

**TRANSITIONS**



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## Designed and Illustrated by



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# CONGRATULATIONS!

## You made it into college/university!

The transition to college or university is a big one, whether you are making a move across the country or staying in your hometown. You will be facing new academic, social, emotional, and financial challenges in a completely different setting and it may take some time to adjust and develop a new support system. It's an exciting time of your life and it comes with great opportunities and a few challenges.

This booklet is designed to help you better adjust to your new life by sharing important information and suggesting some helpful strategies to help you succeed in your college/university career. It can't cover everything that you need to know, but there is a larger version easily available, in case you need more information. Just go to [www.teenmentalhealth.org](http://www.teenmentalhealth.org) and you can view it there for FREE or download the iBook From the iBookStore.

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**ROOMMATES & FINANCES**

Living “on your own” is an exciting step but it brings new responsibilities. Successful living arrangements require communication and negotiating household rules before a conflict arises. Don’t assume that a good friend will make a good roommate! Sharing financial and household obligations can put stress on friendships, but there are ways to help prevent conflict. Sit down with potential housemates prior to signing a lease to discuss the following:

- ➔ What are your views on smoking cigarettes, using drugs, or drinking alcohol in the house?
- ➔ How do you feel about overnight guests?
- ➔ Who will be responsible for Internet, electricity, and other utility bills? How will these costs be divided?
- ➔ Do you all have the same class schedule? If not, are you planning to study at home and, if so, do you need quiet at certain hours of the day?
- ➔ Do you or your roommates have specific needs that have to be respected, such as: allergies, medical conditions, or religious observances?

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## MAKE A HOUSEHOLD AGREEMENT

Once you have a better understanding of what your roommates expect, you can all sit down together and make a “contract” so you don’t forget your mutual obligations when life gets hectic. This will help to remind everyone of what their responsibilities are to each other. Your “contract” can help if the going gets rough!

### Check these out:

<http://www.roommateclick.com/RC/roommate-tips-infos/creating-a-roommate-rental-agreement>

[www.canadarentals.net](http://www.canadarentals.net)



## STUDENT LOANS & SCHOLARSHIPS

Getting a good education is expensive! Make sure you check out all avenues that are available to help you. Visit the registrar's office or the awards office at your school for a list of scholarships and bursaries to apply for. If you are applying for a student loan, make sure you know what the rules and regulations are for you.

Be sure you understand how interest works on your student loan. You will usually not be charged interest while in school full-time. However, if you are studying on a part-time basis, payments and interest may have to be made while still in school.

Dropping courses may impact your student loan. Be sure to find out how many courses you are required to take to maintain full-time student status.

Don't get caught short!

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## BUDGETING

Preparing a budget is always a good idea. It may help you survive financially! Make a preliminary budget, and then track ALL of your expenses for a one month period. Compare your "actual" to your "preliminary" numbers. This will give you a realistic idea of exactly what you need to budget for.

## CREDIT

Many banks and credit card companies market credit cards and lines of credit to post-secondary students. If you choose to apply for either of these items, make sure you have a good idea of how you can use these resources. A line of credit usually has a lower interest rate than credit card “credit”. Be sure you pay off ALL your credit card debt monthly!

### Check these out:

[www.scholarshipscanada.com](http://www.scholarshipscanada.com)

[www.edulinx.ca](http://www.edulinx.ca)

[www.canlearn.ca](http://www.canlearn.ca)





**SCHOOL, TIME &  
STRESS MANAGEMENT**

There is never going to be enough time in the day, so it's important to learn to manage your schedule, set priorities, and find a balance between work and play. Most universities or colleges provide student planners or day-timers at the beginning of the semester for free or at a low cost. Your phone likely has a calendar function too. Take advantage of this and use it to plan your week.

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## PROCRASTINATION

Are you constantly putting things off and not getting things done? Common reasons & tips to help:

- **Too many projects on the go.** Look at the bigger picture. Choose what is most important FIRST. Remember - not everything that feels urgent is important.
  - **Too challenging.** Break down the task into smaller, easier steps.
  - **Distractions.** Take control of the situation! Find a private study space.
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## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENT TIME MANAGEMENT

- **Set Priorities.** Prioritize your tasks – high, medium, or low priority.
- **Make a To Do List.** Create daily, weekly, monthly lists based on your priorities.
- **Allocate Adequate Time for Each Task.** Be realistic about how much time will be required for each task.
- **Schedule Study Time on Every Course, Every Week.** Plan to review course material at least once every week. Identify what you don't understand early on so you can clear up any confusion before it comes time for exams.

- **Choosing your Courses.** Keep the time of day in mind when picking your classes. Schedule harder classes when you have the most energy in the day.

**Check these out:**

<http://academictips.org/acad/timemanagement.html>

<http://myguide.dal.ca/index.html>

<http://studygs.net/timman.htm>

<http://www.smu.ca/counselling>

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## MAXIMIZE YOUR LEARNING

Understanding your personal learning style can help you to reach your goals and succeed in school.

There are four common learning styles: **visual**, **auditory**, **reading/writing**, and **tactile**. You may be a combination of all four, but generally one learning style will be more effective for you than the others.



## Some study tips for your learning type

### Visual Learners:

- The more pictures, charts, and diagrams the better.
- Study alone and highlight the key points.
- Use sticky notes to mark off important phrases in your notebook.
- Watch instructional DVDs.

### Auditory Learners

- Listen to speakers. Record class sessions and listen to them later.
- Reading out loud will help you remember key points.
- For some auditory learners, taking notes in class is distracting. If your memory is strong (or you are recording the class session), consider just listening instead of taking notes.
- Repeating information out loud can help you remember key points when studying.

### Reading/Writing Learners:

- Written lists help.
- Rewrite study material in your own words.
- Always take notes – whether in class or when you're reading your textbook. Writing the information down will help solidify it in your brain.

### Tactile Learners:

- Take breaks often and find a way to incorporate movement into your studying.
- Jump right in! Trial and error is one of the ways you learn best.
- Try out the idea that you're studying, if you can. Hands-on experience helps!

# YOUR FIRST EXAMS

Exams at this level are not like in high school; expectations are much higher. This is why it is important to take good notes throughout the year. Unlike high school, it's best to start studying weeks prior to exams! A weekly review will keep you up to date and make writing exams easier.

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## Study tips!

- Organize yourself
- Make a study plan
- Create study notes
- Highlight key points
- Take breaks
- Get 8 hrs. of sleep
- No distractions
- Join a study group
- Do not procrastinate



## EXAM DAY

- Hopefully you got a good night's sleep. This is more important than "pulling an all-nighter". And don't be late for the exam!
- Eat a good healthy breakfast. If you have difficulty eating in the morning or feel too anxious, try to eat something small (e.g., yogurt, an apple). You don't want to be distracted by hunger in the middle of the exam!
- Review your notes. Do not study new material.
- If you are feeling anxious, get some fresh air and exercise, if you can.
- Go to the bathroom. It may seem silly but often instructors will not let you take bathroom breaks during an exam - so go before!
- Take your time and pace yourself. If you do not know the answer to a question, move on and go back to the question later.
- Answer the questions you know the answers to first. That way, if you're short on time, you've at least answered all of the questions you know.
- Don't second-guess yourself. Often your first idea is the right one.



The image features a vibrant red background with large, overlapping white shapes that resemble stylized circles or organic forms. The text 'HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS' is centered horizontally and partially overlaps the white shapes. The words 'HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS' are written in a bold, sans-serif font. 'HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS' is in white, while 'IPS' is in red, matching the background color.

**HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS**

Going to a college/university will put you into a whole new environment. You will have an opportunity to make new friends – some of whom you may have for life! Remember that electronic “friends” can’t take the place of “face-to-face” friends.

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## TIPS ON MAKING FRIENDS

- Introduce yourself
  - Be open to new experiences
  - Stay sober enough at parties
  - Show up early to class and chat to make good conversation!
  - Invite someone to go for coffee with you
  - Be interested in the lives of others
  - Join a sports team or club
  - Get a job or volunteer
- 
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## YOUR PARENTS

As you get older, the way you relate to your parents changes. You’re no longer fully dependent on them for food, shelter, safety, or guidance. These changes can be hard on your parents and hard on you. It’s easy to get frustrated and feel like they’re trying to be too involved in your new life. Your increased independence means that you don’t need your parents as much as you used to and it’s not always easy for them to let go. Try to keep the lines of communication open while you assert your independence. Your parents need to feel like they’re still an important part of your life.

## DATING

If you are interested in dating, this may be the easiest time of your life to meet people. Go for it and have fun! Relationships can be simple, fun, complex, problematic, and more! Be sure you think things through before you leap. Decide on what is best for you and be honest about that to others.



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## THE DREADED BREAKUP

Breakups hurt but we all have to go through them in life. Some breakups are mutual, while other times we may get outright dumped. Either way they can totally hurt.

## Tips to get over a breakup

- Cut off intimate contact with your ex - sex with the ex can just prolong the pain.
- Don't rush into a new rebound relationship. Give yourself time to deal with your feelings, instead of distracting yourself with someone else.
- Talk to your friends.
- Write down your feelings.
- Stay busy with new and healthy activities and hobbies that boost your self-confidence.

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## ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Abusive relationships occur when one partner controls the other partner with violence, intimidation, and/or threats. Although movies and television paint the picture that abuse only happens to meek submissive women at the hands of aggressive men, the reality is that abuse is not determined by gender, sexual orientation, or personality type. Abuse can take many forms, and although physical abuse probably gets the most media attention, abusive relationships may involve financial, emotional, or sexual abuse. Abusive relationships don't happen overnight. At first, the signs may be subtle and you may hope the relationship will improve over time but frequently, these relationships worsen and become more abusive over time.

## Forms of abuse

- **Emotional Abuse.** Emotional abuse includes the use of constant criticism, insults, threats, and intimidation to isolate the abused partner and make him or her afraid to leave the relationship or seek help.
  - **Sexual Abuse.** Sexual abuse includes any kind of forced sexual act, ranging from sexual touching to forcible intercourse (rape). Some people believe that you can't be raped by someone you are in a relationship with; this is not true. If you don't agree to have sex, it's rape; no matter who the person is.
  - **Physical Abuse.** Physical abuse includes any kind of bodily assault (e.g., punching, kicking) or assault with an object (e.g., gun, knife, baseball bat), intended to cause physical harm.
  - **Financial Abuse.** Financial abuse includes limiting access to financial resources (e.g., cash, bank accounts, credit cards), even resources that may be legally the sole property of the person being abused.
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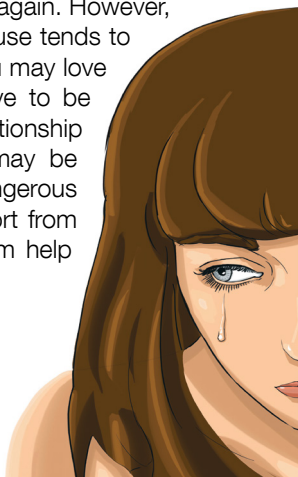
## Warning signs of abuse

- Your partner displays violent behaviours and may yell at you, push you, or hit you.
- Your partner isolates you, limiting your time with family and friends.
- Your partner is very jealous and accuses you of things you did not do.
- Your partner tries to control many or all aspects of your life (e.g., your decisions, your finances, your clothes, your friends, etc.)

- ➔ Your partner demands that you have sex, even if you say no.
  - ➔ Your partner threatens to hurt themselves, you, or your friends/family if you do not do what they want.
  - ➔ Your partner blames you for their actions or their misfortunes.
  - ➔ Your partner uses intimidation to make you feel afraid.
  - ➔ Your partner criticizes you to force you to think, feel, or behave in the way they want you to.
  - ➔ Your partner calls you names and ridicules you, alone or in front of others.
  - ➔ Your partner demeans or humiliates you in front of others.
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## Leaving an abusive relationship

Making the decision to leave an abusive relationship can be really difficult. Your partner may apologize and promise you that the abuse won't happen again. However, the opposite is usually true; abuse tends to worsen over time. Although you may love your partner, you don't deserve to be abused. Leaving an abusive relationship may not only be difficult, it may be dangerous – but it's more dangerous to stay. You need to get support from friends or family and have them help you leave quickly and safely.



## Tips to get out of an abusive relationship if you are living together:

- Contact a local domestic violence shelter. They will be able to help you prepare a plan to safely get out.
  - Make sure you prepare a safety plan; know the best time to leave (when the abuser is not home).
  - Have a friend or family member with you and make sure someone knows where you are at all times.
  - Store important documents in a safe place so you can grab them quickly when you need to leave.
  - Prepare an emergency suitcase with everything you may need.
  - Know exactly where you are going and how to get there.
  - Call the police to help you if you are concerned about violence.
  - Warn your friends and family not to give out information about you. The abuser may threaten them or harass them to try to find you.
  - Be aware that the abuser might have access to your e-mail and banking information, so change all passwords and notify your bank. Change your phone number and do not list it.
  - Shut down easily accessible social media, such as Facebook.
- 

If you break up with an abusive partner and are living in residence or on-campus, **it is very important to let residence security know if you fear for your safety.** It might be hard to tell people what has happened, but at the very least, the people in your life should know that the relationship has ended. That way, your friends or residence advisor will know not to tell your ex where you are or what you are doing. Provide campus security with their picture so they are prepared.

If you are living off campus, **make sure that your ex cannot enter your apartment**. If you don't feel comfortable telling your roommates what happened, make sure they understand that your ex is absolutely not welcome in the apartment, nor should he or she be invited to any social events. Don't let anyone make you feel guilty for ending the relationship. If you feel like you cannot get away from your ex among your group of friends, consider taking a break, a vacation, or staying somewhere else for a while. You can also consider a peace bond or restraining order, which can be obtained from the court house or by contacting local police services.

**Check out:**

<http://deal.org/the-knowzone/violence/dating-violence/>





**SEXUAL HEALTH & SAFETY**

Sexuality is complicated. Our sexual experiences and preferences play an important role in our sense of self and identity. Sexuality involves intimacy, and sharing yourself and your body with another person. Whether it's a short-term fling or a long-term relationship, sex has the power to profoundly impact how we think, feel, and behave. It can affect both our mental and physical health. It can also affect numerous moral, personal, family, social, and religious parameters – it is an important component of how you live your life.

Sex can and should be a healthy and fun experience. If it's something you want to try, then you should think about what kind of sex you are comfortable with, who you want to share your mind and body with, and what your boundaries are.

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## HOOKING UP (THE ONE NIGHT STAND)

- ➔ Does this person respect you? Do you respect him or her?
- ➔ Are you sober enough to make decisions? Is the other person sober enough to consent? If not, sexual activity with him or her could be considered sexual assault.
- ➔ Are you sexually attracted to this person, or are you just allowing him or her to decide what happens?
- ➔ If you live with or have a friendship with this person, how will sexual activity impact it?
- ➔ If you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, or intersex (GLBTQI), are you or the other person still 'in the closet'? If so, does that put you in a vulnerable situation?
- ➔ If a significant problem arises as a result (e.g., sexually transmitted infection or pregnancy), how are you and the other person going to deal with it?

# UNPLANNED PREGNANCY

If you find out that you are pregnant and do not want to be, you may feel overwhelmed by emotions, worries, and doubts. This is not a time for hasty decisions; you need to take some time to sort things out. Talk to people you trust, including your parents, relatives, significant other, and/or friends. Seek help from a counsellor. Make an appointment with a doctor and ensure you know about all of your options. Never let anyone force you into a decision. You are the one who has to live with the consequences of whatever you decide, so the decision must be your own.

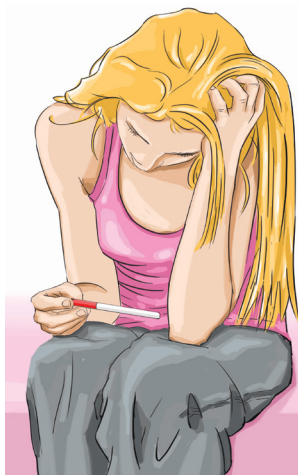
If you have just found out that your partner is pregnant, remember that you can be supportive while also being honest about your own needs.

**Remember:** If you are the one who is pregnant, no one should be forcing you into a decision about what you must do that makes you uncomfortable. If your partner and family are supportive, discuss your options with them. If not, there are counselors, doctors, and family planning nurses who can help you think things through.

## Check these out:

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-gs>

<http://sexualityandu.ca/adults>



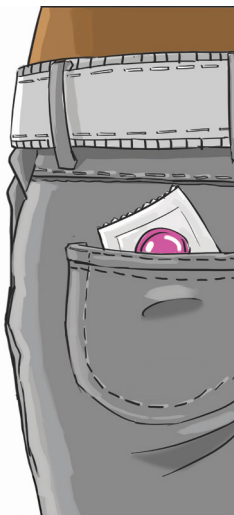
# SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

Sexually transmitted infections, or STIs, can be uncomfortable to talk about, especially if you've just met someone who could be an intimate partner. Even though it might be awkward, it's a good idea to discuss the risks with your partner and decide together how you can best protect each other. You're at higher risk for STIs over the next four to five years because they are so common among college/university students. Worrying about possible STIs while having sex can definitely ruin the moment. Remember - the other person may have anxieties about this issue, too. Getting 'the talk' over with can be a relief for both of you!

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## Tips for keeping sex safer!

- ➔ Use condoms every time you have sex. Proper condom use is the best way to protect yourself from STIs. Remember, condoms are not 100% protective.
- ➔ Visit your doctor regularly for an STI test. Although your doctor may test for some STIs (e.g., Gonorrhea, Chlamydia) during a PAP smear, this is not always routine. Make sure you explicitly ask to be tested for STIs.



- A single committed partner decreases the risk. Multiple casual partners puts you at higher risk - if you increase the number of partners, increase your safety protocol!
  - You can use flavoured condoms for oral sex and there are latex condoms specially designed for performing oral sex for women.
  - Never touch a genital sore. Genital sores are frequently the result of an STI. Infection can sometimes be carried on your hand to your partner's genitals. Mouth herpes (cold sores) can be transmitted to the genitals during oral sex or vice versa.
  - If you use sex toys, don't share them unless you use condoms on them or wash them first (as per instructions on the box).
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### Remember:

Many sexually-transmitted infections can be asymptomatic, which means that you can be infected without having symptoms. Make sure you get tested regularly and make sure your partner does, too!

### Check out:

[www.sexualityandu.ca](http://www.sexualityandu.ca)

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## SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual assault is not about sex. It is an act of violence against another person. There are many different types of sexual violence – Rape is an extreme form of sexual violence. You can experience sexual violence without being raped.

### Non-Physical forms of sexual harassment:

Threats, sexual suggestiveness, blackmail, intimidation, and exhibitionism

### Physical forms of sexual assault:

Any oral sex, fondling, or intercourse that occurs without consent. They may involve physical assault, such as hitting, choking, and/or being held down. Being spit on by a partner is also considered physical assault by police. If you are unable to consent to sex because you are passed out or highly intoxicated, it is sexual assault.

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### Have you been raped or sexually assaulted?

- Go to a safe place.
- Call someone you trust immediately.
- Do not change your clothes.
- Do not wash or shower, as much as you may feel like you need to.
- Contact the police (**call 911**).
- Contact your local rape crisis centre.



**MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS**

There are many types of mental disorders that may begin for the first time between ages 15 and 25. In this booklet, we discuss only a few of them.

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## STRESS TIPS

Everyday stress can be good for you! Successfully dealing with stress leads to learning, better coping skills, and success. Nobody can live a stress free life, so don't try! Learn to deal with stress. Here are some tips to help with that.

- **Get active.** Thirty or more minutes of vigorous exercise every day – your choice! Exercise is good for your body and for your brain.
- **Sleep.** Nine hours of sleep per night helps combat stress, improves your ability to learn, and helps fight viruses – so make sure you get enough!
- **Eat well.** A healthy diet is what your brain and body need. Supplements are usually not necessary.
- **Get organized.** Use a daily scheduler. Check it every morning. Being prepared for what you need to do translates into less stress.
- **Build healthy relationships.** Make and keep good friends. They can be a great help when times get tough.
- **Moderation.** Alcohol and other legal drugs in moderation. That includes caffeine.





# DEPRESSION

How do I know if I'm depressed or if I'm just having a bad day? Everyone has bad days. It's perfectly normal to feel low when something bad happens (e.g., you break up with your boyfriend/girlfriend or fail an exam). If your low mood persists over a long period of time, however, and starts affecting your ability to succeed in your daily life (or is making you feel that life is not worth living), you may be experiencing clinical depression.

If you think you, or a friend, may be depressed, it's a good idea to make an appointment with your school, health clinic or counseling office to get help.

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## 10 Signs of depression

- **Sad, low, blah, or irritable mood.** A persistent and intense feeling of sadness.
- **Feeling of worthlessness.** Harsh self judgment; blaming yourself.
- **Changes in sleeping patterns.** Not being able to sleep well when tired or sleeping most of the time.
- **Appetite way down.** Food is of little interest; can't be bothered to eat.
- **No energy.** Very tired most of the time.
- **Unable to concentrate.** Keeping your mind "on task" or making everyday decisions becomes difficult.
- **Loss of interest.** Can't be bothered; bored very easily.
- **Loss of pleasure.** Things you usually enjoy are not fun anymore.
- **Feelings of helplessness or hopelessness.** Feeling or thinking that everything is bad and that it won't get better.

➔ **Thinking about suicide or hurting yourself.** At this point, seek help immediately. Tell someone you trust and/or go to the emergency room.

If you are feeling low, make sure you are following the STRESS TIPS on [page 26](#). If, in spite of your best efforts, you continue to feel low, DO NOT tell yourself it's hopeless; you have not failed! Visit the student health clinic or the student counselling office to get help. There are many good treatments for Depression that can help you feel better soon!

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## Tips for helping your friend

If you think your friend may be depressed or suicidal, go with him or her to the student counselling office. Let him or her know you care. It's okay to ask your friend if he or she is feeling suicidal; you won't put the idea in his or her head.

### Check these out:

[www.teenmentalhealth.org](http://www.teenmentalhealth.org)

[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

[www.keltymentalhealth.ca](http://www.keltymentalhealth.ca)



# UNDERSTAND ANXIETY DISORDERS

It is perfectly normal to feel anxious sometimes. A little bit of anxiety is a good thing and can help us succeed (i.e., a little bit of anxiety about an exam makes you study harder and perform better). Too much anxiety, however, can affect our judgment and our ability to make even simple decisions. Although there are times when high levels of anxiety are totally normal (e.g., dangling off the ledge of a 10-story building), some people's bodies make them feel this way when they're not in any danger. When this anxiety starts interfering with your ability to live a normal life, it's considered an Anxiety Disorder. Although they cause a lot of problems, Anxiety Disorders are one of the most common and most treatable mental disorders.

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## Tips to cope with an anxiety disorder

Whether you are experiencing normal anxiety or you have an Anxiety Disorder, the STRESS TIPS on [page 26](#) can be helpful.

If you have an Anxiety Disorder, you will likely benefit from a proven treatment. You can get that at your student health service or counselling office. Panic Disorder and Social Anxiety Disorder are the most common types of Anxiety Disorders experienced by students in college or university. If you are having panic attacks, are worrying excessively, or are having intense anxiety in social situations, you may be developing an Anxiety Disorder. Go get it checked out. You have nothing to lose and a life with less anxiety to gain.

## How to help a friend

People who struggle with anxiety disorders need more than just counselling and medication; they need supportive friends like you.

### Check these out:

[www.teenmentalhealth.org](http://www.teenmentalhealth.org)

[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

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## BE AWARE OF EATING DISORDERS

There are three main types of eating disorders:

### Anorexia Nervosa (AN)

Characterized by intense fear of gaining weight, skewed perception of body weight/shape, and severe weight loss due to intentional starvation, extreme dieting, excessive exercise, or purging (e.g., vomiting).

### Bulimia Nervosa (BN)

Characterized by frequent binge eating followed by purging behaviour, most commonly self-induced vomiting.

### EDNOS (Eating Disorder Not Otherwise Specified)

Eating disorder that does not meet the full criteria of AN or BN. One example is Binge Eating Disorder, which is characterized by episodes of compulsive overeating, but without the purging behaviour that accompanies binge eating in BN.

## Some secrets kill!!

Anorexia Nervosa has the highest mortality rate of all mental illnesses and all eating disorders have serious physical and emotional consequences.

Eating disorders are complicated and require professional treatment. Treatment usually includes many different components, including psychotherapy, medication, and nutritional counseling.

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## I have an eating disorder—what do I do?

If you are struggling with an eating disorder, you are not alone! There's nothing shameful about asking for help. If you feel comfortable, consider telling a friend or someone else you trust first. Seeking professional help can be a huge step. Having someone you trust with you for support will make it easier. Your family doctor, psychologist, or school health/counseling centre are excellent resources. There, a trained professional will be able to help you take steps toward your recovery.

## How to help a friend

If you suspect your friend has an eating disorder, you should encourage him or her to seek professional help. Remember that people with eating disorders often don't realize the severity of their problem, so your friend may not be receptive to your help. He or she may even get angry with you. This doesn't mean he or she doesn't need your help. Try to get your friend to open up and talk about his or her feelings, but don't focus the discussion around food or support their eating patterns. Let your friend know you are concerned without forcing anything on him or her or laying blame.

### Check these out:

[www.nationaleatingdisorders.org](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org)

[www.keltymentalhealth.ca](http://www.keltymentalhealth.ca)

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## DRUGS & ALCOHOL, KNOW THE RISKS

The point of this section isn't to tell you not to use drugs or not to get drunk. You made it into college or university, you're smart. You know that the decision is yours and reading "don't do drugs" won't make a bit of difference. So our intention here is just to give you some information. It's up to you what you do with it.



## How to reduce your risks

- It's never safe to use hard drugs (e.g., cocaine, heroin, crack, crystal meth).
  - If you do use drugs like alcohol or marijuana, use them only in moderation and within the limits of the law.
  - People who pressure you to use drugs/alcohol when you don't want to are not your friends. If you don't want to use drugs and alcohol - don't!
  - Never drive after drinking or using drugs and don't get into a car with a driver who has been drinking or taking drugs.
  - If you are using drugs/alcohol more days than not, or if you are having financial, personal or school problems while using drugs/alcohol, you may have a problem. Remember that using drugs/alcohol decreases your inhibitions, and may increase your risk for difficulties.
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## Signs of a drug overdose

- Loss of consciousness which can lead to a coma
- Chest pain
- Heavy sweating
- Delusions and/or hallucinations
- Faster breathing
- Seizures or uncontrollable twitching
- Overheating
- Racing or irregular heartbeat
- Cold or pale skin

*Call 911 immediately!*

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# ALCOHOL

The effects of alcohol on your body vary, depending on your age, gender, weight, metabolism, tolerance, and the number of drinks you've had. Following the tips below and making an effort to drink responsibly can help prevent your drinking from becoming a problem.



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## Tips to keep in mind

- **Eat before drinking.** Food slows down alcohol absorption.
- **Safe consumption.** You should generally have no more than two drinks a day.
- **Know when to stop.** If you are at a party and have had more than a few drinks and are starting to feel woozy, you likely have had too much. Time to stop.
- **If you're on medication, don't drink alcohol.** Some prescription drugs or even over-the-counter drugs can be harmful, or even deadly, when mixed with alcohol.
- **Stay safe.** If you feel you've had too much and are not in control of yourself - get somewhere safe. You don't want someone to take advantage of you.



- **Don't drive.** Four Canadians are killed every day due to impaired driving. Call a cab or grab a ride with someone who hasn't been drinking. (For more information visit [www.madd.ca](http://www.madd.ca).)
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## Signs of alcohol poisoning

- Loss of consciousness
- Vomiting
- Slow or irregular heartbeat
- Seizure
- Low body temperature
- Pale or bluish skin

### What do I do if I think someone has alcohol poisoning?

Know that a person who has passed out may die.

**Call 911 immediately!**

### Check these out:

[www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov](http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov)

[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca)

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## GUIDELINES FOR SAFER GAMBLING

Many people are able to gamble without experiencing problems. An increasing number of students, however, are going to casinos and gambling online in hopes to win big and pay their way through school. This can lead to major debt. If you are gambling and have the following warning signs, you may have a gambling problem. Get help before it gets out of hand.

## Warning signs

- Ongoing money problems associated with gambling.
  - Constantly borrowing from friends & avoiding those owed money.
  - Acting secretive or deceitful about gambling.
  - Social withdrawal due to gambling.
  - Missed commitments due to gambling.
  - Relationship problems.
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## UNDERSTAND SUICIDE

Suicide should always be taken seriously, as it is one of the leading causes of death among young people. If you hear someone talking about suicide, it may be a cry for help and it is important to take it seriously.

If you are feeling suicidal, you need to seek professional help immediately. You may feel like you're alone and that things will never get better, but there are people who can help. Talk to your doctor or a counsellor at your student health clinic.

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## Why would someone choose suicide?

People often choose suicide because their problems feel so overwhelming that it can seem like there is no way out.

Each person's reason for choosing suicide may be different. Most young people who die by suicide suffer from a mental disorder, such as depression.

## Warning signs

- Suicidal thoughts or plans
  - Preoccupation with death
  - Talk about what it will be like when they're gone
  - Withdrawal from family and friends
  - Intense hopelessness or sadness
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## I think my friend is suicidal

If you think someone is suicidal, it is important that you listen and take him or her seriously. Your friend needs to know that you care and that it matters to you whether he or she lives or dies. Accept that your friend's feelings are very real, even if they don't make sense to you. Encourage your friend to see a counsellor or doctor. If he or she needs immediate help, **call 911** or take your friend to the emergency room.

### Check this out:

<http://teenmentalhealth.org/live/suicide/>



## GETTING HELP

Sometimes things will not be going well and sometimes it can be hard to differentiate between a difficult time that you will be able to slog through and a difficult time that you will likely need help during. (For example, a situation in which you would benefit from speaking to a counselor can be really helpful and don't hesitate to ask for that help.) If you are not sure about what to do calling Kids Help Phone (its not just for Kids) and speaking to a counselor there can help you make the decision. Their number is: [1-800-668-6868](tel:1-800-668-6868)

Sometimes, it can be difficult to differentiate if you are experiencing something more challenging; for instance, a mental health problem or a mental disorder. For something like that you may need to get help from a health professional such as a: doctor; nurse; psychologist. If you are thinking or feeling that your situation is overwhelming or if you are having thoughts about harming yourself or others, you should go to the nearest emergency room right away. If you have a friend who can go with you don't hesitate to ask them to do that. Their support may be a big help. Here are a few questions to ask yourself if you are concerned. If you answer yes to one of these it would be a good idea to visit your family doctor or your student health service and share your concerns.

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IF IN DOUBT ABOUT NEEDING HELP, DON'T WAIT.  
PICK UP THE PHONE AND CALL:

[1-800-668-6868](tel:1-800-668-6868)

## Should I go to my student health services with my concerns? Questions to ask myself:

- Have I been feeling really out of sorts emotionally for over two weeks, most of the time each day? And I can't really get feeling better in spite of what I try to do.
- Have I begun to let my school work slip (missing classes, not doing my studying) because of how I have been feeling?
- Have I been using alcohol or drugs more than others are using them or have I begun using alcohol or drugs to "help" me with how I am feeling or to take my mind off my problems?
- Have my friends or family members been telling me that they are concerned about how I am doing?
- Have I cut down on my social life and my contacts with friends and family because of how I am feeling?
- Am I experiencing any of the following: thoughts of hopelessness or that life is not worth living; hearing voices when others are not hearing anything; thinking that people are wanting to harm me in some way, or are against me for some reason; feelings of despair; feelings of intense anxiety or panic for no reason; fatigue or numerous aches and pains (such as headaches) that seem to go along with my emotional difficulties?
- Am I having problems with my emotions, behavior or thinking that I have had help for in the past but that are now re-emerging?

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If you answered **YES** to one or more of the questions above, please make an appointment to visit the Student Health Services or your family physician as soon as possible. Let the person you talk to know about what is concerning you. Remember, if you are concerned that you may harm

yourself or someone else, please go immediately to your nearest hospital emergency room and let the staff there know what is happening.

If you have a friend you are concerned about, talk to them about your concerns and go with them to where you think they may be helped most. Feel free to share this information with them.

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**iStore App**

Transitions by [TeenMentalHealth.org](http://TeenMentalHealth.org)



**iBook**

Transitions by [TeenMentalHealth.org](http://TeenMentalHealth.org)

A detailed version of Transitions is also available at:  
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95%  
like the materials

40%  
discussed them with a friend

16%  
sought help for mental illnesses  
because of what they learned