

Support your mental health

We all have mental health, and there's lots you can do to support your mental health. We've put together a list of six ways that you can boost your mood and manage difficulties linked to depression.



Eat healthily

A balanced diet and following a regular routine can help manage mood swings and ease depression. Students eating a balanced diet, including fresh fruits and vegetables are less likely to experience low mood than students who do not¹. It's ok to indulge once in a while – everything in moderation.



Find alternatives to drugs/alcohol

Substances like alcohol and drugs can interfere with your sleep, memory and can impact on our mental health². Relying on substances for social situations can contribute to increased dependency and anxiety. You don't have to abstain completely, but if you've recognised a connection with low mood, it's good to make realistic goals to cut down.



Relax

Relaxing is a skill you can practice and get better at which can help boost mood. Almost anything you enjoy can help you focus and improve your mental wellbeing³, so it's helpful to know ahead of time what works for you! Many people find meditating and mindfulness can be helpful when experiencing low mood⁴.



Sleep

Sleep is absolutely critical to good mood and uni work. You're about six times more likely to feel depressed if you're getting less than 42hrs sleep a week⁵. Some of the steps required for making new memories occur during sleep. In most students, 7-9 hours is about right⁶.



Maintain your support network

Feeling connected to other people is one of the best ways to improve your mood. Talking to people increases oxytocin release, a hormone that helps you feel connected and happy. Texting and social media doesn't have the same effect⁷. Students often report that staying in touch with family and friends outside of uni can give you perspective on university issues.



Be active

Just 30 minutes of physical activity a day (it doesn't even have to be all at once) can greatly improve your mood⁸. Meeting up for group exercise (yoga class, playing baseball, taking a walk) can be a great way to meet new people and build your support network too.

ripple


Start a ripple. Make a wave.

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HOW ARE YOU FEELING TODAY?

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What emotions are you experiencing? Can you identify how those emotions impact your body? If you're feeling joyful, pay attention to what that feels like in your body. Maybe you feel tingling in your hands or feet. If you feel anxious, you might feel it as a tightness in your chest.

Recognizing emotions and how they impact us encourages Self-awareness, one of five core Social Emotional Learning Competencies. Learn more here: bit.ly/nysel



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WHAT ARE THEY FEELING?



How do you know? Think of a time when you experienced similar feelings. Nonverbal cues like facial expressions and body language help us understand others' actions and emotions, often more than verbal communication. What can you better understand about the people around you through non-verbal communication?

Practicing perspective-taking and empathy encourages Social Awareness, one of five core Social Emotional Learning Competencies. Learn more here: bit.ly/nysel

WHAT IS 4-7-8 BREATHING?

Exhale for
eight
counts,

Inhale for
four
counts,

Hold for
seven
counts,



When we're feeling stressed or anxious, intentionally slowing down our breathing can help calm our nervous system and soothe negative feelings. 4-7-8 Breathing was developed by Dr. Andrew Weil. Try using it for 3-4 cycles next time you feel tense.

Learning techniques to help us relax or calm down encourages Self-management, one of five core Social Emotional Learning Competencies. Learn more here: bit.ly/nysel



ARE YOU AN ACTIVE LISTENER?

Image by Andrew Martin from Pixabay

Active listening means intentionally hearing the words that another person is saying as well as their meaning. It means giving the other person your undivided attention, and resisting the urge to plan what you're going to say while the other person is speaking. Give it a try today!

Practicing active listening encourages Relationship Skills, one of five core Social Emotional Learning Competencies. Learn more here: bit.ly/nysel

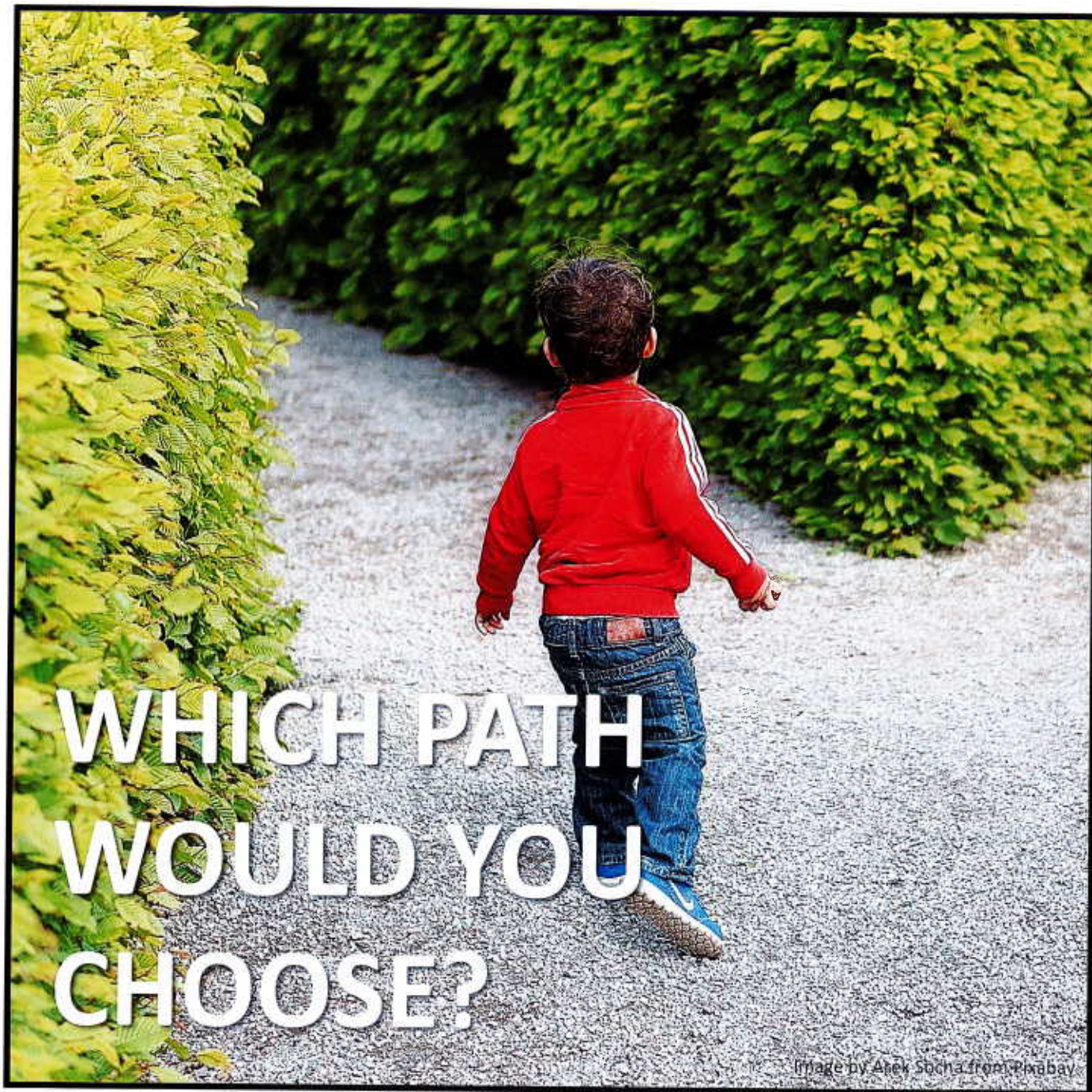


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We make innumerable decisions every day, and each has consequences. Considering ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, and the well-being of self and others can help us to make those decisions more responsibly.

Choosing wisely encourages Responsible Decision-Making, one of five core Social Emotional Learning Competencies. Learn more here: bit.ly/nysel