Mental Health: Finding Help

➔ **To fill out and reflect**

➔ **Developed by Students for Students**

This guide is designed for active use – you can write in it directly and interact with it. For this purpose, we've used the following symbol:

Content

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Mental Mental health challenges during studies:
You are not alone

Many students feel stressed, overwhelmed, or lonely – and that's not unusual.

Mental health challenges show up differently for everyone and are often only recognized late, for example through withdrawal, lack of motivation, or the constant feeling of having to "keep it together."

This guide is here to help you better understand warning signs and show you concrete ways to regain a sense of stability and well-being in your everyday student life.

Taking Control:
Strategies to Improve Your Well-Being

Mental health challenges during your studies are not uncommon – but the good news is: You can actively do something about them. Here are a few practical steps that might help:

- **Talk to others** – You don't have to carry everything on your own.
- **Build your self-worth** – through small, successful steps in everyday life.
- **Schedule breaks consciously** – Rest isn't a luxury, it's a necessity.
- **Get moving** – Established routines bring structure and energy.
- **Focus on the positive** – Gratitude can change the way you think.
- **Accept mistakes** – No one is perfect; learning is part of the process.
- **Allow yourself to accept help** – Strength also means knowing when to receive support.

Reflection Questions:

→ What has helped me in the past to cope with stress or difficult situations?

→What gives me energy in everyday life?

Professional Help- Counseling:

If the stress becomes too overwhelming, consider seeking help from a therapist or counselor who can offer strategies tailored to your situation.

Remember, it is okay to seek help and make adjustments. Prioritizing your mental health is key to both academic success and overall well-being.

Psychological Stress:

Symptoms you should take seriously

Mental health challenges often show up through symptoms that aren't immediately recognized as such. They can manifest physically, emotionally, or socially.

Symptoms that should be taken seriously:

- Your worries are negatively affecting your relationships.
- You lose interest in things that used to be important to you.
- You turn to alcohol or other substances more often to switch off.
- You feel constantly exhausted, unmotivated, or down.
- You experience physical complaints without a clear cause.
- You've already tried to solve the problem on your own – without success.

→ If you answer “yes” to one or more of these statements, it’s a sign to actively seek psychological support.

Reflection Questions:
→ Do I have a symptom that limits my daily life?

→ When exactly does it occur, and since when?

→ How intense is it? How long does it last?

Professional Psychological support–

First Steps to find help

Step 1: Initial Contact

When we're not feeling well, it takes courage and is the right thing to accept help. The first step is to talk to someone about your situation.

Possible first points of contact:

- Friends, family, fellow students
- Student counseling centers or psychotherapeutic services
- General practitioner or psychiatrist
- Helplines (e.g., 0800 111 0 111)

Reflection Questions

→ Who in my circle could I talk to honestly?

→ Who do I trust enough to open up to?

→ Write down 3 people or places you could reach out to:

1.

2.

3.

Step 2: A preliminary diagnosis

If you feel that your distress goes beyond everyday stress, the next step is a preliminary assessment by medical professionals. This can also help cover therapy costs through health insurance.

Ways to get a (suspected) diagnosis:

- General practitioner
- Psychiatrist
- Psychotherapist with appropriate training
- Psychiatric clinics / outpatient services

Reflection Questions:

→ Which symptoms are specifically troubling me?

→ Have I already spoken to a doctor or therapist?

If you receive a suspected diagnosis that requires therapeutic or medication treatment, the next step is to find a specialist or therapy place.

Step 3: Find therapy

Searching for a therapy spot takes time and energy.

There are different ways and resources to support you during this search.

How to find a therapist:

- Contact your health insurance for lists of approved therapists
- Use portals like therapie.de or psychotherapiesuche.de
- Call 116 117 or use the app for appointment scheduling
- Ask counseling centers or trusted people for help with writing emails or making phone calls
- A sample email fo
- r the first contact is attached
- To keep track, use the fillable list on the next page

Reflection Questions:

→ How much energy do I currently have for the search? Do I need support?

→ Is it easier for me to write or to call?

→ What do you specifically need to take the first step in your search?

List of therapy places I have contacted

Conact	Conacted (Date/How)	Response

Step 4: Obtaining therapy

- Have several initial conversations with different therapists → choose the person you feel comfortable with.
- Clarify costs (public vs. private insurance) with your health insurance provider.
- Proceed as structured as possible:
  Use email templates, set aside time for phone calls.
- Feel free to use the list from Step 3 as well as the email template attached.

Reflection Questions:

→ Who did I already feel comfortable with?

→ What do I need so that I don't have to take this step alone?

Step 5: Treatment

What to Expect:

- Emotional work: It can be tiring at first – and that's normal.
- Regular appointments: Online sessions are possible – clarify this directly, if this is a must for you.
- Important note: Don't quit therapy lightly – otherwise, a waiting period may apply.
- Changing therapists is allowed if you don't feel comfortable.

Reflection Questions:

→ How do I feel after the first sessions?

→ Am I getting along well with the therapist?

→ Do I need to adjust anything organizationally (e.g., taking a leave of absence*)?

→ What changes can I already notice?

***A leave of Absence**: If you need a break from your studies due to mental or physical stress or if you are undergoing intensive treatment, you can consider taking a leave of absence semester (For more information, please visit: **https://h-da.de/en/study/study-organization/leave-of-absence**

Step 6: Additional Support (for students)

Therapy and medication can certainly help you manage your daily life more effectively. Additionally, there are various other services available at your university that can offer valuable assistance and support, including:

F**urther Resources:**

- Overviews of counseling services at Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences: https://h-da.de/en/studies/advice

- Central Advisory Service
  Study orientation and planning, problems during studies
  studienberatung@h-da.de

- International Student Services
  Non-academic concerns: e.g. finding accommodation, residence permit, etc.
  international.student.services@h-da.de

Reflection Questions:

→ Which of these services have I not used so far – and why?

→ In which area do I currently wish for more support (academic / emotional / social)?

→ Which 3 points of contact could help me?

1.

2.

3.

Prepare an email to send to multiple therapy providers in your area. The email should briefly and clearly describe your symptoms and their severity.

Example Email Inquiry:

Subject: Request for Initial Consultation

Dear [Therapist's Name/Clinic Name],

I hope this message finds you well.

My name is [Your Name], and I am reaching out to inquire about the availability of an initial consultation with a therapist. I have been experiencing [briefly describe your symptoms, e.g., persistent anxiety and difficulty concentrating] over the past [duration, e.g., several months]. These symptoms have significantly impacted my daily life, including [mention specific effects, e.g., work performance and social interactions].

I would like to schedule an initial appointment to discuss my situation and explore potential treatment options. Please let me know about your availability and any necessary steps to arrange this consultation.

Additionally, please note that I am [mention your language proficiency, e.g., not fluent in German; if possible, I would prefer to communicate in English]. If your practice does not offer services in English, could you recommend someone who does?

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Best regards,

[Your Name]
[Your Contact Information]

This example email is designed to be concise while providing essential information about your symptoms and request for an appointment.