



Providing NHS services

# Support pack for settling into student life



Life as a student is pretty unique. It's a time when you might be figuring out who you are and what you want, trying new things, meeting new people, and seeing what life has to offer beyond the boundaries you may be used to. It can be exciting, nerve-wracking, confusing - even terrifying! And it's different for everybody.

## **Settling in**

Those first few days, weeks, and even months at university can be pretty tricky. There's a lot to figure out and get used to, and managing this transition is different for everyone.

Some people find it really easy. They might thrive off their new-found freedom and enjoy the challenges they face, such as adjusting to a new place, making new friendships and connections, and taking in the huge amounts of information that comes their way.

Others might have a more difficult experience, struggling outside of their comfort zones, lacking in confidence or support, or feeling overwhelmed by everything.

You might even find you go between the two: enjoying yourself one minute and feeling uneasy or homesick the next. It's totally normal to be feeling a whole range of things when beginning this new experience. With the help of some of our counsellors, we've put together some tips to try and make the transition a little easier, and to help you get the most out of the start of student life:

## Reach out your support network

Whether it's your friends or family back home or the people who are around you, your support network can pick you up when you're feeling down. Be it a quick text, an email, a social media post, or a phone call, we all need someone to lean on during difficult times.

*"Staying connected with people who know you can be so helpful during periods of change, like starting university. It might even help you to feel more confident and relaxed, knowing you have people to support you."*

## Take time for yourself

You-time is especially important when you're going through something big. Whether it's taking a few minutes out to go for a walk or spending an evening by yourself, or stepping out of the academic and social scenes to just be by yourself can help to ease the pressure.

*"With a jam-packed timetable in those early weeks, taking a few minutes (or however long you need) out can help you decompress and recharge so that you don't get too overwhelmed. It can also be an ideal time to reflect on what's happening and how you really feel."*



## **Enjoy your comforts**

Whether it's your favourite book, a film you love, or those songs you listen to on repeat, our comforts help to ground us and make us feel safe and relaxed. Stepping outside of our comfort zones is great, but it can be really challenging and sometimes scary, too, so remember it's okay to indulge yourself with feeling super comfortable every now and again!

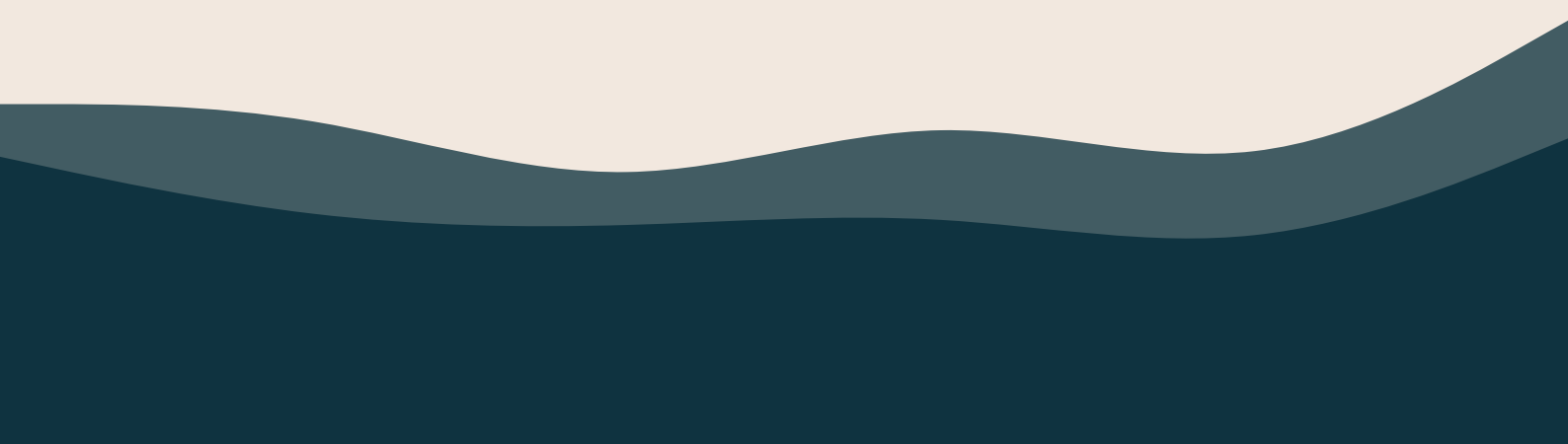
*"Doing things you find comforting or enjoyable is essential self-care. It's a way to say 'I am important' without words. It's also a great way to soothe some of our difficult feelings, too, when things feel too much."*

## **Be kind to yourself**

Settling into a new place with new people and a whole new way of life is a lot of change all at once, so look after yourself and do what feels right for you. If this feels tricky, focusing on what you might say to a friend who is finding things difficult can be helpful.

*"We often focus on being kind to others, and while that's a great skill to have, self-kindness is that inner voice we can develop that helps us take care of ourselves, too. It supports us and gives us understanding instead of criticism. It's the voice that says, 'You tried your best' instead of 'You failed', or 'What do you need?' instead of 'Get on with it'. It's an empowering skill to have, but it's often one that we have to practice."*

And finally, best of luck for your first term. Don't forget: however things are going for you, you are not alone. You can always reach out for support at Kooth.



# Free, safe and anonymous mental health and wellbeing support

It's quick and easy to sign up to Kooth or Qwell\* and will only take a few minutes. No formal referral from a GP is needed and you can self refer at anytime.

## Support options

You can access a range of support options including:

- Chat with a member of our team (\*live chat or send us a message anytime)
- Self help tools
- Community support (discussion boards and live forums)
- Helpful articles (from the Kooth and Qwell team and our community)

## Live chat hours

You can live chat with a member of our team between:

- 12pm - 10pm on weekdays
- 6pm - 10pm on weekends

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\*You can sign up to Kooth or Qwell using either your home area or your university area. The online service you have access to will depend on your age and the area you register with.

