STUDYING AND DEPRESSION

You are not alone

If you have (or think you may have) depression or anxiety then you are not alone. Depression can happen to anyone. Depression and other mental health conditions are common and create challenges for a lot of students.

Depression is not a sign of weakness! There are many effective treatments. Seeking support for your health is not only the best thing for your general wellbeing, it will also help reach your academic potential.

Get Help at UWA

The doctors at the UWA Medical Centre are very familiar with how depression affects you as a student. Call 6488 2218 to book an appointment or go to:

Don’t forget you can access six free individual counselling sessions with a psychologist from the Counselling Service at Student Wellbeing.

Special Consideration is how the university accommodates students who are unwell. Know your rights and the rules for Special Consideration. www.student.uwa.edu.au/course/exams/consideration

Go to UniAccess to discuss Alternative Exam Arrangements and get help with extensions on assignments and for other types of Special Consideration.

Call in at the Student Wellbeing Reception on the first floor of Student Central or telephone 64882423 to find out more about making an appointment with UniAccess or Counselling. http://www.student.uwa.edu.au/experience/studentwellbeing

Community Support Numbers:
Lifeline 13 11 14
Crisis Care 9223 1111

Challenges at Uni

Depression works to undermine your confidence in your academic skills. Like any illness, depression means you need days off or need to work at a reduced rate. Research suggests that it is common for students with high levels of psychological distress to be unable to study for an average of ten days per month.

Look at yourself with kindness.

How understanding would you be to a student with a broken arm or recurrent migraines? Be just as kind to yourself as you learn to study with your own health condition.

It is often more difficult to manage the impact of your depression at university than at work. The workplace has a lot of incentives to get you through your daily tasks. For instance, there is a direct link between being paid and attending! Students with depression report some common study problems. Read over for some tips on how to beat these.
Six Common Blocks for Students with Depression and Study Tips.

1. **You struggle to attend tutorials/labs/workshops**
   You may feel that anything you say is not worthy of hearing. Remind yourself that confidence is not a measure of capability!
   - write down just one idea and look for an opening to say it.
   - if you are challenged it is perfectly fine to say “I didn’t consider that...thanks, that’s an interesting idea”.
   - if you have a bad day or couple of weeks and miss some tuts/labs, try to get back to it. No-one knows (or really cares) why you weren’t there. Most will assume it was headache/flu.

2. **Your assignments that never seem good enough to hand in.**
   You have made some notes, or a plan, or even a draft but you just can’t conceive of it being good enough to continue. This is your depression talking nonsense to you!
   - It is worth completing and submitting even a version that you are not happy with. It may not be perfect, but it is difficult to gain enough extra marks to make working on it after the due date really worthwhile.
   - If you know you have trouble accepting that the assignment is finished and submitting it (or uploading on Turnitin), ask a friend to help you submit.

3. **Checking your student email account feels threatening.**
   Yes, we can feel crushed by the sheer volume of emails. Very few of these will be really important but you do need to read official communications from your faculty and student administration. Make a short list of what counts and ask a friend or family member to check your email account for you.

4. **Fatigue...you are so exhausted all the time that just doing one task feels insurmountable.**
   Fine, just do the one reading/quiz/prelab today and be very pleased with yourself for achieving that much. It’s a big job when you are unwell. Set small achievable daily goals and reward yourself for finishing them.

5. **Things are so bad that you don’t want to get up or leave the house.**
   Sometimes you are just too unwell to get out of bed. Don’t beat yourself up about this. Accept the bad day(s) and then apply for Special Consideration for missed assessments or classes.

6. **Exams! You are worried because...**
   - you might not wake up in time since you are not sleeping well, or your meds make you drowsy in the mornings
   - your thinking speed and retention is slower so you won’t finish the paper
   - even though you have covered most of the course, you might blank in the exam
   You need an exam safety net! UniAccess can help with Alternative Exam Arrangements. If you are too unwell to prepare or become unwell on the day of the exam apply for Special Consideration to defer.

Like this Survival Guide? Why not check out...
Survival Guides: Avoiding procrastination, Effective Time Management, The Right Study Load for Me

Want to know more about STUDY Smarter?
Find out about our services, resources and workshop schedules at: www.studysmarter.uwa.edu.au

Any suggestions?
We’d love to hear from you. Email us at study.smarter@uwa.edu.au

This resource was developed by the STUDY Smarter team for UWA students. When using our resources, please retain them in their original form with both the STUDY Smarter heading and the UWA logo.