

YORK
COLLEGE

ASKHAM BRYAN COLLEGE



UNIVERSITY
of York



York St John
University

Coping With Change



Acknowledge Things are Changing

Starting College or University is an exciting moment in your life that involves change and you might feel apprehensive, but that's normal. You need to acknowledge that there will be change and managing that change will be tricky sometimes so it's important to realise you might not get it right straight away.

Getting prepared can help you feel more confident and positive and here are our top tips:

Keep routines

The more things change, the more beneficial sticking to your regular schedule will be. Regularity provides an anchor, recognising not everything has changed will help you de-stress and remind you that you are still in control.

Healthy Eating

Stress can make you reach for the carbs and junk food. A poor diet will affect your mood and energy levels, the last thing you need while dealing with stress. Whilst some comfort food is ok in moderation, a healthy, balanced diet is vital to improve your mental health and well-being. Be aware of the foods you are eating and practice trying to eat sensibly.

Alcohol

Recognise your limit. Peer pressure, e.g. during Freshers can put massive pressure on you to drink lots but it's ok not to drink, not everyone does. Alcohol and other substances can amplify difficult feelings and affect sleep, and increased usage can sneak up on you when you are feeling stressed.

Exercise

Keeping up regular exercise can boost positive mental health and can help feelings of low mood and anxiety. It can even connect you with like-minded people. You don't have to run a marathon everyday or join a gym, just get out there and be active. Even walking around the block can make you feel better.

Sleep

Acknowledge that your routines will change during the day and your sleep may be affected. It is important to try to develop a good sleep routine such as going to bed at the same time regularly. Avoid social media or phones up to an hour before going to bed and during the night. Try to establish a regular waking pattern to avoid the stress of lying in and missing buses, classes or lectures.

Social Media

Be aware of the dangers. You may be drawn to social media when you are feeling a little unsure. It's fun to show your friends and family how things are going but be aware that what you post never really disappears. When posting, recognise that social media may provide you with a warped view of the world. Everyone only posts their 'highlights' and this can be the last thing you need to see when you are feeling low. Also, be careful how you interpret what you read which is easy to do when you're stressed, and can cause insecurities or fall-outs with friends.

Focus on the positives

Remember why you wanted to come to college or university in the first place - making a list of reasons might help remind you. Think about what you enjoy doing and keep these as part of your routine. Don't feel guilty spending time looking after yourself, a break can help you refocus.

Try new things. This will help build your confidence, raise your self-esteem and make you feel better able to manage your new situation. Researching where you're going will help remove fear of the unknown. See what kind of activities you could join in at your new institution such as clubs, societies, cultural groups, etc. Set yourself simple goals but be persistent.

Take time out to give yourself a break

Nothing says you have to function at 100% all of the time. Look for positive ways to unwind and de-stress such as mindfulness, meditation, yoga, or going for a walk. Remember not everything will go well. Try not to dwell on negative experiences or over-react to situations.

Currently receiving support?

Think about how you supported yourself before through formal and informal support networks, e.g. friends and family, professional support services. If you are already receiving learning support or mental health support, it is important to make your new institution aware so that you can continue to access the help you need to settle into your new environment.

Where to go for help

Colleges and universities provide health and well-being, and other support through their Student Services teams. It is a good idea to check your institution's website to look into what support might be available before you start.

Other useful support:

- Mind - information on a wide range of issues and difficulties: www.mind.org.uk
- The Samaritans - FREE 24-hour helpline, 365 days a year: 116 123 (UK) samaritans.org

- HOPElineUK - has a specialist helpline which helps young people (35 years and under) deal with suicidal thoughts and supports those worried about others. www.papyrus-uk.org

- SANE - out-of-hours helpline offering specialist emotional support and information to anyone affected by mental illness, including family, friends and carers: www.sane.org.uk

- YorWellbeing - advice and support on how to lead a happier, healthier life: www.yorkgov.uk/YorWellbeing

- Mental Health Foundation - free podcasts of guided relaxation, meditation and breathing exercises: www.mentalhealth.org.uk

- The Haven @ 30 Clarence Street, York – Out of-hours mental health support to anyone aged 16+ in York or Selby 18:00-23:00 everyday including weekends and bank holidays.

- A warm and welcoming space to access support and relieve emotional distress, no need to make an appointment, just turn up.

Remember College and University is an opportunity to develop your independence and is an exciting time where you can grow, learn new skills, meet new people, and have fun.



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