



Staying Sane on campus

Why read this booklet?

University study is challenging – adjusting to timetables, attending lectures, writing essays, balancing work, family and your social life. For some, going to uni means living away from home for the first time and experiencing greater independence than in the past. New ideas and concepts, new people and beliefs, all contribute to the ongoing experience of personal development.

This booklet has been written from a students perspective to give an overview of a range of information and services that may be of use to you, including...

- * hints for maintaining a well lifestyle
- * tips for coping when the pressure is on
- * who to see and where to go to for help
- * support when dealing with mental illness
- * an information bank of resources, contact details of support services at Vic and in the community

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Adapted by Kelly Atherton and Gerard Hoffman, Counselling Service, Victoria University.

With thanks to:

- Student Counselling Service
- Student Learning Support Service
- Financial Support and Advice
- Disability Support

Comments and suggestions welcomed, please contact the Student Counselling Service.

Further copies of this booklet can be obtained by contacting: counselling-service@vuw.ac.nz, 04 463 5310

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Whaia te matauranga hei
oranga mo koutou.

Seek after learning
for the sake of
your wellbeing.

Keeping well

Kia ora

Starting university can offer a world of new experiences, relationships and opportunities. It can be a time of experimentation with alternative lifestyles and the trying on of different identities.

All students (and staff!) experience times of stress, self-doubt, a loss of motivation, and at times, universities can be lonely and isolating places. How much you work, sleep, exercise, take time out for yourself and what you eat and drink are all factors that can influence how you feel. Many students spend periods of time surviving on little sleep, lots of drinking and living on unhealthy food. While your body can cope with this lifestyle for a while, sooner or later it will catch up with you.

This section is designed to give you ideas about how to live healthily, manage your time and workload and keep balanced—to help you make the most of your time at university.



Some people seem to arrive at university with a ready made social network, and look like they know where they're going and what they're doing right from the start. For most people however, the introduction to uni can be overwhelming with loads of people in lectures and so many new faces. Making a fresh start with new friends is something you may not have had to do for many years and it can be challenging to break into a social group – here are some ideas that may help:

Make the most of what's on offer

Victoria University has programmes that aim to make the first year of uni easier. Find out what transition and orientation programs are available through Student Services or your faculty. Vic's Campus Coaches programme is a great way to meet other first year students and also get connected with those who've been here for a while. Contact them at campus-coaches@vuw.ac.nz.

What do you enjoy doing?

Uni's a great time of life to develop new hobbies and creative outlets that can be a breather from the routine of lectures, tutorials and reading. Even if you like things that were considered 'nerdy' at High School, you can be sure that someone else at Uni is into the same thing. So engage in your passion, whether it be cartooning, politics, medieval role-playing, religion or theatre. It's a great way to meet others, and can be one of the most memorable parts of uni when you look back later. Check out the clubs and societies, there are plenty to choose from (a tip, try some of the smaller groups –you'll find it easier to get to know people).

Common ground

You may not think you have many similarities with anybody else around you, but you are here to do a particular course and that's a fairly major thing to have in common with a sizeable number of people! Some courses organise study groups where you'll get to meet people, or try starting one yourself with people from your tutorial group. Also check out the clubs for students from different religious groups or from different ethnic backgrounds.

Making friends

Lecture theatres are often full of people you don't know – try and talk to the person next to you about the lecture or the coming exams – maybe go for a coffee after the class. Talk to others in your tutorial about an assignment or perhaps brainstorm possibilities over coffee in one of the cafés. If meeting new people and making friends is something you find challenging, consider the group programme at the Student Counselling Service, or meeting with a counsellor to talk about developing your social skills and helping to reduce your anxiety in social situations.

Keeping up networks outside of uni

Talk to a supportive person, or your support networks regularly, and spend time with people that make you feel good about yourself. Make sure you catch up with school, home, church and work friends, people who know you and you feel easy with. Friendships can take time and effort to build and maintain, however the benefits of having a good support base of people you enjoy spending time with, who energise and nurture you, can make life very enjoyable.



Exercise – some people love it, some people hate it, but we all know it's good for us. It elevates our mood, gives us energy and reduces susceptibility to colds and flu. Research shows that regular exercise can help maintain emotional well-being and assist us if we are down.

Some tips:

- * Take an exercise class—try something different. The uni rec centre has a range of classes and activities available for a reasonable cost for students, or check out your local community centre or church for other options.
- * Try a team sport—netball, football, or join a sports or recreation club.
- * Make exercise a part of your day - wash the floor, walk to the train station, use the stairs.
- * A walk with a friend is a great way to make sure you don't isolate yourself too much. And Wellington has so many walkways on offer—check out the Information Centre in town for route maps.
- * If exercise is not something you enjoy then maybe only do activities you like. Using a Wii, walking, swimming, dancing, yoga and jumping around the living room to loud music are all great exercise (but less so if you have a drink and cigarette in hand!).

The food you eat can have a significant impact on how you feel. A diet too high in fat, sugar or processed food can leave you feeling tired and stressed, with low energy. You may find yourself dozing off in those four o'clock lectures or waking at night with sugar cravings.

Most of us know what a healthy diet is. It comes at us from everywhere – television, magazines, books, conversations. However, the convenience of two-minute noodles or takeaways for dinner can be pretty enticing after a long day. There are some easy ways that you can incorporate healthy eating into your lifestyle with minimum effort.

Some tips:

- * Aim for 3 meals a day plus planned snacks.
- * Drink lots of water to keep fluid levels up.
- * Aim for 5+ vegetables and fruit a day.
- * Eat wholemeal bread instead of white.
- * Minimise caffeine intake, particularly in the evenings.
- * Choose healthy snacks—nuts, fruit, muesli bars, popcorn.
- * Make sure you have breakfast to give you energy for the day. Even a breakfast bar or drink is better than nothing.
- * Look at cheaper options for buying food—Wellington has regular fruit and veg markets every weekend which are much cheaper (and more fun) than supermarkets.
- * Think about the low cost nutritious meals that you used to have at home when planning your menu.
- * Rather than wait till you're starving, plan ahead and buy hearty, nutritious foods from the supermarket rather than spend your money on chocolate and cheap takeaways on the way home.

Basic items for the pantry:

- * Fruit and vegetables - buy seasonal fruit and vegies as they are usually cheapest
- * Rice/pasta/noodles
- * Brown or wholemeal bread
- * Cow's milk/soy milk
- * Weetbix/rolled oats/cornflakes
- * Tofu/cheese/tuna/salmon/chicken/eggs
- * Lentils/chickpeas/beans
- * Canned tomatoes
- * Herbs and seasonings to taste (i.e., salt, pepper, parsley, basil, coriander, garlic, stock cubes, cumin, chives)
- * Butter/olive oil
- * Tea/coffee/herbal alternatives

With these ingredients you could make...

- * Lentil and Vegie Soup
- * Sandwiches to take to uni (or bring a small tin of tuna or some cheese and salad and buy a plain bread roll)
- * Spaghetti Bolognaise (vegie or non-vegie)
- * Stir-fry
- * Fruit crumble
- * Risotto
- * Chickpea and Lentil Dahl
- * Vegies can also be added to noodles or tinned soup for some added healthy bits.

Generally if you make an effort to eat this kind of food, your diet is pretty well balanced and a few chocolate bars, chips etc won't do any great harm.

Feeling depressed?

Aim for foods which maintain or boost your serotonin level – omega 3 rich foods such as chicken, turkey and salmon are particularly good.

Feeling tired?

Eating whole carbohydrates (brown rice, brown/soy pasta, wholegrain bread) are good for keeping your blood sugar levels stable.

Craving sugar?

Increase your protein levels (eggs, chicken, tofu, red meat, fish, raw nuts). By eating at least 3 meals a day, drinking plenty of water, eating whole carbohydrates, plenty of fruit, veges and protein and dairy you are less likely to need to shell out for Berrocas or expensive vitamins.

Brain food

Some foods are touted as being great for getting our brains working—eggs, fish, fruits and unprocessed foods are among these. Also look for those foods that have a low GI (glycaemic index) rating which will help to keep you feeling full for longer.

Getting a good night's sleep is vital for our physical and mental wellbeing. Everyone needs a different amount of sleep and this changes as we get older, or if we're under pressure.

Some useful tips for getting enough rest:

- * Minimise your caffeine intake, particularly later in the day. Caffeine free teas are often helpful in calming you before sleep.
- * Try to keep your study out of your bedroom.
- * Get the most comfortable bed and bedding you can.
- * Make your bedroom as dark as you can.
- * Wear ear plugs if you're a light sleeper or have a noisy flat or flatmates.
- * Develop a good night time routine—winding down, reading something light.
- * Exercise during the day to burn up energy.
- * Make a list of things to do before bed so you're not worrying about them all night.
- * Make sure you feel safe and secure in your home at night—fix broken locks or latches and keep a phone by the bed if you are nervous.

Making sure you get enough relaxation time is just as important as getting enough physical activity. Think about what helps you to relax? Walking along the beach? Meditation? Listening to music? Hanging out with your dog?

Having a regular time and activity that you can do to relax will have a positive effect on how you manage your stress levels while you are at university. And the sooner you find a relaxation activity that you enjoy, the sooner you can schedule this into your routine.

There are many different ways to relax.

- * Relaxation techniques
- * Breathing techniques
- * Meditation
- * Yoga
- * Visualisation
- * Gentle exercise

If you're interested in learning more about various relaxation techniques the Student Counselling Service group programme offers a weekly meditation class and a 'Relaxed and focussed' group. Individual counselling can also help you incorporate a range of relaxation techniques into your everyday life.



Not having control over your finances can have a serious impact on your life and can add significantly to your stress levels. Being uncertain about whether you will be able to pay for things; not being able to afford text books, stationery or printing costs; missing classes because you need to work or cannot afford transport can seriously affect your studies. It can be hard for many students (and non students!) to manage their money effectively. At the same time, there is enormous pressure from peers and marketing to spend money on lifestyle.

Some tips on how to manage your money:

- * Work out a system that pays out your most important expenses (rent, bills, etc.) first. Many people set up automatic payments with the bank to go out immediately after they are paid, so they never have to worry about not being able to pay their bills.
- * Calculate how much you can afford to spend on clothes, entertainment, and social activities.
- * If you know how much you can afford and stick to it, you don't need to feel stressed about your spending.
- * If you are tempted to spend money on something because it seems like everyone else is doing it, remember that others may be in the same situation as you, and they may be relieved to hear somebody choose not to buy that drink or meal.
- * Credit cards, overdrafts, and hire purchases are all forms of debt. It is best to avoid getting into debt, only using it for something that is essential, not to fund your lifestyle.
- * If possible, avoid long term financial contracts such as mobile phones and gym memberships. You never know how your life will change and you may be stuck paying for something you no longer want.
- * If you wonder where all your money goes, there is a good chance you are spending a lot more than you realise on snacks, drinks, eating out. Look carefully at your bank transactions and see where the money has gone.
- * If you want help putting together a financial plan, or if you are in trouble with money, make an appointment to see a Student Finance Advisor.

Getting into a good routine with your study workload is essential to manage your university life. The earlier you can develop a routine, the easier it will be to maintain when the pressure comes on. Everyone studies differently and learning what and how you best take in information is vital to being successful at university.

Everyone has times in the day when we are more alert and clear thinking.

Where possible, plan your uni timetable to best utilise 'up times'. Think about when you feel best. If mornings are particularly hard, you may try to schedule study times in the afternoon or go to evening lectures.

Break your study into manageable chunks. Large readings or pieces of work are daunting, but by breaking them down into smaller, manageable pieces you will be more effective. Remember to take breaks regularly.



Some tips for surviving tutorials and lectures

- * Do your best to attend all lectures and tutorials.
- * Do the reading, even if it's only to 'pre-read' (read first paragraph, first sentence in each paragraph and last paragraph).
- * Some students find recording lectures helps their concentration as they can listen to it later, but for others it means that they diligently record everything but never actually get around to listening to them. Remember, recording lectures can double your workload.
- * If you get nervous, you may find it helpful to talk to someone on the phone for five minutes to settle your nerves before the tutorial or lecture.
- * Sit near the door or window if you are feeling nervous or anxious. If you are too anxious to ask questions or make comments in front of everyone, you may be able to ask the tutor after the tutorial, or via Blackboard. Lecturers have office hours and there will also be a Duty Tutor available—your course outline will have details.

Struggling to get organised for study?

- * If library research is required, set a limit to how many books you are going to borrow or how many journal articles you want to photocopy.
- * Photocopying can be strangely hypnotic and you may spend more time doing it, than actually reading the articles. Unfortunately photocopying an article is not the same thing as reading it!
- * Underlining or highlighting articles can be equally hypnotic – you underline the stuff that’s important, underline the stuff that you might think is important, underline the stuff you’re afraid to leave off and end up with the whole article underlined!
- * When doing readings—read through the whole article first, then go back over key areas.
- * Arrange to show your tutor, Student Learning Adviser, or Te Pūtahi Atawhai Mentor (for Maori and Pacific students), a plan of the assignment to check you’re on track, and to learn about good study techniques.
- * If other thoughts constantly distract you when you are trying to write, keep a notebook next to you. When a worry comes into your head, write it down. You won’t forget it, and can deal with it after you finish studying.
- * If you are thinking of giving up a habit, remember that during exam periods or when assessment dates are looming is usually not the time to stop smoking, drinking caffeine or giving up chocolate. Be kind to yourself and stick with what you know works for you during times of pressure.

Got exams coming up?

- * Remember to use your relaxation techniques to keep stress levels manageable.
- * Arrange specific times to study with friends (even if they are doing different subjects), then reward yourself.
- * Most students find it really easy to procrastinate when there’s study to be done. Find a space where you like to work. It may be at a desk at home, in the library, a spot on campus. Some students like to do reading for tutorials on the train or bus.
- * Going to stay with a relative, whether parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles, may alleviate some of the pressure and take away some of the distractions, but think about whether you may find this helpful—some people find a change in routine and/or environment more distracting.
- * If getting up in time for an exam is a problem, get someone else to wake you up, stay at the house of a friend who also will be going to the exam, or organise a wake up call.
- * Make sure your housemates know when you’re studying and come to some arrangements about private space and keeping noise to a minimum!
- * Consider unplugging the television for a few hours each day, so it’s less of a temptation.

Nervous about giving an oral presentation? You're not alone...

Public speaking is the most anxiety provoking situation for most people, however it's something that most of us have to do at some stage of our lives. Depending on the course you've chosen, you will have different expectations about speaking in public. Try these tips to hopefully make this a less traumatic experience:

- * It may be helpful to arrange to speak early on in the semester, at least you can get it over and done with.
- * Do a group presentation to take the pressure off. Often tutorial classes are overcrowded, making it more likely you'll be able to present with someone else. Be careful, though, as there can be other pressures associated with group work – especially uneven workload distribution.
- * You may be able to present information in a different format – for example show a video or use powerpoint. One advantage of this is that everyone will be looking at the screen, not you. Discuss options with your Tutor or Lecturer.
- * The Student Counselling Service offers group programmes to develop self confidence and presentation skills in the 1st and 2nd trimesters.
- * External groups such as Toastmasters may be helpful to give you the opportunity to speak in front of a small supportive group who are probably as nervous as you. You'll find Toastmasters groups on-line or in the phone book.

Tips for post-grad students

The transition to postgraduate studying can mean many adjustments, not only in academic expectations but also to your lifestyle, family arrangements and financial circumstances. You may have coped well as an undergraduate student, but now be feeling pretty overwhelmed at having to structure your time so that you can manage an increased work load. Or you may be returning to study after a few years in the workforce and now find yourself poorer financially and struggling to get back into the flow of study.

Juggling study with parenting, part-time work and relationships can cause considerable stress. Some tips are:

- * Find yourself suitable work space at home and university that is quiet and as clutter-free as you can make it.
- * Ensure that you have time from your other work and family commitments to study—this may take negotiation with your family and/or employer
- * Get some assistance with study skills and time management. Talk to a Student Learning Adviser.
- * Consider what kind of support your supervisor can provide up front. For example, you may wish to meet more frequently for shorter periods of time.
- * Attend any relevant workshops on Postgrad skills offered by your postgraduate association or Student Learning Advisers.
- * Aim to maximise your productivity when you are at your best. Use that time for writing rather than photocopying or research if possible.
- * Discuss with your partner or family, the ways in which they can assist you in maximising your study time.



- * Ensure that you slot legitimate rest breaks into each week, where you do something far removed from study (for example: go for a swim, catch up with a friend, watch a movie).
- * Meeting with other post grads can make you feel less isolated. Talking to others doing similar research to yourself can generate new ideas and directions for your work. Vic's Postgraduate Students Association organises regular on and off campus social and academic events.

Learning to make the best use of your time will help you to lead a balanced lifestyle, and enable you to maintain this when university pressure comes on. Making sure you have enough time for keeping in touch with family and friends, sleeping, relaxing, exercising and working as well as studying will be a challenge, but is manageable with some simple strategies.

Use a diary or wall planner to write down regular events such as lectures, tutorials, doctor's appointments, when assignments are due, dates of exams etc. Make an appointment in advance to see a Student Learning Adviser, or a Counsellor for support in planning your study timetable.

Avoid unstructured time where possible. Unstructured time can be a big source of stress and anxiety for many students as you think of all the work you should be doing or how much you have to do. Unstructured time also allows you to dwell on negative thinking and can make you feel isolated and lost. This is a natural experience and is the brains way of trying to adapt.

Creating a daily "Things to do list" will be useful to minimise unstructured time. This is also helpful if you have a hard time remembering things, or are constantly forgetting to take particular books or materials to class. The list can be in your diary, mobile phone or computer. Don't forget to keep the items 'do-able'. Crossing items off the list gives a great sense of achievement, so remember to reward yourself for your successes.



Other ideas?

- * Keeping a journal is a great way to process things. Articulating your thoughts, anxieties, problems, dreams and goals in writing or drawings can give you a chance to look at them in a tangible way. Once you have things down on paper they may seem clearer and it can be easier to weigh up the pros and cons. Additionally, just having a rant to yourself can get a feeling out of your system, even if it doesn't solve the external factors that caused it.
- * Make sure you have a comfortable living space where you feel safe and happy. Home should be more than a place to crash at night. If you are in a freezing cold house, and are sick of your housemates and their dubious habits, maybe it's time to find somewhere better to live.
- * Take time to do the things you enjoy. Being at uni shouldn't mean that you have to spend your whole day (and night) with your head in the books. Aim to have good balance in your life as soon as you can, which will hold you in good stead when things get busy.

Me noho tahi,
tena pea ka tika.

Discuss together, then
things may come right.

When the pressure is on Te wā awangawanga

Stress is a natural human response which can be a mobilising and energising force for short bursts of time. However, when stress impacts on your daily life to the extent that things become unmanageable and you are finding it hard to cope, it can be a signal that all is not right. The stress that once was energising, is now exhausting and overwhelming.

As a student, you don't always have a stress free life—essays/assignments/exams always need your attention, bills have to be paid, families need to be cared for and relationships can take a lot of attention. Just being accepted into uni means you're a high achiever, but the reality of the increased standards and expectations means that you may also be experiencing your first fail (or maybe a 'B' instead of a long succession of 'A's').





Some signs of stress

Physical responses to stress are often our first sign that something is not right. Some of the most common signs are:

- * Exhaustion/fatigue
- * Headaches
- * Inability to concentrate
- * Sleep difficulties
- * Feeling agitated or 'hyperactive'
- * Feeling depressed, tired and unable to get anything done
- * Procrastinating
- * Change in eating patterns
- * Neck and shoulder pain.
- * Relationship problems and sexual issues
- * Succession of physical ailments

Stress can manifest in different ways. It can also cause you to change your behaviour. Some changes may be:

- * Excessive coffee and cigarette intake
- * Change in alcohol intake
- * Use or increased use of drugs
- * Change in priorities
- * Avoidance



What to do about stress

Being aware that you're feeling stressed is the most important step towards managing how you're feeling. Try utilising the resources on the previous pages if things aren't improving. Often people feel they have to manage issues on their own but at university there are many avenues to turn to for support and advice.

- * Speak to a Student Learning Adviser about developing an exam or study timetable.
- * Talk to your lecturer or tutor about an extension (they're on your side). See the following pages for more information.
- * Te Pūtahi Atawhai, and Te Ropu Awhina Putaiao provide academic and non academic support to Maori and Pacific students.
- * Ask your faculty — they often have advisers or coordinators who are there to assist you.
- * If you have a disability, illness or condition, make contact with your Disability Support Advisor who can help you communicate with your lecturers or provide practical help.
- * For financial support, visit the Student Financial Support and Advice office.
- * During times of stress, it can be important to take time to reflect on what you think the issues are and to gain some perspective. Counselling can help you with this. Attend the Student Counselling Service 'Reduce stress & stop procrastinating' group, or arrange an appointment to see a counsellor individually.



There is help out there

You can ask for support around your academic work if you are struggling, e.g., extensions, aegrotats and alternative exam arrangements. For these to be put in place, you'll need to be in touch initially with at least one of the following: Disability Service, Counselling Service, Student Health Service, your Faculty Office or your Course Coordinator. Remember, the worst thing you can do is nothing, so try to maintain contact with staff when you're under pressure.

Extensions

You may sometimes find it hard to complete work by a due date, particularly if you are under significant pressure. You may be able to ask for an extension and there are a number of ways this can be requested, e.g., by talking to your Lecturer or Course Coordinator, or sending them an email request. Typically they will want to know:

- * Why you want the extension.
- * If you have any evidence to support your claim (a medical certificate or a letter from your counsellor if appropriate).
- * How much time you need.

Keep in mind that the longer the extension, the longer you have to procrastinate or stress about the work you have to do, so aim for a realistic length of time. Also, consider that overly long extensions can often mean that you have no real breaks due to unfinished work hanging over your head.

If you have been given an extension and cannot complete the work by the extension date, you may be able to apply for an additional extension. It's helpful to speak or meet with your lecturer or tutor and provide the work you have completed for review.

Aegrotats

Aegrotats exist to ensure that you are not disadvantaged by circumstances beyond your control during the period leading up to and including exams. An aegrotat is not an automatic entitlement. You need to have met specific criteria to apply. Serious personal problems such as family difficulties, bereavements or relationship breakdowns are valid reasons to apply. Or your studies may have been affected by physical or mental health symptoms or consequences of mental health issues, e.g., adverse side effects of medication, financial difficulties due to problems maintaining employment etc.

To apply for an aegrotat you need to have been affected substantially in your ability to complete all or part of a component of assessment due (such as an essay or exam or other piece of assessment). However, applying for an aegrotat because you have not attended lectures all semester, or done any of the reading, will not be looked upon with any sympathy! Written documentation from a counsellor, GP or other health professional will help verify your applications and will be required.

There are specific timeframes that you must adhere to when presenting to Student Health or the Student Counselling Service. If you think your situation might fit the aegrotat guidelines see your faculty office, GP or Counsellor as soon as possible.



Alternative Exam Facilities

Alternative Exam Facilities are available through Disability Service, Student Health Service and the Student Counselling Service, to ensure that your ability to undertake an exam is not unfairly hampered by stressors or health issues you may be experiencing. You may find being in a crowded exam hall extremely stressful, or you have an impairment that means that extra time is the only way you can complete all of an exam. Some of the Alternative Exam Facilities which may be provided (if you meet the criteria) include:

- * Smaller examination room with a supervisor
- * Extra reading time
- * Extra writing time
- * Specific rest breaks during examination

If you require alternative exam arrangements, you need to apply before each exam period. Further Alternative Exam Facilities can be made through Disability Service.

Financial advice?

Financial problems can add to your stress. It may also mean that you are not eating properly or are unable to afford the medical treatment you need. Don't just suffer – talk to the Student Financial Advisers at Financial Support and Advice. They can talk to you about the full range of available options open to you, such as:

- * Being granted Limited Full Time status by Study-link to study part-time, but being entitled to a student loan and/or allowances on the grounds of disability.
- * Changing to a Sickness benefit – you will need suitable documentation from your GP.
- * Financial help from the Victoria University Hardship Fund.

It's always good to be able to talk to someone you trust and who is there to support you. It's not always about looking for solutions, sometimes just talking issues through can help.

However, there's usually a limit to how often you can talk to a friend about the status of your love life/alcohol intake/depression etc. There comes a point when despite the best efforts of those around you, you feel like things aren't changing and you have negative thoughts or you feel out of control of certain aspects of your life.

“But I don't want to see a counsellor!”

Sometimes the thought of talking to a counsellor about your problems can feel intimidating, overwhelming or even frightening. Talking to a friend can be helpful but talking with a professionally trained counsellor can help you resolve more difficult situations or problems. At Vic, our counsellors' expertise and neutrality enables you to gain insight, understanding and an overview of what is happening in your life that you often don't get in your day-to-day contact with friends.

You can come when you are feeling miserable - we don't need to be protected from the depth of your feelings. Or you can come when you are feeling happy - it may be a good opportunity to identify the ingredients that contribute to your sense of well-being, to develop further self knowledge or to enhance your personal growth.

Here are just some of the things students at Vic come to see us about:

- * I'm feeling really stressed out
- * I don't seem to know what I want
- * I get depressed a lot
- * I feel suicidal
- * I'm thinking of quitting uni
- * There are problems in my family

- * I can't seem to get interested in anything
- * I'm having trouble with a relationship
- * My attitude has been so negative lately
- * I'm just not happy
- * I've been assaulted recently/in the past
- * I'm having trouble concentrating on my studies
- * I really get uptight about tests/presentations/math
- * I'm worried about my thoughts
- * I'm concerned about my/my friend's eating/drinking
- * I need to talk about something that has happened to me

Depending on your issues, counselling can sometimes be challenging. This does not mean your counsellor is doing a bad job. Make sure you talk to them about how you're feeling. If you find counselling unsatisfactory it could be for a number of reasons. It might be that the issues are difficult or challenging but if you feel dissatisfied with the counsellor, or don't feel that you've developed rapport with them, you can ask to see someone else. Don't let this put you off though, remember, everyone is different

Before you visit the counsellor, think a bit about how you want to discuss your issue. Be very clear about how your situation is impacting on your studies and your life. They won't be able to provide help for issues you don't tell them about. Remember, you get out what you put in.

Youthline	www.youthline.co.nz	0800 376 633 (4pm-11pm)
The Lowdown	www.thelowdown.co.nz	5626 (free text service)
Depression Helpline	www.depression.org.nz	0800 111 757
Lifeline Aotearoa	www.lifeline.org.nz	0800 543 354 (24 hour phonenumber)
Chinese Lifeline	www.chineselifeline.org.nz	0800 888 880

Samaritans	www.samaritans.org.nz	0800 726 666 (24 hour phonenumber)
Mental Health Foundation	www.mentalhealth.org.nz	04 384 4002
Like minds	www.likeminds.org.nz	0800 102 107
Phobic Trust	www.phobic.org.nz	0800 142694389 (24 hour phonenumber)
Beyond Blue	www.beyondblue.org.au	
Atareira (support for families and friends of people with mental illness)	www.atareira.org.nz	04 499 1062
Alcohol and Drug Helpline	www.adanz.org.nz	0800 787 797
Alcoholics Anonymous	www.aa.org.nz	0800 229 6757
Al-Anon/Alateen	www.al-anon.org.nz	
CareNZ (addiction treatment and recovery)	www.carenz.co.nz	0800 385 151
Wellington Sexual Abuse HELP Foundation (24 hour rape and sexual abuse support)	Email: info@wellingtonhelp.org.nz	04 499-7532
NZ Aids Foundation	www.nzaf.org.nz	0800 802 437
Women's Refuge	www.womensrefuge.org.nz	0800 REFUGE
Rainbow Youth	www.rainbowyouth.org.nz	09 376 4155
Wellington Community Law Centre	www.communitylaw.org.nz	04 499 2928
Problem Gambling Foundation	www.pgfnz.org.nz	0800 664 262
Smokefree NZ	www.smokefree.org.nz	



Other avenues for seeking help in difficult times

You may feel more comfortable visiting your local GP or the Student Health Service (GP's and Nurses who work in university health services understand the pressures of study really well). If they feel it's warranted, they'll be able to refer you on to a specialist. Another option to consider is Disability Services.

For international students, the International Student Advisor at the Vic International Office is a useful source of advice and information.

For Maori and Pacific Island students, Te Pūtahi Atawhai can support you in some university programmes through their mentoring and group programmes.

Caffeine

A lot of people enjoy a caffeinated drink to 'kick start' their day. Caffeine stimulates the central nervous system and temporarily wards off drowsiness and restores alertness. Beverages such as coffee, tea, soft drinks and energy drinks contain varying levels of caffeine.

Caffeine dependence develops very quickly, especially among heavy coffee and energy drink consumers. Withdrawal or cutting down of caffeine intake can result in headaches, irritability, drowsiness or anxiety. Caffeinated drinks may have an effect on your sleeping pattern and you should try to avoid these later in the day. Caffeine does dehydrate you so make sure you increase your water intake when drinking caffeine.

Alcohol

University is a notorious place for excessive drinking and experimentation with alcohol. Alcohol is a depressant and often will have a negative impact on our mood. It is also a disinhibitor, meaning that we may act differently than we normally do when drinking. Here are a few ideas to help keep you safe:

- * Alternate an alcoholic drink for a non alcoholic drink.
- * Make sure you have a decent meal before or while drinking to reduce the effect of alcohol on your system.
- * If you're taking medication, check with your GP or Pharmacist about the effects of alcohol combined with your medication.
- * Work out a safe way of getting yourself home before you start your night. Set aside taxi money if necessary.
- * Stick with your friends and watch each others' drinks if you're out in public.

- * Know your limit - blackouts, vomiting, needing to be carried home and risky behaviour are not great for your physical or emotional health and can lead to serious consequences. Getting to this state is **not** a goal for your drinking!
- * If you are concerned about your drinking (or someone else's) there is information and help available. Either contact Student Health or the Student Counselling Service, or check out the resource section at the back of this booklet.

Drugs

Using drugs can temporarily block out stressful situations, but unfortunately those stressors will still be there when you come back down. Drugs can have a serious impact on your ability to function in the short and long term, affecting your physical and mental health. If you feel that your drug use or that of someone you know is getting out of control and impacting negatively on your life, it might be time to think about getting some help. Check out the resources section at the back of this booklet.

Smoking

We're all aware of the health implications of smoking, but trying to give up may be one of the biggest challenges you can face. Quitting smoking is hard work but you don't have to face this alone. The Student Health Service offers one to one and telephone support for a small charge, along with prescriptions which entitle students to subsidised gum, patches and lozenges to support kicking the habit.

Ehara taku toa
i te toa takitahi,
engari he toa takitini.

My success is not
the work of one,
but the work of many.

Mental Health and Study

Te waioratanga me te mahi ako

Mental health conditions can vary enormously in their impact on people and are not as uncommon as you might think. Around 20% of New Zealanders will experience an episode of mental illness at some time during their lifetime. Most people find that mental illness affects their ability to concentrate and focus on study to some extent. Whatever symptoms you've been experiencing (and they might vary from time to time), the majority can be well managed through strategies such as balancing your lifestyle, managing stress levels, exercising, getting the right supports, and the use of medication.

Responsible management of your mental and





emotional health means that it is more likely that you will experience long periods of wellness and will be better able to cope with the day to day stresses of study. The more you understand about yourself and your symptoms, the easier it is to stay well.

Educate yourself about any symptoms you may have, treatment options, resources and support available. Learning about the nature of your symptoms and how they can best be managed will greatly assist your ability to study. Check out the resource list at the back of this booklet for ideas on useful support groups and organisations.

Academic concerns

Experiencing mental health issues can mean that you may not always be in control of how you are feeling or the symptoms you have. However, you can make choices about how you can best manage your symptoms and what supports you need at university. Many students are hesitant about asking for what they need for fear that they may not be believed, or be seen as having an unfair advantage over students without mental health conditions. However, working with the university can ensure that you are able to study to the best of your ability and receive the support you are entitled to. Other people may not be aware that you have mental health issues, and your needs may not be as apparent as for a student with a physical disability. It is often your responsibility to be able to articulate what your needs are, to ensure that they are met. However, you don't have to do this alone. Talk to staff at Disability Services or the Student Advocate at VUWSA for specific strategies, support and representation. These staff are trained and experienced. It is part of their role to facilitate your access to the support you need to maximise your study.

Mental health conditions can affect your ability to study in many different ways and at varying intensities, depending on your symptoms. Some of the ways these conditions can impact upon study include:

- * Poor concentration when studying or during class
- * Difficulty maintaining motivation
- * Episodes of low confidence
- * Difficulties getting (and staying) organised
- * Anxiety about exams
- * Missing classes (or struggling getting to morning classes)
- * Difficulty communicating clearly
- * Feeling unsafe or uncomfortable on campus
- * Problems relating to other students or staff
- * Poor memory
- * Feeling stressed
- * Difficulty meeting deadlines

Recognising these issues is the first step towards managing them. Knowing yourself and your usual behaviour/routines and having support people around who know you well will help you to monitor your symptoms.

It is helpful to think about what aspects of study you find most difficult when you are unwell, and then develop specific strategies to manage them. Talking to someone from Disability Service or Student Learning Support Service are good options for mapping out specific strategies to help manage your particular symptoms and study. However, many students find that when their symptoms are particularly bad and their concentration levels are very low, it can be extremely difficult to get work done. Designing strategies while you are well can be helpful for this reason.

What to do if things are overwhelming

- * Slow down – think about what is overwhelming you.
- * Think about what things you need to do to be well, e.g., sticking to medication, getting enough sleep.
- * Create a Recovery Action Plan. An example plan (page 52) and blank template (page 54) have been produced for you. It may be helpful to work on this with a friend, counsellor, or family member.
- * Try to break the problem down into “do-able” things. A great problem solving template is available on www.depression.org.nz
- * Take some time out. Going to stay with friends or family can give you a break from uni for a few days.
- * Try not to have too many demands placed on you. It can be hard to make decisions when you are feeling unwell.
- * Think back to what has helped you in the past when you have felt unwell.
- * Talk with someone about how to tackle the problem.
- * Let your supporters know how to best to support you.
- * Find a quiet space on campus for when you are feeling unwell or unsafe, need a sleep or to be alone. Disability Services can help with this.
- * Make an appointment with a GP or counsellor to discuss ways to manage your difficulties.
- * Be kind to yourself/distract yourself if you are waiting for an appointment time to come around. Go get a massage, buy a new CD, soak in a bubble bath or get a friend to stay with you until your appointment time.

When you're not coping

When your mental health is impacting on your ability to study to a substantial degree, you may find you need to make some decisions about your time at uni and the likelihood of academic success in the short term. You may find that you need to spend more time getting support in managing your symptoms, exploring medication options or treatment such as hospitalisation. This does not mean that you will never be able to study again, or that your symptoms will always require such high maintenance. Take some time out to consider strategies that will assist you to increase periods of wellness and improve your time at uni. It can be really hard to admit that things have become too much to handle.

And remember, your health is more important than passing.

Reducing your course load or withdrawing

A first step can be to contact your Course Coordinators to request extensions on work due or to allow you to miss tutorials, labs etc. Your health professional can assist you to do this. However, it may not be possible to catch up with a month of missed classes, especially practical sessions. When things are getting completely overwhelming, one option is to reduce your course load or withdraw for a trimester.

Some of the reasons people withdraw when unwell:

- * Just needing a break to get well.
- * Acute illness and/or hospitalisation.
- * Time away from study to get appropriate medical support and medication.
- * When you are so far behind that the stress of catching up would make you even worse.

The Student Financial Advisors can help you resolve Studylink matters and



apply for relevant entitlements. If there are circumstances beyond your control (such as a documented mental health condition) that force you to withdraw from subjects, a partial reimbursement of fees may be possible. See the Faculty Office about this.

Reducing your workload to part-time by withdrawing from a subject or two can be arranged through your Faculty Office. This can then give you time to deal with things. Anyone can withdraw from a course within the first 2 weeks and get a full fee refund.

Your Studylink entitlements or loan can be affected, so you will also need to speak with the relevant people about these issues.

International students should talk to a Vic International Student Adviser if withdrawing from papers means that they are no longer a full time student. The Advisor can help you work out ways to try to meet visa requirements with your reduced enrolment.

With the support of a health professional, you can apply for a late withdrawal (up until week 9) or a Dean's withdrawal (until the end of trimester).

The idea of medication can be pretty scary at first. Medication is often an important part of managing your condition and enabling you to participate in life and study. It's common to worry that you will be drowsy or 'out of it' all the time, that people will be able to tell that you are taking it or that it will change your personality drastically. Medication may greatly reduce symptoms and take the 'edge' off to allow you to start making changes to your life in a positive way. It may have the added advantage of making it easier to get out of bed in the morning and generate a feeling of well being.

Medication may take a few weeks to start working. When you're on medication a good working relationship with a GP or Health Professional is really important. Learn about your medication, how it works, what to expect, possible side effects, and dietary/lifestyle restrictions and take them only as prescribed. A useful website to find information on medications is www.medsafe.govt.nz/Profs/CMI.asp

Going off medication suddenly can have some not so pleasant side effects. If you are thinking of stopping your medication, it is important that you discuss this with the person prescribing it. They may agree with you and it is important to discuss with others why you are considering this move. Becoming addicted to medication is a common worry, so discuss this with the person who prescribes your medication as to possible long term effects. If you choose to drink alcohol, discuss with your GP and work out for yourself realistically how many drinks your body can tolerate (the Faculty Ball is not the time to experiment!). If someone wants your medication to take to a dance party, tell them that the best they're going to do is make them feel crappy or fall asleep! And don't give it to them!



Study and medication

Try to organise study time around when you take medication. Some medication can cause nausea, headaches or can have a sedating effect. Again, talk with the person prescribing your medication as to side effects and timing to help you study as effectively as you can. If you change medication, work out whether this involves ‘wash out periods’ where you will be un-medicated for a week or two and may not feel well. Try to ensure that these are not at key times in the year, and that you are getting extra support during the process.

Exams and major deadlines can be enormously stressful. Make sure you have your prescriptions filled before the exam period commences. You don’t want to be at a 24 hour clinic at 2am on the day of an exam, trying to get your medication. Speak to your counsellor or health professional about upcoming times of stress and they can help you identify some coping strategies.

If you are an International student, you may have been receiving treatment under a Health Professional back home. While in New Zealand it may be helpful to see a GP even if you are well, to let them know what medication you have been taking and what kinds of symptoms you have experienced. A letter from your original counsellor or health service back home is usually extremely helpful.

It may be useful to meet with an Advisor at Disability Services to discuss any impact your illness or medication may have on your studies. Disability Advisors can help you work with your lecturers. Decisions on when and how this is done will be made with you. You can decide if contact is made with your Lecturers and how much information will be shared.

This is probably one of the first worries you have. Do I tell anyone? What if people find out? What will they think of me? Disclosure is an issue that many students struggle with. There can be advantages and disadvantages to disclosure of mental health issues, and a range of good and bad consequences.

Advantages of disclosure

Disclosure of mental health issues to friends, family and relevant university services may help to make your time at university more positive. Mental health issues are not always apparent without disclosure, and disclosure can allow you access to the support and services you are entitled to, such as:

- * Practical help like adjustments to courses or facilities and services, e.g., Alternative Exam Facilities.
- * Being better understood and accepted.
- * Increasing emotional support, greater interest, care and follow up from staff.
- * Receiving appropriate reactions in difficult situations from staff.
- * Receiving clear explanations of what support can be offered.
- * Not being seen as a difficult student.
- * Receiving advice on advocacy.

Disadvantages of Disclosure

Unfortunately, myth and misinformation is still an issue for many students with mental health issues. Disclosure can in some instances cause stigma, in that people treat you differently or may see you as your illness, especially if they don’t know anyone with mental illness. By disclosing, you can get help to deal with this.



Things to think about with disclosure...

What is my purpose?

It is not always important for everyone to know everything about you. Knowing the outcome you want from disclosing can determine who you choose to tell and what you tell them. What you tell your flatmates about your troubles with early morning starts might be quite different to what you disclose to a lecturer when asking for an extension.

Who am I telling?

Some people disclose openly and liberally, for others it's on a need to know basis. It is possible that friends, family and flatmates may suspect that something is 'not quite right' and have been waiting for you to say something. Registering with Disability Services can ensure that the exact nature of your issues are kept confidential, yet you are still able to receive appropriate support. They will however, require documented evidence as to the nature of your mental health condition from a health professional.

What am I telling?

Mental health issues affect people in many different ways and describing your symptoms may assist in providing greater insight to the kinds of supports that you need. At Disability Services, documentation outlining your diagnosis is important, but ultimately they will be more interested in how your mental illness impacts on your ability to study.

Will this person tell anyone?

If you are worried about other people knowing, it can be important to be selective in whom you tell. There are strict guidelines about confidentiality in the university, but it's natural if friends are concerned or worried that they may talk to someone to alleviate their anxiety or to get advice as to how to better support you. If in doubt, ask.

Should I tell my friends I'm not coping?

It's quite likely that your friends are aware that there is some kind of problem. Have a think about how you'd like them to support you. You may want to explain what some of the symptoms you experience are like, what effect they have on you and what your friends can do to help. If they're good friends, they'll stick around.

Shall I apply for an aegrotat or an extension?

You may prefer not to use a diagnosis to describe how mental illness affects you and in what ways it manifests. It may be possible to apply for an aegrotat or for an extension, while maintaining confidentiality with an appropriately worded letter from the Counselling or Student Health Service.



Confidentiality

In the university environment confidentiality is taken very seriously. University staff should tell you if they are planning to tell anyone else about your mental health issues and why. For example, with your permission your counsellor may discuss with other uni services how to best support you. However confidentiality cannot be assured where it is believed that you are at risk of harming yourself or others, or if there is a legitimate concern for your wellbeing.

Discrimination and your rights

Disability discrimination happens when people with a disability are treated less favourably than people without a disability. Disability discrimination also occurs when people are treated less fairly because they are relatives, friends, carers, co-workers or associates of a person with a disability. If you want more information about discrimination, contact the Disability Service.

Victoria University has a Facilitator and Disputes Advisor who can provide free support or advice for a range of issues. If you're in a situation of conflict you cannot resolve, or can see a conflict developing and want to know what can be done to defuse it, making contact with the Advisor may be helpful, see the resources section for contact details.

When you are unwell you may need time away from university. You may have initially made friends at the start of the year and when you return, find that they already have an established social group or that everyone you knew from classes has graduated. If there is one thing you can be sure of, it is that there are many students who may also feel isolated for any number of reasons, such as, cultural differences, not drinking alcohol or being from out of town.

Strategies to combat isolation

- * Think about what you like to do. If you have a particular hobby, try to go to places where you'll meet other people with the same interests. Short courses are also a really good way to meet other people who like drawing, belly dancing, art or whatever.
- * Many faculties or student groups have regular social events which are a great way to meet people in your course.
- * Many students prefer to cultivate a social life outside campus, especially if they are part-time and only studying one or two subjects.
- * Campus volunteer work is a great way to meet people.
- * Virtual friends—social networking can be a great way to meet others experiencing similar situations to you.
- * In lectures and tutorials sit next to people you know, or the same people each week – this way you will soon know them.
- * Go to any coffee or drinks organised after tutorials. It's a good way to meet others—it's common to not really get to know anyone until after the subject is over.
- * Check out your church and community events and make an effort to go along.



When you're worried about someone

It can be challenging and painful when someone you care about is not well. As a friend, partner or housemate you are in a position where you can notice changes of behaviour over time. You may be unsure of how to help or what you can do. Some tips:

- * Talk to the person about how you are feeling. Be specific. Discuss what your concerns are e.g., "I notice you are crying/sleeping a lot".
- * Learn about what kinds of supports are available for the symptoms they are experiencing. Help them explore options that will get them the help they need (see Resources section for ideas).
- * Spend time with the person when they are in need of support. However there may be times when someone wants to remain silent and alone for a while. This is not necessarily a bad thing.
- * Respect their right to make their own choices. Encourage them to think about what they would like you to do if they are unable to make decisions for themselves.
- * It's OK to set boundaries, e.g., "I know you are upset, but it's not okay for you to yell and slam doors". You have rights too!
- * Remember that mental health issues form only one aspect of the person. With treatment, support and choices that aim to empower the person to take responsibility for their mental health, they are likely to improve.
- * Don't feel that you have to 'fix it' yourself. Depending on the circumstances, having a friend with a mental illness may be scary. It is often hard to know what you can do to help, while still respecting the independence of a person who may be unwell. Sometimes a person who appears to be behaving in a self-destructive/other people-destructive way can vehemently deny there is anything wrong. How can you help without betraying them? What are the boundaries? This is where it may be useful for you to talk to a counsellor about your friend, without disclosing the friend's identity.
- * Ask them how to best support them, don't assume you know.



I'm feeling really stressed and I have all this work to do...


Don't panic. Work out how much work you have to do, when it is due, and whether you will be able to complete it realistically. Talk to your lecturers and tutors about extra help and if there's any possibility of an extension. Work out your priorities. You might be able to take some time off work, cut down on social activities and be able to get the work done. Draw up a timetable for yourself so that you can do the work in bits and pieces. Reward yourself each time you hand something in - a coffee with a friend, a new magazine, or a walk on the beach. Talk to Student Learning Advisers about how to manage your time the next time assignments are due, so you don't have a huge build up of panic.




I hate to say it, but I've been here for a trimester and I still haven't made any really good friends. It's starting to make me feel like a freak and I feel depressed. What can I do?

You're certainly not the only student in this situation. It takes time and effort to make sustainable friendships, especially if you are on a really big campus or surrounded by people who all knew each other at high school. Think about what activities you enjoy doing. Seek out others who enjoy the same activities.


Maybe you could join a club. In class, if you do any small group work, invite your group out for coffee. Could you get a study partner to study with? In the meantime, keep doing things that you enjoy - movies, visiting galleries, whatever - even if you have to do them alone.

 **I'm really worried about a friend of mine.
He drinks a lot and gets into these fits of rage.
Afterwards he doesn't remember any of it.
How can I handle this?**

Could you talk to your friend about his behaviour when he is sober? Let him know why you are concerned. You could provide specific examples of his behaviour that worry you. Encourage him to see a Counsellor or use the resource section at the back of this booklet. You could offer to go with him or meet him after the appointment. But make sure you are getting some support for yourself so that you don't have someone else's behaviour weighing on your shoulders.

 **I've been feeling really anxious and having
trouble sleeping. It seems to be getting worse.
Does this mean that I have a mental illness?**

Not necessarily. Everyone feels anxious at times and especially around the exam period. 'Mental illness' is an umbrella term covering a wide range of illnesses and symptoms. The symptoms can be mild and occasional such as stress around exam time, or longer term. It can be helpful to talk to someone about specific strategies to make things easier and make study less stressful.

 **I've been diagnosed with a mental illness.
Does this mean I'm going to have to leave uni?
Will I have this for the rest of my life?**

No. Like any illness or condition, when you get proper treatment it is possible for people to recover or manage their symptoms. Many students experience a range of mental health symptoms, from mild to severe. Some are chronic, while others are transient. For many students, having a mental illness is similar to having a physical illness which requires ongoing treatment, such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease, and the condition can

be managed to enable them to study. Many people who suffer even major mental illnesses manage to live quite ordinary lives, studying or working while continuing to receive treatment or medication for their illness.

 **Can anyone develop a mental illness?**

The causes of mental illness are unclear. A genetic predisposition to mental illness such as schizophrenia, can run in families. Many other factors such as stress, bereavement, relationship breakdown, child abuse, drug use, unemployment, social isolation, accidents and life threatening illness, can contribute to the onset of mental illness in people who have a predisposition.

One in five people in New Zealand will experience some degree of mental illness throughout their lives and many more will feel the impact (family, friends, partners). You usually can't spot a person with a mental illness. It could be the person sitting next to you on the train, a friend, lecturer or even a family member. We're all on a continuum with our emotions and stress levels, and for some it is more a day-to-day challenge.

**I've heard that there's a new wonder drug and
it can make people happy. Is that true?**

 Every now and then the media will tout a new medication as the "wonder drug". It is vital to understand that medication is carefully thought about before being prescribed. You, your environment and your experiences, all form a picture that is carefully considered when medication and dosage is recommended.

New developments in medication do not mean that a new drug is the best answer for you. Always speak with your GP about your medication – if you hear about something new and you are interested, discuss this with them.



My Action Plan (example)

When I am feeling well I am:

In good spirits, calm, sociable.

Some of my triggers for getting unwell are:

Stress, exam periods, working over time, relationship problems.

When I am starting to get unwell the following happens:

Always feeling tired, sleep too much or too little, forgetting or losing things, can't get out of bed in the morning, feel negative about everything, becoming withdrawn from people.

What I need when I am experiencing these symptoms (Try to have one or two trusted friends who know it is OK to tell you when you're unwell):

Contact my doctor, arrange a friend to stay with, spend extra time doing things that I enjoy, take some time off, get more rest.

What I don't want when I am experiencing symptoms:

Added stress—from work, family, study

People I may need to talk to when experiencing difficulty

Family telephone no:

Friend telephone no:

Doctor: telephone no:

Counsellor/disability service: telephone no:

Things I need others to do for me:

Arrange to get notes from missed lectures, return my library books, remind me of doctor's appointments, and make me dinner

Who I would like to do them:

Friend, housemate, partner etc.

What I don't want from people when I am experiencing symptoms:

Talking about me to others without my permission, Having drugs and alcohol in the house

Things that have helped in the past when I am experiencing symptoms:

Counselling, getting extensions on assignments, working on assignments in small amounts, checking in with a friend every day.

Things I can do in the here and now to make myself feel better:

Cook up a big pot of soup, make an appointment with my counsellor, take a hot bath or shower, phone a friend.



When I am feeling well I am:

Some of my triggers for getting unwell are:

When I am starting to get unwell the following happens:

What I need when I am experiencing these symptoms (Try to have one or two trusted friends who know it is OK to tell you when you're unwell):

What I don't want when I am experiencing symptoms:

People I may need to talk to when experiencing difficulty


Things I need others to do for me:

Who I would like to do them:

What I don't want from people when I am experiencing symptoms:

Things that have helped in the past when I am experiencing symptoms:

Things I can do in the here and now to make myself feel better:



Resources

Ngā rauemi

At Victoria University, all students have free access to a range of student services, paid for (in part) by your student levy. They are here to provide you with information and support. To help you understand what each of the services does, a quick explanation is provided in this chapter.



Support at VUW

Student Counselling Service

Offers free, confidential, short-term counselling to any Vic uni student. They provide a variety of counselling styles and have a Maori Counsellor and Counsellors from other countries. Regular 50 minute appointments, daily emergency appointments and brief drop-in appointments are available. Counsellors are available on all four campuses.

Mauri Ora, Level 0, Student Union Building
Ph 04 463 5310 counselling-service@vuw.ac.nz

Student Health Service

Offers a general practice medical service based at Kelburn and Pipitea campuses. They have an experienced team of nurses and GPs who can deal with the full range of primary care illnesses, accidents, prescriptions, minor surgery, chronic health issues and preventative health care advice. They have access to visiting specialist services such as nutrition, psychiatry, diabetes and dermatology. Most of the services they offer are free if you register with them, otherwise some costs might apply.

Mauri Ora, Level 0, Student Union Building
Ph 04 463 5308 student-health@vuw.ac.nz

Student Learning Support Service

Works with all students from first year undergraduates to postgraduates. Their staff aim to foster successful study and develop independent, active learners. They offer a large variety of programmes ranging from one to one appointments to group seminars.

Level 0, Kirk Wing, Hunter Courtyard, Kelburn campus
Ph 04 463 5999 student-learning@vuw.ac.nz

Financial Support and Advice

Offers individualised financial advice to students, including information about Studylink, banks, transport costs, flat accounts, etc. They also help with financial statements for scholarship applications and Vic OE applications. Students in financial hardship can apply to the Hardship Fund through Financial Support and Advice.

Kevel 1, Hunter Building, Kelburn campus
Ph 04 463 7474 student-hardship@vuw.ac.nz

Te Pūtahi Atawhai

This service is for Maori and Pacific students offering non-academic support and a mentoring programme for FHSS and FCA students.

14 Kelburn Parade, Kelburn campus

Ph 04 463 6974

te-putahi-atawhai@vuw.ac.nz

Victoria International

Victoria International Admissions and Services staff provide assistance and support to international students, from the time they first consider studying at Victoria, through to graduation. They have student advisors, an insurance advisor and a visa officer and are involved with the Victoria International Leadership Programme, student exchanges and International programmes.

Level 2, Easterfield building, Kelburn campus

Ph 04 463 5350

victoria-international@vuw.ac.nz

Careers Development and Employment (Vic Careers)

Offers assistance and advice for a wide range of queries - from the general exploration of career ideas and the career implications of subject choices, to details of specific jobs, employers, or postgraduate courses. Tools are available to identify your personality type, clarify your aspirations for the future, and suggest job options based on your skills and interests.

14 Kelburn Parade, Kelburn campus

Ph 04 463 5393

careers-service@vuw.ac.nz

Student Disputes Resolution

Any staff member or student can contact the Student Interest and Dispute Resolution Adviser for support and guidance on matters involving student safety, conflict, or misconduct.

Depending on the circumstances help may include advice, referral to specialist services, or mediation between disputing parties. The aim will always be to ensure that issues are resolved as early and as informally as possible.

If you are unsure about how to deal with a problem, and want to discuss what assistance is available, contact us.

Rm 207, 14 Waiteata Rd, Kelburn

Ph 04 463 5023

yvonne.oldfield@vuw.ac.nz

Disability Services

Provides free and confidential services for students with temporary and ongoing impairments. They value the expertise of people with disabilities and recognise the uniqueness of individual experience. Services offered are tailored to meet your needs and include: regular meetings with a Disability & Inclusion Adviser who can provide support; advice and planning assistance; liaison with academic staff; access to quiet places to rest and study; technology and training and note taking assistance.

Ground Floor, Robert Stout Building, Kelburn Campus

Ph 04 463 6077

disability@vuw.ac.nz



VUWSA Student Advocate

The Student Advocate is available for guidance and support and to advocate on your behalf on any problem you might have. The service is free and confidential and can assist with complex or simple issues, related to your studies, living, finances or other issues.

Level 2, Student Union building, Kelburn Campus
Ph 04 463 6984 www.vuwsa.org.nz

University Police Liaison

Vic uni has their own police liaison officer who is available to give advice and speak to staff or students who may have been the victim of crime. If you're not sure if you are a victim of a crime and you want to know what your options are, you will be able to get the clear advice you need to make an informed decision.

During Trimester 1 & 2 a clinic is held on campus every fortnight where students and staff can bring their issues. The current constable is Jane Gowans and she is able to be contacted at the Wellington Central Police Station.

Ph 04 381 2001

Check out the websites for the above Victoria University student services at www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services.

Some other great options for internet based support are also available:

- * www.mentalhealth.org.nz
- * www.youthline.co.nz
- * www.thelowdown.co.nz
- * www.likeminds.org.nz
- * www.rainbowyouth.org.nz
- * www.headspace.org.nz
- * www.smokefree.co.nz

