're in touch with your community mental health team (CMHT) or crisis team, let them know that you're moving. Find out how you can access the support you want in your new home.

## Transitioning into working life

If you're starting work or returning to a job after your course, it's important to think about how you'll manage your mental health in this new environment.

- Read our information about [talking to your manager about your mental health](#).
- See our pages on [being mentally healthy at work](#) for more information too.

Work, just like studying can take different forms. Part-time, full-time, freelance, there are many options to find something that works for you.

### Workplace support for new graduates and employees

Find ways to help manage your mental health and wellbeing, and get support:

- **Check out Mental Health at Work.** Get information, resources, tools and training to promote good mental health in the workplace. Visit the [Mental Health at Work website](#).
- **Create a Wellness Action Plan.** Wellness Actions Plans can help you support your own mental health at work. They can help you identify what keeps you well, and what impacts your mental health. See our [guide to Wellness Action Plans](#).
- **Find out if you're protected by the Equality Act.** Some people with mental health problems have a legal right to ask their employer for reasonable adjustments. See our legal information on the [Equality Act 2010](#) and [disability discrimination at work](#).

See our web pages on [how to be mentally healthy at work](#) for more information.

“For me, I found that freelancing was something I could handle.”

[Read Mike's story, Schizophrenia: What I wish someone had told me](#)

## How can someone else help?

This section is for friends and family who want to help someone they know with a mental health problem who is studying or considering becoming a student.

When a friend or family member becomes a student, it can bring lots of changes to their life. There are things you can do to help them manage these changes.

- **Keep in touch** – make the effort to stay in contact. Even if they appear very busy, they are likely to appreciate the effort.
- **Make time to be together** – if they've moved away, visit them where they are studying. This can give you the opportunity to understand more about their new life. But accept that for some, student life can be busy. So be patient and flexible to find dates that work.
- **Ask them how they are doing** – it doesn't have to be a serious conversation about mental health, but most people will appreciate being asked. If you're worried about how they're doing, creating time and space for an honest answer can help. This could be while going for a walk, doing a joint activity such as crafting or even washing up.

“From the second my parents found out about my illness, everything was about supporting me but also trying to get things back to normal for me, and never about holding me back. They gave me endless support.”

- **Take an interest** – ask them about what they're working on at the moment or about their course.
- **Give them space** – if they've left home for the first time, remember that being a student is part of a process of gaining independence and growing up. It's natural that they may not want to tell you everything.
- **Offer practical help, especially if you're nearby** – for example, help with a routine task, such as preparing or cooking food.
- **Help them to make the transition between healthcare services at home and university**, and encourage them to access the support available to them.
- **Remember that studying can feel like a job** – while they may not be going to a full time job, studying can take up a lot of time. It can involve long hours in lectures or busy work placements. Try to understand that they can feel under a lot of pressure, and offer them support.

“Understand that student life isn't a walk in the park for everyone and it isn't necessarily the 'time of your life'.”

## Look after yourself

Supporting someone else can have an impact on your own mental health. For more information see:

- Our pages on [how to cope when supporting someone else](#)
- Student Minds' resource [Look After Your Mate](#)
- [Carers UK](#) information, advice and support for people caring for someone with a disability

# Useful contacts

## Mind's services

- [Mind's helplines](#) provide information and support by phone and email.
- [Local Minds](#) offer face-to-face services across England and Wales. These services include talking therapies, peer support and advocacy.
- [Side by Side](#) is our supportive online community for anyone experiencing a mental health problem.

## Who else can help?

- [Charities](#)
- [Money advice](#)
- [Health services](#)
- [Student advice](#)
- [Support for alcohol and drugs problems](#)
- [Support for care leavers](#)
- [Support for disabled students](#)
- [Support for LGBTIQ+ students](#)
- [Support for students of colour](#)

## Charities

### Carers UK

[0808 808 7777](tel:08088087777)

[029 2081 1370](tel:02920811370) (Carers Wales)

[advice@carersuk.org](mailto:advice@carersuk.org)

[carersuk.org](http://carersuk.org)

Advice and support for anyone who provides care.

### Nightline Association

[nightline.ac.uk](http://nightline.ac.uk)

Lists contact information for helplines and listening services in universities and colleges across the UK.

## Papyrus HOPELINEUK

[0800 068 41 41](tel:08000684141)

07860039967 (text)

[pat@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org)

[papyrus-uk.org](http://papyrus-uk.org)

Confidential support for under-35s at risk of suicide and others who are concerned about them. Open daily from 9am–midnight.

## Samaritans

[116 123](tel:116123) (freephone)

[jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

Freepost SAMARITANS LETTERS

[samaritans.org](http://samaritans.org)

Samaritans are open 24/7 for anyone who needs to talk. You can [visit some Samaritans branches in person](#). Samaritans also have a Welsh Language Line on [0808 164 0123](tel:08081640123) (7pm–11pm every day).

## Student Minds

0808 808 4994 (open 3pm to 12am daily)

[studentminds.org.uk](http://studentminds.org.uk)

Mental health charity that supports students. Runs Student Space, offering online information and helpline support delivered in partnership with The Mix.

## Students Against Depression

[studentsagainstdepression.org](http://studentsagainstdepression.org)

Information and support for students experiencing suicidal feelings, including a helpful safety plan template.

## University Mental Health Advisors Network (UMHAN)

[umhan.com](http://umhan.com)

Network for mental health advisors working in education. Website also has information for students.

## YoungMinds

[0808 802 5544](tel:08088025544) (Parents Helpline)

[85258](tel:85258) (Crisis Messenger for young people – text the letters YM)

[youngminds.org.uk](http://youngminds.org.uk)

Committed to improving the mental health of babies, children and young people, including support for parents and carers.

## Money advice

### The Money Charity

[themoneycharity.org.uk](https://themoneycharity.org.uk)

Information and advice about managing your money, including resources and workshops for young people and students.

### MoneyHelper

[0800 138 7777](tel:08001387777) (English)

[0800 138 0555](tel:08001380555) (Welsh)

[18001 0800 915 4622](tel:1800108009154622) (text relay)

[moneyhelper.org.uk](https://moneyhelper.org.uk)

Provides free and impartial money advice.

## Health services

### NHS Choices – Student Health

[nhs.uk/Livewell/studenthealth](https://nhs.uk/Livewell/studenthealth)

Advice on student health issues.

### NHS Services Finder

[nhs.uk/service-search](https://nhs.uk/service-search) (England)

[111.wales.nhs.uk/localservices](https://111.wales.nhs.uk/localservices) (Wales)

Searchable database of NHS services.

## Student advice

### Careers Wales

[0800 028 4844](tel:08000284844)

[careerswales.gov.wales](https://careerswales.gov.wales)

Information, advice and guidance about learning, training and work for people who live in Wales.

### Citizens Advice

[0800 144 8848](tel:08001448848) (England Adviceline)

[0800 702 2020](tel:08007022020) (Wales Adviceline)

[18001 0800 144 8884](tel:1800108001448884) (textphone)

[citizensadvice.org.uk](https://citizensadvice.org.uk)

Free, confidential information and advice on your rights, including money, housing, experiences of discrimination and other problems.

## **National Careers Service**

[nationalcareers.service.gov.uk](https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk)

Information, advice and guidance about learning, training and work.

## **National Union of Students**

[nus.org.uk](https://nus.org.uk)

Promotes and defends the rights of students.

## **Not Going To Uni**

[notgoingtouni.co.uk](https://notgoingtouni.co.uk)

Information about alternatives to university. Includes a search tool for current opportunities.

## **Office for Students**

[officeforstudents.org.uk](https://officeforstudents.org.uk)

Information and guidance for students from the independent regulator of higher education in England.

## **Open University**

[open.ac.uk](https://open.ac.uk)

Offers flexible, part-time or full-time study and distance learning, including some free online courses.

## **Save the Student**

[savethestudent.org](https://savethestudent.org)

Information and advice about managing your money as a student.

## **The Student Room**

[thestudentroom.co.uk](https://thestudentroom.co.uk)

Information for students and the UK's largest online student community.

## **UCAS**

[ucas.com](https://ucas.com)

Processes applications for higher education courses in the UK.

## **UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA)**

[ukcisa.org.uk](https://ukcisa.org.uk)

Advice and guidance for international students and the institutions, students' unions and organisations who work closely with them.

## **Support for care leavers**

### **Propel**

[propel.org.uk](https://propel.org.uk)

Support for children in care and young care leavers.

### **Rees Foundation**

[reesfoundation.org](https://reesfoundation.org)

Support for care leavers, including regional peer networks.

## **Support for alcohol and drugs problems**

### **FRANK**

[0300 123 6600](tel:03001236600)

[talktofrank.com](https://talktofrank.com)

Confidential advice and information about drugs, their effects and the law.

### **We Are With You**

[wearewithyou.org.uk](https://wearewithyou.org.uk)

Supports people with drug, alcohol or mental health problems, and their friends and family.

## **Support for disabled students**

### **Mencap**

[0808 808 1111](tel:08088081111) (Learning Disability Helpline)

[mencap.org.uk](https://mencap.org.uk)

Information and advice for people with a learning disability, their families and carers. Services include an online community.

## National Autistic Society

[autism.org.uk](https://autism.org.uk)

Support and guidance for autistic people and their families. Campaigns for improved rights, services and opportunities. This includes an:

- [Autism services directory](#) – listing local and national support options
- [Online autism community](#) – helping autistic people and their families to connect with each other and share experiences
- [Autism Inpatient Mental Health Service \(England\)](#) – providing advice to autistic people in England who are detained or about to be detained in a mental health hospital
- [Guide to asking for reasonable adjustments](#) – providing advice on how to ask talking therapies services to make themselves more accessible

## Support for LGBTQIA+ students

In addition to the list below, it's also worth finding out what your university or student union offers. They may have an LGBTQIA+ society, network or peer support group you can join.

We have more information about [LGBTQIA+ mental health](#). This includes a list of useful contacts.

## Gendered Intelligence

[genderedintelligence.co.uk](https://genderedintelligence.co.uk)

Charity supporting young trans people aged under 25, and information for their parents and carers.

## Mermaids

[0808 801 0400](https://08088010400)

[mermaidsuk.org.uk](https://mermaidsuk.org.uk)

Supports gender-diverse young people aged 19 and under, and their families and carers. Offers a helpline and and webchat.

## MindOut

[mindout.org.uk](https://mindout.org.uk)

Mental health service run by and for LGBTQ+ people.

## The Open Minds Project

[theopenmindsproject.org](http://theopenmindsproject.org)

A place for LGBTQIA+ people with Punjabi and South Asian heritage to connect.

## Support for students of colour

### Choosing our words

There is no 'one size fits all' language for talking about race and identity. Group labels bundle many identities and experiences together. This obscures the fact that people in these groups don't all have the same experience of race. And we don't all face the same challenges.

### Black People Talk

[blackpeopletalk.co.uk](http://blackpeopletalk.co.uk)

Provides resources and brings black communities together to support their mental health. You can ask them to deliver peer support groups and workshops at your university.

### Muslim Youth Helpline

[0808 808 2008](tel:08088082008)

[myh.org.uk](http://myh.org.uk)

Provides faith and culturally sensitive support to young Muslims by phone, live chat, WhatsApp and email.

### Taraki

[taraki.co.uk](http://taraki.co.uk)

Creates spaces for mental health education and awareness for Punjabi communities.

If racism is affecting your mental health, our [racism information](#) offers advice and support. It highlights the impact of racism on mental health and support services. It can help you choose how and where to seek help.