Anxiety can be extremely debilitating and leads to avoidant behaviours like:

- Avoiding lectures, tutorials, placements.
- Avoiding social situations and busy places like shopping centres and university campuses.
- Turning to unhealthy behaviours such as alcohol and substance use.

Stress is to be expected from university students, along with some anxiety such as exam anxiety. Anxiety in the form of panic attacks, extreme worry or unrealistic fears or phobias may mean you are experiencing an anxiety disorder. With an anxiety disorder you will feel out of place and the anxiety will be interfering with your life. Sometimes it interferes in just one area, like exam anxiety but other times it is evident across multiple parts of your life.

Tips

- Learn some breathing strategies. Breathe in for four seconds, hold for two seconds, then breathe out for six seconds. Check out our tip sheets on ‘Relaxation Techniques’ and ‘The Calming Breath’ to help you improve this skill.
- Tell yourself, “it is ok, these feelings will pass, I will get through this”.
- Face your fears in a ‘graded’ way – like climbing a ladder, one rung at a time.
- Check out the tips on the ‘Grounding Techniques’ tipsheet to help you stay in the present moment rather than worrying about the past or future.
- Seek help from a professional. Anxiety disorders are treatable.

Help is available

- Contact your GP, the University Health Service on campus or Counselling.
- Talk to a family member or friend and ask them to take you to a professional.

Links

- headspace
- Beyondblue
- Youthbeyondblue
- MindSpot
- E-couch
- AnxietyBC

Apps

Search on the App Store or Google Play

Breathe (apple only)
Breathe helps you increase your deep breathing skills and gain better control over your physical responses

MindShift
MindShift is an app designed to help teens and young adults cope with anxiety

Reachout Worry
Track your worries and get tips on how to cope with them

Smiling Mind
Develop your mindfulness skills with the help of audio scripts.