

Advice for Edinburgh students – Feeling like a #fresheroutofwater?



Help is at hand for you if you are finding Freshers' Week and the first few weeks of university life just too much to handle.

It is a big leap from school to university life no matter whether you are still living at home or have moved into your sparkly new student accommodation.

As new students from all over the UK start university for the first time, Samaritans is reminding those who feel like a '*Fresher out of water*' that its volunteers are available any time of day or night to listen if they are struggling to cope.

You can speak, in confidence, to a listening volunteer by telephone, text or email, or by visiting a local branch. Above all, [tweet_box design="default"]Samaritans wants all Freshers to know that if they are struggling, for whatever reason, **they do not have to face their problems alone.**[/tweet_box]

Nicola Gee, ex-student and now Samaritans volunteer, struggled with the way that she felt while at university and said: "I remember asking myself why I was so down at university and then punishing myself for the way I felt. I loved my course but I had withdrawn totally and compared myself negatively to my peers who seemed to be having the time of their lives.

"It was Samaritans who helped me put together a support plan which has been essential to me managing episodes of depression ever since. I wish I had called them sooner, when you are confused by the way you feel having someone to listen to you

and work through your problems has a hugely positive effect.”

A survey released by Samaritans in July 2015 revealed that the majority of young people feared admitting that they were struggling with life. More than half (52.3%) of 16-24 year-olds in the UK felt there was a stigma around admitting that you're struggling to cope with something. Yet, two-fifths (40.9%) say they sometimes felt overwhelmed by their problems.* Young adults are the least likely to want to burden others with their problems and the most likely to feel 'embarrassed' or 'weak' if they do, the survey found. A fifth (20.5%) feared they'll be seen as 'weird'.

Elsewhere, the survey also revealed that many young people had strong listening skills, with 45.5% saying that people went to them with their problems. Samaritans are calling on Freshers to utilise these listening skills and watch out for friends who may be struggling with the way that they are feeling.

James Jopling, Executive Director for Scotland, said: “University life is often portrayed as a wild, fun journey of self-discovery. Whilst that can be the case for some, the reality is that moving away from home, making new friends, managing a new workload and financial pressures can be a struggle for many young people.

“25 years ago I moved 450 miles from South London to the University of Stirling and can remember only too well the initial isolation and worry this caused me. I've made Scotland my home now but knowing Samaritans are always there might help others who are now making this huge life change.

“That's why Samaritans are making an urgent plea to new students to remember that help is always at hand. We know that having a listening ear when times get tough helps people work through their problems. If you, or anybody you know, is struggling to cope, for whatever reason, please don't hesitate to get in touch. You can tell us anything, it stays between

us."

Call Samaritans on: 08457 90 90 90 (calls will cost 2p per minute plus your telephone company's access charge)

Email jo@samaritans.org

Text 07725 90 90 90

Visit www.samaritans.org to find details of the nearest branch.

Samaritans offers round-the-clock support for anyone who is struggling, whoever they are, however they are feeling, and whatever life has done to them.