



# Well-being Mini Guide

Tips and stories from UHI Moray  
staff and students

We are aware of the stigma surrounding mental health. Adjusting to life as a student; dealing with coursework, exams and being away from home for the first time can be potentially stressful and may intensify any pre-existing conditions.

However, being a student can also be beneficial for your well-being; keeping you connected to your peers and friends, expanding your knowledge and opportunities, and provides structure and routine to your days.

Our community of staff and students have teamed up to create this little guide filled with tips and stories to support your mental health.

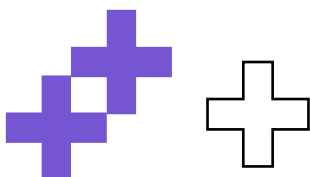
# What mental health means to me?



Mental Health means a lot to me because a lot of people struggle in silence and don't ask for help even though it is important to ask for help when you need it. People often don't because of the stigma around it so because of this it means a lot to me. I want to be able to help people with their Mental Health - it shouldn't be as stigmatized as it is but in the society we live in it is hard for people that are struggling with Mental Health to ask for help and get the help they need, especially young people and men it is a lot more stigmatized I feel.

**Chloe Catmore, Depute President  
(2024-2025) HISA Moray**

HISA has worked hard with UHI and its partners to make several commitments to supporting student mental health including the creation of the Student Mental Health Agreement > [bit.ly/HISAmha](https://bit.ly/HISAmha)



# Wonderful plants for improving your health and wellbeing

by Nick Chambers,  
Horticulture Lecturer

Countless studies have shown that the presence of plants within a home and within one's life can bring many health benefits. From a vase of flowers on a table, to a parkland filled with trees and shrubs, plants have the power to make us feel better and lift our mood.

Growing and caring for plants contributes to these feelings, it adds a sense of hope, anticipation, responsibility and nurturing.



House plants come in a wide range of types, some with big leaves, some with colourful leaves and many with flowers. Indoor plants have the ability to absorb toxins from the air, they can remove the chemicals leaching from carpets, furniture and the like. This makes them not only good to look at but useful too.

Of all the houseplants I would recommend, top of the list is the humble spider plant (*chlorophytum comosum*). It is often viewed as common, but this plant is by far the best for cleaning the air, every

room should have one. Added to this is its hardiness. It is bomb proof, can survive weeks without watering and will forgive the most forgetful and busy owner. However if you water it regularly, with an occasional feed, it will reward you with luxuriant foliage and showers of trailing runners, each bearing new plantlets.

Other house plants are just as good for brightening a room, pick those that please you most, regular, little watering and a feed every now and then and they will be happy. Why not name your plant? Make that relationship something special.

Growing outdoors offers a greater range of plants to choose from and I would recommend you select something hardy and perennial, this way you keep the plant for many years and watch it grow and mature. Fragrant, colourful and hardy, there is little better than Lavender, a plant from the mediterranean known for its relaxing scent and colourful purple flowers. It is also one of the best plants for pollinators, popular with all kinds of bees. Bunches of flowers can be cut and dried for long lasting bouquets in the house.

Lavender is very easy to keep, it is naturally very tough and requires







little attention. It can be grown in the ground or in a container. A little bit of watering and an occasional feed and it will grow and blossom without any trouble.

**Having plants around us is vital for our sense of wellbeing, they don't need to be fancy or special, in fact some of our most common plants are super useful. Dandelion, forever the scourge of tidy gardens is such a cheerful and useful plant (all parts are edible). The ultimate survivor, growing despite many a best effort to suppress it, the dandelion comes back to raise its cheerful flowers again and again. An inspirational example to us all.**

Any plant will do, all humans share an inherent attraction to plants. Termed 'Biophilia' we have evolved over millennia living among the greenery of nature and we all benefit from connecting with it, even in the smallest of ways.



# Integrative Health for mental health

Within the Integrative Healthcare department, our students study a variety of therapies focused on promoting overall health and wellbeing, including mental health support. Through our student treatment clinics, we witness firsthand the positive impact these therapies have on our clients.

While not everyone can find the time to book a treatment, there are effective self-care practices you can incorporate into your daily routine to support your mental health all year long.

## Reflexology

Our adrenal glands, which are directly affected by stress, are responsible for the 'fight-or-flight' response we feel when under pressure. This response is meant to be short-lived, but in many cases it is a regular occurrence, leading to overworked adrenal glands.

In reflexology, the adrenal reflex is found just below the ball of each foot and also on the fleshy area below the thumb on the palmar side of the hand.

- + Gently pressing these reflex points for a few minutes can help calm the adrenal glands and reduce tension.

- + The hands can be worked at any time of day and the feet are best worked for about five minutes per foot before bedtime.





## Massage Therapy

We tend to hold emotional stress in our faces - particularly in the jaw and temples. For anyone who doesn't have the time to book a full body massage, it is amazing how much tension can be released throughout the whole body when just the face is massaged.

+ Gently self-massage of your face using upward and outward circular motions helps to promote relaxation and reduce stress, while increasing muscle tone and revitalising your skin.

It is easy to do yourself, using your favourite cream or oil after cleansing. Make it a daily routine to look and feel your best.



## Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy involves using plant essential oils to help improve your health and wellbeing. The optimum way for the body to absorb the therapeutic qualities of essential oils is through a combination of inhalation and skin absorption, via a massage blend or bath water. Lavender is one of the most studied essential oils in terms of its relaxing effects. It has been shown to calm the nervous system, lower blood pressure, heart rate and skin temperature, as well as change brain waves to a more relaxed state. Neroli, often referred to as the 'rescue remedy' of essential oils, is also a valuable oil for helping to ease anxiety and stress, along with bergamot, which is traditionally used in Italian folk medicine to relieve tension and anxiety.

Integrative Healthcare student, Caroline Redgrift, recommends this uplifting and soothing aromatherapy blend to support mental health and well-being:

**Frankincense (*Boswellia carteri*):** relaxes & revitalises, eases nervous tension, helps to slow & deepen breathing if you're having a panic attack and helps to quieten mental chatter.

**Sweet orange (*Citrus sinensis*):** gentle but effective anti-depressant, mild sedative to aid restful sleep, helps to relax and brings joy & happiness back.

**Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*):** restores when overcome by fatigue & burnout, increases self-confidence and restores positivity.

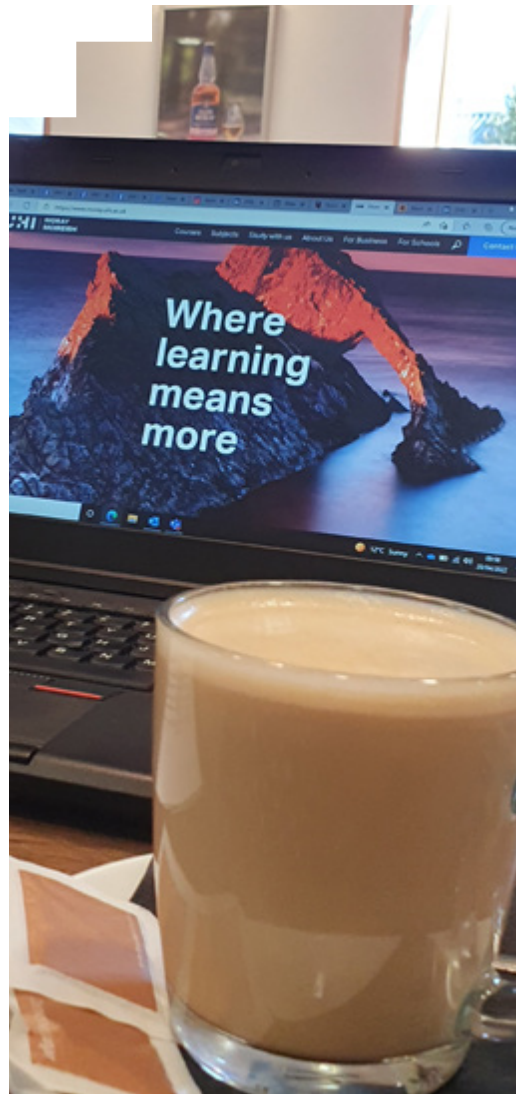
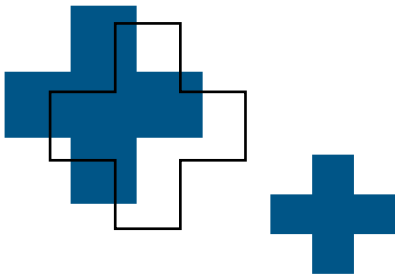
**Ylang ylang (*Cananga odorata*):** eases panic attacks, effective anti-depressant, promotes self-confidence and dispels anger.

**When using essential oils, it is important not to use the oils neat on skin but instead to dilute the oils within a base product such as a carrier oil for example, using 2 drops of each oil above within 20ml of carrier oil would be a 2% blend, and safe for use within a body massage, but other ways to use essential oils include oil burners, bath soaks, room sprays and more!**

# The importance of taking a break

Breaks are important during your study sessions, they can:

- + Improve productivity - Caffeinated beverages can boost cognitive abilities, which can lead to more efficient work with fewer mistakes.
- + Help you to relax and speak with family and friends.
- + Help counteract the physical problems associated with sitting for long periods.
- + Help you to regain and improve your focus and alertness levels.
- + Protect your eyesight: Staring at a computer screen for too long can strain and damage eyesight.



# How we look after our mental health

by UHI Moray  
Marketing Department



As someone who struggles with low mood and anxiety my mental health is a daily struggle; Sometimes even the thought of doing a task is a barrier so that is why I:

- + Have daily routines and weekly routines. Daily routines are a strict set of tasks I do either every day or on a given day i.e. every morning I do 3 deep breaths and set my intention for the day but I only do badminton on a Tuesday. Weekly routines are tasks I have to complete weekly, but it doesn't matter when I do them i.e read 2 days a week and tidy my desk.
- + Go for a walk at least 5 times a week. No matter how long or short, getting outside keeps me active, gives me much needed vitamin D and just gives me a moment of calm.
- + Have at least 6 hours sleep. A good night sleep helps us rest after all.
- + Have a dedicated Spotify playlist filled with songs that ground me and allow me to recentre.
- + Try to be kind to myself. If I don't complete something trivial who cares! No one is perfect and sometimes we just need to idle. We are not robots.

**If you are making a playlist try to find songs that you can really focus on, boosts your sense of self or has a strong motivational message.**

Emma







Sometimes, no matter what advice or uplifting quote is thrown your way, it feels impossible to get yourself out of a rut. The thought of reaching out for help can be terrifying, but I promise that it will be worth it. I have seen different types of mental health professionals over the years to help manage my day-to-day mental health and my mood disorder, so hopefully some of the things that have helped me will help you too:

- + Release anxiety and tension from your body – drop and roll your shoulders, unclench your jaw, close your hands into fists and then release by spreading your fingers.
- + Remember that you are not alone. There are people out there who understand you and want to help you. A friend or colleague, a helpline or healthcare professional.
- + Take time to reflect on how far you have already come. A year ago, you probably didn't think you'd be where you are now, but you made it here despite any setbacks – be proud of yourself.
- + Don't forget to take care of yourself on the 'good' days too, it makes moving through the 'bad' days a little bit easier.
- + Spend time in nature and put down your phone. It's natural to want to curl up on the sofa when you get home from classes, and whilst that is a valid and comforting way of taking care of yourself, make sure to balance it out by going on a walk, sitting in the garden with a book, exploring somewhere or something new.

# Alanna

**We have lots of different support options for our students . If you reach out or make use of one of our resources on a 'good' day, when a 'bad' day comes, it wont feel as scary.**

# Tips from the counselling department

Taking that first step to reach out might feel daunting, but it can make all the difference in finding the support you deserve. You don't have to face it alone.



## Put pen to paper

Many of us kept secret diaries as kids, but journaling as an adult can be a powerful tool for gaining clarity and perspective. Writing down your thoughts and feelings regularly not only helps you prioritize your problems and concerns but also enables you to spot patterns and triggers in your emotions and behaviours - both positive and negative.

Putting pen to paper on a regular basis can also help you identify what triggers your different thoughts, emotions and behaviours, both good and bad, which in turn means you can find ways to manage these more effectively in the future.

## Small steps, Big Impact

If you're feeling overwhelmed, taking a quick break to stretch

your legs and get some fresh air can work wonders for clearing your mind and gaining a fresh perspective.

When feeling worried or anxious, sometimes there's no better place to turn than to Mother Nature. Studies have shown that, amongst other health benefits, walking or gently exercising in forests and other green spaces can help to improve mood and reduce levels of the stress hormone, cortisol. Even if it's raining, put on your trusty mac and wellies, and take a stroll in the country or by the seaside to clear your mind and see things from a new perspective.

### **Share your problems**

In an attempt to protect those around us, perhaps out of fear of being judged, it's not uncommon to 'bottle up' worries or concerns. While it might not bring the solution you need, simply confiding in someone you trust can bring an enormous sense of relief. If this is difficult for you, or there simply isn't anyone you feel you can talk to, seeing a registered counsellor or other professional therapist might be just what you need to get back on track.

**At UHI Moray, Student Services are here to support you and guide you toward the right resources, whether you're dealing with anxiety, stress, grief, or just feeling overwhelmed. Outwith UHI Moray, there are many qualified counsellors and therapists available to support you.**

You can find accredited professionals through:

- + Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland (COSCA)  
[www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk)
- + British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)  
[www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)
- + Breathing Space: Free counselling services across Scotland  
[www.breathingspace.scot/](http://www.breathingspace.scot/)
- + Samaritans Scotland: Free, confidential emotional support  
Call **116 123** or visit [www.samaritans.org/scotland](http://www.samaritans.org/scotland)

# Services available

## Students Association

Our Students Association, HISA, are always happy to help. HISA offer support to all students around a range of issues and can help to talk over any of your difficulties together with signposting you to those that can help further. HISA also host a range of sporting events and activities and can let you know what is happening at your campus.

## NHS Healthpoint

The NHS Healthpoint is a free drop-in service where you can get advice and support on a number of health concerns, such as contraception, mental health, long term conditions such as diabetes, and much more.

The service usually takes place monthly:

+ Wednesdays 8.30am - 4.30pm in the AGBC Community Hub at our Moray Street campus

## The Well-Being Bar

Our Well-Being Bar supports our student's mental health and well-being.

They run well-being sessions throughout the year and can refer you to our counselling service or other organisations such as the Moray Wellbeing Hub.

As a UHI student, you will have access to a range of external services including 24/7 out of hours mental health support line via **Spectrum.Life**.



For a full list of support visit  
[moray.uhi.ac.uk/mentalhealth](https://moray.uhi.ac.uk/mentalhealth)



# Mindful practice

Use the boxes below to put your thoughts to paper.

**What am I thinking about right now?**

**Three things you can hear, taste or feel?**

**What are you grateful for?**



