Tough times will happen. No-one gets through life without things happening that challenges them or causes pain. Life as a university student can mean competing priorities. You may have study, work, family commitments. You may have financial, cultural or physical/health/mental health challenges. This information sheet includes a few tips on the skills or attributes that can help you become or remain resilient.

**What is resilience?**
Resilience is having the skills and attributes that help you bounce back from problems and the ability to identify, assess and respond to a potential problem to prevent it from becoming a crisis. What can help get you through these tough times? Being resilient takes time and practice. It takes active steps to ensure we maintain a healthy brain.

**Self care**
There are times during semester which are more stressful. You will probably have a number of assignments due in the same week, the pressures of balancing study/work/relationships, your car or computer might break down and you feel overwhelmed. It is important to develop good time management skills (see Time Management fact sheet) and plan your days, weeks and months. Use a diary, a weekly planner and a yearly planner. Identify the things you cannot go without (work, attending lectures, looking after family, sleeping) and put them into a weekly planner.

Your physical health is important and plays a big role in maintaining resilience. Eating healthy, balanced meals, sleeping (see Improving your Sleep Information Sheet) and getting exercise are all a part of this.

It is also important to find time for you. Plan to spend time with a friend, watch a movie, learn a relaxation technique (this is an active process not just sitting in front of the television). Be proactive in having ‘me’ time to help balance the other demands.

**Managing emotional responses**
Our responses to situations are a direct consequence of how we think about them. If we think they are a catastrophe then our reactions will reflect that catastrophic thinking. Learn to identify your thoughts not just your reactions. Ask yourself “how realistic is this worry?” Are you focusing on the past rather than looking forward to the future? Our thoughts and emotions aren’t separate but they aren’t untamed beasts that we have no control over either.

**Tough times as learning opportunities**
When things get tough learn to sit with the discomfort and feel your feelings. You don’t need to be happy about being uncomfortable but recognise these feelings will settle. Is the issue something you can change or have influence over? If yes, then what can you do? If no, then sit with the discomfort. It may settle quickly or take time but try to see this as an opportunity to learn. Do I need to do something different next time?
Resilience skills you can practice
It is okay not to feel okay sometimes. Sit with discomfort rather than trying to avoid or get rid of the feeling. Observe with curiosity and without judgement.

Develop coping tools. These can include: relaxation techniques (see Breathing and Relaxation fact sheet), Mindfulness (download Smiling Mind app), and exercise (short walks).

Manage your thinking. Don’t let the negative thoughts become overwhelming. Try to focus on things you have done well now or in the past. Focus on the next step in this one task, rather than getting overwhelmed by the whole picture. Write any worries down and plan to come back to them after that assignment or exam, when other stress is lower. Take note and stay alert to any positive things that do happen.

Make a positive back up plan. Are there other things you can do that will support you to manage higher stress times?

Know when you need professional help. If you start to feel the issues are affecting your ability to get on with your normal every day life then talk with one of our professional counsellors.

Additional information
The Desk: thedesk.org.au

The desk is an online resource aimed at improving wellbeing, designed specifically for University students. It includes online modules and resources to help you manage stress.

Information sheets
Check out our range of information sheets that can help you better manage stress such as Breathing and Relaxation, Stress Management, Time Management, and Improving your Sleep.

For a full list visit utas.edu.au/students/resources

Getting Support
There are times when we can get stuck in particular thought patterns that might not be particularly helpful, but if you keep them to yourself you might think they are the only ways of thinking. Talking can put things in perspective. It doesn’t matter what you think – others will also have those thoughts, worries and concerns. What is important is talking to others and sharing your feelings.

Friends and family are a good source of support and can be there to listen but sometimes they are not around, are not sure of the advice to give, or don’t quite understand where you are coming from. In these situations there are a number of options including:

- GP – your GP can refer you to an external psychologist. These sessions may be funded by Medicare (you may need to pay a small gap fee depending on the individual psychologist).
- Talk it through with an expert

If looking for support, we’ve made it easy for you. We’ve listed a few of the free services where you can chat with an expert.

University Counselling Service:

Free personal counselling (face-to-face, video, phone, instant chat and email) appointments are available with experienced mental health clinicians between 8.30am and 5.00pm weekdays.

Online bookings: utas.edu.au/appointments
Phone: 1800 817 675

After Hours Crisis counselling support

Need to talk?
University of Tasmania after-hours Crisis Support Call or text to speak with a qualified counsellor 5pm - 9am weekdays / 24 hours weekends and public holidays
Call 1500 511 709 or text 0488 884 368

Headspace: headspace.org.au

Information, resources and support for people 25 years and under. Includes online and phone support through eheadspace, as well as face-to-face service at a centre near you.

Beyond Blue: beyondblue.org.au
Free information and support around mental health and wellbeing. Includes online chat service.
Phone: 1300 22 46 36

Mental Health Helpline

Free information and support about mental health, including access to public Mental Health Services for Tasmanians.
Phone: 1800 332 388

In an emergency or for external support call 000 or contact the Mental Health Helpline on 1800 332 388.

If you have thoughts about other resources that might be helpful feel free to send us an email: counselling.services@utas.edu.au

> utas.edu.au/students