



SETTLING

IN TO

LIFE AT

ARU

WELCOME TO ARU LONDON UNIVERSITY

We hope you're looking forward to your course here. Whether this is your first time away from home or you're going back to studying after a break, starting university can be a time of great change. And change, even if it's exciting, is not always easy to cope with.

The first few days can be quite bewildering - so many meetings, things to do, finding your way around the campus, a sea of new faces. It's not at all unusual or surprising to feel lost or lonely in a new situation. Other new students may be feeling just the same, and this is the ideal time to meet and make friends.

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

Make sure you find time to do something that's familiar and reassuring. This might be playing your favourite music, doing sports you enjoy, keeping in touch with people you feel comfortable with.


Get to know what you need to feel good. It may be lots of activity or lots of time on your own, or a mixture. Find out what's best for you.

If you can, resist the temptation to withdraw and hide away.

CONCERNS

You may have worries about what's going to happen in the next few weeks - so will lots of other students. These may be worries about:

- The course. Is it what you expected, can you keep up?
- Making friends. Will anyone like you?
- Finances and managing practical things on your own: can you do it?



You may feel homesick - a sense of loss of familiar places, people and routine - and be surprised at how this is affecting you. You may be trying to live up to other people's expectations: this can be a real burden. You may also have expectations about yourself that are unrealistic.

NEW RELATIONSHIPS

Going to university can be an opportunity to make a fresh start, to make new friends. You can start afresh.

If you have lots of friends at home, that's wonderful, but do take the opportunity to meet the wide range of people you'll come across as a student. Getting involved in social activities or volunteering to do some charity work can be good ways to meet people.

Whether you're just out of school or a mature student, you'll find someone at Anglia Ruskin University you can get along with.

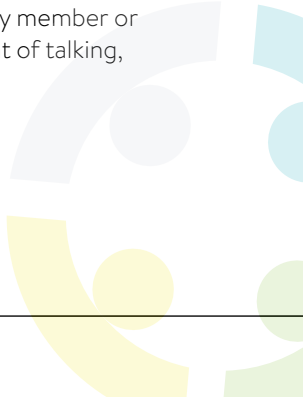
WORK/LIFE BALANCE

You may have a job and a family to look after as well. Getting behind with academic work is a major cause of anxiety; never going out socially can make you feel quite isolated; fitting in a job may help your finances but limit your socialising or studying. The Students' Union and ARU London support services can help you with quite a number of these problems.

I'M STRUGGLING, WHERE CAN I GO?

WHAT IS COUNSELLING AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

To understand how counselling works, it's worth thinking about what it's not. It is not the same as going to a doctor or other 'expert' to be advised, instructed or directed in some way. Nor is it the same as having a chat with a friend, family member or someone you know, when both of you may well do an equal amount of talking, sometimes not in confidence.



WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

Counselling aims to help you explore and clarify concerns that are important to you, and to develop resources and skills to deal with difficulties in your life.

Your counsellor will encourage you to speak about yourself and your concerns at a pace which is manageable for you. There is not a right or a wrong way of doing this. You may have a very clear idea of what you want to talk about or you may be feeling confused and anxious, perhaps not sure what it is that is troubling you.

Your counsellor will try to listen attentively to what you are saying and to understand how you are experiencing your world and what is happening to you. Putting your thoughts and feelings into words may feel helpful and a relief. You may also find that you are helped to recognise and make sense of these thoughts and feelings and how they affect your behaviour and choices. Your counsellor will not tell you what to do, but can help you explore some of the options open to you and you might decide you want to change something about yourself or your situation.

STUDENT FEEDBACK

Here are some comments from students about what they found helpful about counselling:

“I could talk about anything, knowing it was confidential and I wouldn’t be judged.”

“An unbiased outside listener who can sum up very well my thoughts and help me understand them.”

“Somewhere I can let rip with feelings which otherwise I would be wary of letting out.”





“Talking through my thoughts was very helpful.”

“Helped me to see things better and to take action in certain areas of my life.”

“Good, quiet atmosphere where I can concentrate on real feelings.”



IS IT FOR ME?

You may have made an appointment after someone has suggested counselling. It will be possible in the first session to think about whether counselling is right for you and what you want at the present time. Sometimes one or two exploratory sessions may be necessary before this can be decided. You may feel that one session is enough to deal with your concerns. However it is common for a lot of people to see a counsellor more regularly.

You might feel comfortable seeing your doctor to arrange some counselling, but you can also get in touch with the ARU London Wellbeing Department and they will be able to help you find somewhere.



MEN AND COUNSELLING

THE FACTS

Depression occurs as frequently in men as in women; but women get diagnosed and treated twice as often as men.

Suicide is the biggest killer of young men in England. Men are less likely than women to recognise that they are under stress or unhappy.

Men are significantly less likely than women to go to their GP with emotional and psychological problems; if they do they are more likely to describe physical symptoms of mental distress such as sleep problems, chest pains or headaches.

Alcohol and substance abuse is five times more common in men than in women.

Male students are significantly less likely to access university support services than female students. But the dropout rate is much higher among male students.

THE OBSTACLES

Many men have been brought up feeling they shouldn't talk about their problems or express their feelings. To do so is seen as a confession of weakness. Therefore men are often reluctant to ask for help for their emotional or psychological problems.

Avoidance of talking about things can put you at risk of more serious problems developing or getting worse such as drug or alcohol abuse, aggressive behaviour, physical ill health, relationship or sexual problems and depression.


Men often only seek help from their GP or a counsellor when they've hit crisis point.

Research indicates that more men would use counselling if they knew in advance the 'nuts and bolts' of what's involved. Once they've seen a counsellor the vast majority of men say they'd recommend others to do the same.

THE SOLUTION

- **Recognise and acknowledge the symptoms.** It's important to recognise when a problem is getting more serious and it's affecting your relationships, work or general health. Take action before it gets out of hand.



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- **Take control and get support.** Our experienced counsellors are there for anyone who needs to talk something through in complete confidence. Make use of the free service available. Putting it off won't sort it out.
 - **Talking to a counsellor really can make a difference.** You can be your real self, talk openly and have time to think without pressure. A counsellor will listen objectively and help you make sense of things.
 - **Set yourself goals.** A counsellor can work with you to explore your options, find a new perspective and identify steps forward to help you sort your problems out.
 - **Learn new ways to deal with things.** Your counsellor will help you to explore what's not working and find new approaches to deal with problems and feelings such as anxiety, anger, low moods and relationship problems.

THE NEXT STEP



If something is bothering you, however trivial you may feel it is, contact the Wellbeing Department to help you meet with a counsellor. The counsellor will give you time to talk things through in confidence to identify what changes you'd like in your life and how they could help.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE FEELING ALONE

It is a cliché that we can feel lonely, even particularly lonely in a crowd. Unfortunately it is one that is only too true and all too common at University. Here, surrounded by people of a similar age and, supposedly with lots in common we can nevertheless feel wretchedly isolated and awkward. This is made worse by the sight of others who seem perfectly at ease, are rapidly making friends and are becoming embedded in groups from which you feel excluded or only tolerated on the margins.

Looked at from another angle, however, it is not surprising that loneliness at University is common especially among first year students. Coming to University is a major stage in 'leaving home'. It may indeed be the first time you are away not just from the supportive familiarity of home and family, but also from friendships that may have been built up over the years.

Leaving home and coming to University involves a number of changes: in lifestyle, work patterns, and degree of independence. The accumulated effects of these can