

Transcript:

Episode One: Talking through Anxieties

Bethan: Today's episode is brought to you by the Advice Service and Wellbeing Officer

Bethan: Hi my name's Bethan and I work for the student's union advice service

Sana: Hi my name's Sana and I am the SU's Wellbeing Officer.

Bethan: Hi Sana how's everything going?

Sana: Hiya, yeah alright, as you said we are all trying to adapt to this self-isolated world, I think for me this is day 18 now, and I'm just trying to keep every day fresh- which can be quite hard! So I'm just trying to keep it as fresh as it can be in the current situation. What about you?

Bethan: Yeah I'm the same really! I started quarantining on the 17th of March, so it's been a little while as well. Yeah, just trying to make sure I have something to look forward to every day even if it's just watching a different TV show or having something nice to eat

Sana: Yeah, no 100% that's such a good point, giving yourself something to look forward to is so important. Because I know students have a lot of work to do, as do people working from home, so it is kind of the attitude "okay once I've finished with this I'll watch this Netflix series", and that hopefully will help you. I know staying motivated right now is so hard, so doing it like that will give you an end reward. So yeah, that's a good tip there.

Bethan: Yeah, definitely. So the big topic that we are talking about today, and the title of today's episode is talking through anxieties. Anxiety is something that the majority of people have felt since the rise of this corona virus, this has definitely increased since the lockdown was announced, and I've even read reports about people experiencing panic attacks for the first time during this period. I know I personally have definitely been worried about how long we could be in this situation for, what would you say have been the things going through your mind since lockdown started?

Sana: Yeah waiting on that Easter Monday announcement and thinking 'oh god how long are we going to be stuck?' is definitely on some people's minds and the uncertainty of when are we going to be out. Then I guess a bit more for me, I'm trying to have a bit more structure to my days, and thinking what am I going to cook today, because when you're bored you always think about what you are going to eat! So I've been trying to meal plan, ensuring I know what I'm going to eat each day, and then buying for it. Otherwise, I go to Sainsbury's or Tesco's without a shopping list and buy loads. I guess I think about how to occupy my time, and hope people stay in their houses so we can leave sooner.



Bethan: Yeah, no these are things I've been feeling, and wondering what the world will be like once we all come out of this as well. But yeah, something that we are emphasising today is that we do need to keep talking about it. Something I know from working in the Advice Service is that it's good to keep having contact with others and not bottle up any anxieties you could be having. One thing we want to keep reminding students, is that we are available to keep signposting you to relevant talking services and you can email us at: advice@le.ac.uk.

Or on our Facebook page we have chat sessions going on 1pm-3pm every week day. Something we've had students asking about are our clinics too, we are trying to move our clinics online, we have Headspace twice a week usually, and they are a charity in itself, so they are continuing to do stuff on phone, and have sessions with students – all the details of that can be found on our website.

But yeah thinking about today's topic Sana, what would be your advice to students who are maybe feeling helpless and really struggling during lockdown?

Sana: I think the main thing is that we are in a situation where a lot of stuff will be out of our control. So focus on what you can control in the here and now. That could be as simple as waking up and changing every day, out of your pyjamas and into new clothes. You can control that, your daily routine. You can control going on that state mandated walk or run, but if you can't do that don't beat yourself up. That's a big advice I want to give to everybody because I think there's a lot of conversation about be productive and pick up a new skill, but you don't have to do that, and don't pressure yourself. We're all adjusting to a completely new way of life, and you've lost all routine, so it's completely normal that you're just adjusting in this period and not doing anything – and that's okay. Allow yourself to just accept that emotion and be gentle with it.

Then slowly, slowly, let yourself try and be a bit more motivated, and for me as I mentioned, it just really helps, even if I wake up late I go change, and I just feel that little bit more productive. Think about what productivity is to you, because it will be different for everyone. Don't be thinking you're wasting time in quarantine, we're literally in a time where everything is different in a pandemic, and everyone will react differently to it.

I think there is a lot of stuff as well where people are worried they aren't moving enough, or not as much as before, and people are worried about weight gain. But again this can relate back to control, so be aware of your thought processes with this, and seek support if they start becoming unhealthy. Have daily check ins with yourself, how are you feeling, why are you feeling like that. Everyone is having to get used to changes mentally and physically, and no one should be worrying about their own experiences with that. You can move your body in whatever way feels comfortable to you, it doesn't have to be a run, it could be dancing in your room to music blasting from a speaker – that's what I do!



Be gentle to yourself, we've got so much craziness going on around us right now, don't be mean to yourself too, which I know is easier said than done.

Bethan: Yeah definitely, and everyone needs to know as well that every day is going to be different. Some days will be fully functioning and other days you'll just be working through surviving this period. The Advice Service also has lots of self-help packs online for students to use during this period. And our student union support social channels will also be releasing wellbeing tips regularly by me, Sana and our other colleagues in support. I know what is useful during times of panic is grounding techniques, so instead of focusing on something that you miss or are missing out on because the virus, instead think about what you are appreciating during the current situation and what you are looking forward to once some of the restrictions are lifted. So to finish on a more positive note, Sana what are you appreciating currently?

Sana: I think I'm really appreciating the time to reflect on my current thoughts and feelings. Without belittling the current situation at all it's nice to have time for hobbies. I have time for reading and writing again, where normally I don't have the time or the energy. I think it's made me appreciate my friends and family more and having access to them more. Then, less a grateful thing, but more I can acknowledge my privilege that usually I can go out when I want to, whereas other people do have to self-isolate more frequently for their own health. So yeah being mindful of that, and knowing that there are a lot more smaller things that I should feel thankful for that I don't always acknowledge.

Bethan: And what are you looking forward to once lockdown is lifted?

Sana: Being able to see my family and my friends and being able to hug them, I think that will be an amazing thing. The other day, Oge, the SU President, had left something at my house before lock down commenced, and she came to collect it and we were standing far away socially distancing, and it was sad that I couldn't come near her, or her me. And I can't wait to be able to show my affection towards people again. How about you? What are you looking forward to?

Bethan: Me? Well initially I think I will be going to the pub! Looking forward to seeing my friends there, as that is definitely something that has been removed from my usual lifestyle. But yeah also seeing my family, they live far away and are in a high risk category which is difficult, so it will be good to see them again without the worry of hurting them. Okay, I think we will finish there. Thank you so much Sana for joining me today on Leics Quarantine and Chill. To all of our listeners, please subscribe to this podcast for more self-isolation commentary, and follow Leics_Support on Instagram and LeicsTrainingPM on Twitter for more self-care guidance over the upcoming weeks. Don't forget to join the SU's Leics



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