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Introduction

University is a time of change. It involves new academic and social experiences, and for many, new responsibilities, such as managing finances and fitting studies around work. The changes can trigger a range of feelings, from excitement and joy, to apprehension, anxiety, and loneliness – sometimes all at once! Transitions occur at different stages of university life, and any of these can contribute to feelings of stress.

Transitions at different stages of university

Transition at university	New challenges
School or college to first-year undergraduate studies	Meeting new people; moving out of home; adapting to a new learning environment with less support
First-year to second-year undergraduate	Adapting to a more advanced level of classes; higher expectations for written work; maintaining friendships
Second-year to final-year undergraduate	Managing the pressure of final exams and dissertations; applying for work or further study

Transition at university	New challenges
Undergraduate to Master's studies	Becoming a researcher; adapting to an intensive course and the jump from undergraduate to postgraduate teaching
Master's to PhD	Developing your own research idea; planning a long-term project; having a viva to defend your research

If you're reading this, it may be that you've been finding life at university difficult recently, or that someone thought it might be helpful for you or for someone you know. The five parts of this book will help you to understand what stress is, why you experience it, and crucially, what you can do to manage it.

What this Pocket Guide can do

This guide can help you to:

- ▶ learn about what stress is, and why we experience it
- ▶ understand what happens in the brain and body when you get stressed
- ▶ identify your stress and anxiety triggers
- ▶ learn new coping strategies to manage stress from two evidence-based approaches: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Compassion Focused Therapy
- ▶ plan your time to prevent stress from becoming overwhelming
- ▶ learn to look after yourself to manage the ups and downs of university life
- ▶ find out what other sources of help and support are on offer.

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