

U OK? ACADEMIC PRESSURES WORKSHOP



Worrying about the future and how well we're working towards achieving our goals is totally normal. Sometimes though, these worries can impact our mental health.

Worrying about either your own expectations of yourself or expectations others have of you can lead to feelings of panic and anxiety. You might be someone who thrives on setting goals and achieving them, or you might be someone who panics at the thought of it, either way, there are many important things in life other than succeeding and achieving our goals, and it's important to have a balance of all of those things.

Figuring out a healthy balance while working towards your future plans could help you to look after your mental health.

EXTRA SUPPORT

The Mix

Support for under 25s
Text 'THEMIX' to 85258

Samaritans

For urgent support
116 123

Papyrus

Support for under 35s
experiencing thoughts of
suicide
0800 068 4141

Shout

Text 'SHOUT' to 85258

Beat Eating Disorders

Student specific helpline 0808
801 0811

Voice Collective

Support children and young people
who hear voices, see visions and
other sensory experiences

Switchboard LGBTQ+

0300 330 0630 - helpline

Muslim Youth Helpline

Faith and culturally sensitive
mental health support

Mermaids

Support for transgender young
people under 20

OCD Action

Support and advice for anyone
affected by OCD



Mental Health
Foundation

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FURTHER READING, ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Racism & mental health

From [Mind](#)

LGBTQ+ mental health support and advice

From [Mind](#)

BAATN Network

The home of the largest community of Counsellors and Psychotherapists of Black, African, Asian and Caribbean Heritage in the UK

What's up with everyone?

Information and advice on key areas that impact young person and student mental health.

Tell me App

A digital peer support App

Behind the Books

Mental health tips for university students created by a group of Sussex University students

Mental health A-Z

Learn about signs, symptoms and how to access support if needed

Mind: Student advice

Tips and guidance for students to look after mental health

Zero Suicide Alliance

Free online training for students about having conversations with peers about suicide

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TOP TIPS

TALK TO SOMEONE

Talking things through with someone can help you to get perspective, to take some time away from the things that are worrying you, and to get ideas for new things you can try to manage what's worrying you. Sometimes just saying it out loud can help you to process what you're feeling. Talking to someone you trust can help to challenge your own beliefs around productivity and success and to recognize when your behaviours are causing you to feel anxious or stressed. This could be a friend, a tutor, a helpline or God – whatever works for you.

PRACTICE HEALTHY STUDY/WORK HABITS - YOUR PRODUCTIVITY IS NOT YOUR IDENTITY

These could be different for everyone. You might find it helpful to study/work with others around you, or on your own. You might find that study tools are helpful, or '[study with me](#)' [videos](#) on youtube. Breaking your work down into smaller tasks and setting yourself windows of time to achieve them could help. Try different approaches until you find some that work for you, and then build them into your routine.

IDENTIFY THE SOURCE OF YOUR STRESS OR WORRY

If you find yourself feeling anxious or stressed it can help to identify exactly what it is that's causing you to feel this way so you can do something about it. If you can't figure out exactly what it is, it can help to keep a journal on your phone where you record what you've done each day, alongside your thoughts and feelings. This could help you to identify patterns and avoid or prepare for specific things that trigger feelings of stress or anxiety, such as lack of sleep, preparing to give a presentation, or unrealistic deadlines.

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TOP TIPS

BALANCE YOUR TIME AND BE REALISTIC ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN ACHIEVE

It's tempting to spend a lot of your time on the thing that's causing you the most stress, but it's possible to spend too much time on a task – your productivity could plummet and your feelings of stress and worry could sky-rocket. Be realistic about how much time you can dedicate to a task, making sure you also spend time on exercising regularly, getting enough sleep, eating well and relaxing or socialising. Make yourself stop working at a reasonable time. Taking a step back from a daunting or stressful task can help us reset and come back to it in a more positive state of mind.

TRY TO FOCUS ON THE TASK AT HAND

If you find yourself feeling anxious about the future, it can help to focus on the present, and what you've got to do right now. Save those thoughts about the future for another time when you can talk to someone about them.

MAKE YOUR BEDROOM A RELAXING ENVIRONMENT

If you think of your bedroom as a relaxing space, it will help you not to feel stressed when you need to study or work in it, or go to sleep. Keep it tidy and make it a space you want to spend time in. If you can, find other spaces to study – study outside or in public libraries. When you are studying in your room, designate areas for studying, even if that's a little corner of your room, and keep the rest of your room for relaxing.

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TOP TIPS

GET MOVING

Being active and moving our bodies is not just good for our physical health, it's good for our mental health too. Getting your blood flowing and your boosting your endorphins can help you to be more productive. Try your best to incorporate movement and activity in your routine, in whatever way works best for you. Break up your work or study time with a few minutes of stretching – you can even do it from your seat.

HAVE SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO

Having something to look forward to can make us feel less daunted by tasks we have to do before then, and helps provide a bookmark for when we can have a break from stressful or anxious situations. Try to get a balance of big and small things to look forward to, like going for a walk, or going away for the weekend to visit family or friends.

DON'T COMPARE YOURSELF TO OTHERS

Your life is completely unique to you alone. Comparing yourself to others can cause feelings of low self-esteem, anxiety and stress. It can also cause you to set unrealistic expectations for yourself. Your expectations of yourself should be based on your own circumstances, not anyone else's. The only person you should compare yourself to is who you were yesterday. Surround yourself with positive role models – either on your socials feeds or in real life. These don't have to be hugely successful people, just people who make you feel good or even inspire you.

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TOP TIPS

UPSKILL YOURSELF

A number of resources like [The Skills Toolkit](#) and [Future Learn](#) offer free online courses in a wide range of subjects if you fancy learning something new. These can look great on your CV, and give you a chance to try new things you might really enjoy and be good at. Take a look at local colleges near you that can help you pass your Maths or English GCSEs, learn a new language, or study new skills like beauty therapy.

PRACTICE GRATITUDE

Practicing gratitude can lower stress levels, increase feelings of happiness, and help you sleep better. Each day, write down one or two things that you're grateful for from that day, like your health, family, or friends, or something you've done that you're proud of. This can help you to recognise and appreciate the people and things you have, and after a few days it can start to reshape how you feel about things. Celebrate your own achievements, even the ones you might think are the smallest ones – sometimes they feel like the hardest.

ACADEMIC PRESSURE EXTRAS

UnJaded Jade

Study with me videos and revision tips

Combat perfectionism and competitiveness

Perfectionism and competitiveness can be really damaging to our mental health. Click on the links to read more and find extra [tips](#) to overcome perfectionism [here](#)

How to Fail

This podcast from Elizabeth day celebrates the things that haven't gone quite right

Study tips

Check out these study tips from [Student Minds](#)

Brain fog and the pandemic

Read about the impact the pandemic is having on our mind