
Mental health matters

**Understanding University, the
Ultimate Uni Podcast - Episode 16**

Welcome to Understanding University, the Ultimate Uni Podcast.

My name is Katie and I work for the University of Essex Outreach Team helping to deliver activities and events to support students and guide them on their higher education journeys. The outreach team believe that all students, regardless of their background, education or where they come from, should have an equal opportunity to discover whether Higher Education could be part of their future. Our podcast is designed to give listeners an insight into university life, including the journey before, during and after, dispel some of the myths out there and also motivate and excite you to achieve your potential.

If you'd like to know more or have any questions please contact us by emailing outreach@essex.ac.uk

Mental health matters, whatever stage of life you're in. Having positive well-being will always be important. It can raise your self-esteem, boost self-confidence, provide you with a sense of purpose, help you to connect with other people and enjoy experiences. And even if we're not necessarily dealing with poor mental health, perhaps in good mental health can help support other people and prepare us for when we're not feeling so great. We're lucky that the conversation on mental health is being promoted much more widely and more people are taking action to put mental health first. It's important for everybody to recognise that it's okay not to be okay, and that sharing their feelings not only helps to get them the support they need, but also helps other people realise what they can do too. As a young person, you'll experience many emotions and feelings, and this continues through school, college, and university. Having a positive mental health can help us to adapt to these feelings and promote a healthy lifestyle, but when we do need some help, there is plenty of it out there. To help students thrive during the university experience we have a variety of support teams available at Essex to ensure you have access to the supports if and when you need it. Thomas from the Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Team will be joining us today to discuss their role and later on, we'll be talking to some current students who have had a personal experience of using the support offered at Essex.

So welcome, Thomas, to the podcast. If you'd like to introduce yourself and tell us a bit about your role.

Thomas

Hi, so I'm Tom. I'm from the Student Wellbeing Team, SWIS, the acronym. I'm a wellbeing assessor, so one of our roles is to look after any and all students who come in and need help with us and we just kind of deal with everything mental health wise.

Katie

Perfect, so, great and as you said, that's the acronym SWIS, is where we sign post our students to. And so do you work with first year students or is it all students?

Thomas

Yes, so it's all students. So undergraduate, postgraduate, anyone who's a student at Essex comes to us. We offer kind of access to any and all services as such. So without going into too much detail at the moment, if people need just a bit of basic support or if they need ongoing mental health support or physical support as well. So for instance, if a student who's got a hearing impairment, something like that, so you come through our team, we deal with the whole lot of that.

Katie

Oh, cool. Thank you and do you work with staff, at all, as well?

Thomas

We don't personally, but we kind of deal with each other. So we can give advice to staff if they want to talk to students. So that's kind of where interactive staff more with academic stuff we talk to them about their students and how they can help their students with wellbeing and things like that.

Katie

Nice. So how do you promote sort of positive well-being amongst students?

Thomas

Okay. So when we talk to students, we always give them wellbeing tips. We give them wellbeing advice as a wider thing in general. However, when it comes to a team, we do things like we go to, I think Open Days we're there, Freshers events we're there, we do things on the squares every now and then when we can.

There's various events throughout the year where we try and promote these. Like it's recently been World Mental Health Day this you wouldn't get chance to do much for that but in future we tend to do things like that so.

Katie

Yes, it's really nice. I was walking around campus today and has a really nice atmosphere with lots of students because it's Welcome Week. Students are getting an integrated back into the academic year and there were some crafting workshops. I think they were sort of making a plant hangers. Really nice, even just seeing people doing activities like that is really nice. And like Thomas just said, there's lots of opportunities to sort of do those things because university isn't just about sort of the nightlife and drinking things, there's other opportunities to take part in clubs and or sport clubs and activities as well. So, yeah, that's really nice. There's always things going on that people can take part in to sort of support their wellbeing and do good things. And why is this important? Why should we be doing these sorts of activities?

Thomas

Well, it's a weird question because if you think about it you don't say why is it good to have good physical health? Why is it good to have good health, it's one of the things where it is just good for you all round to have good well-being. You know, you're less stressed with life, you manage to cope with things a bit better, that's not the right word, you kind of manage to work better. As a student you'll find things a lot easier if you've got good things in practice and good things in place for this. Yeah. It's just it's just good health, really. I mean, nobody wants to go through a life of poor mental health because it's an incredible stress to do that, it's hard. So if you can deal with it from this side, then it helps.

Katie

Yeah, absolutely and I think as our listeners are sort of in school and college, they might have experience of worries to do with stress and things like that. And so it is likely that you may experience them at university level as well. And that's absolutely fine, lots of students go through lots of different experiences and so it's important that you do have those things that you go to, your clubs, or your society's or perhaps you do need to speak to someone a bit more professional about your worries. And it's just important to remember that those things are there to support you if you were to come to university. Some of the things I think that students possibly might not experience before is worrying about money if you haven't had to budget things before. Is that something you see common?

Thomas

Yeah, it's one of those things where I think especially when younger people and you think about university, you can forget the nitty gritty details like where to go and get my shopping. Is Tesco cheaper than Asda? Or that kind of thing. Which does come with growing up. If you don't go to university, you'd have to learn this stuff anyway. So it's all part of that process. And it's not really that scary. I mean, it's like we look here at Essex, we've got Tesco on the doorstep and we have things on campus so on and so forth. But we've got like, we actually have advisory services for financial matters as well. So if you've got stuck with student finance and things like that, we have teams to deal with that. We've got financial advisors, not financial advisors, people who deal with money matters and things like that.

Katie

Are they the sort of people that you would signpost to the problem had come through to you, you then sort of?

Thomas

Yeah

Katie

Ah, amazing

Thomas

I mean, we do some of that ourselves. So if it's someone who's just got a bit of an issue with budgeting, you know, even if you've never really had to budget bills before and all the rest of it, that's a horrible thing to get used to, to be honest. Yeah, we can do a bit of that, that's not a problem. But yeah, there are people we signpost to as well.

Katie

What sort of other sort of common problems do you see amongst students that are common worries?

Thomas

Well, it kind of depends year on year. I mean, we're not gonna go into every single year, we've only got so long. But finances is a big one like what you said, it's things like general welfare, to be fair, stresses, anxieties. Academic pressures is quite a big one. The transition from college and school to university is quite a large step and there's various things that people don't think about. So, for instance, in college you get given numerous quite rapid deadlines for work and you've got a teacher on looming over you, not like that in university. You get told to do a piece of work at the end of the month and then it's up to you to do the work for that and all the rest of it. So on some sides we also see students who kind of forget to have any fun in meantime. Which goes against the stereotype but yeah, you do see students who forget that they do have to have a life outside of university.

Katie

Absolutely and we do sort of say this to our listeners all the time that university isn't just about coming here to study. You've gotta find that balance between studying and then having fun and making sure you have time for those additional bits.

Thomas

Yeah, join a club, join a club, join a society, do get a hobby, do something you like. One of the things that I always said to students, regardless of what I'm talking about in a meeting, because it's almost always helpful is I always ask them, do you have a hobby? Do you do something that you like? Do you, do you video game? Do you do your podcast? Do you do something? Because most of the time students will say yes and they haven't done it for a while because they've got work to do. They're behind on things. And I always say to people to think about things like this is if you have a job, you work 9 to 5, you work for 37 hours a week and so on, and so forth. You don't work 70 hours a week at your job and take it home with you and forget to have a life outside it because it won't help you. I mean, at university, you are meant to have fun here as well, you know, and there's plenty of cool stuff. I mean, I can only talk for Essex, but we've got society's things like that right. But every university has got an SU. You know, every universities got good societies, you can try things you never tried before. The really big thing about university you can do stuff that you've never had the facilities to do before. I mean, like peek behind a mirror, we're in a recording studio here at Essex because the SU has this kind of facilities, which most schools and colleges won't have. So if this is something you're interested in, then you can join the club, look into that kind of thing. Yeah, that's a really big part of university that students forget and that's where stress comes from, because you stop having fun and you stop having something else outside university to keep yourself going.

Katie

Yeah. Yeah. Thank you for that. And I think going or taking part in these sorts of clubs and societies is a great way to make friends as well, because that doesn't come naturally to everyone. And obviously, if you're going to a university that isn't local to you, it's very unlikely you're going to know anyone. So, yeah, I imagine that's possibly something that people come to you about as well.

Thomas

Yeah, it's, I don't want to scare people and say loneliness is a thing, but people do find it hard sometimes to because often when you see people who've been to college that have gone from primary school to secondary school to college with people they know, because that happens in your local areas and things like that. But if you've moved from like I'm originally from Birmingham. So I moved from Birmingham to Essex. Yeah. I didn't know anyone from Essex when I first moved here. So where do you start making friends? Like you said it's not so natural for some people to do that. It can be quite hard to do that if you don't know stuff. But that's where the societies can come into place. That's where groups come into place. Because if you've got something in common that's a really great way to start a conversation.

Katie

Yeah, I remember when I went to uni and I joined the Rounders Society. I literally didn't know anyone going and I was really nervous but as part of that society it's sort of their job to make sure that all the new people do get stuck in and meet people and then you go and do other things together and make sure that you, yeah, they just make it really fun and interactive and you soon have a really great bunch of friends. Or at least some people you know on campus that you meet up with at other times as well. And obviously

you'll meet people on your course as well but if you are a little bit worried about making friends and meeting new people, just turn it around and think how exciting it is you could potentially meet some really wonderful people.

Thomas

It's also worth noting as well, because I always have, again, it comes from conversations with students. If you feel like you went to university and you feel like you're lonely and it's hard to make friends, there will be hundreds of other students who feel exactly the same. Almost everyone feels like that, it's a bit intimidating when you first get here and it's so much bigger than college and you're living away from home for the first time, things like that but very quickly you find your acclimatised to it.

Katie

Absolutely. Absolutely. And these are some worries that maybe you've experienced before or perhaps they might be new worries that you experience when you come to university but it's important to remember that there are people there to support you and you are possibly having the same feelings as maybe the person in the flat next to you because you're all going through the same change and new experience in your life. So do you have any top tips for positive wellbeing? Like I said earlier, it's good to do these things in general isn't it and I'm thinking in particular about situations where students are spending long periods of time in front of a screen revising etc?

Thomas

Looking at a screen is, this sounds awful as well, because I look at a screen all day, is one the worst things you can do for yourself just over time. It is actually quite bad for you. So if you take gaps every now and then in those 5 minutes, go get a drink, go to the toilet, go stand outside for a minute.

Katie

Yeah, do some stretches.

Thomas

Yeah, often stretching is very good. But yeah, you often see around crunch time on exam periods where students will basically bed in for a little bit to do stuff and that can be detrimental sometimes because you do need to give yourself air, you know, you need a minute to come up for breath every now and then so.

Katie

Definitely. Is there a sort of a way they can structure their revision or things, tips that they can do during those sorts of stressful periods of time?

Thomas

The routine, everyone's got their own different ways of doing this and departments themselves can be quite good for this. So if students have an academic personal tutor or things like that, they're a good way to talk about things. But what I always had students do is to actually structure out your day a bit, because what students tend to do and I have seen this sometimes when I sit down and say I'm going to revise, they'll try and revise for 7 hours straight and realistically you revise for 2 hours of that and the rest of it is you're starting to burn out because you're trying look at the same stuff over and over again. So, you know, look at it for an hour, go do something else for half hour, come back to it, go and have lunch. Look, like, you'd break up a workday like that with your breaks, you have a lunch break, you do things in-between, structure it like that.

Katie

Yeah. Well, actually, that's great because it sort of helps prepare you for that working life as well. So you learn it at university, and you start to manage it a bit better so that eventually when you go into sort of full time employment, you're well prepared for that sort of working environment and dealing with those things.

Thomas

You know, no job will expect you to work 8 hours on the trot without a break in between and expect you to perform at the height of what you're expecting. That's the thing.

Katie

Absolutely. So do you have any advice or guidance for our parent, carers or guardians who might be worried about their young person going to university?

Thomas

Yeah. So one of the things we do often advise is that parents come to our Open Days. Come and see what campus is like, come and meet us. Because often it's scary letting your kids go away. You know, they've never left home for that long and now they're moving away to city across the country. But yeah, come to an Open Day, go to lots of Open Days. It's always good to get a vibe for the campus. Yeah, meet staff, meet people there, we're always there at support services, so not just at Essex, but, you know, KCL, UCL, Birmingham, wherever else you look at, support services will be there. So go have a chat with them. It's always good to know who these people before you go around, you can get an idea of what they do. I mean, in regards to parents if you've got worries, talk to your kids about them. Be honest about that, there's no harm in that, saying like, you know, I'm worried, are you gonna be okay with these kind of things? You know, keep lines communication open. Yeah, just talk to people about it, you know?

Katie

Yeah, absolutely. I think sometimes, obviously university is the young person's decision, it's your decision at the end of the day but if you've got a parent, carer or guardian who's heavily involved in sort of the support of you going to university and then yeah, it's very important to have that open conversation and discuss any worries that are coming from either party.

Thomas

And to be aware as well that I think I can't speak for every university or most in the country, that they all have teams of professionals who are there to help in any and all situations. We're very well-established, we've all been doing this in various aspects for years. Yeah, in some aspects, it can be easy to get support with various things on campus than it is in the outside world. See we're quite well-placed to help with people. So yeah.

Katie

Perfect. Thank you, Thomas and I think we'll finish off with maybe a final piece of advice that you have about coming to university as a young person and promoting positive well-being.

Thomas

Yeah, so that final piece of advice really for everyone is if you're in any doubt about anything, any worries or concerns, then reach out and speak to somebody about it. There's absolutely no shame in that, it really helpful to do those kinds of things. When I attempted university, I had some student finance issues that I didn't reach out about so I ended up withdrawing. Whereas now I deal with that on a daily basis and it's solvable, if I'd spoken to somebody at the time it wouldn't been an issue. These things can seem intimidating, you might not be used to that, but it will be nothing that people you've spoken to haven't seen before and there'll be more than happy to help with anything you've got. So you just reach out, don't, to be cliché, don't suffer in silence just talk to somebody about it.

Katie

And I think that is a valid point for whatever stage of life you're in, if your school or college and you've got a worry, reach out to someone you trust, whether it's a friend, someone at your school or a college like a teacher. Or, of course, your parent, carer, or guardian. And then we've obviously got charities that you can reach out to as well. And yeah, whatever your problem, small, big, anything, it's important that someone else is aware of it so that they can help you deal with it.

Katie

Thank you so much to Thomas and for the guidance provided in today's episode, we're now gonna talk to our current student ambassadors at the University of Essex who'll be talking to us about their university pathway and their experience of using the support offered here at Essex. So we have Dominika, third year Biomedical Sciences student, Essex Flames president and she has just finished her placement year at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. And our other guest Karen, originally from London is a third year Data Science and Analytics student. Thank you both for coming. It'd be great if we could share your journeys to the University, so Dominika did you come from a college or sixth form and could you tell us a bit about how you came to Essex?

Dominika

So, I went to a specialist maths and science sixth form and I did Biology, Chemistry, Maths, and I came, so I finished my A-levels in 2018 and then the following September I started, so I went, I didn't have a gap year and I just went straight into university. The University of Essex was my first choice because it was really good for the course that I did, and it was accredited so that's how I chose here and that's why, yeah.

Katie

Lovely. Thank you. With your sort of transition from college to Essex, what was that like for you?

Karen

Interesting. I think it could be quite sometimes stressful if you don't know what you want to study but being able to do the correct quiz and let what my strengths and weaknesses depict, what's best for me was actually one of the best decisions I made because I think that gave me the opportunity to explore something I never would have thought of doing.

So I did do maths, but the other side of data science is computing. Computer science, which it involves programming and understanding these very complex things, but actually wasn't really as difficult as I thought it would be.

Katie

Okay, that's good.

Karen

If you use logic, but you've got the creativity side and it became very interesting to go into uni to then have fun and enjoy different things to meet new people who you've not known because I didn't know anyone at university except for one person who was older than me. So knowing that everyone is in the same stage and then going in to try out our best was really a very good experience.

Katie

Yeah. I think that's actually quite rare for you to know someone at your chosen university. So I know you say, oh, you didn't really know anyone. But in lots of cases literally there won't be anyone that you know when you go to university. And so, yeah, you have to learn to make new friends and, yeah, no. Thank you. Thank you very much, Dominika. What was that transition like for you?

Dominika

It was alright, actually. I actually knew 4 people from my sixth form who went to Essex, at the same like in the same cohort. And one of the girls who came with me actually did my course, so, yeah, we naturally just stuck together really quickly. Yeah, and then I think the transition was a little bit stressful because obviously my first time moving away and, you know, it's a different environment and a different sort of vibe on campus versus like coming into school every day. But yeah, I think I settled in after about a month and a half, I reckon.

Katie

Yeah, it is just part of that university experience, as you know, it's completely new. If you've not been away from home before, it's just about adapting that and that's just part of the university experience you soon settle in, you find your routine and those sorts of experiences really help you to set you up for your future life as well. Because even if you don't go to university and you do move away from home move out of home and get a full-time job. Again, you're gonna be going through that experience of having to cook and clean and deal with time management and everything independently, so doing it at university, actually, you've got quite a few support systems in place to help you with that and that actually leads me on very nicely to talking about yours experiences of using support systems at university because you both have very kindly offered to talk about your personal experiences.

So, Karen, if you wouldn't mind just telling us a little bit about your experience of using SWIS?

Karen

Yes. So there's actually quite a few support systems that I've used. So firstly, the one that's on campus that most people would be assigned to is the drop-in service. So this is where you can go in whenever you needed it. It's at the back of Silberrad so it's quite discreet and not much people will go in. You won't find yourself feeling a little nervous being seen and it's generally quite anonymous about that service because you, I think it's writing your registration number. and then just if you wanted, you can give some information of what you wanted to talk about and then you wait a little and then they have you inside the room and you

can talk however long you want and I think that made it easier for me to go through uni being able to kind of rant to someone just to kind of let all my emotions and my feelings onto like, to have someone to listen to me. There are also GP services where you use the Validium and Silver Cloud. So Validium is like a telephone service, so you have telephone counselling and then with the other one, which was... let me remember, oh yes, Silver Cloud. So that's the other option that they recommend, which is an online platform so you can go through the courses for anxiety, stress, depression, there's feeling homesick, I think, as well. So there's these different options and you go through the course yourself in your own time. It's not set for saying you have to do it by a certain point and then the last one is Green Wood House, so this is next to the GP. It's like for 4 sessions and it's very kind of go base. You give yourself a target, so you speak to the GP, they go and get through the service, and then at the end of that 4 sessions, you supposedly then go and accomplish one thing that you wanted to work on. So in that session I learnt how to say no, which is one of the things that can be quite hard. And it led me to feeling a lot less stressed because I was able to figure out what my priorities were, and I think that's very important about the different support systems.

Katie

Yeah. And you mentioned as well that because of the phone services that are available and the fact that the drop-in centre is sort of in a private area, you don't have to worry about other students potentially seeing you if that's what you're worried about if you if you need to make that first point of contact is that it's very private if you need to make it so if you want to be anonymous, you can. And yeah. Thank you, thank you for that. And Dominika, then, if you mind, just sharing a little bit about your experience as well. That would be great.

Dominika

Yeah. So I have struggled with my own mental health since I was about 13-ish just due to some home problems that occurred when I was younger and I thought I kind of dealt with them but when I moved to university, you know, the new environment and different people and I've really struggled with the noise sometimes on campus. So I live in kind of like a very rural countryside area, so I was never really used to like noises outside my bedroom during the night and that really kind of freaked me out. So I wasn't getting a good night's sleep and like the doors just kept slamming and I think the combination of like lack of sleep, new environment and everything brought things up that were quite difficult for me to deal with. And my first point of contact was also the drop-in service and I think I spent about an hour just discussing everything that happened and what my goals were to like, how can I get better, how to work through this? And I was actually referred onto a further counselling service and it's a specialist counselling service called Cara. And I've been using them for about 2 years during the, so I started using them in my second year and I had about ten sessions for free and they were all for an hour and then I got an extension. So I had some extra sessions that were available to me for free. And now I no longer use Cara, but I use the same counsellor who also practices privately. So initially it was in person at the Cara building and as I moved back home during the initial wave of the pandemic, we used Whatsapp, because Whatsapp is double ended encrypted so it's extra secure. And I have been using them like remote services ever since the pandemic. But we might go back to face to face, but in a different room and you can have some rooms for hire near the university, their called... I'm not sure what their name was. I think it's like life, Life Force. And that's by the university that private counsellors can hire out like a counselling room that's not associated with their main practice.

Katie

That's good. Thank you for sharing. And yeah, it's all private, especially with the drop-in sessions. You can remain anonymous, but there's that flexibility there with face to face or things are becoming a lot more adaptable now, we can have these remote sessions as well so yeah, it's fantastic that we have the support services there. But what about timings and things? Are they available all the time so that 24/7? What would we need to do if they're not available 24/7?

Dominika

Well, so Cara operates on I'm pretty sure a 9 to 5 basis and I had a regular session once a week. My slot was Wednesday I think like 12 till 1 or something. And that was always my slot, if I had something on like any extracurricular activities that have just abruptly come up, I would just defer my session so I wouldn't waste a session. So I would still have like the 10 sessions or the 8 sessions that were remaining like in the bank, so to speak. Yeah. As for 24-hour services. I personally haven't used them, so I can't really speak on behalf of them. I know that nightline used to be 24/7 and Samaritans is another one, but I personally haven't used them.

Karen

So I haven't used any either, but I do know of, as Dominique said, Nightline and Samaritans. There's also, I think, out of services for the GP service as well as 111 I think you can speak to them.

Katie

Absolutely. Thank you. And with your experience of using these support services. Were you aware of them prior to sort of coming to university? Did you know that universities had these support systems?

Karen

I'm not too sure. I think I went to the school counselling service at sixth form and then I think they might have mentioned that universities do actually have a support service so if you ever needed someone to speak to, you can speak to them. The other way of learning about this prior to university was my own research, or on UCAS I think they do show certain things that you can use when you're then at university. So that was a way for me to learn about these different things.

Katie

Yeah, and of course I'm sure that they probably mention it during welcome week, freshers week, they'll have stalls and stands to sort of say to you, look, we've got these services in case you need them. But what about you Dominika? You were sort of nodding your head there saying...

Dominika

So I don't come from the Essex area so the local university from where I lived, I heard quite bad things about their wellbeing services and that kind of put me off initially. And then I met, so Essex do residents life service. So we have RA's and my RA, like when she came into our flat for the first time, she said, you know, like here are all of the services available and there's like a drop-in service and I asked her like personally, like have you used them? Is it good? Because I was just kind of afraid that they'll just be like okay we'll just brush it under the carpet sort of thing. And she actually said that she used them personally and that they were really good and yeah, I just it took me a lot of courage to turn up to the drop-in service. I actually had my friend come with me and she just waited outside just for the hour just to make sure that I got in all right and stuff. And then, um. Yeah, they referred me onto Cara. And I had no idea that such an organisation existed, and I had no idea that, you know, if you do qualify for Cara based support, you can have many counselling sessions for free and that, you know, as a student its really helpful. I've actually gotten so much information through Cara so I've applied for the DSA, the Disabled Student Allowance, where I can potentially claim some of my money back now because I pay for counselling now, which means that again, I don't have to worry too much about financial matters, which takes a lot of the stress off as well, because you know, you have to cook for yourself and provide everything you know and student loans and yeah, I find it really helpful and they've also provided me with a laptop and a printer and assistive technology. So I've got like a read and write software service so if I'm too tired to get out of bed, they you know, I can speak into the computer and it will write my notes for me.

Katie

That's fantastic.

Dominika

And I can do that for my lectures as well and then also because I live on campus, the nearest printer is maybe a 5-minute walk away from me and they just you know, they gave me a printer so I don't have to leave my room if I'm a bit worried about leaving.

Katie

And these are sorts of things I think some of our listeners or maybe other students won't be even aware of that the university can provide you with this equipment, support you. Did you know that was something you could get hold of?

Dominika

No, I had no idea. So my counsellor actually asked if I was aware of something like this. And I honestly had no idea. And because I didn't think I would qualify, I thought it was more of like a physical or a learning disability such as like dyslexia or like hearing impairment, or mobility issues. So, I was kind of like, oh, I

don't think I would qualify and then I actually, I actually did. So I needed to provide like a GP letter and my counsellor wrote like a referral letter as well and it was actually a really easy process, surprisingly. Yeah. So it's been like a really big help, especially for third year because I went through 2 years of university without it and just towards the end of second year. Yeah. She was like you could try and apply and that's yeah.

Katie

Yeah, great. Well from what you've just in that one answer just sort of said some top tips there. Take a friend with you if you're nervous about sort of that first initial contact with the drop-in service. Check out scholarships and bursaries that you could be eligible for and speak to some about DSA if you think you might qualify, if you're not even sure what it is, take a look into it. Definitely. And then you might find that you can get support for those additional things that could support you with your studies, because it's not just about being sort of better in yourself mentally or physically, it's also about being able to do your studies well as well. Because whilst you're a student here at university, you want to have a good time and a good experience. So by having positive wellbeing and having a healthy lifestyle, that's going to improve all aspects of your university experience. So Dominika, that was, that was fantastic. Thank you. Is there anything else that you wanted to add, Karen?

Karen

With the DSA you can also, if you find yourself not sure if you have a different condition, you can also speak to your GP about it. And they do have quizzes, especially since a lot of, there's a few conditions that mostly are diagnosed whilst we are a child. But if your parents don't know of these conditions, it can be quite hard to figure out for yourself. So there are some quizzes that you can try and speak to your GP about, and they'll give it to you and then you can try and complete all of that and they'll find out whether you do have a condition and then being able to help provide you with the whole, with the services that Dominika has said.

Katie

Great. Thank you both. Do you have any sort of tips for our listeners to do with positive mental health? So any little tips and tricks you guys have, whether it's when you're revising, studying or just little things that you might do day to day because it's just good practice? Karen do you want to start?

Karen

Yes so, I use apps and I also listen to music, building myself a routine. These are a few things that helps me get myself out of bed. I think a lot of people have heard about building habits. But when you're trying to do it yourself it can be a bit difficult. So the app that I've been using is Finch F I N C H. It's a little penguin that you grow, and hatch and it grows with you whilst you give them goals. And you can personalize it to whatever pronouns you want so he, she and they, and every week it gives you a check-up of what's happened last week, how many check-ins you've done. And then seeing what went well last week, what made you feel happy and positive and what made you actually feel a little sad so that you can identify what things you might need to change or alter so that you can feel better for the next week upcoming. The other things is, of course, Headspace and Calm. So we know of those. But if you don't want to use them, on Spotify there's also daily wellness, which is quite good because that gives a mixture of podcasts and music and it also tailors to your music preferences. And I think it's so important being able to actually have like a mix because sometimes it can be quite hard to just listen to just podcasts throughout the whole day. But if you have a change between the two, you can then get up listening to your happy music and you start dancing and it instantly boosts your happiness.

Katie

And I think, listening to music, well, it's quite a normal thing to do, isn't it? We have it on the radio and the TV and it really can change the way you're feeling sometimes. But it might not be something that people necessarily think about implementing it into their sort of routine. So it's really good just to mention sort of podcasts and things or I love the idea of this penguin, because it's a really good way of so it basically self-reflection, isn't it?

Karen

Yes.

Katie

To check in with yourself and it forces you to do that because you've got someone else or a penguin to sort of to focus on and help. So yeah, no, those are some really lovely suggestions, thank you. Dominika, have you got any top tips?

Dominika

Take time for yourself as well as your studies, you don't want to do one thing and none of the other things that you enjoy, so try not to let your studies overtake your life because you're also you're also a person deserving of free time and enjoyment. So take some time, like do your hobbies if you have any or spend some time to discover if you have any like other hobbies, I guess. So university is a really great place to try different things and try like different sports or societies. I've never done cheerleading before, so until I came to university and now, I'm the president.

Katie

Some really brilliant advice there from our student ambassadors which I hope will help you in the next few years and remember to speak to someone if you have any concerns or worries. Huge thank you to all of our guests today for providing all their advice to promote positive well-being and I hope it's helped you to think about what positive changes you can make to your lifestyle.

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