

## Professional Supports

A range of free/low cost professional resources are available. These include books, online websites, support phone lines, social services, as well as counselling and health services.

**For information that is helpful look at the Counselling Service website**

[www.vuw.ac.nz/st\\_services/counselling/](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/counselling/)

Additional reading material can be obtained for free from The Counselling Service Reception. The Counselling Service runs free group programmes throughout the year. For information on current programmes and registration, please contact reception.

**There are other Student Support Services at VUW who may be able to help**

[www.vuw.ac.nz/st\\_services/](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/)

- Student Health Service
- Disability Support
- Student Learning Support
- Financial Support and Advice
- Te Putahi Atawhai
- Victoria International
- Career Development & Employment
- Accommodation

You can contact any of these services by phoning 472 1000.

**Student Advisors located at each Faculty office are also good resources for help and assistance with course related issues.**

This brochure is provided by the Counselling Service at Victoria University of Wellington. We endeavour to ensure this information is up to date. Updated: Feb 2010.

### Local counselling services:

There are counselling services outside of VUW that you can access. Many of these have low or reduced fees depending on your financial situation.

- People's Resource Centre 385 8596
- Victoria Psychology Clinic 463 6400
- Catholic Social Services 385 8642
- Salvation Army 389 0594
- Wesley City Counselling 384 7695
- Women's Health Collective 499 7709
- Relationship Services 0800RELATE

You do not have to belong to a church to use these services.

**For further information or details of qualified counsellors and psychologists please contact reception or refer to the Yellow pages.**

**If you want to talk to someone out of normal office hours, there are phone services run by:**

- **Youthline** (4pm – 11pm) 382 8828
- **Alcohol and Drug Helpline**  
(10 am–10pm) 0800 787 797
- **Samaritans** (24 hours) 0800 726 666

**Checkout these useful web-sites**

[www.thelowdown.co.nz](http://www.thelowdown.co.nz) or TXT 5626

[www.mentalhealth.org.nz](http://www.mentalhealth.org.nz)

### Crisis Services:

If you are experiencing a personal or mental health crisis needing immediate response contact:

- **Emergency services** 111
  - **CATT teams** (Mental Health Crisis Assessment and Treatment Team) 0800 745 477
- Wellington area 494 9169  
Hutt area 566 6999

Or go to the hospital emergency department.



## Coping with Difficult Times

- *Self Care*
- *Personal Supports*
- *Professional Supports*

**Counselling Service**  
Victoria University of Wellington  
Mauri Ora, Level 1, Student Union Building  
Kelburn campus  
Tel. 463 5310  
Fax. 463 6009  
Email. [Counselling-service@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Counselling-service@vuw.ac.nz)

# Coping with Difficult Times

At certain points in our lives we all experience difficulties, stress and emotionally challenging times.

Difficult situations impact each of us differently. How we cope in difficult times is influenced by our current circumstances, past experiences, understandings of the world and how we look after ourselves.

This pamphlet provides some suggestions for getting through these difficult times.

## Self Care

### First Principles of Self Care

Health care professionals agree that self care is the first port of call in difficult times. We can increase our stress tolerance and resilience by maintaining a healthy lifestyle with good nutrition, regular exercise, sleep, rest and relaxation as well as socialising. It is very easy to overlook these fundamental building blocks when we are not feeling good.

It is helpful to pause and consider these aspects to our wellbeing. What are you are currently doing or can do to take care

## Self care questions to consider:

### Am I:

- Getting adequate nutrition and exercise?
- Getting enough quality sleep? Sleep is very important. Talk to a GP for short term options and focus on rest if sleeping is difficult.
- Making time to relax? For example through physical exercise, breathing exercises or doing enjoyable activities.
- Keeping my routines going? For example work, sport and interests.
- Making time to socialise?
- Talking to friends/family/others I trust about how things are going for me?
- Keeping things in perspective?
- Using healthy distractions? For example ring a friend, get out a funny DVD, read a book.
- Avoiding or limiting alcohol, drugs, cigarettes and stimulant drinks?
- Being encouraging and supportive of myself? Do I speak and think well of myself?
- Listening to my own wisdom/advice? And Advice from those I respect and trust?
- Reminding myself of my strengths that help me get through difficult situations?
- Expressing myself creatively? For example through writing or art.
- Thinking about what has been helpful when I have been in difficult times in the past?

Remember that to be able to be there for others we first need to look after ourselves.

Focus on today - one day at a time.

If you're currently experiencing distress, try the following:

- Stop for a moment
- Take a few slow deep breaths (stress often causes us to breathe shallowly, which can create more stress!)
- As you breathe out repeat the word 'relax' to yourself and feel your shoulders and muscles relax.
- Ask yourself what has helped you relax in the past.

Carry out this simple grounding exercise to calm your mind:

- Bring your attention to the present. Where are you at this moment? What can you See? hear? Smell? Touch? Taste?
- Then consider: Is there something that you need right now?

When you are feeling calmer:

- Bring your attention to your situation. Work out exactly what is making you feel this way.
- Remember your strengths and to be generous to yourself. Is there an action you can take to improve it? Who can support you? Plan any steps you need to take.
- Focus again on relaxation
- Take an action

## Personal Supports

Don't forget your friends, family/whanau and people you respect.

Consider who is already in your life. Who can be of support to you? And in what ways?

Particular people in our lives may be able to support us in different ways. For example a certain friend might be fun to be around and provide distraction; while a certain family member might be a good listener.