The importance of self-care

It is important that you take care of both your body and mind. This will give you the best chance of thinking clearly, remembering, concentrating, managing difficult situations or strong emotions, and help you build solutions. Below are some general tips to help you manage a balanced lifestyle.

Healthy eating

Establish a healthy diet. This will help reduce stress and increase your ability to cope with different situations. Get to know your body and become aware of how certain foods affect you. For example, food high in caffeine (coffee, tea, chocolate etc.), cigarettes and alcohol can add stress to your body and cause other impacts.

Tips for healthy eating

– Start the day with a good breakfast which includes unprocessed carbohydrates and protein. Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and protein. This helps to replenish the body with essential minerals and vitamins that stress can tend to deplete quickly.

– Stay hydrated – drink plenty of water, at least 2 litres a day.

– Keep energy levels up – eat regularly, try not to skip meals, and avoid long periods of time without eating.

Sleep

Sleep is essential for coping with all of life's up's and down's and vital in helping to manage stress levels. Try to maintain a healthy sleep routine by getting at least 6 hours of sleep each night, and where possible try to avoid sleeping beyond 9 hours.

Tips to help you improve your sleep

– Try to maintain a routine where you go to bed and get up at a similar time each day, even on weekends.

– Try to cut down on your caffeine intake and avoid smoking or using alcohol before bedtime.

– Try to avoid bright lights, very hot baths/showers, or heavy exercise at night-time. These can stimulate your body and make it difficult to wind down and get a good night's sleep.

– Avoid reading, looking at your phone or watching TV in bed. If you have not fallen asleep after 20 minutes, get up and do something relaxing. This may include drinking a cup of chamomile tea or warm milk or do a relaxation exercise and then try to go back to sleep once you feel drowsy.

– If you find it difficult to stop worrying whilst trying to get to sleep, get up and write a list or note about what you need to do or are worrying about, and then try to go to sleep.

– Engage in regular exercise to manage feelings of stress.
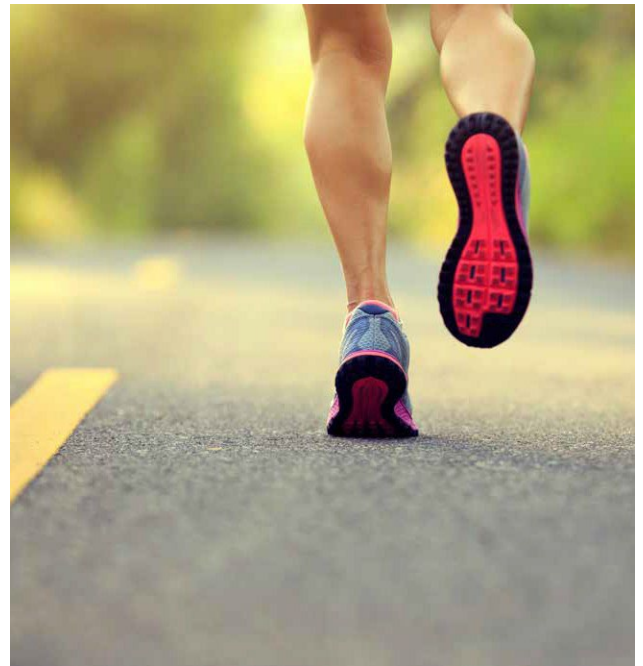
Exercise

Exercise is important because it:

– releases tension and encourages the release of natural endorphins

– helps you to feel less tired and increases energy levels

– can increase confidence

– strengthens the immune system

– revives and assists you to think more clearly

– helps with sleep

– improves appetite

– burns up stress chemical

If you believe a health condition may be affected by changes to your lifestyle, consult a health professional.

* Information sourced from the Project Air Synergy Strategy factsheets

Student Counselling Service

Level 5, Jane Foss Russell Building
Open: Monday to Friday

Crisis contacts
Ambulance/Fire/Police: 000
Lifeline (24 hours): 13 11 14
Mental Health Access Line: 1800 011 511