Mental Health Matters

The World Health Organization states that “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. Mental health, being an integral and essential component of overall health, plays a significant role in our daily lives on how we can realize our abilities and unleash our potential, work productively, make good use of normal stresses, and contribute to the community.

For many adults who have mental disorders, symptoms were present—but often not recognized or addressed—in childhood and youth. For a young person with symptoms of a mental disorder, the earlier treatment is started, the more effective it can be. Early treatment can help prevent more severe, lasting problems as a person grows up.

If there are signs and symptoms that last weeks or months; and if these issues interfere with a person’s daily life, including at home, at school, at work, or with friends, you may consider contacting a health professional.

A person might need help if he or she:
- Often feels anxious or worried
- Is intensely irritable much of the time
- Has frequent stomachaches or headaches with no physical explanation
- Is in constant motion, can’t sit quietly for any length of time
- Has trouble sleeping, including frequent nightmares
- Loses interest in things he or she used to enjoy
- Avoids spending time with friends
- Has trouble doing well in school, or grades decline
- Fears gaining weight; exercises, diets obsessively
- Has low or no energy
- Has spells of intense, inexhaustible activity
- Harms herself/himself, such as cutting or burning her/his skin
- Engages in risky, destructive behavior
- Harms self or others
- Smokes, drinks, or uses drugs
- Has thoughts of suicide
- Thinks his or her mind is controlled or out of control, hears voices

You may also do a quick Mood and Stress Assessment to understand more about your mental health status:

Mental illnesses can be treated. Reach out to the Student Counselors of the Counseling and Wellness Center for consultation or assistance.

24/7 HEAR Ing - (852) 8308 2688

If you need Immediate Counseling or Emotional Support Outside Office Hours
This is a 24-hour helpline that supports exclusively all HKUST students 7 days a week. The service is made available by our Counselors in collaboration with the Christian Family Service Center.

Reference:
Mental Health Toolkit

This Toolkit is providing useful self-help resources to help you alleviate short-term stress and emotional tension. If symptoms persist, please seek help from the Counseling and Wellness Center or health professional.

MINDFUL STRETCHING 🧘‍♂️

A gentle movement with stretching can help alleviate stress, regulate attention, stabilize mood and ease chronic pain.

**Arm Sweep**

*Step 1:* Stand up straight with your feet hip-width apart. Relax your body and your shoulders. Pause for a few seconds. Pay attention to your breathing, and sense your body standing.

*Step 2:* As you inhale, sweep your arms out to your sides. Pause and focus on your body sensation. As you exhale, sweep your arms down and relax. Notice the change of sensations in your body.

*Step 3:* Bring both arms overhead, so the fingertips are pointing to the ceiling, arms straightened and parallel to each other. Focus on your awareness of changing physical sensations. Breathe in, pause, breathe out. Slowly lower both arms. Focusing on sensations. Return your arms to the resting position.

**Shoulder Roll**

*Step 1:* Sit or stand with good posture and relax your shoulders. Notice your physical sensations.

*Step 2:* Inhale, slowly roll your shoulders up. Focus on your awareness of the body.

*Step 3:* Roll your shoulders back as when you exhale. Pay attention to the stretch and the muscle extension.

*Step 4:* Gently roll your shoulders down, while palms point forward, elbows slightly bent.

Follow through steps 1 to 4 and slowly roll your shoulders like drawing circles with them. Repeat the steps with reverse movements. Notice how your breathing and feelings may have shifted.

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Reference:
RELAXATION AND MEDITATION

Diaphragmatic Breathing Exercise Step by Step

UCCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center - Guided meditation

UCSD Center for Mindfulness - Guided Practice Mindfulness - Based Stress Reduction

Dr. Kristin Neff - Self-Compassion Guided Meditations and Exercises

Mobile App:
The Oxford Mindfulness Foundation – Oxford MBCT (Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy)

New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association - Newlife.330 (Available in Chinese only)

More mental health app recommendation with ratings on credibility, user experience and transparency is available:
Psyber Guide

The websites were correct and up to date to the best of our knowledge at the time of publication. The Counseling and Wellness Center holds no responsibility for the content of external websites.
ACUPRESSURE

Acupressure is based on the concept of life energy. Physical pressure is applied to acupoints with the aim of clearing blockages in these meridians. Acupressure can help to ease the symptoms and relax the body.

**Insomnia:**

*Step 1:* Locate mid-point between ring finger and pinky finger.
*Step 2:* Locate its radial meeting point with the wrist crease.
*Step 3:* Press this acupoint “Spirit Gate” for 2-3 minutes.

![Insomnia diagram]

**Headache related to stress:**

*Step 1:* Locate the apex of ear
*Step 2:* Put 2 fingers above the apex of ear. The acupoint “Valley Lead” is where you feel sore when you press.
*Step 3:* Acupoint “Union Valley” is on the dorsum of the hand, between the first and second metacarpal bones, at the mid-point of the second metacarpal bone and close to its radial border.
*Step 4:* Squeeze the thumb against the base of the index finger, and locate “Union Valley”.
*Step 5:* Press the acupoint “Valley Lead” and “Union Valley” for 2-3 minutes alternatively.

![Headache diagram]

**Poor concentration and mentally weak:**

On the midline of the head, 5 cun directly above the midpoint of the anterior hairline, acupoint “Baihui” is approximately on the midpoint of the line connecting the apexes of both ears.

To improve concentration, press “Baihui” for 2-3 minutes.

![Concentration diagram]

**Stomach bloating, nausea:**

Acupoint “Neiguan” is located 3 fingers above the transverse crease of the wrist, between the tendons of palmaris longus and flexor carpi radialis.

To harmonize the stomach and alleviates nausea, press “Neiguan” for 2-3 minutes.

![Stomach diagram]

Acknowledgement:
Information and contents provided by Ms. TANG Yi Man, Registered Chinese Medicine Practitioner.

Reference:
You may find a small bottle (5 ml) of essential oil blend with this Mental Health Toolkit. It is a Focus Blend with organic ingredients specially designed to help you focus better.

**Directions:** Apply the blend on (1) the 2 sides of the temple and (2) the knob at the back, between the neck and the head. The blend helps you to focus on your present endeavors, stay rooted at the present, avoid procrastination, give you positive energy, growth and development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient’s English name</th>
<th>Ingredient’s Botanical name</th>
<th>Function of the ingredient in this blend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Black spruce</td>
<td>Picea mariana</td>
<td>Provide positive energy to face fear and challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Galanga</td>
<td>Alpinia galanga</td>
<td>To grow and develop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Geranium bourbon</td>
<td>Pelargonium asperum</td>
<td>To attract positivity and stay focus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Marjoram sweet</td>
<td>Origanum majorana</td>
<td>Focus your attention at the present, avoid procrastination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Peppermint</td>
<td>Mentha piperita</td>
<td>To clear your mind, especially in pensiveness, chaotic thoughts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Petitgrain bigarade</td>
<td>Citrus aurantium ssp. aurantiurn (feuilles)</td>
<td>Supports concentration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Lemongrass</td>
<td>Cymbopogon citratus</td>
<td>Brings freshness and motivation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Sunflower</td>
<td>Helianthus Annuus</td>
<td>Carrier oil, holds lots of solar energy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Caution:**
1. Not suitable for children aged below 12 and pregnant ladies.
2. Not suitable to anyone allergic to Aldehydes.

**Acknowledgment:**
The essential oil blend and the above contents are provided by our alumna Ms. Michel Lou (BBA ISMT Class of 2000 and MBA Class of 2020). She is a certified aromatherapist with the Swiss Usha Veda Holistic College, which is registered under the Swiss government as a college for alternative therapy. She can be reached at isabelleworkshop@gmail.com.
ART THERAPY COLORING

Coloring mandalas has proven to remove negative thoughts and preoccupied emotions (Curry and Kasser, 2005). Try them out!

Reference:
The Counseling and Wellness Center

The Counseling and Wellness Center is here to support students to gain self-understanding, emotional resilience and personal insights into any challenges they may be experiencing throughout their university years. We provide high quality counseling and evidence-based psychological service that help students to put into effect real changes, unleash their personal potential, as well as to enhance their psychological well-being.

We provide the following services:

• Personal Counseling
• Psychological Assessment
• Crisis Prevention and Intervention
• Service for Students with Special Educational Needs
• Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Course
• Healthy Living Events
• Peer Counselor Training Program
• Self-enrichment Workshops
• Adjustment to University Life

“A place to discover more about yourself.”

Serenity Lounge to Rest Well and Recharge

Our Center’s environment is built on an intention of sharing with students a sense of privacy and serenity. We sincerely hope that our family-friendly environment would help students to express their personal concerns at a more comfortable manner. Students are most welcome to rest or gather in the lounge of our Center where self-help resources including reference books and soothing music are available for them to relax, regain inner peace, and recharge their body and mind.

To make a counseling appointment:
counsel.ust.hk

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