Transcript of Undergraduate Mental Health Awareness poster by Dr Zoe Ayres for Accessibility

With approximately 1 in 4 undergraduates experiencing mental health concerns, this poster explores some of the common stressors that students face during their undergraduate studies.

Number 1: Financial concerns.

Managing personal finances was not wanting to miss out on social opportunities with peers can be very difficult. In some cases, city living costs can be very high. tip: some universities have hardship funds that students can apply for. Budgeting and deciding what is essential may also help.

Number 2: Little fish, big pond

With the increasing size of academic cohorts, it is often easy to feel like just one of the crowd. Tip: academic tutors and teachers are there for you and can help point you in the direction of help.

Number 3: Job prospects

The fear of what is next and competing with peers for jobs can be daunting, including wondering whether you have spent your time well.

Number 4: Isolation

With deadlines and coursework looming, University work can be a lonely task. Tip: think about joining study groups on University teams/clubs.

Number 5: Fear of missing out

FOMO as well as peer pressure, can lead to a packed schedule with little downtime. Tip: sleep deprivation can impact wellbeing. Make sure to take some time out for you.

Number 6: Living with others.

Living with house mates you find difficult can add stress, whether it's loud music at 2:00 AM or who takes the trash out. Tip: tried to have a chat and discuss what behaviour is causing issues and set boundaries.

Number 7: Grade panic.

Being in the top percentages of your school classes, to middling at University can lead to feelings of impostor syndrome and inadequacy. Tip: try not to compare yourself with others.

Number 8: Exam stress.

With the time pressures often associated with exams, as well as the perceived impact on the future, exam periods often result in increased anxiety. Tip: try to treat revision like a job making time to exercise and eat well out of hours.

Number 9: Being away from home.

Being away from home for the first time we very difficult and fending for yourself independently can be overwhelming. Tip try to schedule regular calls for check-ins with home friends and loved ones.

Is someone you know in your cohort struggling? It's important to know some of the signs: being absent, slipping grades, social withdrawal, dishevelled its appearance, poor sleep patterns, increased irritability, changes in diet, increased drinking sometimes the signs are not evident or hard to spot and one of the difficulties is differentiating general student life versus those attributed to depression.

What can universities do to support students?

Signpost resources. Great resource is often exist, but they're not always visible. More apparent, consistent sign posting is needed to ensure that students are fully aware of the help available to them.

See students fast. When students are experiencing a mental health crisis, the speed at which the student is seen is incredibly important. Wait times need to be kept to a minimum with priority given to those most in need.

Train staff and create links. Staff need to be fully aware of the reporting routes and help available to be able to advise on next steps having personal tutors to provide approachable, familiar faces for the students is important so that the student has someone they can talk to.

Manage the transition. The transition from home to University is a difficult one. Posting classes on financial management, how to cook etc, to create a smoother transition is useful. Talking about mental health in welcome week is also necessary so students understand the strains.

What can students do to support their own mental health?

Seek medical advice. Speak to a medical professional about how you are feeling. This may lead to interventions such as medication or counselling to help you manage your mental health.

Reach out for help. If you feel able, talk to a friend, family member, your personal tutor, or one of your lectures and let them know you are in need of help. They will be able to provide support and guidance will stop your peers will likely be experiencing some of the feelings.

Focus on you. With the pressure on exams and grades, it's easy to forget about looking after yourself such as working out, going for a walk and eating well can also help you with your well being and often grades two as well as studying hard.

Say seeing others in distress. Seeing members of your cohort struggling can be difficult. Sometimes it be hard to know what what to do and what steps you should take try to regularly cheque him with them and let them know that help is available and encourage them to reach out.

Part of the mental health series by Dr Zoë Ayres free to distribute.