

Computing Student Wellbeing Newsletter

October 2019

Welcome to the Student Wellbeing Newspaper and the first for this academic year!

Welcome to all those students who are new to Imperial and welcome back to those who are returning to courses. This edition of the newsletter has information on Staying well and Resourcefulness at university which can be useful regardless of what year of study you are going into! The start of a new academic year is also an excellent opportunity to get into new habits and routines, therefore on the last page there is a poster illustrating the '5 Ways for Wellbeing' which is an evidence based approach for promoting and maintaining good wellbeing! For those of you who haven't read the newsletter before there is always a different topic each month based loosely around the theme of student wellbeing.

Every edition highlights a useful app in 'App of the Month', whilst 'Mental Health in the Media', includes links to interesting articles, programmes and podcast on mental health and wellbeing.

App(s) of the Month: Spotify + Headspace

This month we are highlighting not one but two(!) apps! Both excellent apps in their own right; Spotify is a music streaming service that allows you to access million or songs, Headspace is a mindfulness based app which aims to help you lead a healthier, happier, more well-rested life. But what is even better is that students who have a Spotify subscription can access Headspace for free!



Mental Health in the Media

The top tip for Mental Health in the Media for this month is the blog on the Student Minds website. The Student Minds blog is the UK's biggest blog dedicated to student mental health and university life. The blog provides students with an open, caring and inclusive place to speak up about your experiences of living with mental health difficulties. If you choose to contribute by telling your stories and sharing tips and advice, you can help show other students that they are not alone, recovery is possible and you can still succeed at university despite experiencing mental health difficulties. Or if you do not want to contribute at the moment there is a huge catalogue of previous blog posts which contain valuable information, insight and advice!

Click here to access blog!

The logo for Student Minds, featuring the words 'student' and 'minds' stacked vertically in a sans-serif font. Above the word 'minds' is a purple speech bubble containing the word 'blog' in white.

Tips for resourcefulness and staying well

University can be a very exciting and enjoyable time, but it can also be a difficult time, with some students experiencing academic pressure, mental and physical health problems, deadlines and exams, relationship and friendship conflicts, or financial issues at some point. Below are some of the difficulties you may experience at uni and some tips on how you can respond, minimise the impact and what support you could access.

Academic Pressures

Imperial is an incredibly high-powered and successful university and all students have done very well to be here! However sometimes this can add to the academic pressure a student feels and even lead to a feeling of 'Imposter Syndrome'

Don't ignore it If you are struggling academically don't ignore it and struggle on. There is lots of help available - speak to your personal tutor or your Student Wellbeing Advisor who they will be able to signpost you to some student skills workshops if appropriate.

Balance It is important that you work towards a good work-life balance, what this looks like will be different for each student but regardless of your study habits it is vital that all students take a break at some point!

Awareness Be aware of how YOU study. It may be that you work best in the morning or that the afternoon is your most productive time. Try to monitor your study habits and find out what works for you and then adapt your work appropriately.

Financial Difficulties

University can be very expensive. So here are some top tips for how this can be managed.

Use the App! There are some excellent apps available which can really help with budgeting and tracking money, noticeably Yolt which helps you track bills and spending and Splitwise, which is an excellent app for keeping track of shared expenses - for example household utility bills and communal shopping like washing up liquid and loo rolls! Using Splitwise may help disagreements and niggles about money developing amongst friends and housemates.

Learn financial skills Budgeting is not a skill which we necessarily get taught at school and so therefore it's not surprising that many students find it difficult to budget at uni (many people not at uni also struggle to budget sometimes!) Never fear - help is at hand. The Student Hub will happily help students develop budgeting skills.

Let us know If you find yourself in financial difficulties please speak to a member of staff in your department as we may be able to help.

Physical and Mental Health Difficulties

Just like in other areas of life and society students at University may experience physical or mental health difficulties. It is therefore important that you know what support is available and where you can access it.

Pre-existing physical and mental health difficulties If you have experienced physical and/ or mental health difficulties before coming to uni, it's a really good idea to let someone in your department know. Any information will be treated confidentially and will not be shared with the whole of your department, and will not affect your academic record. There is lots of support available within department and college for all students.

Self-care Making sure you have time for yourself is really important for maintaining good physical and mental health. Find out what activities contribute towards your self-care and make sure you regularly allow time.

GP any student studying at South Kensington campus can access the Health centre, even if they live elsewhere and are registered at another GP practice.

Let us know There is lots of support available if you notice changes in your mental health that you are worried about. You can speak to your Student Wellbeing Advisor who will be able to support you and if necessary signpost to appropriate services.

Loneliness/ Isolation

There is a lot of pressure on students to make 'best friends' and 'friends for life' at university, and whilst this is true for some it can take and many people experience loneliness or difficulties with friends whilst at university at some point - this could be a difficulty making new friends, missing 'old' friends from home or having difficulties with current friends or housemates.

Societies/ Clubs It's not uncommon for students to struggle to make friends at Uni. Many students visit the Societies Fair and sign up for a large number of clubs/ societies and then feel overwhelmed and unmotivated to attend any - not to mention being bombarded with emails! Why not choose two clubs/ societies to join - one doing something you already do and feel competent in and one trying something new (it could be you discover a new passion for sky diving!). And remember that societies/ clubs are open to all students and welcome new members regardless of what year you are in!

Housemate difficulties If you are having difficulties with a housemate try and find a neutral space and time to meet and discuss the difficulties you are experiencing calmly and without assigning blame, you could always ask a friend or other housemate to be present if you are worried about how the conversation might go.

Volunteer Volunteering is an excellent option for potentially meeting new friends, it is also a great way to widen your experience as well as increase your wellbeing (studies suggest that volunteering for a few hours a week can have a very positive impact on our wellbeing)

5 Ways to Wellbeing



Connect

Connect with people around you. Spend time with your friends and family. Make new friends. Use different ways to communicate.



Be Active

Go for a walk or a run. Cycle, dance or play a game. Walk to school instead of getting the bus. Go to the park. Try a new activity.



Take Notice

Take time to be still, reflect, and become aware of your surroundings. Notice what you are thinking and be aware of what's going on in the world around you: the everyday and the unusual. Be curious. Savour your favourite food.



Keep Learning

Set yourself a goal. Learn something new. Research something you're interested in. Learn a new word or a random fact. Visit a museum.



Give

Do something nice for a friend. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Raise money for charity. Be a good role model. Take action to improve your neighbourhood.

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter or have any suggestions for content please do not hesitate to get in touch!