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# WORDS OF ADVICE

**SOME ADVICE FOR WHEN YOU ARE FEELING CONFUSED,  
OVERWHELMED OR NOT SURE WHERE TO START....**

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The feeling of not knowing or not understanding can be disorientating and extremely unsettling. These feelings are extremely normal when it comes to studying, even more so in a national lockdown. It is very easy to feel as if everyone else is doing it better, doing it right or doing it at all. The truth is, the only thing that matters is you. Your brain is totally unique and will work in different way to someone else. Be kind to yourself and go at a pace that works for you.

## **Set realistic expectations**

If you wake up in the morning and you know that you are not feeling okay, plan in that extra time for yourself. There is no point sitting at a desk feeling disheartened when you can use the time to recharge. You will be more productive when you feel energised and mentally ready to combat the work. The days I spent working when I felt low or unmotivated I could get the same work done in an hour on the day I felt more ready and resilient.

## **Make realistic to do lists**

Be honest with yourself and don't make endless to do lists that you know you will not be able to complete in the time you have allocated yourself. Make sure you include easy ticks, tasks you know you can achieve and will in turn still be equally satisfying when you tick them off.

## **Recognise what you don't know**

A lecturer once told me that even if you spend 15 minutes writing down what you don't understand, it is still something on a page. He suggested that writing down what you don't know often helps you find the answer you are looking for. It sounds unhelpful – I thought so too. However one day, I was feeling stuck and I thought I would try it. Believe it or not, I spent half an hour writing down what I couldn't understand and in turn, I discovered the block in my brain was easily solved by a missing definition. Even if you don't find the answer, writing down your thoughts, anxieties and concerns is always a helpful way to destress and declutter your brain, providing the clarity you need to push through the day.

## **Plan in your procrastination**

Another lecturer wisely advised me to plan in my procrastination. She admitted we all do it: online shop, check unnecessary emails, setting up your workspace – so plan it in. By getting up an hour earlier, or timetabling it in to your revision, you avoid the negative thought patterns that tell you, "you are wasting time" or "not doing enough." Knowing that I was in control of the time I wasn't spending 'productively' reduced the guilt and shame I had come to attach to not being "productive."

You may find everything, only one thing or nothing at all in this article helpful but I hope that it will have offered some of you a way to navigate the lack of focus right now. Until we know further details about assessment guidelines, focus and motivation is expected to be low – do not punish yourself for this. You are all smart, capable, resilient human beings and you can do it – even if it is only 15 minutes at a time.

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