Supporting the Transition to Independent Living

Meera Kavia

Anxiety

- Overwhelming
- Experienced anxiety
- Isolated myself
- False pretences
- Affecting studies
- Depression
- Denial
- Dark place
- Counselling
- Support
- Fight mental illness
- Other students - similar experiences
- Psychtalk - student magazine

What Makes the Transition Particularly Difficult?

No secure base

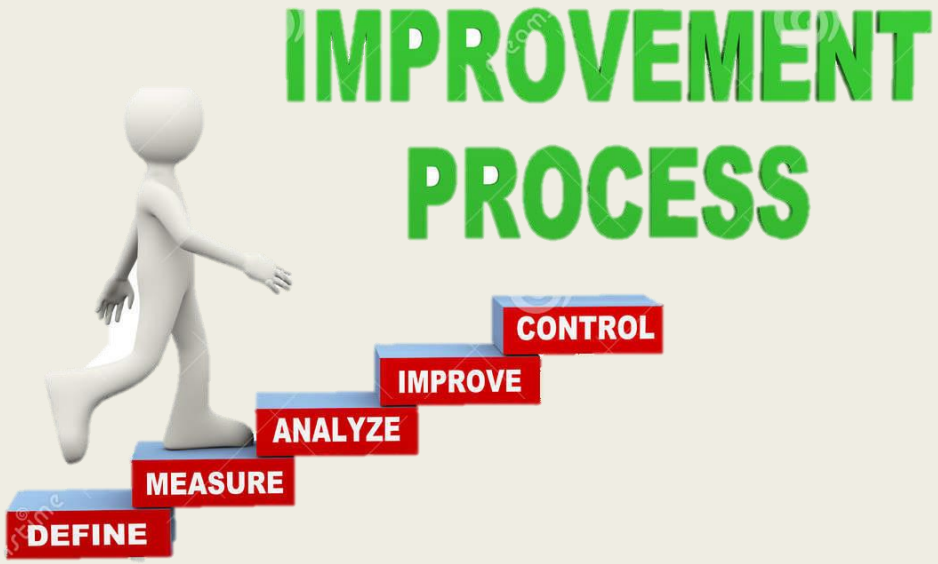
- No secure base to return to
- Creatures of habit
- Moving out for university - secure base is eliminated
- When leaving family home - fending for yourself is terrifying!
- New surroundings/environment
- University – 1st day at a new school (anxiety)
- No comfort and security initially
- Requires a lot of resilience

Constantly Changing Environment

- No two years have been the same
- Lived in 4 different locations
- 3 different groups of friends
- Recognising changes are inevitable

Balancing Responsibilities

- Money can be a huge constant stressor during university
- New responsibilities/self sufficient e.g. bills, shopping etc
- Time management
- No worries living at home with bills to pay etc
- Balance jobs, assignments, exams and social life
- One typically suffers
- Pressure on students mental health



MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE PROCESS

Ice Breaker

- Daunting moving into new accommodation with new people
- To ease anxiety, introduce a system for everyone to meet up
- The move in date won’t seem so daunting
- This is something I personally struggled with as well
- Isolation
- Possible Suggestion
  - *Create a chat room for new student at same accommodation*
  - *Organised activities*
  - *Team building day to break the ice*

Education

- Compulsory mental health talk during fresher’s week
- Did not feel normal
- Flatmates assumed I did not want to be around them
- They were unaware of why someone could be like that
- For students to be able to spot common signs
- Encourages early identification and disclosure

A constant

- Constantly changing environment
- A possible solution –
  - *befriending service*
  - *Once a week – not too demanding*
  - *Incentive*
- Flag possible mental health issues
- These solutions may have benefitted me

Peer Support Group

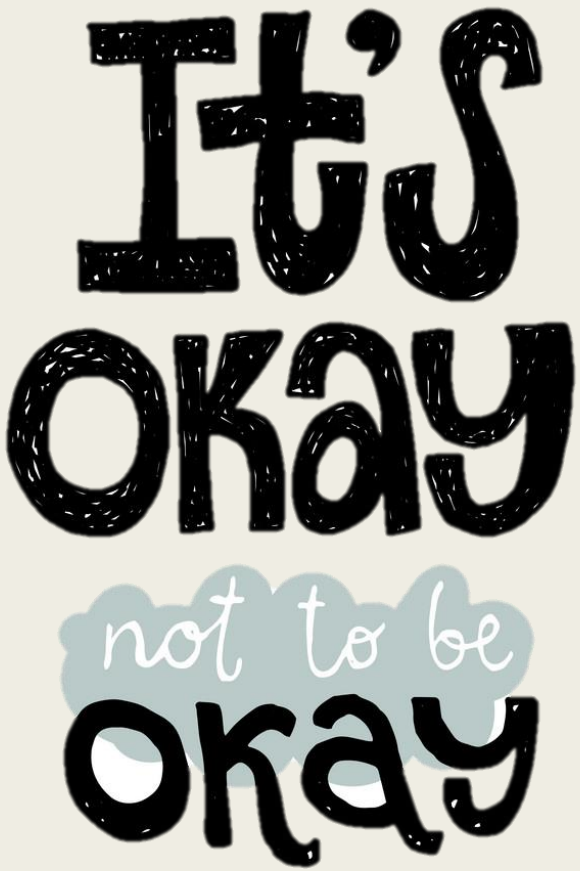
- Encourage universities to set up a peer support group
- Southampton, Cardiff and Oxford University involved with this
- Informal support, one to one, group support or remote support
- More universities could get involved in this

Extracurricular Activity

- Any compulsory extracurricular activity
- Beneficial in many ways
- Meeting new people
- Decreases risk of isolation
- Another way to identify difficulties
- Students could have something to look forward to each week
- University can be lonely

Importance of Change

- First year particularly vulnerable period
- Formative years
- Steps promote early identification of elimination of some anxieties



My experience
is my gift

Thank you!