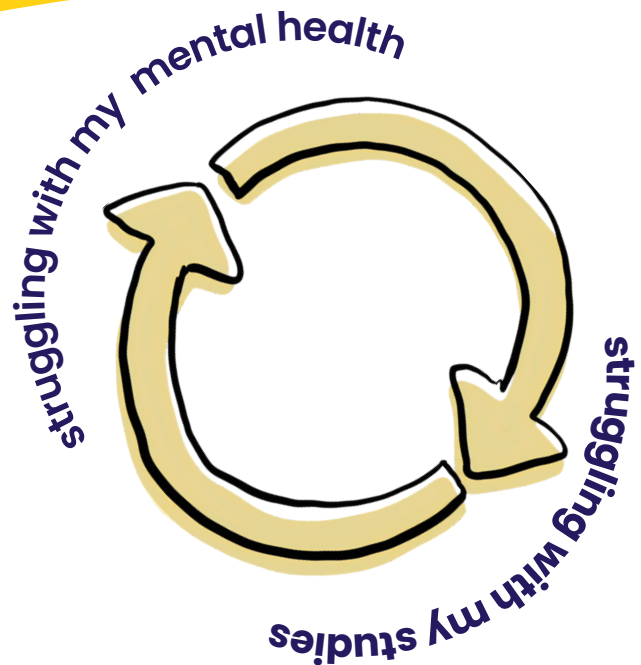


Balancing Studies and Your Mental Health

Tara Tjahjadi (she/her)

Managing your studies can be difficult and even more so if you are struggling with your mental health. For years my mental health and studies were engaged in a positive feedback cycle where school stress led me to struggle with my mental health and struggling with my mental health led to struggles with my schoolwork.



Depending on where you are studying and the kind of support you're looking for, your education provider can be a great way to access mental health support. Most schools and universities have a counsellor if you would like to speak to someone about your mental health or other wellbeing support staff such as Student Support Officers or Student Learning Support Officers (to learn the difference and about other people who can support your mental health, check out our care cards here).

read about different supports here!



click here!

Types of professionals that might be involved in your care

Based on your unique needs, you may benefit from working with different people. It can be useful to understand the role of different supports. Here we have a list of some different people that might be in a care team:

Peer Worker	Psychiatrist
Aboriginal Health Worker	Psychologist
Case worker/Mental health worker	
Occupational Therapist	
General Practitioner	
Student Support Officer (SSO)	
Community Elders/Cultural or Religious Leaders	

What they do

Psychologists are university-trained mental health professionals who specialise in understanding how people think, feel, and behave. They assess and diagnose mental health conditions, and provide evidence-based psychological therapies – such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), or trauma-focused approaches. Psychologists work with a wide range of concerns, including anxiety, depression, stress, trauma, relationship difficulties, and more

Support for your mental health in an education setting can be more generalised whilst some accommodations may be more specific to you. Supports and accommodations can look like:

**Earlier in your education (eg.
primary and high school)**

Making an Individual Learning/Education Plan to send to teachers so they can know what support you may need in class

Being allowed to have a fidget or wear headphones in classes.
More time to pack up and get ready for your next class

Having a card to tell teachers that you need to leave class to visit a wellbeing room or support person

Attending a wellbeing club or committee

Having more time, longer breaks, fidgets or reading and writing support in exams

Being able to apply for the Educational Access Scheme if you are wanting to pursue tertiary education and your mental health has significantly impacted your Year 12 studies

Going to group or institute-wide wellbeing events

Calling a helpline that is university-specific

Being able to apply for consideration, replacement tasks or extended deadlines for assessments

**Later in your education (eg.
further studies, TAFE, university)**

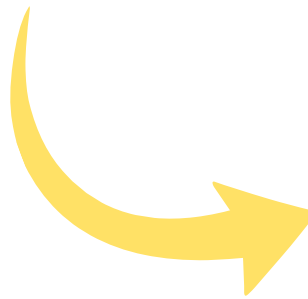
Useful tips and tools

-  Even though you've probably heard it before, sleep is super important. In my senior years of high school I sacrificed a lot of sleep to get things done which really impacted my wellbeing and ability to focus at school. If I was tired at night but had homework I really needed to do, I would wake up earlier the next day to finish it in the morning.
-  It can be tough trying to be motivated enough to go to school. I joined a lot of extracurriculars and clubs which I enjoyed and made me motivated to attend school.
-  If you spend a lot of time travelling to school, it can be a good way to recharge. I used to commute 1hr to school each way and I spent a lot of that time listening to music or sleeping (whilst trying to dodge being in people's snap streaks 😭).
-  If you don't have a quiet place to study at home or want a change of scenery you can study at a local library or cafe. Check out your local headspace or library to see if they hold study sessions!
-  Studiosity is like a helpline but for your studies! You can get feedback on your writing and get explanations on how to work out questions. Some libraries provide you with free access.
-  Your local library likely has textbooks and practice questions for different subjects and year groups. I used to borrow a lot of practice question books from my local library when studying for the HSC.
-  If there's no one you feel comfortable chatting to whilst at your place of study, you can always call and speak to a helpline between classes. If you're at school and don't have access to your phone, you can ask if you can call using one of the phones at the school office.

What happens if there is involvement from school with my mental health support that I don't want?

Your education provider has a duty of care to keep you safe. What this looks like in different education settings (eg. high school vs university) can be different and can also differ depending on your age. Sometimes, there are situations where an education provider needs to contact another organisation or speak to your family or carer/s to ensure your safety, even if you don't want them to.

When I was in high school, I had to make a safety plan to help keep me safe at school. This meant a lot more meetings and monitoring than I would have liked and I didn't have much of a say of what was put in the plan. In hindsight, whilst the plan did help to keep me safe, I would have wanted to advocate more for my care. Keeping track of your mental health in an app like Minding Your Mind can be a great way to be able to find out and then communicate what things are helpful for your wellbeing or what things can make you feel unwell. Check out Zoe's blog post to learn more about advocating for your mental health care!



Remember, it's great to want to focus on your studies, but the ability to learn and showcase what you've learnt depends on your health and wellbeing. It's the foundation that your studies are built on! 📚

-Tara



Self-Advocacy in Your Mental Health Care

By Zoe

Ever felt like no one's really listening when it comes to your mental health? You're definitely not alone. Learning how to speak up for what you need can completely change your care. Zoe shares simple, real ways to back yourself and feel heard, without having to be "confrontational."

[Find out more](#)