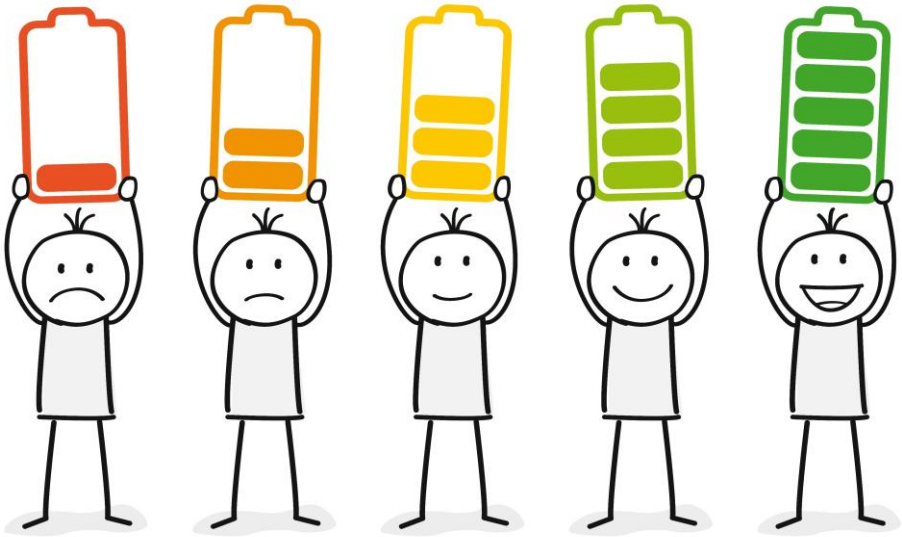
MIC Student Counselling Service

Minding your Mental Health & Wellbeing Guide 2026-27



Acknowledgements

This guide has been adapted by the MIC Counselling team from the original booklet created with love and care by the UL Student Counselling and Wellbeing team 2023. MIC Counsellors are grateful to the UL team for permission to create a MIC version of this student resource.

Disclaimer

This guide is an information resource about mental health and wellbeing.

Due to the general nature of the information in this guide, should you require specific help, you should seek the assistance of an appropriately trained professional.

The information printed in this guide was correct at the time of publication.

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It's not selfish to love yourself, take care of yourself, and make your happiness a priority. It's necessary.

Mandy Hale

Introduction

When faced with personal challenges at College, many students look first to self-help options to support their mental health and boost their wellbeing. This booklet offers you some guidance and resources.

Even with your self-help approaches and talking with friends and family, you might still find you are struggling with your mental health. If this happens please reach out early for additional professional support at home, or from one of the free MIC support services: Student Supports | Mary Immaculate College

How to contact MIC Student Counselling Service:

Limerick Campus

- **Availability:** Monday-Friday, 9am-6pm (in-person or online via Teams).
- **Drop-in Hours:** 11am-12.45pm, Monday-Friday in **T311/T312**.
    - No appointment or referral needed.
    - Meet a Counsellor for an initial chat; further support can be arranged if required.

If you can't make Drop-in: Email **counselling@mic.ul.ie** with **"Limerick Student"** in the subject line to arrange an alternative meeting.

Thurles Campus

- **Availability:**
    - In-person: Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday, 10am-5pm
    - Online via Teams: Monday-Friday, 9am-6pm
- **Drop-in Hours:** 12pm-1pm, Tuesdays & Thursdays in **Room 217**.
    - No appointment or referral needed.
    - Meet a Counsellor for an initial chat; further support can be arranged if required.

If you can't make Drop-in: Email **counselling@mic.ul.ie** with **"Thurles Student"** in the subject line to arrange an alternative meeting.

Tips for Well-being

Relax Including activities into your daily routine that help you to relax can help manage stress levels, even if it is only 10 minutes of downtime.

Keep In Touch Maintaining contact with the people close to you can provide you with the sense of support, belonging and connection.

Keep Active Find something which keeps you active and which you also enjoy, regular physical activity can give your mental health a positivity boost.

Eat Healthily It will not only affect how you feel, but also how you think. Aim to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, and always carry a water bottle with you.

Watch Your Alcohol Consumption Alcohol is a depressant and can lead to low mood and increased anxiety. Excessive consumption of alcohol poses many risks to our mental health and overall wellbeing.

Become Comfortable With Who You Are Take some time to connect to your body and mind via meditation, mindfulness or breathing exercises and celebrate everything that your body and mind helped you to achieve.

Talk About It Talking about your feelings validates what you are going through and connect you to other people. Talk to someone you trust or call a free helpline such as the Samaritans - 116 123 or text 'Hello' to 50808

Anything that is human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable. When we can talk about our feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting, and less scary. The people we trust with that important talk can help us know that we are not alone.

Fred Rogers

Food for Thought

"Being a student is actually a bit like a high-performance athlete- you are using part of your body (your brain) to perform to a high performance level. In fact, you are using the most powerful part of your body: your brain uses one fifth of all the calories you burn over a typical day" Hughes, G., (2020) *Be Well, Learn Well: improve your wellbeing & academic performance* p.19

Why might I want to change the way I eat and exercise?

- Eating healthier is not about losing weight. It can help you feel mentally and physically better.
- People eat for many different reasons, not just because they are hungry. Reasons can include feeling bored, covering up feelings, feeling low or because it has become a habit. Write a list of why or when you eat to help you understand your eating habits.

Steps towards a healthier lifestyle

- Plan your meals and when you will exercise. Be realistic with your goals and use a food and activity diary to track progress.
- Identify personal triggers for eating (e.g. boredom eating, drinking, feeling low) and identify what you can do to target them.
- Eat regularly and avoid skipping meals. Breakfast is extremely important to set you up for a good day (think porridge, wholegrain toast, or a smoothie as a good choice).
- Set realistic goals for your exercising routine. A 20 minute fast paced walk three times a week could be a good starting point. You could then aim for 30 minutes 5 days a week.

- Being healthy does not mean restricting yourself. Diet based on the food pyramid ensures your body gets plenty of nutrients which would support your overall wellbeing.

Coping with food cravings

- Do not skip meals: When you skip a meal, you may end up snacking on sugary or fatty foods.
- Eat breakfast: Eat foods which are high in fibre and low in sugar (e.g. porridge, slices of wholegrain toast and a banana.).
- Include foods that have a low glycaemic index (GI) with each meal. These foods keep you feeling fuller for longer. Examples are: multigrain bread, brown pasta, apples, oranges, bananas, broccoli, peas and beans.
- Understand your cravings: Be aware of what triggers your cravings and have healthy snacks such as fruits or nuts on hand if you feel you need to eat.
- Drink plenty of water at least 8 cups a day.

If binge eating is a worry for you that are extra steps you can take to make this less of a problem

- Do not miss any meals or snacks so that you are hungry.
- Make sure you are eating enough protein.
- Be cautious about 'bulk' buying food or storing food in your room.
- Drinking alcohol; can be a powerful trigger for binge eating , so when you do have a drink, make sure you have eaten well beforehand and perhaps plan what you will eat the next day.

And remember if you are worried about your relationship to food then contact the MIC Counselling Service or one of the online support services listed at the end of this booklet.

Don't start a diet that has an expiration date. Develop a healthy lifestyle that will last forever.

Karen Salmansohn

Relaxation Techniques

Preparing for relaxation

- Sit in a comfortable chair or lie down somewhere comfortable in a quiet, warm room where you will not be interrupted.
- If you are sitting, take your shoes off and let your feet rest on the ground. Uncross your legs and rest your hands on your lap.
- If you are lying down, lie on your back with your arms at your side. If necessary, use a comfortable pillow for your head. If your lower back feels uncomfortable put a pillow under your legs.

Relaxation exercise

- Begin by breathing out, and then breathe in easily. Repeat. Breathe slowly in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Hold your breath for 3 seconds and then breathe out slowly, allowing your rib cage and stomach to relax. Empty your lungs completely. Do not strain. Keep it slow, deep and rhythmic, for the duration of five minutes.
- Once you have established a breathing pattern start the following sequence, tensing each part of the body separately as you breathe in, holding your breathe for 5 seconds while you keep your muscles tense, then breathing out slowly while at the same time leaving go of the tension in your muscles and relaxing.

Relaxation sequence:

- Press your feet and heels down and curl your toes hard.
- Tense your calf muscles.
- Tense your thigh muscles making your legs still.
- Make your buttocks tight.
- Tense your stomach as if to receive a punch.
- Tense the muscles in your arms.
- Hunch your shoulders and press in.

- Clench you jaws, frown and screw up your eyes really tight.
- Tense all your muscles together after a few seconds relax.
- Now while still breathing slowly and deeply imagine a white rose on a black background. Try to see the rose as clearly as possible, concentrating your attention on it for 30 seconds. Do not hold your breath during this time; continue to breathe as you have been doing.
- Now visualise another peaceful object of your choice. Again, try to see this object as clearly as possible, concentrating your attention on it for 30 seconds while continuing to breathe slowly and deeply
- Lastly give yourself the instruction that when you come out of this exercise, you will be perfectly relaxed and alter.
- Stretch and sit up and slowly start to move again.

How else can you help yourself to relax?

- Talking to someone you like and trust and who you believe will be sensitive.
- The '3 minute breathing space' is useful to reduce moments of tension and stress. It's a short, 3 minute guided exercise that can be practised at home, work, or out and about:
  (2013) The Breathing Space by Jon Kabat Zinn - YouTube

- Try the "Butterfly Hug" grounding technique to calm your nervous system when you feel stressed, anxious and/or upset:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=iGGJrqscvtU&t=16s

Low Mood

What are the symptoms of low mood?

- Depressed mood (feeling sad, blue, tearful)
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities
- Significant weight change or significant change in appetite
- Trouble sleeping or oversleeping
- Feeling restless or slowed down
- Decreased energy or feelings of tiredness
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Diminished ability to think, concentrate, remember or make decisions
- Recurrent thoughts of death, suicidal ideation with or without a plan
- Can also include: headaches, and other pains/aches, digestive problems, sexual problems, anxiety and excessive worry, feeling pessimistic or hopeless

What are the causes of low mood?

There is usually more than one reason and can vary from person to person. These include:

- Family history of low mood/depression
- Distressing events and surrounding circumstance
- Low mood can accompany other (physical and mental) illnesses
- A person's deeper beliefs can predispose them to low mood. These thoughts generally include 3 elements:
  - A view that they are worthless, a failure, or to blame
  - A view that the world is devoid of pleasure and immense barriers block access to goals
  - A view that the future is hopeless

What else can I do?

Besides seeing a medical doctor or/and a mental health professional, you can help your mood by doing some of these things:

- Daily exercise and eating healthy foods can help you feel better.
- Try to have consistent sleep habits and avoid all-night study sessions.
- Try journaling about your feelings and practice relaxation techniques. Use these when you start feeling down or upset.
- Avoid using drugs and at least minimize, if not totally avoid alcohol.
- Break up large tasks into small ones and do what you can as you can; try not to do too many things at once.
- Try to spend time with supportive family members or friends and take advantage of campus resources.
- Try to get out with friends and try fun things that help you express yourself. As you experience low mood, you may find that even if you do not feel like going out with friends or engaging in your hobby, if you push yourself to do so, you will be able to enjoy yourself more than you thought.

Every time you thought you could not move forward you did. Take a moment to appreciate how strong and capable you are.

Karen Salmansohn

Fear and Anxiety

What is fear?

The 'fight or flight' reaction triggered by fear is a pattern of chemical, physical and psychological changes that prepares us to cope with what we experience as a threatening situation. When we experience fear, adrenaline is pumped into the bloodstream. This can result in more powerful heartbeats, called palpitations, sweating, over-breathing, tension and muscle pain, nausea or fainting. Such effects can be easily mistaken for serious illness by those experiencing them. This in itself can lead to an escalation of these symptoms.

What are your fears?

Some commonly experienced fears are:

- A fear of failure, disapproval, or rejection
- A fear of competition
- A fear of change
- A fear of intimacy

How can we cope with fear and anxiety?

There are several methods for coping with the physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural responses to fear. These include:

- Dealing with the physical symptoms of fear including the use of relaxation and breathing exercises.
- Assertiveness training.
- Dealing with fear-provoking thoughts.
- Support from a mental health professional may help you to develop strategies to manage your fears. It may also help you to understand and process any underlying issues or meanings of your fears.

Become aware of your fears

1. Make a list of all your current life situations which trigger your fear. Rank the fearful experiences in order, from the least to the most fear-producing, on a scale from 0-100. Start with the least fearful and construct a vivid image of it

2. Record your fear-producing thoughts. Write down your thoughts about the event, including subjective assumptions, beliefs, judgements and predictions

3. Dispute your self-talk, what you are saying about yourself. Ask questions such as "Where is the evidence for this idea? Where is this written? Is there any support for my belief?"

4. Imagine the worst case. Ask questions such as "What is the worst thing that could happen? What are the worst consequences if the worst thing happened? How tolerable would the consequences be? How likely is it that the worst will happen? What good things may occur? "

5. Replace the statements you recorded under task 2 with more reasonable, objective, statements. Work on writing a list of coping thoughts for the following four stages of coping:

- **Preparation** - "I have succeeded with this before"
- **Confronting the fear situation** - "No need to rush", "Take it step by step", "I can do this"
- **Coping with fear** - "I am only afraid because I choose to be", "Keep my mind on the task at hand"
- **Reinforcing success** - "I did well! It is possible not to be afraid. All I have to do is stop thinking I am afraid"

Let your mind and heart rest for a while. You will catch up, the world will not stop spinning for you, but you will catch up. Take a rest.

Cynthia Go

Procrastination

Procrastination means putting off until tomorrow something that you could do today.

What causes procrastination?

- Having an unrealistic view of how a productive person really functions.
- Being a perfectionist and being afraid to fail.
- People who procrastinate get in the habit of telling themselves "I really should get started". These "should" statements, are usually in effective and unproductive as they make you feel guilty, making you completely avoid the task.
- A genuine lack of desire to do whatever task that you are putting off.
- People procrastinate because they do not feel like doing them at the time or because they are not in the mood to do them.

One simple way to improve your motivation is through goal setting. Try the technique SMART.

S - Specific. Set specific goals. Decide a specific time and day that you are planning to do some study.

M - Measurable. Continuously measure progress towards your goal. For example, ticking off items from a "To do list".

A – Action. Related. Identify the necessary actions required to achieve your goal. If you have to start an assignment, the first step might be to take out appropriate books from the library. The second step would be to begin reading on the subject, the third to decide on a particular topic and then narrow your focus.

R - Realistic. Ensure that your study goals are realistic and can be accomplished.

T - Time based. A good idea would be to work back from a deadline when planning your study.

The ABC of procrastination

We can look at procrastination by examining separately each of the components: Affect (emotions and sensations), Behaviour (actions), and Cognitions (thoughts and beliefs):

Affect as emotion can be experienced as positive (e.g. joy), negative (e.g. sad) or somewhere in between. Affect as sensation (e.g. feeling tired, relaxed) can also be experienced as either positive or negative. These emotions or sensations can be over-reactions to events or situations such as heart palpitations when asked to speak in class.

Behaviour relates to observed actions. As most behaviour is learned, one can modify them through practice.

Cognitions are the thoughts, ideas and beliefs which depict our view of ourselves, others and the world. They can be positive as in thinking how great it will be when a goal is accomplished, or negative as in thinking about how we could fail.

The affect, behaviour, and cognition components are constantly mutually reinforcing.

Beat your procrastination

- Identify it - Notice one task that you are putting off unnecessarily.
- Think about it

a) Using the ABC above method ask yourself what emotions/affect (A) are enabling procrastination. Does the task make you feel anxious/tense?
b) Ask yourself what behaviours (b) contribute to your procrastination. You may be replacing doing an assignment with watching TV.
c) Then ask yourself what thoughts/cognitions (c) are linked to your procrastination. Do you think that you work well under pressure, and you will wait until the last minute?

- Examine your own ABC interaction - Identify which component triggers your procrastination and in what order the other components follow.

By identifying your trigger for procrastination, you can start to change it:

- If A (emotions/affect) was the problem, using relaxation and other stress management tools can allow you to deal with the feeling.
- If the difficulty is at B, (behaviour) use rewards to promote the behaviour that you are avoiding. For example, allow yourself to watch a television programme only when you have finished one topic.
- If C is the problem, replace your negative thoughts with more positive self-talk.

Extra tips:

- Make it meaningful
- Break it down
- Tell everyone
- Reward yourself in the right ways
- Change your environment
- Just do it

Procrastination is something best put off until tomorrow.

Gerald Vaughan

Social Anxiety

People experiencing social anxiety may fear what others think of them (usually that others will see them in a negative light), may believe that others are better than them or that they are being watched closely in social situations.

What causes social anxiety?

- Social anxiety can often be related to low self-esteem or a poor opinion of the self.
- It 'typically' starts in childhood or the adolescent years and can progress onto adulthood.
- Some people are naturally more anxious than others in social situations and have learned to worry in social situations.
- Sometimes social anxiety can be a result of being bullied, a critical parent etc. This can result in a person avoiding social situations completely.

Social anxiety in the body

- Heart racing or pounding
- Chest feeling tight or painful
- Tingling or numbness in toes or fingers
- Having to go to the toilet
- Dry mouth
- Breathing changes
- Blushing
- Restlessness
- Sweating

Social anxiety in the mind

- You may think you are acting in a way that is embarrassing to others.
- You may feel fearful of social situations, and know that your fear is unreasonable.
- Thinking you are making a 'fool of myself', 'I am boring', 'I am strange', 'if I get it wrong people will not like me' etc.
- Creating a negative self-image and thinking that this is how everyone else will see you e.g., my friends see me as 'boring', 'weak', 'timid', 'uninteresting', 'foolish' etc.
- Before you go into a social situation you are fearful and think that it will go badly.
- After you come from a social situation you think 'That was awful. I will never do that again'.
- This can lead to avoiding social situations, or use of alcohol or substances to 'help get through it'. This is a short-term solution and tends to perpetuate the socially anxious feelings.

Ways to overcome social anxiety in the long-term

It may be helpful to try and identify when, how and where you experience social anxiety. Keep a diary about your feelings and what makes you feel anxious about social situations. If you know what happens to make you anxious, you can try to work out how to change things.

- Understanding social anxiety and how it manifests in the body and mind.
- Reducing negative thoughts/beliefs by challenging your usual thoughts/behaviours.
- Deep and mindful breathing - this works with tackling the physical symptoms of social anxiety.
- Creating a 'small steps' plan and take little steps to tackling the behaviours you usually use to 'hide' your social anxiety. For example, if you usually eat lunch in your office/room, try going to the canteen.

When you change
the way you look at
things, the things
you look at change.
Wayne Dyer

Alcohol Use

What is alcohol?

Alcohol is a drug. It is classed as a depressant. This means that it slows down communication between the brain and the body, resulting in slurred speech, unsteady movement, disturbed perceptions brain fog, delayed reaction time, disorientation, intoxication, memory loss, and blackouts. The amount of alcohol consumed determines the type of effect. Most people drink for the stimulant effect, such as a beer or glass of wine taken to “loosen up.” But if a person consumes more than the body can handle, they then experience alcohol’s depressant effect.

What is a standard drink?

- A standard drink is a measure of alcohol. In Ireland, one standard drink contains 10 grams of pure alcohol.
- Common examples include a half pint of 4.5% lager, 100ml glass of 12.5% wine and pub measure of 40% spirits.
- The number of standard drinks is based on the size of the drink and its alcohol strength, usually shown on labels as alcohol by volume (%ABV). The higher the alcohol strength, the higher the standard drink content.
- It takes your body one hour to process one standard drink. But this should be taken as a guide for information purposes only. There are many factors that will affect this time including age, gender, weight, alcohol strength, the speed of your metabolism and the number of drinks consumed.

Did you know?

Getting fresh air, drinking coffee or taking a cold shower will not help you “sober up”. Time is the only thing that will help your body get rid of alcohol.

What is binge drinking?

Binge drinking is when a person consumes 6 or more standard drinks in one sitting, usually in a short space of time. Our liver can only process approximately one standard drink per hour. When you binge, you are drinking faster than your liver can handle. This means the liver's ability to process alcohol and complete all the other essential functions it performs is affected.

When does alcohol become a problem?

- Regularly neglecting responsibilities at home, work, or college because of drinking or recovering from drinking.
- Often binge drinking or drinking more than they intended to.
- Lying about or trying to cover up how much they are drinking.
- Having regular blackouts so you do not know what was said or done when using alcohol.
- Continue drinking even when it is causing problems in their relationships.
- Using alcohol to self-medicate a mental health problem.

Tips for Mindful Drinking

Measure – Use a measure for spirts or wine at home. Never free pour – this makes it very difficult to know how much you have been drinking.

Downsize – Downsize your drink by serving in a smaller glass.

Avoid top ups – Avoid topping up glasses. Finish one drink before pouring another to make it easier to track how much you are drinking over time.
Break habits – If your normal night in involves having a drink in front of the TV, consider doing something different like going for a walk, calling a friend, or checking in with a neighbour.

Alternate – Alternate each drink with a glass of water to reduce dehydration associated with alcohol. Keep a jug of water on the table to make this easier.

Non-alcohol options – Have a non-alcoholic drink instead of your usual. There are so many low and no-alcohol wines, spirts and beers to take advantage of, so it is a great time to make a swap.

Stay out of rounds – Stay out of buying rounds as you may end up drinking more than you intended as you are more likely to drink at the pace of the fastest person in the group. If you cannot then opt for a non-alcoholic drink instead.

Other Lifestyle Choices

We have focused here on alcohol, but if you are concerned that other lifestyle choices (e.g. smoking & vaping; exercise habits; drug use; pornography use; gaming etc) are starting to impact negatively on your wellbeing and/or relationships, look at the self-help supports at the end of this guide and/or call up to the counselling service for a chat. Check out the gambling and social media sections of this guide too.

Balance is not something you find it is something you create.
Jana Kingsford

Eating Disorders

What is an eating disorder?

- An eating disorder refers to a complex and often dangerous condition, which is characterised by extreme disturbances in eating, emotional or psychological distress, and physical symptoms.
- Behaviours characteristic of disordered eating include self-starvation (fasting and/or food restriction), purging (self-induced vomiting, over-exercising) and bingeing (consuming excessive amounts of food).

What causes an eating disorder?

There is no single cause of eating disorders. A combination of biological, psychological, familial, and social factors may create a circumstance in which an eating disorder is more likely to develop. An eating disorder may develop in response to a specific event such as a traumatic experience, a major loss in a person's life, bullying, or stress. Sometimes, there are no obvious triggers. Those who have low self-esteem or lack a developed sense of self may be more vulnerable. It's important to note that body weight is not always indicative of an eating disorder. Obsession with food, diet, and/or exercise can often be a better indicator of disordered eating.

Common eating disorders

Anorexia Nervosa is characterised by an overwhelming drive for thinness and an extreme fear of being or becoming fat. A person will continuously attempt to maintain a body weight lower than what is recommended for their age, sex and height.

Bulimia Nervosa is characterised by purging after eating, sometimes following a binge. Body weight is often maintained within the normal range for their age, sex and height, but can also be higher or lower than average.

Binge Eating Disorder is characterised by continuous episodes of bingeing without purging; a person may gain a considerable amount of weight over time.

Disordered eating

The difference between an eating disorder and disordered eating is whether a person's symptoms and experiences align with the criteria for a diagnosis. While disordered eating may not meet the criteria for clinical diagnosis, it can result in poor physical health, challenges to mental health, and reduction in overall wellbeing.

Signs of disordered eating:

- Frequent dieting or meal skipping
- Chronic weight fluctuations
- Rigid rituals and routines surrounding food and exercise
- Feelings of anxiety, guilt, and shame associated with eating
- Preoccupation food and body image that negatively impacts quality of life
- A feeling of loss of control around food
- Using exercise, food restriction, fasting, or purging to "make up for bad foods" consumed

Orthorexia is the name given to a type of disordered eating which involves a compulsive preoccupation or obsession with dietary purity. Obsession with eating only “pure” or “clean” foods can lead to significant diet limitations diet while trying to abide by these “rules” can have a negative impact on a person’s life. Consuming foods outside of these set rules may contribute to feelings of guilt, anxiety and shame, and lead to more stringent diet behaviours. Efforts spent trying to satisfy the rules may result in avoidance of social situations general social withdrawal.

If you start to notice worrying changes in your eating habits, reach out for support. Whether it’s family and friends, the specialist services listed at the end of this booklet, or MIC Student Counselling Service, support is available.

Managing Eating Disorder Recovery at MIC

Starting College is exciting , with lots of opportunities and new experiences. But change brings challenges and there are common difficulties faced by students recovering from an eating disorder. For many students who are recovering from an eating disorder, living way from home can offer freedom to thrive, but for others this freedom can bring the risk of relapse. It is important to keep your recovery on track by addressing some of the following challenges:

- Telling people about your eating disorder
- Cooking and eating with other people
- Managing exercise
- Body image concerns and self-comparison
- Finding time to study, work, play and recover
- Building social networks
- Staying on track: relapse prevention

For excellent tips on the above topic and more, check out: Preparing_For_University-FREED.pdf (freedfromed.co.uk)

You can register for Bodywhys Student Support Group for support with transitioning to university life here: Student Support Group (aged 19+)

If you would like some further support in maintaining your recovery, contact the MIC Counselling Service and Medical Centre – we understand how hard it can be and we are here to help.

Your body is your home,
your vessel in life.
It needs to be respected and loved.
Iskra Lawrence

Relationships

Healthy relationships

- Healthy relationships require work and need to be maintained. In a healthy relationship (friendships, family, romantic and work relationships), you:
- Feel you can communicate openly together
- Maintain and respect each other's individuality
- Maintain relationships with other friends and family
- Enjoy shared activities
- Engage in activities separately
- Are free to express yourselves to one another without fear of consequences
- Feel secure and comfortable
- Have the option of privacy and personal space
- Trust each other and be honest with each other
- Respect boundaries; sexual and otherwise
- Resolve conflict fairly

Unhealthy relationships

While in an unhealthy relationship you might:

- Experience imbalance as one person's needs are placed above the other's
- Feel pressure to change for the other person
- Feel pressure to quit activities you usually/used to enjoy
- Pressure the other person into agreeing with you
- Feel the need to justify your actions (e.g., where you go, who you see)
- Notice one partner feels obligated to have sex
- Refuse to use safer sex methods
- Notice arguments are not settled fairly
- Experience yelling or physical violence during an argument
- Attempt to control or manipulate each other
- Not make time to spend with one another

Emotional dependency

Emotional dependency is the state of being dependent on someone for emotional support and validation. When we consistently count on others for happiness, reassurance, or comfort we can forget to appreciate our own capabilities and take responsibility for our feelings. Having interests which are not shared by your partner gives you a space to be yourself, have your own group of friends, and allow you to be true to yourself. Being able to spend time without your partner is a healthy part of a stable relationship and maintaining your sense of self.

Handling a break-up

Break-ups can be devastating. You may feel you have lost your partner, your relationship, and even a part of your identity. Here's some tips to help you through a breakup:

- Talk to a trusted friend or family member about how you are feeling
- Try to get some space away from your ex, e.g., unfollow them on social media or/and delete their phone number
- Try something new - make some new memories just for you
- Remind yourself that you are a full person even without your partner, think about your achievements, your friends, and things which make you laugh

Toxic friendships

Toxic friendships look different to everyone but at the core is a feeling of unhappiness or dissatisfaction.

Recognising a toxic friendship:

- Your friend criticises you regularly
- Communication is a one-way street
- You feel anxious or stressed when you are with them
- They are inconsistent in their interactions with you
- They lack empathy towards you
- They are ignorant to events in your life
- They break your trust
- They do not appreciate things you do for them

Ending an unhealthy friendship

However you decide to do it, it is not easy to end a toxic relationship.

Some friendships will fade away naturally when communication wanes. This can involve not answering texts or calls and making fewer plans to meet up. This is particularly effective if you are the one who calls first or the one who arranges plans.

Sometimes you will need to sit down with the person and let them know that the friendship is over. This is a pretty tough option and requires a lot of courage from you. There is a few things to remember if you feel this option is best for you:

- Think about (or write down) what you are going to say.
- Try to use 'I' statements to avoid the potential conflict that can come with 'You' statements.
- Time it right - avoid special occasions or important events.
- Try to choose a neutral venue rather than one of your houses.
- If your friend is bullying you or pressuring you, you do not owe them anything. Their behaviour is not okay, and you have the right to remove yourself from their company.

Ending friendships, even toxic ones, can be tough. Set up a plan for things you can do when you are feeling low, or other friends you can hang out with when you need some company.

This is not my responsibility	This is my responsibility
Other people's words	My words
Other people's mistakes	My mistakes
Other people's beliefs	My beliefs
Other people's opinions	My opinions
Other people's ideas	My ideas
Other people's actions	My actions
The consequences of other people's actions	The consequences of my actions

Self-harm

Self-harm involves inflicting injuries or pain on one's own body and can take many forms. Self-harm includes cutting, burning, or beating the body, and picking at, biting, or scratching the skin.

Why do people self-harm?

- As a means to express difficult or hidden feelings
- Managing emotional distress
- Re-creating earlier experiences
- A means to communicate abuse
- Communicating a need for support
- It can be a way of making oneself feel alive
- Release of tension from anxiety, grief, or anger
- To relieve feelings of guilt or shame
- To gain control over one's life
- It can be a way of punishing oneself

How to deal with self-harm

It may be helpful to try and identify when, how and where you self-harm. Keep a diary about your feelings and what makes you feel like self-harming. If you know what happens to make you injure yourself, you can try to work out how to change things.

Less damaging alternatives in causing pain are:

- Having an elastic band around the wrist and snapping your skin with it
- Using boxing gloves and punching a punch-bag feeling.
- Holding an ice cube

Alternatives to help manage painful experiences:

- Breathing deeply
- Tell yourself out loud that you will be okay, and the feelings do not define you
- Having a special item to hold or look at for comfort
- Distract yourself with an activity you like doing
- Chat to family or friends

- Write your feelings down

Talking to other people is important and can begin the process of healing. Talk to someone who you can trust and who will be sensitive to what your feelings.

What can I do to help someone who self-harms?

- Do not panic
- Show them your understanding and support
- Provide a safe and open space for them to talk about their thoughts and feelings
- Encourage them to cry, crying is a healthy way to express sadness or frustration
- Encourage the person to seek help, you should only offer as much as you can cope with and do not try to take responsibility for stopping them from hurting themselves.

What is unhelpful?

- Punishment of some kind is unhelpful
- Making a person feel guilty or ashamed
- Perpetuating **the myths** that:

  "Self-harm is a form of attention-seeking"

  "A person who self-injures is a dangerous individual"

Whenever you find yourself doubting how far you can go, just remember how far you have come. Remember everything you have faced, all the battles you have won, and all the fears you have overcome.

N. R. Walker

Sleeping Problems

What happens when you sleep?

When you are asleep, you go through different stages:

- Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep - During this stage your brain is very active and dreaming occurs. This stage comes and goes throughout the night, and your muscles are relaxed.
- Non-REM sleep - Your body moves around more frequently during this stage, but your brain is much less active. Your body is repairing itself after the day, and hormones are slowly released into the bloodstream. You can cycle between REM and non-REM sleep about 5 times during the night.

How much sleep do I need?

Most adults need between 7-8 hours, but the amount of time you are sleeping can depend on what you do throughout the day, if you are stressed, or if you are on medication.

What happens if I do not sleep?

If you are consistently not sleeping well, this can have a variety of negative effects:

- Feeling tired all the time
- Finding it difficult to concentrate
- Starting to feel low or depressed
- Worrying about not being able to sleep during the day
- Feeling physically unwell
- Feeling stressed and anxious

If you feel you are not sleeping enough, find difficult falling asleep, or wake up too early, there are some things to avoid and things you can do to help:

DO

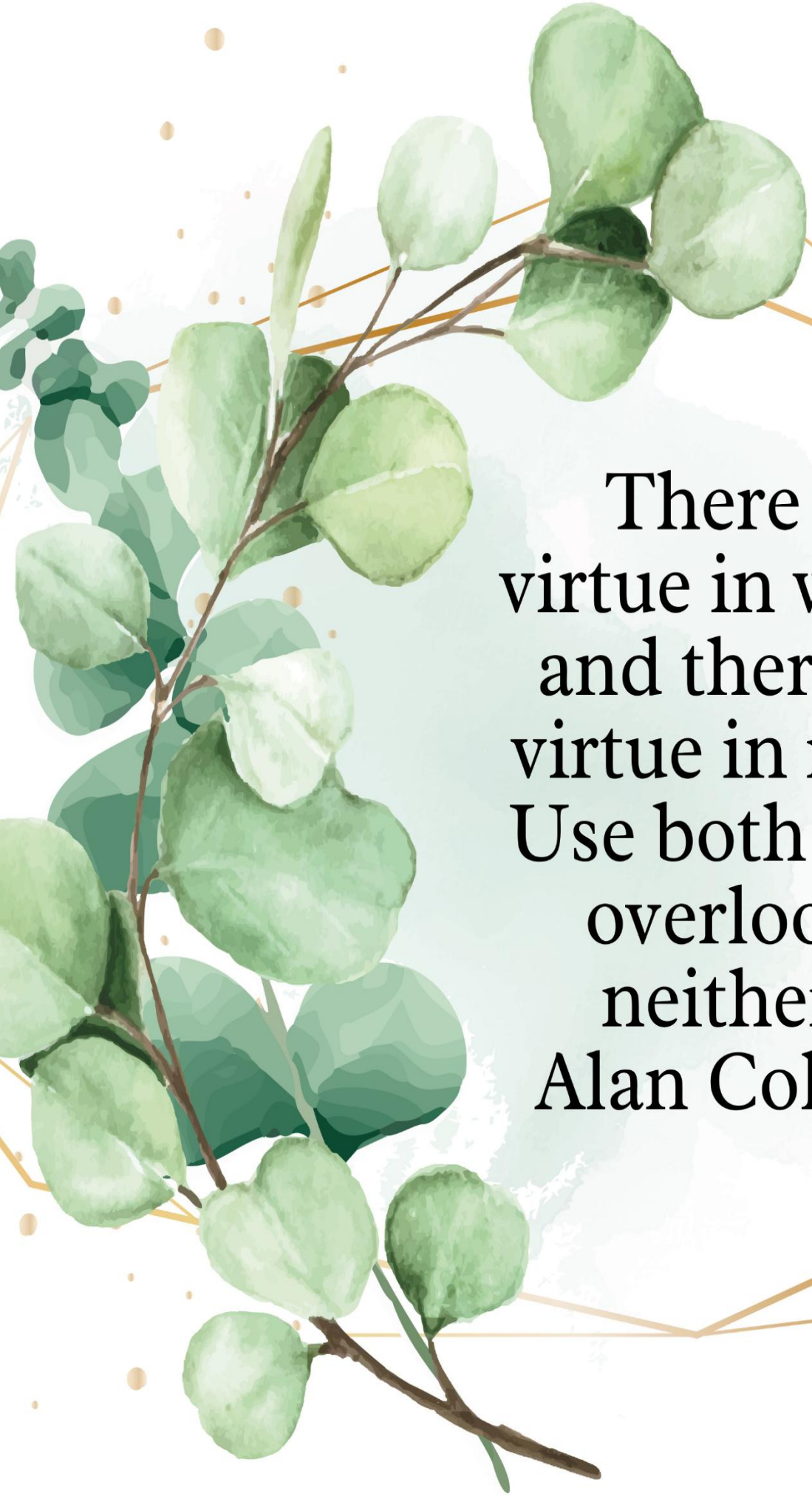
- Make sure your bed is comfortable and your bedroom is not too hot, too cold, or too noisy.
- Go to bed and get up at roughly the same time each day.

- Take some time to relax and unwind before bed. Some people find mediation or aromatherapy helpful.
- Get some exercise early in the day - exercising too late may disturb your sleep.
- If you are worried about something, try writing it down before bed, and tell yourself you can deal with it tomorrow.
- Remove artificial light. The blue light from TV, laptop, and phone screens hinders your ability to sleep. Use a blue light filter or better yet put away screens an hour before bed.

DO NOT

- Do not drink tea, coffee, or energy drinks close to bedtime.
- Do not go to bed until you are tired
- Do not stay in bed longer during the day to catch up on sleep you missed during the night. This will prevent you from sleeping the next night.
- Do not drink a lot of alcohol. It may help you fall asleep, but will lead to disturbed sleep throughout the night.
- Keep checking the time or your phone.

If you are worrying about falling asleep, this can keep you awake for longer. Take your mind off sleeping by reading, listening to a quiet audiobook, or meditating.



There is virtue in work and there is virtue in rest. Use both and overlook neither.
Alan Cohen

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

What is OCD?

People who have obsessive compulsive disorder struggle with frequent and intense obsessions and/or compulsions. Obsessions are recurrent and persistent ideas, thoughts, impulses, or images that are experienced as intrusive and senseless. Compulsions are repetitive, purposeful, and intentional behaviours that are performed in response to an obsession. Both the obsessions and the compulsions can cause marked distress and can be time consuming. They can interfere with the person's daily routine, wellbeing, relationships, and general social activity.

Signs of OCD

- Thoughts that something you have done or might do will hurt you or other people.
- Thoughts that frighten you, like thinking you are dirty and that negative things will happen if you are around dirty things.
- Images in your head of hurting others.
- Believing things in your life are not in order and this will result in bad things happening.

Most common obsessions and compulsions

- Obsession with contamination - compulsive washing
    - Washers and cleaners are consumed with obsessions about contamination and dirtiness by certain objects or situations e.g. germs, disease and chemicals.
- Obsession of doubt - compulsive checking
    - People check things excessively in order to prevent a certain bad things from occurring.
- Obsession with order - compulsive organising
    - Everything must be arranged in precise ways, including patterns, and people can become upset if someone else rearranges their possessions.
- Repetitive thoughts as obsessions - compulsive counting
    - Thinkers and counters use repetitive thoughts or images in order to counteract anxiety provoking thoughts or images.

- Worriers
    - Experience repetitious negative thoughts that are uncontrollable and quite upsetting. However, unlike those with any of the above forms of OCD, they do not engage in repetitious behaviours.

Causes of OCD

One idea is that the person comes to recognise that performance of rituals is accompanied by relief from their obsessional thoughts, and this reinforces the ritual. Research has not proven that OCD runs in families. However, it has been found that relatives of people with OCD are more likely to have anxiety related problems.

Treatment of OCD

Cognitive behavioural therapy uses specific tools to help people eliminate of their unwanted obsessions, thoughts and beliefs as well as alleviating their compulsions is a common approach used with OCD sufferers. Within this therapy, individuals learn to identify their specific distressing thoughts and learn how to replace them with more supportive ones. Various types of drug treatment have proven helpful in treating and alleviating symptoms of OCD.

Just breathe. You are strong enough to handle your challenges, wise enough to find solutions to your problems, and capable enough to do whatever needs to be done.
Lori Deschen

Time Management

A number of techniques are described below. The idea is to experiment with a variety of techniques and discover the ones that suit you best. What works for one student may not work for you.

Monitor how you use your time

First, calculate how much time (in hours) you spend on the following activities during the last week – sleeping, eating, self-care, travelling, errands, hobbies, exercise, lectures, homework, study, socialising.

Then consider the following questions:

- Which of these do you need to spend more time on?
- Which of these do you need to spend less time on?
- Were you surprised at the activities you spent so much time on?
- Were you surprised at the ones you spend so little time on?

How to plan your time

Use a 'To Do List'

- Can be used as a short-term day planner, tick things off as you complete them
- Can be used to set goals for the week

Use a timetable

- Schedule fixed blocks of time. Start with class time and work time. These time periods are usually determined in advance. Other activities must be scheduled around them e.g., eating, sleeping, shopping, laundry.
- Schedule time for fun! Brains that are constantly stimulated by new ideas and challenges need time off to digest them.
- Set realistic goals. Do not set yourself up for failure by telling yourself you can do a four-hour job in two-hours!

- Allow flexibility in your schedule. Recognise that unexpected things happen and allow for them. You could even set aside some 'open time' each week.
- Avoid scheduling marathon study sessions. When possible, study in short sessions. If/when you study in long sessions, stop and rest for a few minutes every hour.
- Set clear starting and stopping times for specific tasks and stick to them.

How to get the most out of your time

- Study difficult subjects first, as we are more alert and receptive earlier on. Also, you may feel more motivated to continue with your work after completing a difficult task.
- Use a regular study area or the library.
- In most situations we study where we are alert. Therefore, avoid sofas and beds as your body will be getting the wrong signal. Good lighting and low noise levels are also an essential feature to increase concentration.
- Monitor your attention and concentration. If external thoughts affect you while studying, take note of these so you can remember them for later

Concentration Strategies

- Get off the phone! Turn on 'focus mode' or 'do not disturb' on your phone so you will not get notified about incoming messages/calls.
- Prepare certain tasks the night before, such as packing your bag, picking out your outfit, meal prepping. This helps you save time the next day.
- Try not to be self-critical. Instead, acknowledge your efforts and accomplishments in what you have achieved so far.
- Make time for other things that are important and keep your energy levels high. Exercise regularly, cook nutritious meals and spend time with family and friends.

Productivity is never an accident. It is always the result of a commitment to excellence, intelligent planning and focused effort.

Paul J. Meyer

Coping with the death of someone close

Immediate reactions

The death of someone close to you is an overwhelming loss and can leave families, friends and communities with a range of emotions and unanswered questions.

It is normal for individual family members to respond differently when someone dies, this can depend on their relationship with the deceased. How people grieve and for how long varies from person to person. No matter how people react, they are trying to make sense of what has happened, express themselves and deal with inner pain and turmoil.

Over time, the intensity of pain and loss usually subsides; most people learn to live with their loss and adjust to life without the one that passed away. It is important to remember that there is no set time, and everyone will grieve in their own personal way.

While coping with grief, talking through your feelings with a trusted friend or relative may be all you need. Others may feel they need support from their GP, counsellor or chaplain.

Coping with emotions

What has helped others?

- Learning to mourn
- Acknowledging all feelings
- Talking honestly with others
- Having a support network
- Faith, religion or spirituality
- Reviewing pictures and mementos
- Visiting the grave
- Re-arranging and storing the belonging of the one that passed away.
- Writing a letter to the one that passed away or connecting with them in new ways.
- Meeting others with similar experiences

- Recalling memories and reliving good times
- Remembering the person at significant times (e.g., anniversaries and birthdays).

Learning to live with grief and loss

- Know that you can survive. You may not think so, but you can.
- Know that you may feel overwhelmed by the intensity of your feelings but that all your feelings are normal.
- Recognise that anger, guilt, confusion, and forgetfulness are common responses when grieving and mourning.
- Remember to take it day by day or moment to moment
- Do not be afraid to cry, tears are healing
- Delay making any big decisions
- Be aware of the pain of family and friends
- Be patient with yourself and others who may not fully understand
- Steer clear of people who want to tell you what or how to feel
- Expect physical reactions to your grief, e.g., headaches, loss of appetite, inability to sleep. Your GP can give advice on how to cope with these reactions if needed.
- Be willing to laugh with others – it can help you to heal
- **Most importantly, be kind and gentle with yourself**

Events that follow a death

- Usually, the family contacts a funeral director to start funeral arrangements.
- A death notice will be put online at www.rip.ie
- The death will be registered, and a death certificate will be issued

Bereaved by Suicide

Bereavement by suicide shares characteristics with other bereavements and it is also different. Questions such as *Why?* and *Could I have done more?* are very common and those bereaved by suicide can often feel isolated. Even if they have strong support networks, they might feel unable to share true feelings for fear of stigma or the impact on others.

If you are grieving the loss of someone by suicide, or would like to know how to better support a friend or family member who has been bereaved by suicide, check out the online resources from the charity HUGG in this link: Resources - Suicide Help - Suicide Prevention - HUGG Charity

Chaplaincy service

- If you feel you would benefit from some additional support, remember that MIC has a Chaplaincy service- their door is always open.

Loss of a pet

The loss of a pet can be a devastating experience and it is important to take time to grieve and talk through your feelings. The following article gives some excellent tips on how to manage your feelings following the death of a much loved pet.

Coping with Losing a Pet - HelpGuide.org

At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer, we remember them.

Sylvan Kamens & Rabbi Jack Reimer

Coming Out

Coming out is the process of accepting your sexual orientation, for example, being gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer or something not defined or your gender identity such as transgender or non-binary and being open about this with other people. The process of coming out can be very different for everyone and it can take some time to get to a point where you feel comfortable and confident enough to have those conversations with people.

The stages of coming out

Coming out is a process which happens over time. Although it varies from person to person the stages of coming out are usually discovery, acceptance, and integration.

Discovery

During this stage you begin to recognise your feelings and start to question whether you could belong to the LGBTQI+ community. There is no time frame in which discovery takes place and it can happen at any age in life

Acceptance

Acceptance is when you start to accept your sexuality or gender identity. You may feel ready to tell people in your life about how you identify. Remember that this does not mean that you must tell everybody, and you should never feel rushed to ever share your gender or sexual identity with someone until you are ready.

Integration

The integration stage will take different forms from person to person. Normally this is when you feel comfortable expressing your sexual identity through being in a relationship or integrating into the LGBTQI+ community. If you are transgender or non-binary you may begin to transition, change your name and ask people to address you by a different pronoun.

Although you may come out to family or friends at a certain stage in life, as you enter new situations during your life you may choose to come out to different people again.

Coming out is a big step in life and during the process you may go through a range of different emotions. At times you might feel frightened, nervous, stressed, relieved or excited and although it can be difficult these emotions are experienced by most people. Regardless of how you feel there are supports countrywide that can help.

Many people feel that although they are ready to come out, they do not feel they fit a specific label such as gay or lesbian. When you are coming out it is important not to feel forced to identify as anything in order to please other people. What we identify as can also change over time and although you might originally identify as gay or lesbian you may find that this can change to bi-sexual or vis-versa. In the case of gender identity, you may be non-binary and identify with neither male nor female.

Coming out is an important experience and something everyone should be able to do in their own time. Although someone may have told you about their sexuality or gender identity it is important not to share this information with other people unless the person involved has expressly given you permission. You may have good intentions but "outing" someone to friends, family or strangers can be a hurtful experience and is a violation of a person's privacy.

For further support contact the student counselling service or GOSHH (Gender, Orientation, Sexual Health, HIV) Email: info@goshh.ie Website: goshh.ie/

Keep your face
always
toward the sunshine
and shadows will
fall behind you.
Walt Whitman

Supporting someone with mental health difficulties

When someone you care about is struggling it can be really difficult and you may experience a mix of emotions such as concern, disbelief, anger, anxiety compassion or any array of emotions. This is normal and understandable.

Some ways to look after yourself

Know your limits: Be realistic about what support you can offer and try not to take on too much.

Get support: Talk to someone you trust or link in with the MIC Student Counselling Service.

Take a break: Make time to do something nice for yourself.

Ways to support your friend or family member

Listen – Listen more than you talk. Ask open ended questions to encourage them to talk - "how are you feeling?"

Be there as someone they can trust – let them know you care, spend time with them, chat over a cup of tea – avoid drugs and alcohol.

Do not assume you know what is best for them – Everyone experiences life differently. Do not try to 'fix things''. Instead, ask your friend how they want to be supported.

Normalise mental health – Talk about it. It is okay not to be okay. Make sure your friend hears that.

Encourage them to get support – Make it okay to need help, offer to go with them to whatever support service they decide on.

It can be frustrating if the person you care about does not want help, but there are limits to what you can do. Try to be patient, do not push but be there for them if they reach out.

Time to get extra help

- If you have talked to your friend but are still worried, it is okay to contact a family member and tell them your concerns.
- Attend MIC Student Counselling Service during drop-in hours and express concerns for your friend.

Keeping control when gambling

Most people gamble for fun and recent surveys show that half of UK university students have gambled in the last year. But 1 in 10 have gambled in an attempt to make money, and for others their gambling is causing difficulties in their lives.

Below are some tips for making sure you keep control when gambling.

- Put the past behind you- don't become preoccupied with past gambling successes or losses.
- Think of gambling as a form of entertainment, not as a way to make money.
- Only gamble with money you can afford to lose.
- Stick to your budget (money and time), and when you hit your limit, go do something else.
- If you are upset or stressed, gambling will not help!
- If you're not having fun, then you may be developing a gambling problem, remember there are other hobbies.
- Don't try to win back money you have lost.
- Consider regular time-outs to ensure you are able to stop without difficulty.
- Don't take your bank card with you. This is a good way to safeguard your money limit and not let being "in the moment" warp your judgment.
- Don't drink or use drugs when gambling. Drugs and alcohol cloud judgment, and good judgment stands as your main line of defence against letting gambling get out of control.

If these tips don't help come and talk with one of the MIC Counsellors.

Social Media Use

Almost everyone uses social media and it can be a huge source of fun, pleasure and a way of connecting with people. The problem is that it can also be hard to get away from; you only have to reach into your pocket or bag to get your phone/tablet to access it. We want to encourage you to think about how you use social media/apps and whether they help your mental health and wellbeing.

If want to reduce your use of unhelpful apps you may like to try these ideas:

- Set some limits for how many times you will access it during the day e.g. once every two hours only
- Set a limit for how long you will spend on it each time you use it e.g. five minutes each time
- Choose another fun or distracting app or activity to do during the time you would normally check your fitness app
- Gradually increase the time between checks and gradually reduce the amount of time you spend on it each time
- Try postponing logging onto apps by an hour or a few hours a day
- Set small goals and targets along the way and reward yourself when you reach them
- Try removing temptation and delete unhelpful apps from your device

Why don't you try…

Experiment with one day of looking at social media and… one day of not!
Give it a go and see what happens to:

- **It is up to you how you use social media; just try to be media savvy when you access it.**

- **Be thoughtful and aware about how you are using it. If you are finding your social media use is Impacting your mental health and wellbeing reach out to the student counselling service for support in regaining balance.**

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can be harder to deal with than other forms of bullying because it leaves people feeling there is nowhere they can hide as every time they access social media they have to face unkind comments and criticism; threatening or aggressive messages. This can undermine self esteem and lead to depression and anxiety.

- If you are being bullied online or images of you are being shared without your consent **BREAK THE SILENCE** and talk to someone you trust. The MIC counselling service is also here to support you.
- Use the "block" function which is available on most social media to prevent further bullying from taking place. Most sites now have a system to report abusive or inappropriate messages and many will take action against users who repeatedly abuse rules. Use these systems and report bullying messages.
- It might be hard to resist but try not to read bullying messages, it is rarely helpful and usually harmful. Bullies/trolls do not give constructive criticism- try to avoid getting into a discussion with them.

Managing Your Privacy

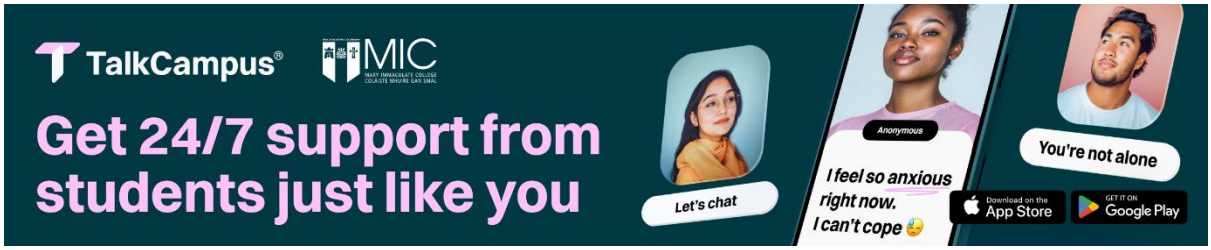
Protect your personal information at all times when using social media. Be very wary of giving out your phone number. Keep them secure, do not share.

Other Lifestyle Choices

Remember, if you are concerned that other lifestyle choices (e.g. smoking & vaping; drug use; pornography use; exercise habits; gaming etc) are starting to impact negatively on your wellbeing and/or relationships check out the self-help links below and/or call up to the counselling service for a chat.

Helpful E-Resources

Recommended Online Platform – TalkCampus



TalkCampus is a free, safe and anonymous online community where MIC students can connect with other students from around the world, share how they are feeling and support one another. Whether you are having a difficult day, feeling lonely or overwhelmed, or simply want to talk to someone who understands student life, support is available **24 hours a day, 7 days a week**.

TalkCampus is used by students at over 310 universities and colleges worldwide. As well as connecting with other students, trained student peers and staff are available around the clock, and support is available in 26+ languages.

What can I use TalkCampus for?

TalkCampus provides a supportive space where you can:

- **Talk about what's on your mind** – post anonymously about how you are feeling and connect with students who may understand what you are going through.
- **Connect with other students** – become part of a global student community and find support, connection and a sense of belonging.
- **Get support at any time** – TalkCampus is available 24/7, including evenings, weekends and times when other supports may not be available.
- **Support other students** – respond to others, share encouragement and be part of a community where students support one another.
- **Explore the Wellness Hub** – access additional wellbeing and self-help resources to support your mental health.

- **Use wellbeing tools** – access features such as mood tracking, journalling and guided wellbeing activities.

You can use TalkCampus whether you are looking for support yourself, would like to support other students, or simply want to connect with the wider student community.

How do I get started?

TalkCampus is **free to all MIC students**:

1. Download the TalkCampus app from Google Play or the App Store.
2. Select Continue and sign up using your MIC email address.
3. Verify your email address to enable you to post, comment and react.
4. Set up your profile and choose whether you are there to get support, support other people, or both.
5. Start exploring the community feed and Wellness Hub, or write your first post.

TalkCampus – free, anonymous, 24/7 peer support in your pocket.

SCAN ME

FIND OUT MORE

Important Data Protection Information

TalkCampus is a wellbeing support service available to MIC students. When you sign up and use TalkCampus, your personal information, including anything you post or share, is managed by TalkLife Ltd, not Mary Immaculate College. TalkLife is responsible for how your information is used, stored, shared and protected. For more information about how your data is handled, how long it is kept and your privacy rights, please read the **TalkLife Privacy Notice**, available when you register and within the TalkCampus app.

Helpful Apps

Smart phone apps can be a really useful way to practice breathing, meditation, CBT and well-being exercises to help with stress and anxiety.

The Calm Harm app provides tasks to help you resist or manage the urge to self-harm.

Mindfulness Coach is an app that provides gradual, self-guided training program designed to help you develop a mindfulness practice.

Mindly is an app that helps to give a structure to your thoughts. It can help you to capture ideas, plan a speech, and take notes.

SUPERBETTER SuperBetter app offers interactive games / self-care ideas to help people cope with various conditions and/or achieve personal growth.

HSE Clinical Programme for Eating Disorders NCPED is a HSE app for people worried about developing eating disorders, for families who provide care, and for people recovering from eating disorders.

More Self-Help Resources

Self-help materials can give us coping skills to help us through times of distress.

- Check out the **MIC Library Wellbeing section**
- Information and exercise sheets:
    - Cognitive Behavioural Therapy self-help information and worksheets: www.getselfhelp.co.uk
    - Psychology Tools Self-Help: www.psychologytools.com
    - Mental health support and information: https://www2.hse.ie/mental-health/
    - Ireland's youth information website created by young people, for young people: www.spunout.ie
- Specific self-help intervention packages:
    - Centre for Clinical Interventions mental health information packages: www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself
    - National Health Service self-help booklets: https://www.cntw.nhs.uk/home/accessible-information/easy-read/self-help-guides/
    - Pornography Addiction. An excellent self-help resource can be accessed from www.pivotalrecovery.org

Crisis and Helpline Numbers

- Emergency services (Gardaí, Ambulance, Fire Service)

  999 or 112
- Shannon Doc (out of hours G.P. service)

  0818 123 500
- Crisis Intervention Service
  - Crisis Mental Health Team, Emergency Department, Limerick University Hospital: 061-301111
  - Crisis Mental Health Team, Ennis General Hospital: 065 6863218 (4.40pm until 3am)
- Text 50808 is a 24/7 Crisis Text Line where you can engage via text with a trained volunteer - text 'Hello' to 50808
- ADAPT Domestic Abuse Services

  1800 200 504 (24/7) Email: info@adaptservices.ie, Website: www.adaptservices.ie/
- Al-Anon, strength and hope for families/friends of problem drinkers

  01-8732699 (10am to 10pm daily) Email: form on their website, Website: https://www.al-anonuk.org.uk/
- Alcoholics Anonymous Ireland

  01-8420700 (9:30am to 5pm), Email: gso@alcoholicsanonymous.ie, Website: www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie/

Crisis and Helpline Numbers

- AWARE, a national helpline for issues relating to mood disorders, 1800 80 48 48 (10am to 10pm daily), Email: supportmail@aware.ie, Website: www.aware.ie Various Support and Self Care groups . https://www.aware.ie/support/support-groups/ n.b an Aware group takes place on Tuesday evenings in MIC Limerick campus.
- Bodywhys, The Eating Disorders Association of Ireland 1890 20 04 44 (Mon., Wed., Sun.: 7:30pm-9:30pm, Tues., Fri., Sat.: 10:30am-12:30pm), Email: alex@bodywhys.ie, Website: www.bodywhys.ie/, Online support group (check for more information). https://www.bodywhys.ie/recovery-support-treatment/support-services-2/
- Gambling Care, GamblingCare.ie - Get help for Problem Gambling in Ireland National Helpline: 1800 936 725
- GOSHH (Gender, Orientation, Sexual Health, HIV), 061-316661/061314354 (Mon: 2:15– 5pm, Tues-Fri: 9:30am-5pm, Closed for lunch: 1.00pm – 2.00pm) Email: info@goshh.ie Website: goshh.ie/
- GROW, Community Mental Health 1890 474 474/061 318813, Email: midwesternregion@grow.ie or info@grow.ie, Website: www.grow.ie/
- HUGG (Healing Untold Grief Groups) – Suicide bereavement support Suicide Support Groups - Suicide Grief Help - HUGG Charity

Crisis and Helpline Numbers

- HSE Drugs and Alcohol Helpline

  1800 459 459 (Mon-Fri : 9:30am – 5:30pm), Email helpline@hse.ie
- Integrated Alcohol Service, 061 492 016
- Men's Aid Ireland

  01 554 3811 (9am –5pm Mon-Fri), hello@mensaid.ie Website: https://www.mensaid.ie/
- Pieta House, for suicidality, self-harm & suicide bereavement support 1800 247 247 (24/7), Text HELP to 51444, Therapy Enquiries 0818111126, Website: www.pieta.ie
- Rape Crisis Midwest

  1800 311 511 (office hours), 24 hour National Helpline accessible by ringing 1800 77 8888, Email: info@rapecrisis.ie Website: www.rapecrisis.ie/home.html
- Samaritans, confidential listening service

  116 123 (24/7) E-mail: jo@samaritans.org Website: www.samaritans.org/