



UMCS
UNIWERSYTET MARI CURIE-SKŁODOWSKIEJ

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BEFRIEND YOURSELF DURING THE STUDIES

University studies are a special period. We meet people, learn new things, some of us live beyond the family home for the first time. We face many challenges and many opportunities during that time. On the one hand, studying requires much effort. We learn to organize our work independently, be in touch with the university realities and find our place in a group of colleagues. On the other hand, it is the time when friendships begin; new things are tried out, the time to pursue one's passions and the time for personal development.

We all know that it is a very demanding time of our lives, both cognitively and emotionally. You probably frequently felt in need of a guide to university life – and you are holding it in your hands now!

This brochure is based on the belief that, in order to achieve satisfactory results in your studies, you have to develop wisely in four areas, i.e. learning, the management of stress and other emotions, management of your time and relations with others. This text will be particularly useful to those who can experience difficulties in an effective use of the studying time for a time due to mental crises. Thanks to knowledge contained here, everyone will be able to cope with challenges faced at the university and at further stages of life.

We hope it will be a good read!

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STRESS

How to cope with stress?

What is stress?

Imagine that you are in a place of maximum comfort. Perhaps you have an image in your head: a beach, the day is warm but not too hot, a glass of freshly squeezed juice in your hand, you have just had a delicious meal and are full but not too full, a person with whom you feel safe is next to you, the wind gently caresses the skin, no obligations... Life is good.

So, you are reclining comfortably on your deck chair when dark clouds enter that beautiful landscape, cold wind starts blowing, you spill your drink and the person with whom you have felt so safe up till now gets nervous and starts behaving in a manner that is unpleasant for you. Additionally, you can hear a noisy quarrel of the locals who are approaching you. Additionally, your delicious meal sits heavy on your stomach causing strange movements in your bowels.

This is stress. Something that knocks us out of balance and of the perfect condition. It sometimes encourages us to act and, sometimes, it paralyzes us. All these things that knocked you out of balance in your imagination are called stressors.

A question appears here: **Is stress always harmful?** Well, it is in fact beneficial to you to a certain degree because it can mobilize you if its level is optimal for you. Psychology mentions "eustress" or a positive stress that motivates and "distress", which is a type of stress that causes pain or even paralyzes. The optimum level is different for each of us.

How we function depends on:

- stress levels,
- our energy reserves.

If the stress level exceeds our energy resource and we become anxious we will begin to act on a caveman's level instead of acting rationally:

- we enter the fight or flight mode instead of looking for other solutions,
- we freeze or become paralyzed and completely unable to act.

In the longer term, this situation entails the risk of getting stuck in a vicious circle of stress. In such a situation, we feel tension and excessive stimulation almost all the time, which makes relaxation and regeneration impossible. It can happen that what has been helping us regain strength so far ceases to be helpful because we have not enough strength to enjoy it. And the fact that we cannot regenerate and remain tense all the time makes our energy reserves even more depleted and each stressor is felt even more strongly, which, in turn, consumes a lot of energy, etc. All these things negatively impact the mood and cognitive abilities, physical and mental health.

ATTENTION! Excessive stress influences an intensification of symptoms and the occurrence of crises and mental disorders such as: anxiety disorders, depression, ADHD, schizophrenia and many others.

Five steps to cope with stress:

1. Reading signals and understanding the behaviour and emotions in the context of stress.

- Observe the signals of excessive stress, excessive stimulation and too low energy level.
- Understand your and others' emotions and behaviour in the context of stress and the fight/flight reaction.

2. Recognition of stressors.

- Become a stress detective in first Self-Reg areas or the method of coping with stress.

3. Stress reduction.

- Reduce stress enough to calm down and be able to act rationally.

4. Awareness of stress and its causes.

- Become aware of when you are stressed and why?

5. Strategies for calming down, regeneration and building mental resistance.

Build the self-awareness of what calms you down and what helps you renew your energy reserves.

Above-mentioned steps can be taken in any order. Knowledge of five areas of stress and self-regulation is useful in each of these steps:

- **Biological area** – or everything that relates to the body, its condition and what we perceive with our senses.
- **Emotional area** – or emotions and our way to experience them.
- **Cognitive area** – or everything that happens in our heads: thinking, remembering, learning, troubleshooting.
 - **Social area** – or being in a group, understanding others and their behaviours, getting along with others, understanding social norms.
 - **Pro-social area** – or what happens between I and others, related to going beyond the individual Self: empathy and coping with others' emotions, giving up one's needs, justice, moral standards.

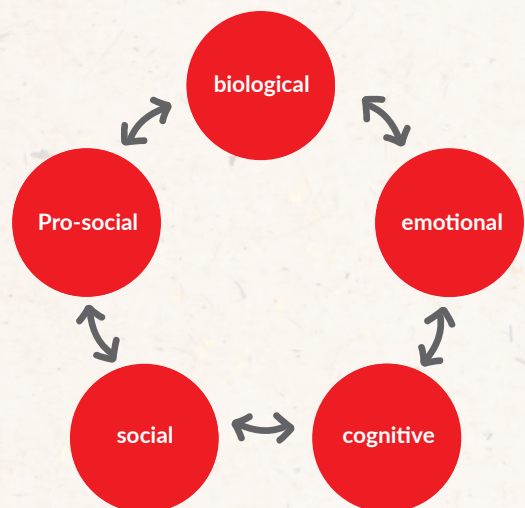


Fig. 1. Interrelations of stress and self-regulation areas

It is important to know that above-mentioned areas influence one another and individual stressors intensify one another's influence. For example, if you did not sleep at night, are hungry and tired (stressors from the biological area) it will be more difficult to concentrate on a lecture (effects in the cognitive area). Or, let us assume that you are not particularly sensitive to heat, you can cope with it. However, on a day when you are frustrated with something that does not go well for you (a stressor in the emotional and cognitive area), a friend shouted at you for unknown reason (a stressor both in the social and pro-social area) and you have an important exam tomorrow (well, how many stressors in different areas does an exam generate for you?) – hot weather can make you mad.

Each one of us is different. Therefore, not all stressors will apply to you and not all methods of their reduction and regeneration will be useful for you.

A list of most frequent stress signals can be found below

BIOLOGICAL	EMOTIONAL	COGNITIVE	SOCIAL	PRO-SOCIAL
low energy level, sluggishness, tiredness	being overwhelmed with emotions	inattentiveness and learning problems	problems related to the establishment and maintenance of friendships	the failure to feel empathy and the lack of understanding of others
excessive mobility and agitation	too long and too frequent strong emotions, especially negative ones	difficulties in switching between tasks	problems related to the cooperation and group activities	fear and the sense of exclusion from a group
difficulties in the transition between different stages of agitation	(or perceived as "negative": anger, sadness, fear, embarrassment, guilt, etc.)	difficulties in coping with frustration, defeat, one's mistakes	conversation problems	being overwhelmed by people who dominate the group
headaches, stomach aches or other psychosomatic ailments	explosiveness	low motivation to learn and work	problems with the understanding of other people's behaviour and social standards	attraction to things contradicting your moral standards
greater sensitivity to noise or sounds	excessive fear	negative thoughts about oneself, other people and the world and about one's future	problems related to sociability	strong concentration on your needs and significant difficulties in abstaining from their fulfilment
difficulties in sitting still for longer than a few minutes	great changeability and unpredictability of moods		problems related to social aggression	
clumsiness	prevalence of negative emotions			
the feeling of being overwhelmed as a reaction to stimuli from any of the senses				

Which ones can you find in yourself?

You can find a list of typical stressors in the table below:

BIOLOGICAL	EMOTIONAL	COGNITIVE	SOCIAL	PRO-SOCIAL
<p>unpleasant sensations in each of the senses: smell, touch, hearing, sight, proprioception or the sense that tells us where individual parts of the body are located, balance, interoceptive sense that senses important functions of the body: the pulse, temperature, blood pressure, hunger, thirst, the feeling of tension in the bowels or bladder</p> <p>body strain</p> <p>the failure to meet the body's needs (hunger, lack of movement)</p> <p>disease</p> <p>improper diet</p>	<p>intense emotions, especially negative ones, that consume a lot of energy, are difficult to cope with and to experience, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rage, • anger, • sadness, • guilt, <p>strong positive emotions, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong joy, • euphoria, • curiosity, • excitement <p>the stressor is the inability to experience emotions adequately</p>	<p>Tasks we face, e.g. if they are too difficult or too easy, unfinished, monotonous and routine.</p> <p>Additionally, an intellectual effort itself, the need to concentrate, our own mistakes, etc.</p> <p>something new and incomprehensible for us (note: some people love it, monotony will be the greatest stressor for them)</p> <p>perception of reality – self-propelled negative attitude to oneself, others or the world can be a vicious circle, a self-propelled process</p>	<p>unknown people</p> <p>Crowd</p> <p>difficulties in understanding others</p> <p>no contact with an important person or other persons in a similar situation</p> <p>the feeling of being different</p> <p>unfriendly persons nearby (or persons we perceive as unfriendly)</p> <p>situations that cause confusion or difficulties</p> <p>conflicts in a group</p> <p>witnessing or being a victim of violence</p> <p>one's own or others' expectations related to social life</p>	<p>the need to give up one's needs</p> <p>compassion to someone's pain</p> <p>the need to cope with strong emotions of other people</p> <p>the sense of injustice</p> <p>the sense of guilt</p> <p>experiencing or perceiving the lack of empathy in others</p> <p>experiencing or perceiving the lack of generosity in others</p> <p>experiencing or perceiving the lack of care in others</p> <p>the feeling that others only care about themselves</p> <p>no social support</p> <p>conflict of values</p> <p>morally ambiguous situations</p>

Which of them stress you?

You will find ways of dealing with them below.

How to reduce stress and take care of your regeneration?

In the biological area

To reduce stress in this area, it is worthwhile to:

- **Take care of the stimuli reaching us:**
 - ensure silence and dimmed light before stressful events,
 - create “safe caves” for yourself – places where you feel good and your senses take a rest.

- **take care of your physical condition, i.e.:**

- sufficient movement (30-45 minutes of light exercise daily),
- good sleep (duration and quality – relaxation before sleep),
- appropriate diet (with no great amounts of sugar and fat).

To regain peace of mind, you can also:

- Concentrate on the breathing,
- Concentrate on bodily sensations.
- Consciously relax the muscles, especially shoulders and the face.
- Surround yourself with pleasant smells and images, listen to nice sounds, etc.
- Indulge in a massage (or self-massage).

The method you choose depends on your sensory type.

In the emotional area

For emotions not to become stressors you have to learn how to experience them properly.

Each emotion can be treated as the information about our needs, values and the way we perceive the world. It is worthwhile to learn to recognize your emotions and develop the understanding of what they say to us as well as the ability to react calmly to them and regulate them.

Remember that emotions are similar to a wave – they increase, achieve the maximum and then recede. This is why they are worth experiencing consciously; recognize them and learn to experience them as waves or changing weather with no excessive submission to them but rather observe them and understand their influence.

Remember to ensure a supply of positive emotions – they “power up your batteries”, especially if you experience them with awareness, consciously observing and even slightly exaggerating them.

In the cognitive area

The majority of stressors in this area, related to studying and concentration as well as with contact with something new are an inherent component of a student’s life. And you have to put up with it. To learn how to study more effectively, see the chapter titled *Practice – how to be effective at the university?*

It is worthwhile to fight against your negative outlook on the world.

You can argue with your thoughts, undermine them and find alternatives for them that will be closer to the reality and less painful. To this end, you can use five golden questions from the Rational Behaviour Therapy (RTZ) and look at a thought considering whether:

- 1. It is based on facts.**
- 2. Helps you attain goals.**

3. **Helps protect your health and take care of it.**
4. **Helps you build good relations with others and avoid conflicts or settle them peacefully.**
5. **Helps you feel what you want to feel.**

If you answered “no” to the majority of these five questions consider another, perhaps a longer alternative that will be closer to the reality and more beneficial for you.

In the self-calming and regeneration area, you can also:

- **Try out repeating certain words or sentences in your mind**, e.g.: “Peace”, “I am calming down”.

- **Take care to be mindful of positive thoughts and to exaggerate them** (we usually automatically exaggerate negative ones, don’t we?) – when you think about something good, spend more time on that thought.

- **Find such cognitive challenges that bring about satisfaction –** preferably slightly above our capabilities but still attainable. They can include reading or learning something you like.

In the social area

To reduce stress and recover energy in this area, it is worthwhile to:

- Take care of the healthy sense of self-worth based on the awareness of one’s strengths and weaknesses and self-acceptance.

- Search for such a group and such people with whom you feel well.

- Take part in interpersonal training if you feel that you lack social skills or if you do not understand others very much.

- Search for your own ways to understand others better and be friendly towards them. You can also observe what you think about people. Are these facts or judgment? Does such thinking improve your relations?

- Remain in touch with people close to you and care for good relations. They are the main indicator of happiness for most people.

In the pro-social area

This area refers to such aspects of human life as empathy, generosity, care, selflessness, i.e. “going beyond one’s self” and being a part of a larger community. On the one hand, we need this area very much and, on the other hand, it can generate much stress and costs us quite a lot of energy.

To reduce stress in this area, you can:

- Use your imagination and build a “protective field” or “armour” in your mind whenever you feel a strong impact of other people’s emotions. You can imagine that you are surrounded by a glass ball that makes you invulnerable to the emotional influence of others but does not isolate you. You can observe everything with a greater distance in it.

- Take care of your personal borders and alone time so that emotions you “contract” easily can subside.
- In addition to the emotional empathy, develop the stronger cognitive empathy (or understanding what others can feel and think without feeling the same emotions) and empathic care (or the understanding how we can help others feel better).
 - Care for the balance in the giving and taking – if you are a “giver” you may feel the “giver’s high” and also tiredness. However, if you take more than you give you can feel inferior and do not experience the inflow of good emotions related to helping someone.
 - Surround yourself with positive people with “infectious” positive energy.
 - Build support groups – consciously choose friends and acquaintances from among people who motivate you, give you energy, accept and understand you. At the same time, care for others by motivating them, showing them acceptance and understanding.

Questions for self-reflection

You will find questions designed to develop self-reflection below. You can think about them on a single day or answer them in stages, returning to an appropriate part of the brochure if necessary. We also encourage you to write – you can start your own self-regulation diary and write about your stressors and ways to cope with them daily or after difficult days.

Biological area

- What are my typical stress symptoms in the biological area?
- What are my typical stressors in the biological area? What do I dislike? What is unpleasant for me? What stimuli related to the body do I dislike? What is the condition of my body? Do I sleep well? What do I eat? What about my physical activity?
- What stimuli of the senses are pleasant for me? How can I calm down and regenerate my energy in the biological area?

Emotional area

- Do I observe emotional stress symptoms in myself?
- What emotions do I feel most frequently and most strongly? Which of them are most difficult for me? Do I contribute to the protracted duration of certain emotions?
- How can I reduce the intensity of negative emotions? Which positive emotions would I like to feel more and how can I take care of it?

Cognitive area

- What are my stress signals in the cognitive area?
- What are my typical stressors in the cognitive area?

- How can I reduce my stress in the cognitive area? Do I observe typical automatic thoughts in myself that generate a lot of stress? How can I neutralize them? How can I “power up my batteries” in the cognitive area?

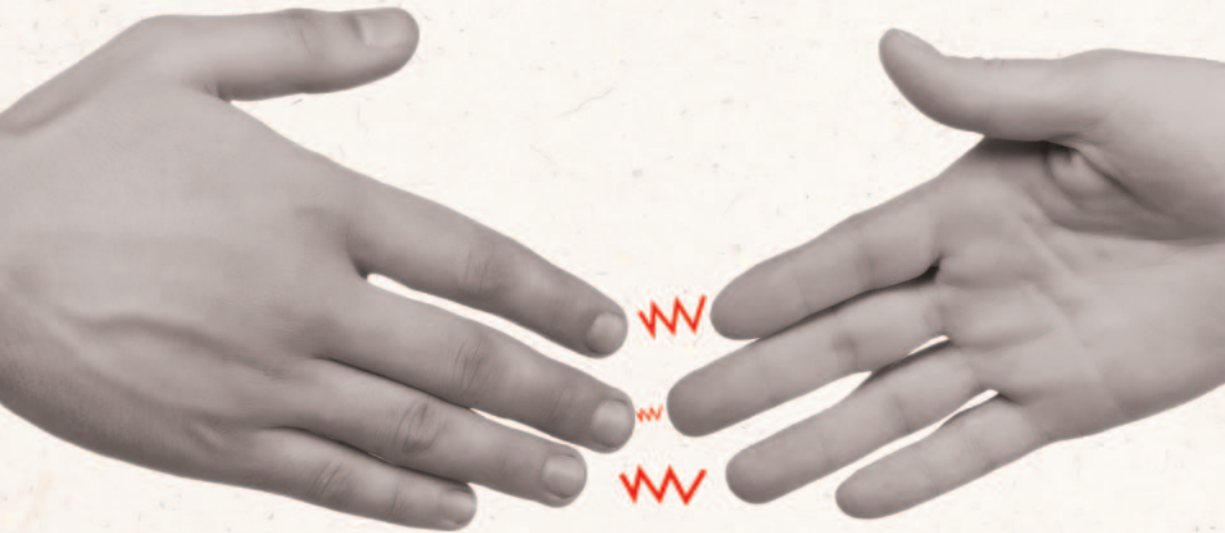
Social area

- What are my stress signals in the social area?
- What “consumes my batteries” in the social area?
- What helps me power up my batteries in the social area? In what groups do I like to be? What kind of people do I like? In whose company do I feel well and comfortable, understood and accepted?

Pro-social area

- Can I see pro-social stress signals in myself? What are they if I do?
- What are my typical stressors in the pro-social area? Which ones do I experience as particularly painful?
- How can I reduce my stress in the pro-social area? How can I take care of my energy level in this area?

R e l a



RELATIONS

C i e

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

How to build positive relations at the university?

Good relations with others do not only improve your mood but also allow you to count on others' support.

The quality of your relations with others depends on how:

1. You treat yourself:

- If you are ashamed of or feel guilty about your difficulties it will also be more difficult for others to accept you. Respect yourself before you expect others to do it.
- Develop and take care of yourself regardless of how others treat you.

2. You treat others:

- Building positive relations requires time. Be patient and let your colleagues get used to your current situation; try to be friendly towards them during that time.
- Your acquaintance can keep their distance because they do not know how to behave and are afraid of hurting you. Be forgiving. Try to take the initiative.

If these borders are transgressed in any manner:

- Remain calm and remember that the behaviour of another person says something about that person, not about you.
- Frankly and directly say what behaviour you do not like. Remember, you do not have to enter into debate or explain anything.

Take advantage of various forms of activity offered by the university:

• **Scientific circles and interest groups** – you will find students with a passion there who act together in order to develop in a specific area.

• **Disabled Students Association “Alter Idem”** – where you will meet people active in the academic community to overcome barriers and stereotypes related to the disabled. The Association organizes many interesting events and training excursions that will help you establish close relations with people from various departments and faculties.

- **Training courses and workshops related to personal development** – they allow you to develop your passions as a part of the Team for the Disabled and the Career Office. They will help you develop soft skills such as assertiveness, emotional intelligence, communication skills and other.

Should you inform your classmates about your psychological condition?

Be aware of your needs resulting from your health. This awareness will also help you determine the intensity of relations and the way of expressing yourself in them.

Everything depends on you.

If you want and are ready to talk about your situation and health take the following issues into account:

- **To whom?** – knowingly choose people with whom you would like to share your situation. You can ask them for discretion.

- **How many?** – if you prefer, you can talk about your experience not mentioning the diagnosis, concentrating on the needs resulting from your health condition.

- **How?** – remember about the respect for your experience that is or was difficult. It is a part of your history. Always talk well about yourself without blaming yourself, negative designations, etc.

- **When?** – begin such a conversation when you and your interlocutor have enough time for you to be able to answer potential questions.

- **Where?** – let it be a peaceful place that guarantees some privacy.

If you are asked about your situation and do not want to talk about it:

- Say it clearly: “I do not want to talk about it at the moment”.
- Stress that this fact can change: “I will let you know if I change my mind”.
- You can suggest another conversation topic if you want.

If you fear the disclosure of the information about your health and what others will think about it remember:

- **Another person’s opinion says something about the person who has it and not about you.**

- What says something about you is what choices you make and how you treat others and not what kind of psychological problems you have irrespectively of anyone’s opinion about you.

- Do not let yourself to identify with the disease and to see yourself only as a person with a psychological crisis. Remember that you are more than that – you have your plans, dreams, value system and worldview.

- And, even though it can sound lofty, just be a good person and let yourself be guided with your values; what others say will not be so important then.
- Take advantage of the difficulties you experienced to become free of the desire to be liked by everybody and concentrate on those who accept you and are worthy of your friendship.

Being ashamed is only justified if you do something wrong. You cannot feel guilty because of something you have not control of. Of course, we frequently hear how agile and satisfied with our lives we should be and we regret that we did not fulfil these expectations. However, is there any sense in adapting your life to someone else's standards?

intellect



INTELLECT

INTELLECT

Various crises, including a health crisis, make the learning process more difficult. Deteriorating effects (despite the same effort) are also among the first observable symptoms of a crisis. Of course, tiredness or overload of the nervous system with an excess of stimuli and tasks can also be the reason. Because of that, always try to have a regenerating rest and a rational attitude to tasks related to your academic duties.

How to study?

If your existing methods are ineffective you have an opportunity to change them now. In order to do this, you should learn a few new techniques that will allow you to:

- learn more effectively;
- remember for a longer period;
- shorten the time necessary for learning;
- make the learning more pleasant.

Use four keys to effective learning:

1. Recognize your predispositions and the learning style that is most beneficial for you.
2. Learn about memory operation rules and methods of its improvement.
3. Organize the time and place for mental work.
4. Take care for your state of mind to favour the learning.

KEY 1. Know your predispositions and the learning style that is most beneficial for you.

What is your learning style?

If you cannot take advantage of a professional psychological test check your prevailing learning style using the test available here: www.zskesowo.kopi.edu.pl/userfiles/file/logopedia/pdf/style_uczenia_się.pdf). Thanks to tips contained there, you will also learn how to organize your learning environment to make it most beneficial for you.

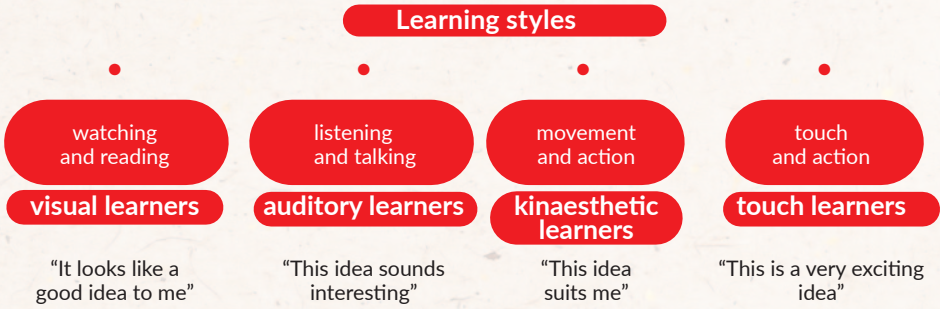


Fig. 2. Learning style

If you currently lack enthusiasm to experiment and search for new learning methods due to your illness, you can take advantage of suggestions below. If you receive new information in line with your preferable learning style studying will require less effort. You will control disturbances generated in the environment in a conscious manner!

KEY 2. Learn basic facts about the memory and its improvement methods.

How to improve memory?

Our memory consists of three components called phases:

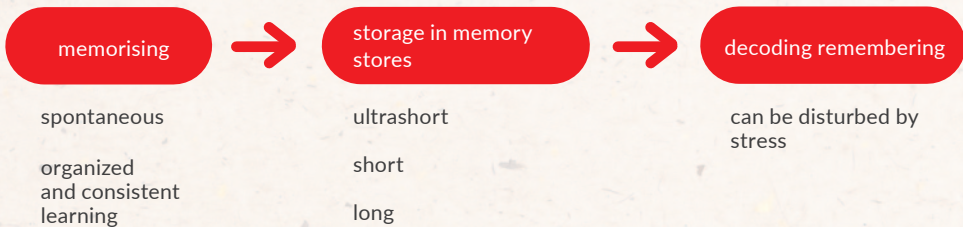


Fig. 3. Phases of the memorising process

Phase I - memorising

In phase I, take care for your activity to consist of the purposeful studying rather than disorganized, accidental memorizing.

Two issues are important:

- Make an intention to remember the material.
- Organize the learning in a rational process (using techniques presented above).

Phase II - storage

In phase II, your goal as a learner is for the information to be transferred to the long-term memory store and recorded in such a manner that they are easy to recover.

Two issues are important:

- Repetitions – they help record the information in a durable manner.
- Associations and addition of the new information to knowledge already acquired – they help create a path of access to the recorded information.

Repetitions! Nothing can be done without them!

They refresh and strengthen memory traces that help find the necessary information in your memory. The chart below shows the normal curve of forgetting and the accrual of memorization thanks to repetitions.

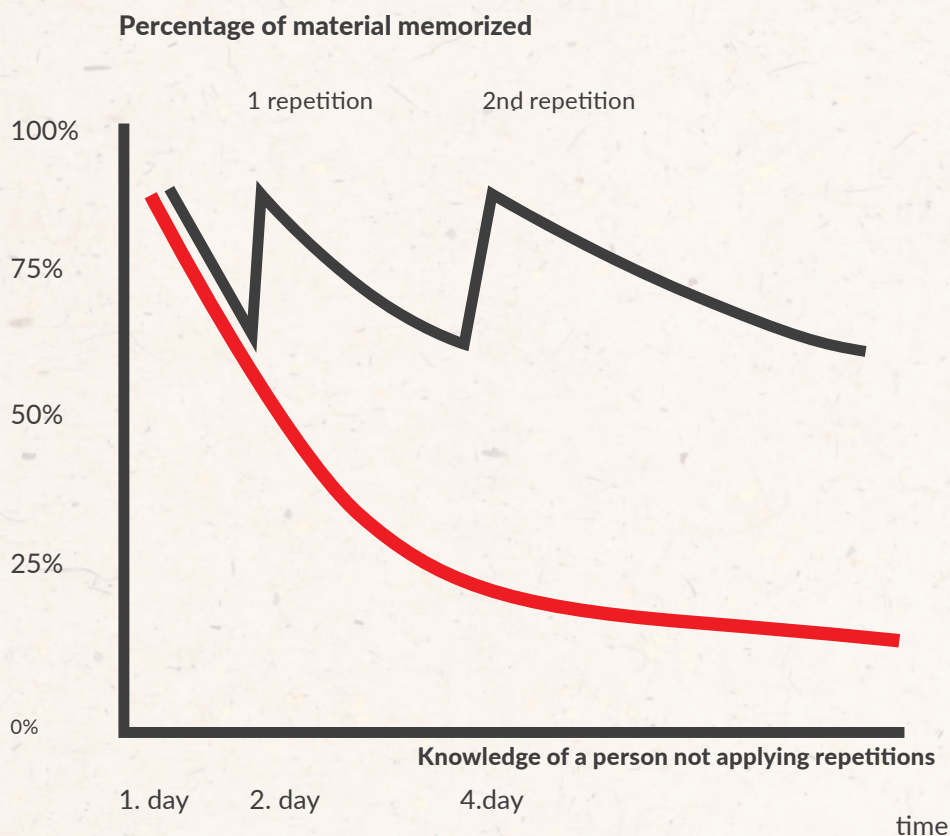


Fig. 4. Forgetting curve and memory accrual
(Source: <http://metody-uczenia-sie.blogspot.com/>)

Note that the memorization level is 50% better with only two repetitions applied. For the successful storage, it is recommended to apply a system of repetitions in the form of five consecutive stages.

1ST REPETITION	5-10 min. after knowledge acquisition	Concentrate on the reading of your notes and remembering main points
2ND REPETITION	1 day after the 1 st repetition	Try to repeat the information while checking whether you made any mistakes
3RD REPETITION	1 week after the 1 st repetition	Recreate the information using your own words, stressing those elements that seem difficult to you
4TH REPETITION	1 month after the 1 st repetition	Reminds the 3 rd repetition. If certain components still escape you read the forgotten fragments of your notes carefully
5TH REPETITION	6 months after the 1 st repetition	Just like the 4 th repetition

Note that the memorization level is 50% better with only two repetitions applied. For the successful storage, it is recommended to apply a system of repetitions in the form of five consecutive stages.

! It takes time to strengthen memory traces. The sleep and its deep phase are beneficial here!

Associations and addition of information

Repetitions do not have to be onerous and boring! Take advantage of memory techniques, creation of mind maps and creative notes as well as a system of repetitions. Mnemonics will help you. It is a range of methods facilitating the memorization thanks to

the use of imagination and associations. The more senses you engage to memorize things the faster and more durably you will remember them. Attach a dynamic, multi-sensual image to the information you would like to remember. Stir up your phantasy and create images that do not exist in real life.

Features of associated images that guarantee the durability of memory are listed below:

- Funny, full of humour, absurd, original.
- Exaggerated, contrasting, dynamic, showing movement.
- Illogical, striking, using all the senses.
- Extraordinary, weird, detailed.

Examples of the creation and use of associations can be found here: <https://technikpamieciowe.wordpress.com/2011/03/23/lancuchowa-metoda-skojarzen-lms/>

Phase III - reconstruction

The most important thing in phase III is that nothing should make it more difficult for you to remember the information.

Three issues are important:

- Stress reduction
- Coping with social fears.
- liquidation of concentration issues.

If you have a problem with the effective reminding yourself of things due to social fears (or high stress levels related to the presence of other people) or concentration problems, note that both these problems can result from psychological difficulties or herald them. Stress management methods can be found in the chapter titled *Stress*. If the problem applies to you UMCS offers various adaptations after a medical or psychological consultation. You can read about them in the chapter titled: *Practice - how to be effective at the university?*

KEY 3. Organize your time and place of intellectual work.

How to manage time and energy?

Health crises are often accompanied by lower levels of energy and motivation to act. Your strong will needed to battle the disease is often weakened.

! This is why it is so important to introduce the greatest possible number of schemes, rituals, habits and activity principles to spend as little energy and strong will as possible to self-regulate, to encourage yourself to make an effort and work every time!

Entry ritual

To initiate an action is usually most difficult. A short entry ritual covering activities preceding intellectual work will help you (5-10 minutes).

An example of such a ritual:

- **Removing what could disturb you** – cleaning the place of work, switching off the TV, telephone and Facebook.

- **Preparation of necessary materials.**

- **Warming up exercises** stimulating concentration and the senses, e.g. imagining an orange and maintaining it in your imagination for a few minutes.

- **Energizing exercises** e.g. stretching, jumps.

- **Ensuring a good mood** by eating a piece of chocolate or listening to favourite music.

Determine the time for learning

- Select it depending on when you function at your best. For the “early bird” type, it can be a morning after ablutions and a meal. For the “owl” type, it will be in the evening.

- Rationally plan the duration of the concentration and breaks.

- Do not work till you drop. Such a situation entails the feeling of tiredness and surfeit that, later, discourage you from the resumption of learning.

- You probably concentrate effectively for a shorter duration during your convalescence period.

However, remember:

Do not fight for a longer concentration period but rather take breaks more frequently!

1. Specify your optimum working time and **set your alarm clock.**

2. When it rings, leave your desk immediately even if you would like to continue your work. **Thanks to this action, you will return to your activity with a greater vigour after the break.**

3. Condition the duration of breaks on the cycle in which you work. **First breaks can be shorter but they should become longer later.**

4. Plan what you would like to do during the break. **Use up the planned time: do not shorten or prolong it.** Use the alarm clock to inform you about the end of the break.

5. Protect yourself from unplanned breaks that suck out the rest of your strong will. Inform all those concerned that you are learning now. **Set the phone to silent and close the Facebook.**

Remember! Thanks to such breaks, you do not only rest but also strengthen learning effects!

How to organize your break well?

Take care to:

- **Be hydrated** – even a slight deficiency of water impacts the mind negatively.
- **Oxygenation** – a few exercises and relaxation of nape muscles will be sufficient.
- **Zour mood** – if the work wears you out, play some dynamic music; if you feel anxious, listen to something relaxing.
- **A change of activity type and place** – if you fail to do this your mind will not distinguish the concentration time from the relaxation time and you will not learn or rest effectively. For example, juggling will allow you to relax, synchronize brain hemispheres and put you a good mood.

Organize the workplace:

- **Ensure good lighting.**
- **Never work in your bed!** Your brain associates that place with rest – you will probably fall asleep soon.
- **If you do not like to work at your desk the floor will be better than the bed.**
- **Remember** – if you occupy the same place every time you will enter the mode that will automatically introduce the condition promoting the learning.

KEY 4. Take care for the favourable state of mind

Strong emotions, lowered sense of self-worth, fear for the future, medications – all these things can significantly reduce your ability to concentrate, which is necessary when you learn.

How to concentrate?

- Make a conscious decision that you want to learn.
- Avoid stimuli that divert your attention (sensual factors, emotions and thoughts).
- Practice the ability to control your attention, e.g. by visualizing simple but multi-sensual images such as an image of a fruit.
 - Make colourful notes, illustrate what you learn. The duration of the concentration is prolonged thanks to a variety of colours, their contrast and attractiveness.
 - Specify the goal you want to achieve and the time you want to spend for that purpose.
 - Answer the following questions: “what will I gain by learning?“, “Why is it important to me?“ etc. and put the answers down on a motivation board.
 - Do not overestimate the role of coffee. Physical exercises will be better in oxygenating your brain and stimulating the concentration.

- Learn to use alpha waves for learning. When they prevail in your brain, you will be able to take advantage of the accelerated learning phenomenon. They are characteristic for the moment when you fall asleep and wake up (you can repeat the material then) as well as for meditation and hypnosis (learn special exercises).

How to motivate oneself?

As a result of a health crisis, your motivation to learn can fluctuate. Fortunately, you can develop it thanks to awards.

A motivating award can have many forms:

- Curiosity and pleasure of learning are the most effective awards. For that reason, passionate people learn without effort, quickly and sustainably.
- Joy can result not only from grades and approval. It can result from the fact of doing purposeful work, overcoming one's limitations and weaknesses or the attainment of goals.

A system of external awards will also be useful:

- Award yourself for each achievement. Initially, attendance or return to a group of colleagues can be such an award.
- Every morning, plan something pleasant for the evening.
- Plan a better award after a week, month or after a successful series of exams.

NOTE: motivating yourself with the fear of grades or disapproval of the environment can shorten the duration of learning. However, it entails a huge danger! We very quickly lose the access to the information associated with unpleasant emotions, e.g. nervous atmosphere accompanying the learning. Because of that, be forgiving towards yourself.

- Before you regain full learning efficiency, you will have the right to poorer grades and to adapt the education process to your needs.
- You can count on the support of the UMCS Team for the Disabled and take advantage of some psychological advice, among other things, as regards the effective learning.

How to ensure good attitude?

- Be positive and you will have a greater chance to succeed.
- Take care of yourself according to the Self-Reg principles from the chapter titled **Stress**
- Remind yourself of the reasons for which you decided to study and place them in a visible place.
- Concentrate on the realization of current plans rather than look to the distant future.
- Treat failures as a natural element of life – concentrate on solutions more.

Would you like to learn more or to train your learning ability? **Contact the UMCS psychologist, Ms. Małgorzata Szerafin: tel. 730 499 898.27 28**

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Practice

PRACTICE

- how to be effective at the university?

The most important thing is for you to remember that the convalescence process is as important as the studying process. It is not possible to study effectively if you do not take care of yourself in the following areas:

- wellbeing;
- time management;
- practical matters related to the studying process.

Wellbeing

It facilitates the studying process and is a necessary prerequisite for gaining new knowledge and competence.

You will learn how to reduce your stress and build good relations from the chapter titled *Stress*.

In your student's life, you cannot forget about those aspects of life that are important for you: **your interests, relations with people close to you, small pleasures such as excursions to the cinema, your favourite sports or walks.** Breakthrough discoveries in science were made during strolls or in a bathtub ;-).

How to manage your time?

Studying during a psychological crisis and after its remission is a challenge because you operate in an environment characterized by high intellectual requirements that are also related to the need to plan your independent work.

Take advantage of tips related to effective time management:

1. Systematically develop all areas of your life: studying, relations, rest, interests.

a. **Prepare a day/week** plan including your key priorities for which you have to find time and other matters that you can deal with if an opportunity arises.

b. **Plan some time for friends and interests in advance** because this is the time in which you gain energy needed for challenges related to the studying process.

2. Know yourself enough to know in which areas you would like to develop.

a. Note which **subjects are naturally interesting for you,** give you joy and satisfaction.

3. **Ask yourself about your goals, interests and needs.**

4. **Give up the need for being perfect. It consumes too much time and energy.**

a. You do not have to be perfect. It is enough to know **what areas you would really**

like to develop It will help you manage your time realistically.

b. Allow yourself to make mistakes. Develop the **"I am good enough"** attitude.

5. **Eliminate things that do not serve you well.**

a. Check – by yourself or with a specialist – **which activities do not contribute to**

your development or which relations are destructive for you.

6. **If you have an important task that requires a lot of work "divide the elephant into small chunks; this is the only way you can eat it".**

a. **Award yourself for each small step** that leads to the completion of the task.

Develop a system of awards. What award will you get from yourself for...?

7. **However, if something does not work out do not lose time for guilt trips.**

a. **Draw conclusions** – what did you learn from the situation and how can you

manage similar situations differently in the future?

8. **Adapt time to specific tasks:**

a. Tasks that require great commitment should be **done when your energy level is at**

its highest (e.g. mornings or evenings).

b. You can do easy tasks during regeneration breaks or when you have less energy.

9. **Prepare two lists of tasks.**

a. One list including important things and another one that contains urgent things.

Systematically work on both lists.

10. **Systematically maintain a calendar in which you will note the most important information and dates.**

a. **thanks to the calendar, you will feel in charge of the situation** It will help you

pursue your goal effectively. You are in charge of what you planned. Do not forget to include awards for your progress in your calendar of awards.

How to deal with practical matters related to the studying process?

How to talk to lecturers?

- **Inform the lecturer about your difficulties due to the state of health. For example:**

"Professor, due to my health status, I have certain concentration/memorizing/excessive stress difficulties..."

- Specify what you need because of that. **For example:** “Could I divide the test into two parts?”

If the lecturer wants your words to be confirmed apply to the Team for the Disabled. **After a consultation, you will get a request for the adaptation of the didactic process to your needs there (with no statement of reasons).** **Remember:** the lecturer or a dean can make a decision regarding the adaptation. The information issued by the Team or a psychologist helps the dean make a decision.

Important:

- It is up to you to decide whether you want to disclose the disorder you suffer from.
- It is a good solution to inform the academic teacher about your needs at the beginning of a semester.
- A year supervisor can also be an important support for you; you can talk to him/her during consultations and learn more about requirements related to your studies.

What didactic adaptation you can use?

You can apply for the following changes that will help you master the material from classes due to your health status:

- Change of the form of an exam from written to oral or from oral to written.
 - Dividing a greater part of the material into smaller parts.
 - Individual Organization of Studies – it will allow you to be absent from more classes. Of course, they will have to be passed subject to the terms defined by the lecturer.
- Remember also that if you do not understand something or have doubts instructors in charge of classes offer consultations during which you can ask for explanations.**

What to say in the dean’s office?

- Write down the information you get (important dates, necessary documents and people’s names, etc.).
- Make sure that you understand everything.
- Do not be afraid to ask if you do not understand something.
- Tell them about your difficulties if you are ready for it. For example: “I have been having concentration problems recently. Can you explain it slowly to me/write it down?” You do not have to say what these difficulties result from.
- Remember that there are many students applying to the dean’s office and, just like you, they want to handle their issues. **Because of that, remain patient and friendly**

What else can I do?

Make use of your experience to help others!

Take part in the activities of organizations or associations striving to improve the situation of people suffering from mental health crises or general disabilities:

- Lublin Association "Jesteśmy";
- Association of Disabled Students "Alter Idem".

It is worth knowing that there are books in which people who experienced a crisis convey knowledge of their experience and tips on how to take care of one's good mood.

- J. McGonigal, Superbetter. Life is a game, learn to win;
- J. Orloff, Wolność emocjonalna (Emotional freedom).

CRISIS

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DYNAMICS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

Psychological crisis is a disturbance of a person's internal balance. It exceeds the capability of independent dealing with the situation and entails a disturbance of the normal course of life. To understand better how a psychological crisis progresses, you have to learn about its dynamics. Each situation is different; however, it is possible to recognize a general scheme. Three stages can be distinguished:

1. The appearance of first symptoms that, even though visible, do not lead to serious disturbances in life as yet.
2. Intensification of symptoms that, due to their intensity, disturb one's life.
3. Reduction or elimination of symptoms accompanied by the existence of difficulties that resulted from them.

How to react to first symptoms of a psychological crisis?

When first symptoms appear, you can be disoriented and not fully aware of what is happening. **For example:** symptoms of depression such as the loss of interest in things that used to be pleasant or a general feeling of exhaustion can be attributed to tiredness or external conditions (e.g. spring equinox). Fear can accompany these symptoms and tempt you to underestimate the issue. However, it is a bad idea as it can make the problem expand.

It is worthwhile to react if mood deterioration or other alarming symptoms can be observed for more than two weeks. You should visit a specialist in such a situation. There is a golden rule here:

It is better to see a psychologist needlessly than to allow the problem to develop.

The description of typical symptoms of various disorders can be found in our earlier brochures supporting people suffering from a psychological crisis under the following address: <http://www.umcs.pl/pl/jak-pomoc-drugiemu,8261.htm>

Concerns and objections potentially related to specialist help:

- **This visit will be useless for me** – you cannot know it before you do it. If you do not do it you will miss a chance for a fast solution to your problem. Additionally, each conversation

- **I will appear to be "mentally ill"** – it is more ridiculous to pretend that the problem does not exist or that you can solve it by yourself. Taking advantage of specialist help shows that you are a responsible person who can take care of himself/herself.

- **I will be ridiculed if someone learns about it** – going to a psychologist is no longer as shameful as it used to be. What is more, you cannot allow such concerns to direct the course of your life. It is not fair to yourself to miss a chance for getting help only because someone else may dislike it.

- **You can only go to a psychologist if you cannot cope by yourself** – would you really like to suffer from depression until you are unable to carry out your daily activities or even get out of bed? Would you advise someone close to you to abstain from getting help until nervous problems preclude his/her participation in university classes due to stress? A human being can survive a lot so, if you really want to wait until you will no longer be able to cope, you may wait even a few years. You will spend them in needless suffering for which you will be responsible.

All these fears are natural. You should not be ashamed or feel guilty because of them. On the other hand, you cannot let them run your life and make you refrain from seeking help.

Remember! A lot of people taking advantage of psychological help come to a conclusion that they regret not doing it earlier.

Be your best friend and if something is wrong, and it lasts more than two weeks, contact a specialist.

How to do it?

- You can quickly ask psychologists for help for free at the UMCS or take advantage of the peer help offered in the UMCS Academic Support Centre.
- You can go to a family doctor, take a referral to a clinic and ask for a psychologist's help under the NFZ arrangements.
- You can also buy a private visit (prices in Lublin vary from 70 to 150 PLN per visit).

The information about where to look for help can be found in the chapter titled *Information*.

Ask someone close to you for support if you feel you need it. Such a person can look for possible forms of support, go for a first visit with you or just listen about your difficulties. However, remember that he/she cannot replace the contact with a specialist. Someone in your environment can discourage you from such a visit believing that the problem will solve by itself. However, note that such a person is probably not a specialist when it comes to psychological help and does not know what you experience.

Trust yourself and, when you feel you lose control over your life or something bad is happening to you – ask for help.

What to do if symptoms intensify?

Perhaps psychological problems you experience have intensified so much that they do not let you function normally or endanger your life or health.

What can it look like?

- Stress paralyses you to such a degree that you cannot pursue your daily activities.
- You have a feeling of the total lack of sense and hopelessness of life.
- Suicidal thoughts appear.
- You feel that you have no control over your behaviour.
- You are constantly agitated, cannot sleep, have serious difficulties relating to concentration and remembering things.
- Friends inform you that they have observed unsettling signals in you, related to your psychological condition.
- You cannot cope with things that used to be easy before.
- You have bouts of uncontrolled behaviours.

These are only a few examples of what can happen if a psychological crisis starts to deepen. It can be different for everyone. An important thing is not to let your fears and hopelessness defeat you and to let yourself be helped.

You have to take it into account that hospitalization may be necessary. The fear of the stay in a psychiatric ward can result from the lack of knowledge of how it looks like. It is currently minimized and consists of the participation in various forms of support supposed to help the patient to recover quickly and improve his/her quality of life after hospitalization.

Certain concerns can appear in connection with the hospitalization, resulting from many myths present both in films and books and in human opinions. However, note that images presented there are frequently exaggerated to make them more interesting and more popular while the majority of people propagating them have never been in such a place.

Here are the more frequent fears related to the stay in a psychiatric ward:

• **I will be stuffed with drugs that will render me unconscious** – perhaps it will be necessary to apply pharmacotherapy if your condition becomes dangerous for you. However, nobody will force you to use it if your life is not in danger. The doctor will explain to you why drugs are necessary to you and will select the best treatment option.

• **Someone will manipulate my thinking** – psychotherapy and other forms of support do not strive to influence others' views. Their goal is to allow you to regain control over your own mind and, as a consequence, over your life.

• **I will be isolated from my family** – there are moments when contacting the family is not recommended but, with the exception of such special cases, visits take place on the same terms as in any other hospital.

• **I will lose friends when I leave the hospital** – would you terminate the relationship with a friend who was hospitalized due to depression or suicidal thoughts? If someone distances himself/herself from you due to your difficulties it will be good for you because it will mean that you have never been really close. If you reconcile with this fact you will be able to appreciate more the people who will stay by your side.

Do what you would do after the appearance of first symptoms: obligatorily seek help and tell people close to you about your problems.

Be ready for the potential hospitalization. Treat the potential visit to a hospital as a chance to gain new skills and new experience. It is doubtful that it will not be a vacation (even though some people remember this period as an opportunity to get away from work and difficulties of daily life) but remember that you will learn many things there that will be useful afterwards.

During the individual and group therapy:

- You will learn how to cope with difficulties.
- You will develop your communication skills.
- Your self-awareness will improve.
- You will become more open and sensitive to others' pain.

It can be a step towards a new and better life for you. Many people after therapy function and feel better than people who have never experienced a crisis.

How to overcome obstacles after a crisis?

Just like a serious physical disease, a psychological crisis has its side effects. Such "complications" can refer to various areas of your functioning:

- **Emotions:**
 - Stress, fear, concern for the future, anxiety.
 - The lack of motivation, discouragement, a feeling of hopelessness and helplessness, belief that mental disorders are difficult to cope with.

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EMOTIONS



- No trust in oneself and the feeling of inferiority; life with a stigma and the fear that one's health can deteriorate at any moment.

- **Cognitive abilities:**

- Poorer memory hindering the learning process.
- Poorer concentration, continuity and shifting of attention resulting in problems with its continuity during classes or when learning.

- Slowed down thinking.

- **Relations with others:**

- Feeling rejected and different from the group, feeling different and unwanted.
- The fear that the disorder will be disclosed and the fear of others' opinions about it.
- Being ashamed of one's condition.

- **Coping with daily realities:**

- Deficits relating to time management, setting of goals and activity directions as well as consequences of actions.

- Sleepiness and slower speed of work that can result from the use of medications.

- Difficulties in the functioning at the university.

How to deal with difficult emotions?

Stress problems

You can read about ways to cope with stress in the chapter titled **Stress**.

Motivation problems

It is often difficult to find motivation and will to live after the difficult experience of a psychological crisis. **Remember that this is natural and do not feel guilty.** What can help you is writing down, remembering and talking to others about the following matters:

- Why is something (e.g. graduating) important for you?
- What are the positive aspects of your life, what are you grateful for?
- What are your resources and strengths?

This task is supposed to make you aware of the fact that psychological problems are something you can live with and it is up to you to decide how you will treat them. Will they become a sentence, an obstacle to overcome or a challenge for you?

Lack of trust in oneself

After a psychological crisis, the fear of its return can appear. You can continuously fear that your condition will worsen again. If this is the case you will have to remind yourself all the time that such thinking leads to nowhere and only lends energy to something that only happens in your head. What can really help you is complying with the doctor's advice (participation in a therapy, taking medications, etc.).

Another important issue is that your **expectations of yourself should be realistic**. Your functioning can be different than before the disease for some time. Put up with that but not in order to abstain from any action but rather to get rid of excessive expectations and to be able to work on an improvement of your situation without blaming yourself for failures.

How to cope with cognitive difficulties?

- If you are looking for ways to improve your cognitive abilities see the chapter titled *Intellect*.

How to cope in relations with others?

- If you are looking for ways to improve your relations with others see the chapter titled *Interpersonal relations*.

How to cope with daily life?

- For ways to cope with practical challenges at the university, see the chapter titled *Practice - how to be effective at the university?*

Overcoming these difficulties will not be simple. It is certainly not enough to read this brochure and there is 99.9% chance that you will make mistakes. However, remember that, by fighting them, you fight for your life and for yourself.

Suicidal thoughts

Dreaming of death
"It would be better if I did not exist"

"I do not want to feel anything anymore"

"I am not worthy of living"

Suicidal intentions

Searching for methods to commit suicide

Dealing with your things: giving away things, giving away your property,


Farewells to the family, risky behaviour

Suicide attempts

Any behaviour leading to taking away one's life

Fig. 5. How suicidal attempts arise?

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SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

What are suicidal thoughts?

Suicidal thoughts are unpleasant and returning contents that can be related to life problems, difficult experience, trauma, family or career problems, low self-esteem, emotional and many other difficulties. They often arise during depression, addictions or other disorders and mental diseases.

- They can appear in anyone.
- They mostly result from the lack of constructive abilities to cope with stress and difficulties.
- They are not always connected with suicidal intentions. They frequently play the role of a “safety valve”. You can think: “I do not care about it, I can disappear at any moment”. However, this path is not worth taking. Come on, let us find another one.

Suicidal thoughts are not the same as a suicidal intention or attempt. Even if you have suicidal thoughts, you can make responsible decisions because the process of transition from suicidal thoughts to actions is quite long. At the beginning, you can imagine and dream about death, and think about it continuously. It is only later that such thoughts can lead to a suicidal attempt. All of this can be stopped.

And now... let us do everything to avoid it!

Taking away one’s life is a taboo in our society. It probably results from the fact that the matter is very delicate and difficult. Unfortunately, it results in a situation in which people suffering from such a problem are afraid to talk about it. The problem can intensify because of that.

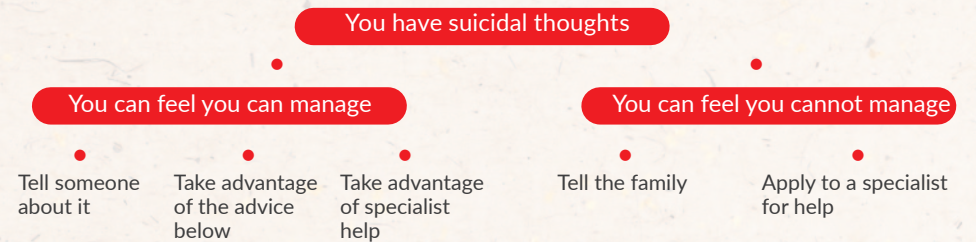


Fig. 6. What to do if suicidal thoughts appear?

What prevents suicidal thoughts and intentions?

Below please find a list of factors improving the mental comfort and, therefore, protecting from suicide. See how you can develop them in your life.

- **Strong emotional bond with parents, caretakers or significant persons** – develop and care for relations, try to find yourself in others! Talk to others, share your feelings, listen to them.

- **Correct contacts in the closest environment** – share your experience, people closest to you can help you sooner than others.

- **Respect for norms, values and authorities** – specify your own values and ideals, live them and realize them.

- **Social sensitivity** – develop compassion and understanding for others.

- **Ability to solve problems** – think what you would like to achieve and how to do it. Put thinking about failure aside. Thinking and concentrating on failure consumes energy, is ineffective and does not get you any closer to the goal.

- **Family support** – do not be afraid to ask for it and accept it.

- **Correct communication** – talk clearly, simply and frankly with respect for others.

- **Ability to cope with difficulties and failures** – treat them as lessons rather than as proofs of your own helplessness.

- **Ability to cope with suicidal thoughts and tendencies** – try and you will succeed, you will overcome even the worst difficulties! It is possible to cope with thoughts and tendencies. Come and try.

- **The sense of one's own effectiveness (agency)** – remember all these problems that you managed to solve.

- **Healthy self-esteem** – think well about yourself, take care to learn about your strengths (e.g. write them down, ask someone who knows you well).

What to do if you have suicidal thoughts?

Think about how serious your condition is. Self-awareness and determination of your borders will help you do that.

- **Learn about yourself.** Think why thoughts of taking away your own life come to your head? Think what you can replace them with?

- **Answer the question:** after what event did suicidal thoughts appear in you? If you find a cause it will be easier to cope with it and work around it. If you are not sure what caused/initiated suicidal thoughts talk to a specialist.

- **Analyse what is happening with you.** Think about when the moment in which you will “no longer manage” will come and prepare for it. Be ready to reach out for help.

- **Determine your limits.** Think whether you are able to cope alone with thoughts that you do not want to live any longer. If not, be sure to ask a specialist for help. The contact information can be found in the subchapter titled *Where to find help* and in the chapter titled *Information*.

- **Search for support in your surroundings!**

What can you do to help yourself?

Change of thinking:

- **Think what is important for you, how many things you would still like to realize in your life?** Become aware of what you dream about and how much do you desire it? Try to achieve these dreams. Write them down and read about them in your free time, discuss them with relatives who support you.

- **Think about positive things** – what did you succeed in in your life? There are many such things for sure! If you cannot remember them now, ask people close to you about them. Write them down and read about them in your free time, discuss them with relatives who support you.

- **Think constructively** – perhaps these thoughts have a purpose? Perhaps they shape your character, perhaps they will help you discover some new skills? See what you can learn about yourself thanks to such thoughts? What skills are you discovering in yourself in order to deal with them?

- **Catch each day, appreciate each moment.**

- **Change bad into good.** Think about the next step you can make and not about barriers you cannot overcome immediately. Think why such thoughts come to your head and what can result from it?

Appropriate attitude to life:

- **Be courageous in your intentions to improve your fate.**

- **Learn, experience and draw conclusions** and your life will become more predictable.
 - Give yourself permission to experience difficult moments and events. Try not to worry about each failure. Remember: at least a half of the globe faces similar situations!

- **Be ready to fight for yourself.** Adversities will appear very often. The difficulty lies in not giving up!

Specific actions:

- Do pleasant things, do something nice for yourself. A cinema? A film? Favourite coffee? Buying a trinket? Get away from intrusive thoughts. You deserve it.

- Try dealing with difficulties. Remember that there are many people who have done it before you and many will do it after you. A change of thinking and an action will be necessary.

- Care for your body. Take care of yourself and do not harm yourself.

- **If necessary, call the Crisis Hotline: 116 123!**

Suicidal thoughts are a life threat. Ensure the support of your social environment:

• **Find people who will understand you.** Have you told anyone in your surroundings about your thoughts: family, friends?

- **Stay in a group... – even two persons are a group. Talk about difficulties.**

• **Look at people and the environment more positively** – if someone says that perhaps you may need help, accept it. Remember that many people wish you well.

- **Look for help and be ready for the feedback!**

• **Allow others to take care of you** – even superheroes need support and understanding!

- **Ask for help** – it is a sign of maturity and courage.

- **Avoid people the contact with whom is destructive for you.**

Be sure to remember:

• **Give yourself time!** Each of us has better and worse moments in life. Think about your behaviour, try to find a goal for the next day, week or month.

• **Make decisions in a responsible manner** – think about the future, do not make decisions in so important matters when influenced by emotions. Think about it, calm down, look at your life from a distance.

• **Be ready for the return of suicidal thoughts.** Unfortunately, they tend to return... However, you can use your knowledge and skills to cope with them constructively.

- **If you feel that life is too hard for you, ask for help!**

Where can help be found?

- <http://suicydologia.org/>
- <http://zobaczznikam.pl/>
- <http://stopdepresji.pl>
- <https://www.facebook.com/PolskieTowarzystwoSuicydologiczne/> 45
- http://www.telefonaufania.org.pl/telefony_zaufania_wykaz.html
- <http://www.psychologia.edu.pl/kryzisy-osobiste/telefon-kryzysowy-116123.html>
- <http://www.niebieskalinia.pl/>
- <https://800100100.pl/>

Also remember about:

- Support systems at the UMCS and in Lublin – more information about them can be found in the chapter titled *Information*.
- Crisis Hotline: 116 123 – available from 14:00 to 22:00, the call is free of charge.

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INFORMATION

INFORMATION

What help can be found at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University?

UMCS Team for the Disabled

The UMCS Team for the Disabled operates as a part of the Office for Students' Affairs, Student Education and Service Centre. The goal of the Team for the Disabled is to improve the accessibility of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University for students with various types of disabilities, including those experiencing crises of the mental health.

1. Psychological support available.
2. Advice on effective learning.

Forms of support organized by the Team for the Disabled that can help a student effectively use the time of studies:

- Personal development training.
- English courses.
- Adaptation excursions.
- Training excursions and language training camps.
- Sports activities.

Cooperation with the university staff:

- Consultations relating to the adaptation of the didactic process to students with various needs resulting from health status.
- Cooperation with an academic teacher having substantive knowledge of a field in order to develop optimum adaptation conditions for students.

Other forms of support

Psychological help for students and staff

- Dorota Kaczmarkowska, tel. 609 370 032
- Małgorzata Szerafin, tel. 730 499 898 – additionally: advice for students regarding effective learning

Psychological counselling in the Competent Development Office

- Marzena Bichta
- Magdalena Bis

Address: ul. Sowińskiego 12, room 5, tel. (81) 537 50 70. The Competence Development Office also helps choose education direction, make career decisions, acquisition of skills necessary to enter the labour market and supports the practical use of knowledge gained during the studies in professional situations.

SENSUM Support and Psychoeducation Point for Students

- dr hab. Katarzyna Klimkowska

Address: ul. Narutowicza 12, Pedagogy Institute, room 14

Advice and coaching relating to:

- professional development and career,
- work-life balance,
- analysis of own priorities and life goals,
- development of competencies to create satisfactory relationships.

Meetings are arranged by e-mail: katarzyna.klimkowska@poczta.umcs.lublin.pl or on the phone during consultation hours (on the employee's personal profile): tel. (81) 537 63 07.

Activation and integration of students with disabilities

- Association of Disabled Students "Alter Idem"

Contact: zsnalteridem.umcs@gmail.com, tel. 510 868 608

Peer help

- Academic Support Centre

Consultations in psychological matters offered by students of last years of psychology, psychoeducation workshops.

More info: www.facebook.com/acw.umcs

What help can be found in Lublin?

Below please find a list of key support centres in Lublin:

- Professor Mieczysław Kaczyński Neuropsychiatric Hospital
ul. Abramowicka 2, tel. (81) 744 30 61
- Lubelskie Mental Health Association "Serce" ("Heart")
ul. Gospodarcza 32, tel. (81) 746 52 00

- SP ZOZ Addiction Treatment Centre
ul. Karłowicza 1, tel. (81) 532 29 79
- MOPR Crisis Intervention Centre
ul. Probostwo 6a, tel. (81) 534 60 60

If you would like to see the full list, go to <http://www.umcs.pl/pl/w-lublinie,8259.htm>

Additionally, you can call:

- Crisis Hotline: **116 123**

Available from 14:00 to 22:00, the call is free of charge.



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