



A Student Wellness Guide

for Identifying and Responding to Student Distress

This guide is an updated, revised, and expanded version of the Garnet Guide for Faculty and Staff: Identifying and Responding to Student Distress. Please note that this is a living document and that some information may change due to the pandemic. Please e-mail navigatemta@mta.ca should you have any updates, additions, or questions about this guide.

Note: This Student Wellness Guide is not a substitute for professional advice or treatment. If you feel you may need medical advice, please consult a qualified healthcare professional.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to Navigate MtA

Navigate MtA Student Wellness Program is the student resource for mental health and wellness information and initiatives at Mount Allison University.

In collaboration with the Mental Health/Harm Reduction Educator, Mindful Mentors are students who navigate, educate, and promote student wellness on campus.

The goal of the program is to take a proactive, collaborative approach to enhance the knowledge of mental health and wellness supports available to students and promote help-seeking behavior amongst students by reducing obstacles to using resources and increasing awareness of Wellness Centre services.

The services provided help students create and maintain a foundation of wellness during their post-secondary years. Weekly outreach booths will be established across campus and will keep current with resource material to meet the needs of students as well as present an opportunity to hear from students. Navigate MtA will also promote wellness through Soothe Your Soul sessions.

Navigate MtA Student Wellness Program is for all students at Mount Allison University to utilize at any stage during your time at Mount Allison. If you are interested in more information or requesting an outreach booth in a certain area on campus or resource material please e-mail navigatemta@mta.ca.

Chapter 2: 24/7 Support

CHIMO Helpline — 1-800-667-5005 <http://www.chimohelpline.ca/>

CHIMO is a provincial crisis phone line, accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and is free to all residents of New Brunswick. CHIMO helpline can provide a listening ear, helpful information, crisis intervention, and referrals to resources in the Province of NB. They are confidential, non-judgmental, and supportive.

Kids Help Phone Counsellors — 1-800-668-6868 <https://kidshelpphone.ca/>

Whether by phone, text, mobile app, or through our website, you can connect whenever you want; however you want. Text 686868.

The Hope for Wellness Help Line — 1-855-242-3310 <https://www.hopeforwellness.ca/>

The Hope for Wellness Help Line offers immediate mental health counselling and crisis intervention to all Indigenous peoples across Canada. Or use the chat box to connect with a counsellor online.

Trans Lifeline – 1-877-330-6366 <https://www.translifeline.org/>

Trans Lifeline is a trans-led organization that connects trans people to the community, support, and resources they need to survive and thrive.

Addiction and Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team

Addiction and Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team is a group of trained mental health social workers who provide timely and well-coordinated responses to people who are experiencing a mental health crisis and who requires assessment or intervention.

Region: Moncton (they do provide service to Sackville)

Telephone: **1-866-771-7760**

Hours of Operation: **Sunday to Sunday 12 p.m. to 10 p.m.**

They are now in partnership with CHIMO helpline, if a call is not answered by the mobile crisis team.

Mount Allison University Security

Telephone: **(506) 364-2228**

IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY: CALL 911

Chapter 3: Mental Health and Wellness Resources at MtA

Student of Concern

A Student of Concern Case Team supports students who may be struggling with their mental health. The team convenes to suggest strategies and supports for students when they need it most. E-mail studentofconcern@mta.ca

Counselling

We have two wonderful full-time counsellors who are offering virtual sessions on Zoom or by phone. These sessions can be by appointment or during the Virtual Walk in counselling hours.

Virtual Walk in counselling will be offered every week during the Fall 2020 semester on Monday and Tuesday 1-4 p.m. and Thursday 5-8 p.m. These same day appointments are 20-30 minute solution-focused single sessions. E-mail wellness@mta.ca.

Psychiatrist

Mount Allison University offers a psychiatry clinic. For information on how to get a referral, please contact Anne Comfort acomfort@mta.ca

Psychologist

There are psychologists in private practice offering services to Mount Allison students on a fee-for-service basis. They offer psychological assessments, mental health diagnoses, and psychotherapy.

Mental Health/Harm Reduction Educator

- o **Zen Den Sessions** — The Zen Den offers you an opportunity to unplug and de-stress in a relaxing environment with mindfulness activities. This service is free to all Mount Allison students.
- o **Self-care/Wellness Planning** — S.M.A.R.T. Thinking! is a healthy mind and body plan to optimize student wellness. This service is free to all Mount Allison students.
- o **Soothe Your Soul Sessions** — During these sessions we will provide an opportunity to check-in with one another, discuss relaxation strategies, mindfulness, and self-care, in order to start building a community of care. These workshops are free and open to all Mount Allison students. These sessions are offered regularly throughout the school year as well as upon request from the mental health/harm reduction educator and counsellors.
- o **Outreach Booths** — Outreach booths will be established across campus. The booths will keep current with resource material to meet the needs of students , as well as provide an opportunity to hear from students.

E-mail wellness@mta.ca to inquire about any of the above services.

Alternative Supports

o Happy Lights

Provides bright light therapy that can be helpful for a person suffering from depression, seasonal affective disorder (SAD), fatigue, sleep disorders, or just the “winter blues.” Students can borrow them free of charge from the Wellness Centre.

o Massage Therapy

Provides a number of benefits, including reducing stress, creating a feeling of well-being, and reducing levels of anxiety. This service has a fee. Available by appointment.

o Acupressure

Can encourage natural healing, improve mood and energy, reduce or relieve pain, and improve function to affected areas of the body. This service has a fee. Available by appointment.

Harm Reduction

Be kind to your mind, manage your risks. A tip a day can help in a harm reduction way.

Keeping you informed with substance use harm reduction information. harmreduction@mta.ca

STUDENT GROUPS

Navigate MtA Student Wellness Program

The Student Wellness Program is the student resource for mental health and wellness information and initiatives at Mount Allison University. It promotes help-seeking behavior amongst students by reducing obstacles to using resources and increases awareness of Wellness Centre services. In collaboration with the Mental Health/Harm Reduction Educator, Mindful Mentors are students who navigate, educate, and promote student wellness on campus. Contact navigatemt@mta.ca for more information.

Jack.org

Jack.org is the only national network of young leaders transforming the way people think about mental health. With initiatives and programs designed for young people, by young people, their goal is to end stigma in our generation. The Jack.org programs are designed to reach all young people. With monthly events and campaigns, the Mount Allison chapter encourages and enables students to better care for themselves and support their peers. <https://www.facebook.com/jackdotorgmta/>

Instagram: [@jack.orgmta](https://www.instagram.com/jack.orgmta) E-mail: thejackproject@mta.ca

Change Your Mind

The goal of this student group is to promote mental health and decrease the stigma attached to mental illness at Mount Allison. Its mission is “to transform our campus into an extremely open and welcoming space to talk about mental health, its benefits, its importance, and what you can do to nurture it.” <https://www.facebook.com/CYMmountallison/>

Instagram: [@mtachangeyourmind](https://www.instagram.com/mtachangeyourmind)

ACID

ACID stands for the Association of Chronically Ill and Disabled students. The goal of this club is to promote a safe, fun, and friendly environment for everyone at MtA and in the Sackville community. ACID is a phenomenal way to connect with other students on campus, advocate for disability support at MtA and in the community, and enjoy some fun times with friends!

<https://www.acidmta.com/> Instagram: [@acidmta](https://www.instagram.com/acidmta)

SAMHI

The Student Athlete Mental Health Initiative, or SAMHI, is a group of volunteer student-athletes at MtA dedicated to raising mental health awareness, sharing resources, and eliminating stigma within the community of student athletes at Mount Allison.

<https://www.facebook.com/samhimita/> Instagram: [@samhi_mounties](https://www.instagram.com/samhi_mounties)

Chapter 4: Professional Supports Explained

Mental Health/Harm Reduction Educator

The Mental Health/Harm Reduction Educator works towards the development of mental health and harm reduction programming at Mount Allison University. This position develops and implements, across the University, new programming and outreach efforts to further the progress of mental health literacy and harm reduction education and awareness on campus. mbrewer@mta.ca

Student Development Counsellors

Student Development Counsellors provide guidance for a number of issues, including, but not limited to, clinical depression, anxiety, family issues/dynamics, relationship concerns, stress surrounding school, substance abuse, suicidal thoughts, sexual/relational violence, and strategies for self-care. They provide an open, supportive environment where you can share your concerns confidentially. counsellor@mta.ca

Psychologists

Licensed clinical psychologists with PhDs in psychology, these are mental health professionals, trained to assess and diagnose problems in thinking, emotion, and behavior. They address more severe and longer-term mental health issues — equipped to deal with eating disorders, complex mental health issues, and trauma. They work on a fee-for-service basis, but some fees are covered under the MASU insurance plan.

Psychiatrists

Psychiatrists are medical doctors who are able to diagnose and treat medical disorders, including prescription medication. Talk to your doctor (or a Wellness Centre doctor) and they will let you know if you need to see a psychiatrist.

Chapter 5: Mental Health 101

Adapted from Jack.org

Mental Health Defined

Mental health, like physical health, is a key component of what makes us well. We can think of mental health like we think of physical health. Physical health refers to our bodies, mental health refers to our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.

Mental health is often thought of as only being applicable to the one in five people who experience mental illness, but that's not the case.

The reality is that five in five people have mental health. We ALL have mental health.

Mental Health Spectrum

Both our physical and mental health vary along a spectrum. We are just more used to talking about our physical health this way. For example, with our physical health there are times when issues may be less critical, and you would treat any ailments yourself (e.g. if you had a headache). But there are also more dire times when you need to seek professional help (e.g. if you had a severe migraine for days on end).

Healthy — This is a state of optimal health. Everything is in optimal shape with your body, mind, behaviours, and attitudes.

Stress — This is when you may need a little extra self-care.

- Physical Health: Maybe you have a headache. Try drinking more water or getting a little extra sleep to take care of yourself.
- Mental Health: You might be feeling stressed and anxious about an exam you thought was later this week, but you realized it is tomorrow. Take a deep breath and create a to-do list.

Struggling — This is when your problem or concern becomes more intense, long lasting, and is having a notable impact on your everyday life.

- Physical Health: Maybe you've broken your ankle playing basketball and can no longer walk. You need to see a professional or care provider.
- Mental Health: Maybe you've been feeling depressed and hopeless for the past few weeks and have stopped attending class and/or participating in extracurricular activities. This is when you should seek extra support from a professional or care provider.

Crisis — This is when your health issue has escalated to a place of emergency where immediate care is needed.

- Physical Health: Maybe you've been hit by a car on your way home. You need to get to the hospital and get immediate care.
- Mental Health: Maybe your having thoughts of suicide and or/self-harm. You need to see a professional or care provider immediately.

How to Identify a Concern

With or without a mental illness, it can be quite difficult to recognize when mental distress has become too severe for us to look after on our own.

Mental distress can be recognized as a serious concern whenever we or someone we know experiences negative thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that have become intense, long-lasting, and are beginning to have a big impact on our lives.

This framework is a helpful tool to use when we are trying to assess the severity of the thoughts, feelings, and behaviours we might be experiencing:

Are they intense?

These aren't mild, everyday fluctuations. They're stronger and more persistent thoughts, feelings, and behaviours than the usual ups and downs of life.

Are they long-lasting?

They are having a consistent or lingering presence over weeks, months, or longer.

Many professionals suggest that anything that has lasted two weeks or longer can be cause for concern.

Are they having a big impact?

They are beginning to have negative consequences in one's life, possibly interfering with someone's ability to function and/or meet their everyday goals.

"When should I get help?" – Questions to Ask Yourself

This resource is powered by [TeenMentalHealth.org](https://teenmentalhealth.org). Check out their website for more information and resources.

Information adapted from: <https://jack.org/Resources/Learn/When-should-I-get-help>

Sometimes, it can be difficult to identify what you are struggling with. Speaking to a professional such as a doctor or counselor can help to identify if you are experiencing serious mental distress or mental illness. They can help support you and find you resources.

Questions to Ask Yourself

- Have I been feeling out of sorts emotionally for over two weeks, most of the time each day?
Does it seem like I'm not getting better?
- Have I begun to let my schoolwork slip (missing classes, not doing my studying) because of how I have been feeling?
- Have my friends or family members been telling me that they are concerned about me?
- Have I cut down on my social life and my contacts with friends and family because of how I am feeling?
- 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?
- 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?
- 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?

If you answered YES to one or more of the questions above, please make an appointment with the Wellness Centre or your family physician as soon as possible. Let the person you talk to know about your concerns.

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.

REMINDER: This is not a checklist nor a diagnostic tool. Presenting some of the symptoms above does not mean someone has a mental health disorder.

What can you do to take care of your mental health?

Information adapted from: <https://cmhanb.ca/documents/mental-health-for-life/>

Build Confidence — Identify your abilities and weaknesses together, accept them, build on your abilities, and do the best with what you have.

Eat Right, Keep Fit — A balanced diet, exercise, and rest can help you to reduce stress and enjoy life.

Make Time for Family and Friends — Important relationships need to be nurtured. Don't take these bonds for granted. Relationships often change in the beginning of university due to new distances and dynamics. This can sometimes be difficult, but change is part of life and is in some ways a positive thing.

Give and Accept Support — Positive friends and healthy family relationships show their strength during difficult times.

Create a Meaningful Budget — Financial concerns can cause stress. Looking at your situation and creating a plan can help. Learning to prioritize spending can be a difficult learning curve, but is an important part of budgeting and planning.

Volunteer — Being involved in community gives a special sense of purpose and satisfaction.

Manage Stress — We all have stress in our lives, but learning how to deal with it when it threatens to overwhelm us helps to maintain our mental health.

Find Strength in Numbers — Sharing a problem with others who have had similar experiences may help you find a solution and will make you feel less isolated.

Identify and Deal with Moods — We all need to find safe and constructive ways to express our feelings of anger, sadness, joy, and fear.

Learn to Be at Peace with Yourself — Get to know who you are, what makes you really happy, and learn to balance what you can and cannot change about yourself.

Chapter 6: How to Be There for Someone — Be There by Jack.org

“Be There Basics” will help you learn to recognize when someone might be struggling with their mental health and gives you Five Golden Rules to help you support and be there for them.

<https://bethere.org/Be-There-Basics>

It is important to talk to the person if you are concerned that they might be struggling with their mental health. Describe the changes you’ve noticed in them and tell them why you’re worried.

<https://bethere.org/Say-What-You-See>

Chapter 7: Wellness and Self-Care Planning

S.M.A.R.T. Thinking! is a healthy mind and body plan to optimize student wellness.

https://fountainofhealth.ca/sites/default/files/smart_thinking_student_wellness_plan_2.pdf

Now, more than ever, we need to prioritize our mental health. The Canadian Mental Health Association came together with their Wellness Partner, Medicine Shoppe Canada, to bring you a self-care toolkit filled with tools to help you feel great.

[https://assets.donordrive.com/cmha/files/Scms\\$/100/1378.pdf](https://assets.donordrive.com/cmha/files/Scms$/100/1378.pdf)

Book a wellness planning session with the mental health/harm reduction educator by e-mailing: wellness@mta.ca

Chapter 8: Other MtA Student Resources

WELLNESS CENTRE

Lower Level — Wallace McCain Student Centre

- Health Services
- Mental Health Services

Contact: (506) 364-2163

or e-mail: wellness@mta.ca

MEIGHEN CENTRE/ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

3rd floor — Wallace McCain Student Centre

Drop in, or book an appointment by e-mail:

accessibility@mta.ca

INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUPPORT

Student Centre, Room 291

Contact Patty Musgrave: (506) 364-2127

or e-mail: indigenous@mta.ca

FIRST GENERATION STUDENT SUPPORT

The Help Hub, Library M16

Contact Dr. Shelly Colette: academicsupport@mta.ca

BLACK STUDENT ADVISOR

Student Centre, 2nd floor

Contact Ivan Okello: (506) 364-2227

or e-mail: bsa@mta.ca

REGISTRAR

Student Centre, 2nd floor

Book an appointment online: <https://www.mta.ca/advising/>

FINANCIAL AID

Book an appointment online: <https://www.mta.ca/financialaid/>

STUDENT LIFE OFFICE

506-364-2255

studentlife@mta.ca

HARM REDUCTION

<https://www.mta.ca/studentwellness/cannabis/>

harmreduction@mta.ca

Chapter 9: External Mental Health and Wellness Resources

- [Campus WELL by Student Health 101](#) is an online health and wellness magazine designed for university students. It updates throughout the year with new articles every Wednesday. Articles cover a range of topics, including recipes, fitness, sleep, and more.
- [Transitions by Teen Mental Health.org](#) is an online resource for students transitioning to post-secondary. It covers topics such as academics, health, identity, community, and getting help.
- [Jack.org](#) is a group of young leaders focusing on mental health and wellness. Through Do Something, Jack Talks, Jack Chapters and Jack Summits, members identify and aim to remove barriers to positive mental health.
- [Wellness Together Canada: Mental Health and Substance Use Support](#) helps you create a mental wellness plan. You can complete self-assessments every two weeks to track your mood, well-being, and functioning.
- [MindWell U – Mindfulness in New Brunswick](#) is a collaboration between MindWell U and the Province of New Brunswick. By signing up you have access to the 30-Day Mindfulness Challenge, the Mini MindWell Challenge, and the Studio BE programs.

COVID-19 Mental Health and Wellness External Resources

- [Jack.org Covid-19 Mental Health Resource Hub](#) is a list of external resources compiled by Jack.org. Resources include, but are not limited to, educational social media posts, educational PDFs, mental health resources for Black and Indigenous youth, self-care tips and apps, and how to get help.
- [A guide to living with worry and anxiety amidst global uncertainty](#) is a guide focused on coping with excessive worry and anxiety. It discusses the differences between different kinds of worry, when worry becomes a problem, and what to do to reduce your worry and anxiety daily.

Alcohol and Substance Use Harm Reduction Resources

• **Keep It Social**

Keep It Social is a student-led nationwide campaign that raises awareness around alcohol harms reduction, education, and awareness.

• **Postsecondary Education Partnership — Alcohol Harms (PEP-AH)**

PEP-AH is a network of universities and colleges from across Canada that have partnered with the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction to support nation-wide campus efforts to reduce the harms related to alcohol consumption. Mount Allison University is part of this partnership.

• [Wellness Together Canada: Mental Health and Substance Use Support](#)

• [Knowing your limits with alcohol: A practical guide assessing your drinking - Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction](#)

• <https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/workbook/you-and-substance-use-stuff-to-think-about-and-ways-to-make-changes>

Chapter 10: Sexual Assault Support & Counselling

Effective Nov. 12, 2020 Mount Allison has entered into an agreement with Crossroads for Women, an independent organization based in Moncton, to provide support for survivors of sexual assault or partner violence.

Mount Allison recommends that all survivors of sexual violence reach out the [Crossroads for Women](#) as their first point of contact.

Services are available at no charge to students.

The centre offers the following services and supports:

- free, confidential specialized sexual assault violence services, including crisis and long-term support
- hospital, court, and police accompaniment
- one-on-one support
- information and referrals to other community agencies

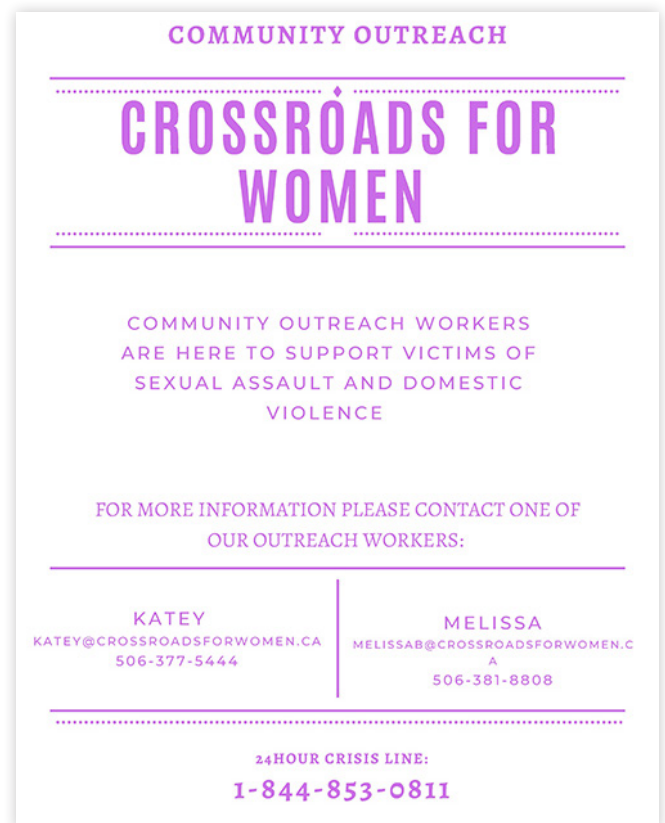
Services are available in person and through the centre's 24-hour crisis line: **1-844-853-0811**.

Counselling sessions with Crossroads are private and will not be reported back to Mount Allison.

Counselling arrangements can be made via phone or by e-mail. Mount Allison will provide space for Crossroads staff members to meet with students as required. Students can also meet with staff privately off campus.

Contact Crossroads for Women

- 24-hour crisis line: **1-844-853-0811**
- outreach@crossroadsforwomen.ca
- <https://crossroadsforwomen.ca/en/>



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

CROSSROADS FOR WOMEN

COMMUNITY OUTREACH WORKERS ARE HERE TO SUPPORT VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT ONE OF OUR OUTREACH WORKERS:

KATEY KATEY@CROSSROADSFORWOMEN.CA 506-377-5444	MELISSA MELISSAB@CROSSROADSFORWOMEN.CA A 506-381-8808
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24 HOUR CRISIS LINE:
1-844-853-0811

Chapter 10: Sexual Assault Support & Counselling

Additional resources

Other community resources available to students include:

Sexual Violence New Brunswick recognizes that all sexualized violence, regardless of sex, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation is gender-based violence.

- Helpline with 24-hour service: call collect **1-506-454-0437**
- <https://svnb.ca/en/>

South East Sexual Assault Centre (run by Crossroads for Women)

- 24-hour Sexual Assault Support Line at **1-844-853-0811**
- <https://www.sesacnb.com/contact>
- sesac.casse@crossroadsforwomen.ca

Beauséjour Family Crisis Resource Centre also serves men and male-identifying people. They do sexualized violence response and help with all other kinds of mental health crises too.

- <https://healingstartshere.ca/>
- Hours of operation: Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Office/reception line: **1-506-533-9100**

Chimo Helpline is a provincial crisis phone line, accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and free to all residents of New Brunswick.

Chimo Helpline can help you by providing a listening ear, helpful information, crisis intervention and referrals to resources in the province. They are confidential, non-judgmental, and supportive.

- **1-800-667-5005**
- <http://www.chimohelpline.ca/>

Kids Help Phone counsellors — Whether by phone, text, mobile app, or through its website, you can connect with the Kids Help Phone whenever you want; however you want.

- **1-800-668-6868**
- <https://kidshelpphone.ca/>
- Text **686868**

Chapter 11: Apps: Mental Health and Wellness

- [Calm](#) — A mental fitness app designed to help you build the strength to face life's ups and downs.
- [Mindshift](#) — Uses scientifically-proven strategies based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to help you learn to relax and be mindful, develop more effective ways of thinking, and use active steps to take charge of your anxiety.
- [Breathe](#) — A meditation app that promotes inner wellness for anxiety, stress, sleep, and more.
- [HeadSpace](#) — Learn a mindful approach — explore guided exercises, videos, and more to help you get healthier and happier.
- [Wellmind](#) — FREE — For dealing with stress, anxiety, and depression; with relaxation games, advice, and podcasts.
- [Youper](#) — FREE — Talk, track, meditate — created by clinical experts and aims to help you understand yourself, improve behavior, and relationships.
- [Self-Help Anxiety Management](#) — FREE — Create an anxiety toolkit. SAM is an app to help you understand and manage anxiety.
- [Clear Fear](#) — FREE — Anxiety management and support network creator to help you when anxiety hits.

Chapter 12: After-Hours Health

811 is available for medical advice.

If it is an emergency call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

The Sackville Memorial Hospital emergency department is located at 8 Main St.

• For urgent, non-emergency medical attention AFTER HOURS

Contact one of these after-hours medical clinics.

• For general health questions

Contact Tele-Care at 811, a 24-hour dial-in bilingual service or contact a local pharmacist at Jean Coutu 506-536-0230 or at the Guardian-Corner Drug Store 506-536-2255 as these allied health professionals can now assess and prescribe some minor ailments.

• After-hours medical clinic

Coverdale Clinic has phone appointments available, call 506-384-2100.

• eVisitNB

Connect with a NB doctor online at www.evisitnb.ca.

• Maple Virtual Visits

Virtual Doctor's appointment and prescription refills (fees may apply) www.getmaple.ca.

Chapter 13: Mental Health Training

Mental Health First Aid Training

Mental Health First Aid training is made available to all residence staff, faculty, and support staff. This service is free to all Mount Allison students.

Suicide Awareness Training

SafeTALK is a three-hour, interactive program designed to create suicide-aware helpers. It is provided annually to all residence dons and residence assistants and is offered throughout the academic year to interested faculty, staff, and students.

Mental Health Online Training

Learn how to recognize, respond, and refer students experiencing mental health issues on campus. The goal of this website is to help you better understand mental health on your campus and help your fellow students. This course prepares you to support students on your campus who may be living with mental health concerns. It will only take you about 30 minutes to complete.

Chapter 14: How to Advocate for Yourself to a Professor

Adapted from Teen Mental Health Transitions book: <http://teenmentalhealth.org/product/transitions/>

Talking to professors/instructors and administration

There will be many times throughout your time in school when you need to speak to your instructors and to professors or the administration of your school. Knowing how to approach them in a professional way can help ensure that your concerns are heard and help you feel less stressed while doing so.

Things to consider:

- If you're more comfortable meeting in person, schedule an appointment or visit during office hours. Showing up unexpectedly can often mean that you will not get the time you need.
- Address the person by their title and last name (e.g., Dr. Brown or Ms. Chu) unless they've specifically told you that it's okay to use their first name.
- If you're more comfortable making a request via e-mail, use proper email technique — see below for more detail.
- Come prepared. Educators and administrators are far more likely to offer assistance when you present them with rational concerns or potential solutions for a problem you are facing rather than just venting (save the venting for your friends and family).
- Stay calm. Even if you feel upset about something that has happened, becoming angry is not likely to help the situation. Take a few deep breaths and remember you are there to accomplish a goal, not to share your emotions.
- Thank them for their time. This is especially important if someone agreed to see you at the last minute or you had to reschedule.
- Follow through. If your professor or instructor offers concrete suggestions, make sure you follow through.
- Try the things they suggest. If they work — make sure to send a quick e-mail thanking them for their help and letting them know how things worked out. If their suggestions don't work, document what you did and see if you can schedule another meeting to find a new way to move forward.

Proper e-mail technique:

- Always start your e-mail with a greeting (e.g., "Hello Dr. Brown," or "Good morning, Ms. Chu").
- Use complete sentences and spell out full words. Never use shorthand or abbreviations that aren't widely understood.
- Use professional language. How you text your friends is not how you should be e-mailing your professors or your instructors.
- Give context. Don't assume the person knows who you are or what you are e-mailing about. Explain what class or program you are in, the issue about which you're e-mailing, and the request you are making to them.
- Thank the person for their time. Even if they haven't done anything for you (yet) — they have taken the time to read through your request and that deserves acknowledgement.
- End with an appropriate closing statement and your full name (e.g., "Sincerely, Jennifer MacDonald" or "Best Wishes, Muhammad Abdullah".)

Chapter 15: Coping Strategies and Grounding Techniques

Grounding Techniques

After a trauma, it is normal to experience flashbacks, anxiety, and other uncomfortable symptoms. Grounding techniques help control these symptoms by turning attention away from thoughts, memories, or worries, and refocusing on the present moment.

5-4-3-2-1 Technique

Using the 5-4-3-2-1 technique, you will purposefully take in the details of your surroundings using each of your senses. Strive to notice small details that your mind would usually tune out, such as distant sounds, or the texture of an ordinary object.



What are 5 things you can see? Look for small details such as a pattern on the ceiling, the way light reflects off a surface, or an object you never noticed.



What are 4 things you can feel? Notice the sensation of clothing on your body, the sun on your skin, or the feeling of the chair you are sitting in. Pick up an object and examine its weight, texture, and other physical qualities.



What are 3 things you can hear? Pay special attention to the sounds your mind has tuned out, such as a ticking clock, distant traffic, or trees blowing in the wind.



What are 2 things you can smell? Try to notice smells in the air around you, like an air freshener or freshly mowed grass. You may also look around for something that has a scent, such as a flower or an unlit candle.



What is 1 thing you can taste? Carry gum, candy, or small snacks for this.

Categories

Choose at least three of the categories below and name as many items as you can in each one. Spend a few minutes on each category to come up with as many items as possible.

- Movies
- Countries
- Books
- Cereals
- Sports Teams
- Colors
- Cars
- Fruits & Vegetables
- Animals
- Cities
- TV Shows
- Famous People

For a variation on this activity, try naming items in a category alphabetically. For example, for the fruits & vegetables category, say "apple, banana, carrot," and so on.

Grounding Techniques

Body Awareness

The body awareness technique will bring you into the here-and-now by directing your focus to sensations in the body. Pay special attention to the physical sensations created by each step.

- Take five long, deep breaths through your nose, and exhale through puckered lips.
- Place both feet flat on the floor. Wiggle your toes. Curl and uncurl your toes several times. Spend a moment noticing the sensations in your feet.
- Stomp your feet on the ground several times. Pay attention to the sensations in your feet and legs as you make contact with the ground.
- Clench your hands into fists, then release the tension. Repeat this 10 times.
- Press your palms together. Press them harder and hold this pose for 15 seconds. Pay attention to the feeling of tension in your hands and arms.
- Rub your palms together briskly. Notice the sound and the feeling of warmth.
- Reach your hands over your head like you're trying to reach the sky. Stretch like this for five seconds. Bring your arms down and let them relax at your sides.
- Take five more deep breaths and notice the feeling of calm in your body.

Mental Exercises

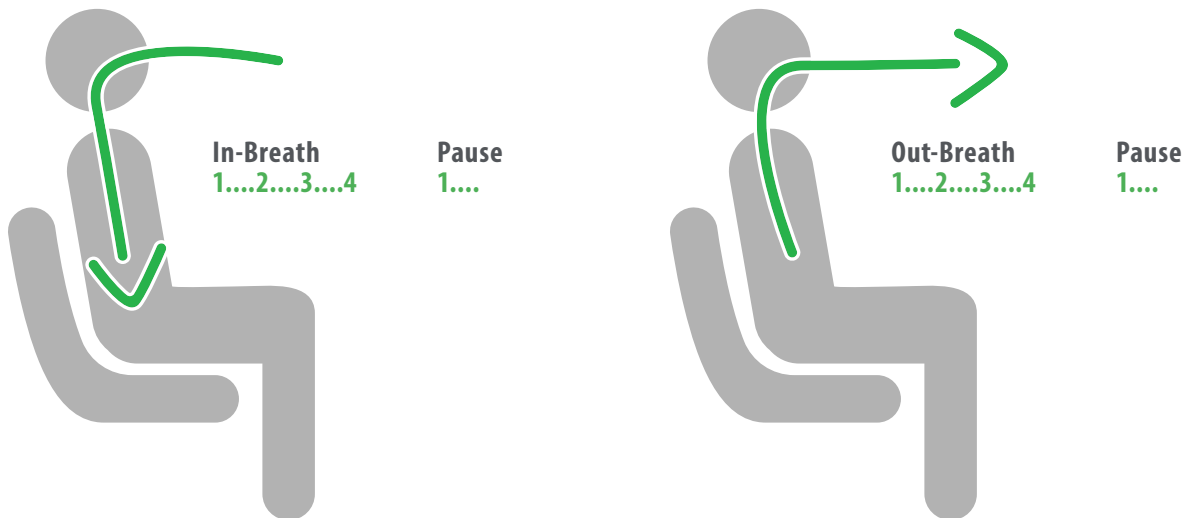
Use mental exercises to take your mind off uncomfortable thoughts and feelings. They are discreet and easy to use at nearly any time or place. Experiment to see which work best for you.

- Name all the objects you see.
- Describe the steps in performing an activity you know how to do well. For example, how to shoot a basketball, prepare your favorite meal, or tie a knot.
- Count backwards from 100 by 7.
- Pick up an object and describe it in detail. Describe its color, texture, size, weight, scent, and any other qualities you notice.
- Spell your full name and the names of three other people, backwards.
- Name all your family members, their ages, and one of their favorite activities.
- Read something backwards, letter-by-letter. Practice for at least a few minutes.
- Think of an object and "draw" it in your mind, or in the air with your finger. Try drawing your home, a vehicle, or an animal.

Grounding Techniques

Relaxed Breathing

When we are anxious or threatened, our breathing speeds up in order to get our body ready for danger. Relaxed breathing (sometimes called abdominal or diaphragmatic breathing) signals the body that it is safe to relax. Relaxed breathing is slower and deeper than normal breathing and it happens lower in the body (the belly rather than the chest).



How to do relaxed breathing

- To practice make sure you are sitting or lying comfortably
- Close your eyes if you are comfortable doing so
- Try to breathe through your nose rather than your mouth
- Deliberately slow your breathing down. Breathe in to a count of four, pause for a moment, then breathe out to a count of four
- Make sure that your breaths are smooth, steady, and continuous — not jerky.
- Pay particular attention to your out-breath — make sure it is smooth and steady.

Am I doing it right? What should I be paying attention to?

- Relaxed breathing should be low down in the abdomen (belly) and not high in the chest. You can check this by putting one hand on your stomach and one on your chest.
- Try to keep the top hand still, your breathing should only move the bottom hand
- Focus your attention on your breath — some people find it helpful to count in their head to begin with (“In ... two ... three ... four ... pause ... Out ... two ... three ... four ... pause ...”)

How long and how often?

- Try breathing in a relaxed way for at least a few minutes at a time — it might take a few minutes for you to notice an effect. If you are comfortable, aim for five to ten minutes
- Try to practice regularly — perhaps three times a day

Variations and troubleshooting

- Find a slow breathing rhythm that is comfortable for you. Counting to four isn't an absolute rule. Try three or five. The important thing is that the breathing is slow and steady
- Some people find the sensation of relaxing to be unusual or uncomfortable at first, but this normally passes with practice. Do persist and keep practising.

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