

# Mental Health

## Beginning study

Depending on the nature and severity of your mental health impairment, some aspects of study may be more difficult for you. It is important to consider giving staff some information about your mental health needs so they are in the best position to work with you on achieving your goals.

Do your mental health issues impact on your study in any of the following ways?

- sustaining concentration and focus
- learning and memory capacity
- maintaining clarity of thinking
- participating in class activities and mixing with other students
- sensitivity to noise or other sensory input in the environment
- maintaining regular attendance in class
- maintaining motivation and confidence
- sustaining energy and physical wellbeing
- being organised and completing your work on time
- handling time pressures and multiple tasks
- managing stress
- experiencing exam anxiety

It is also possible that your study helps you to maintain your wellness

Disability Services staff will work with you to find strategies and supports to help you have a positive study experience. Staff will be respectful and supportive as they talk with you and find approaches that will help you to be a successful student. Staff respect your privacy and will discuss with you what information about your needs can be shared with the teaching staff in your courses.

## Suggestions for successful learning and study

### Before your studies start

- Get advice about the study load expected for particular courses and to help you make a decision about a reasonable study load.
- Before classes start, we can show you your classrooms; you may want to find a particular place to sit. For instance: you may choose a seat at the end of a row so you can leave easily. Go to class early so you can claim your preferred seat.
- If you have a preferred time of day for better concentration, see if you can schedule classes to match your time preferences.
- If you have limited energy, schedule breaks between classes.
- If the demands of full time study do not work for you, but you want to have access to StudyLink loans and allowances, ask for information about the limited full-time study option.
- Disability Services can assist you to provide tutors with appropriate information about your needs and about arrangements that may need to be put in place.

### Managing your study

- Work within your energy and avoid information overload. Take breaks; rest or exercise before, between or after classes; use relaxation exercises.
- Find out about strategies or supports for notetaking in class so you do not miss class content if you are having concentration lapses. Discuss your notetaking needs with Disability Services staff; for instance, you may be able to borrow a recording device to use in class.
- Work on planning, organisation and time management skills so you are well prepared for assessments and do not become overloaded. Set small attainable goals to help yourself keep on track. Break tasks into manageable steps.
- Go to Learning Services to get help with skills such as learning and memory strategies, planning and writing your assignment, essay and report writing and notetaking skills.
- Use positive self-talk. Talk to Disability Services staff, a Counsellor (at Ara Health Centre) or your support staff if you need help with this.
- You may be eligible for specific exam arrangements such as extra time, a separate room or reader/writer support.
- Study can make stressful demands on students at times. Do not neglect your care plan. Seek professional help early if your mental health deteriorates.
- Keep academic staff or Disability Services staff informed if you are absent from class or having difficulties. Ara staff are committed to supporting you to successfully complete your courses.

**Phone: 940 8089    email: [disability@ara.ac.nz](mailto:disability@ara.ac.nz)**

### ***For more information:***

Mental Health Foundation: <http://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/>

Study strategies:

[http://services.unimelb.edu.au/disability/resources/towards\\_success/mental\\_health\\_conditions](http://services.unimelb.edu.au/disability/resources/towards_success/mental_health_conditions)

Mental health and depression information: <http://www.brainhe.com/students/types/mentalhealth.html>