



*Minding Ourselves  
and Each Other During  
the Postgraduate  
Experience*

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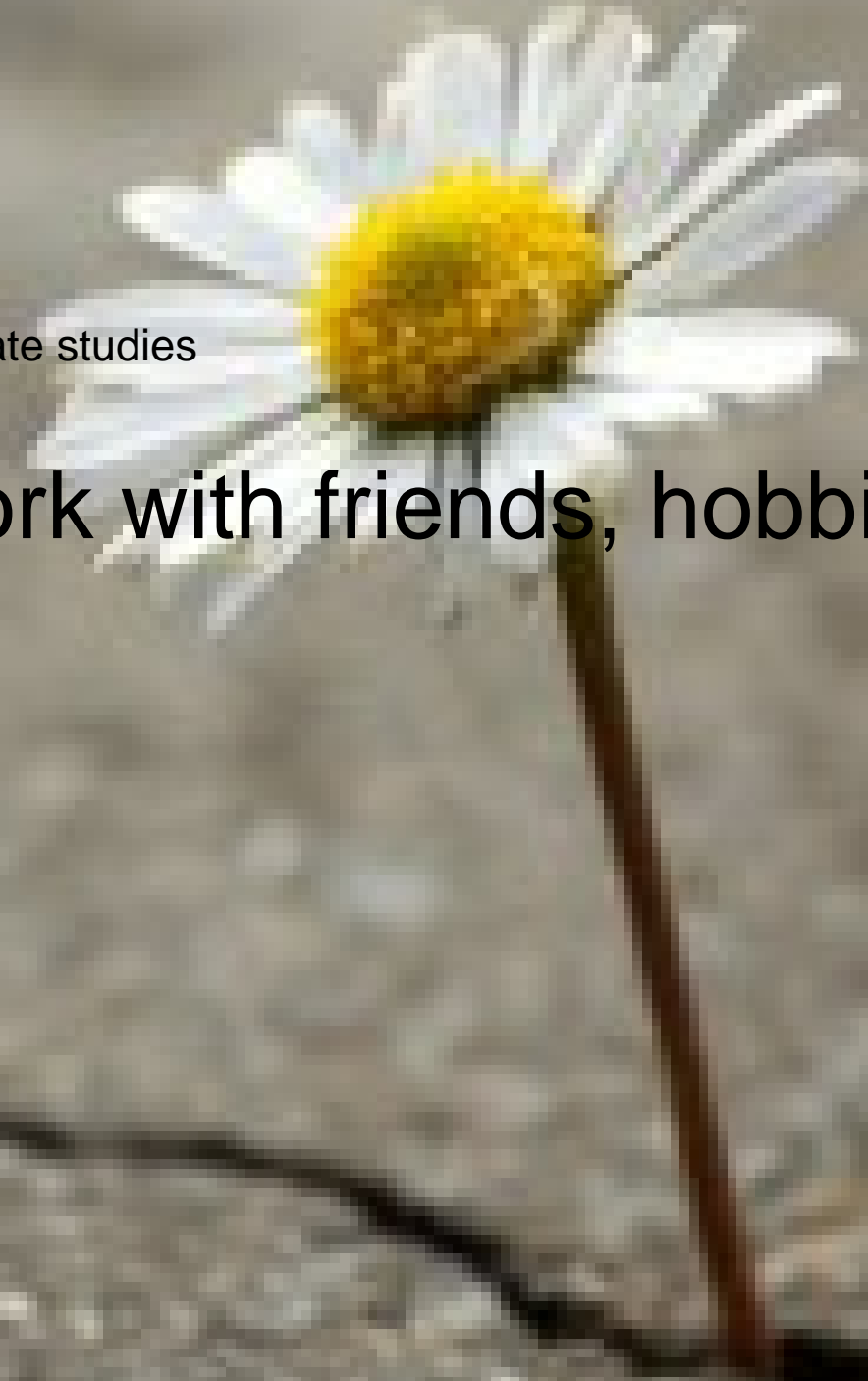
Date: 05/06/24

Tools, tips and strategies for reducing stress and improving wellbeing

general tools/methods to organize our minds and face the phd

Ways to reduce stress and depression during the postgraduate studies

Ways to balance work with friends, hobbies, interests during PG



## What is mental health?



Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being.

It affects how we think, feel, and act.



# What is mental health?

**Human beings need:**

- **Safety:** Physical and emotional.
- **Love:** The capacity to have an authentic, intimate relationship with at least one other person
- **Purpose:** To align our actions with what we value, and to be validated / accepted for who we are.

**Our Mental Health is related to how well these needs are met.**



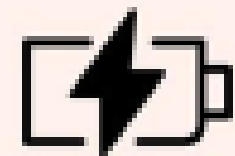
# Difficulties arise when...

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- **Our needs are not being met.**
- **The demands in our environment outweigh our available resources.**
- **We feel powerless, under threat and overwhelmed by this to the point where we can no longer make sense of it.**
- **We feel defined by our problems.**
- **We feel alone.**

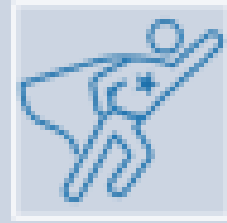
# RESILIENCE

*means knowing that*  
**rest lets you recharge**

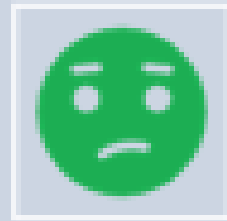


**TAKE THE  
BREAKS YOU NEED**

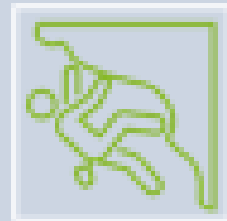
# Four Tools for Resilience



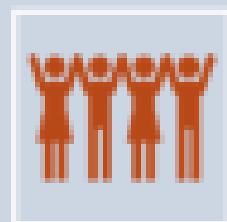
Avoid Avoidance



Manage difficult & painful feelings



Focus on what we can control



Building communities of support

# ⊘ Avoid Avoidance ⊘

- It's natural to want to avoid pain, and we usually do it through behavioural avoidance (avoiding people or situations likely to cause distress), or emotional avoidance (avoiding our painful feelings).
- Avoidance can be **very effective**, particularly with anxiety, but only in the **short-term**
- When we are constantly running away from difficult feelings and experiences, we become out of touch with ourselves and others. We make decisions based on fear, rather than based on our own needs, goals and values.



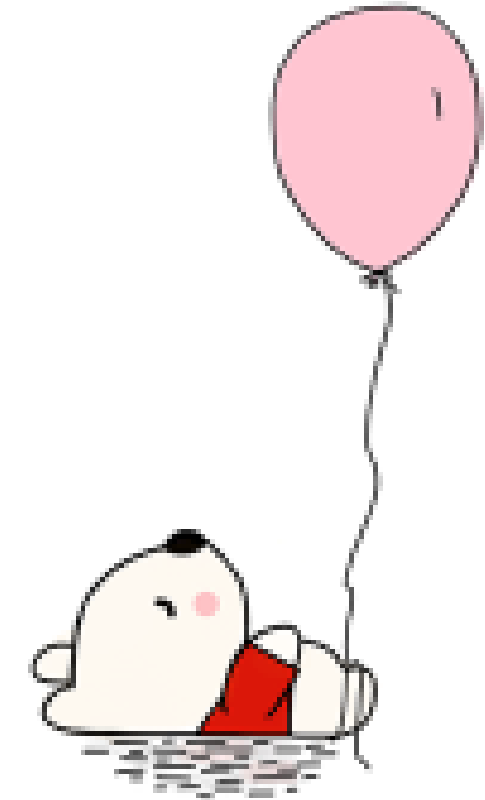


What avoidance do I  
engage in?

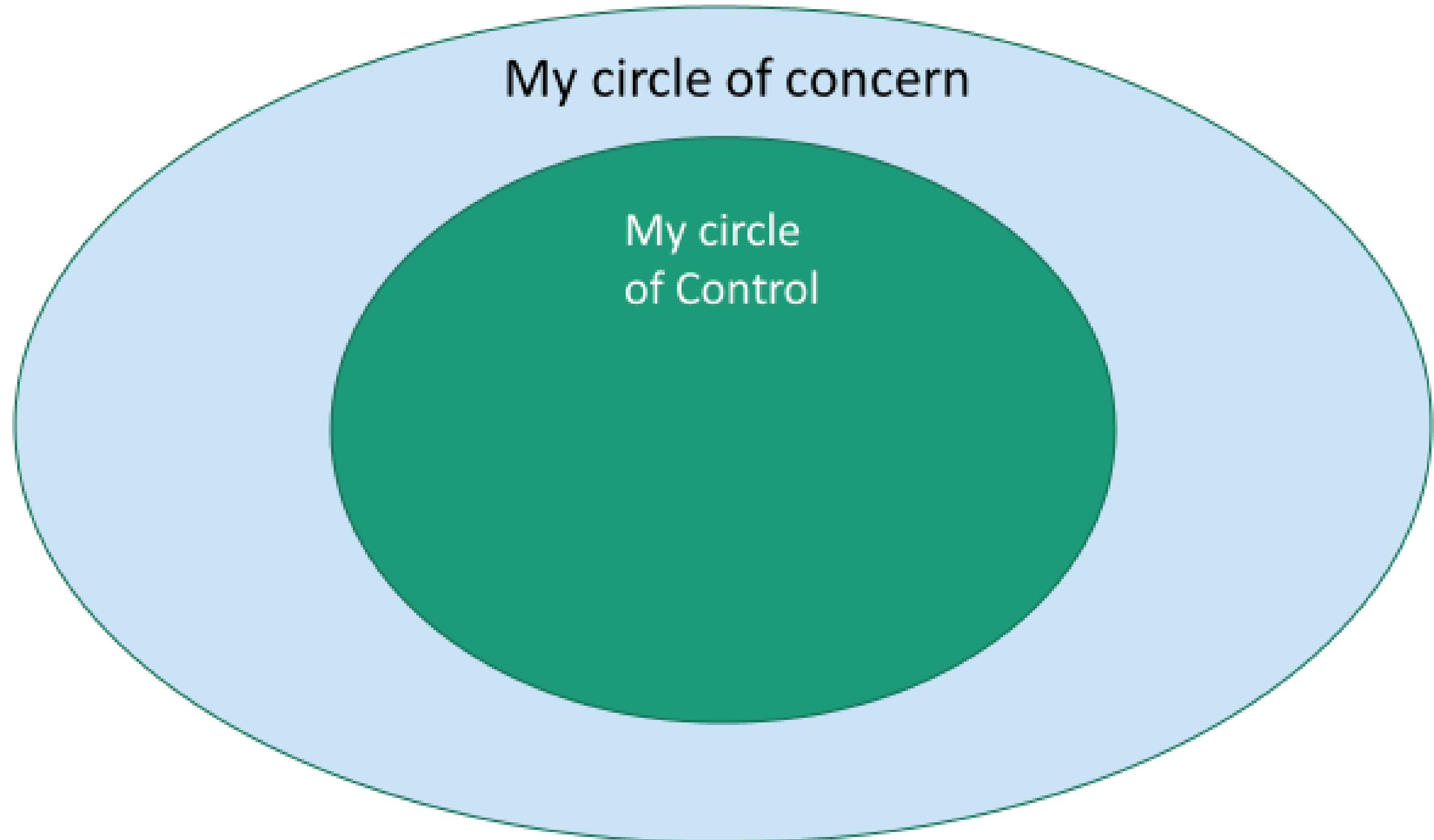


# Accepting difficult feelings

- Emotional pain is like physical pain – it can act as a **warning system**, telling us something is wrong
- Our challenge when we have a strong emotional response is to slow down, recognise we are having strong feelings, identify what they are and approach with **curiosity**.
- Make space for our unpleasant thoughts and feelings without trying to get rid of them or deny them. Without the struggle, our emotions unfreeze.
- Trust that our emotions are telling us something important.



# What I can control/influence and what I can't





## Recognising we are not alone

- We often compare our insides to everyone else's outsides. Our backstage footage to their highlights reel.
- This makes us feel abnormal and alone
- Recognise that suffering and personal inadequacy are part of what it means to be human
- **Common Humanity:** Our flaws and mistakes are what connect us to everyone around us, rather than what isolates us

**Ask for Help and support .....**

**“Asking for help is not an expression of failure but the**



# Positive Self-Talk

Positive self-talk can reduce anxiety, increase effort, and enhance self-confidence

TALK TO  
YOURSELF  
LIKE YOU  
WOULD TO  
SOMEONE  
YOU LOVE.

BRENÉ BROWN

# Your Self-Talk Matters



*"Don't believe everything your mind is telling you"*


It really matters if your inner voice is constantly criticising you or constantly scaring you.

This is a long-practised habit, so we can't change it overnight, but we CAN change it

The first step is to become aware of it, so it can help to start writing down what your thoughts are during times of high emotion

# Harsh Self-Criticism

- A harsh and punishing inner critic can turn a bad day into something much worse.
- Think about how you speak to yourself in your worst moments
- Imagine that self-critic stepping outside of you

A close-up photograph of a lit matchstick writing on a spiral-bound notebook. The matchstick is positioned in the bottom right corner, with its glowing orange and yellow tip touching the paper. The notebook's spiral binding is visible at the top. The text written on the page is in a bold, hand-drawn, black marker style.

YOU ARE NOT  
GOOD  
ENOUGH!



## Four questions about my self- critic

1) How do I feel when I speak to myself that way?

2) What is the cost of speaking to myself this way?

3) What is the purpose of the self-critic? (and is it working? – Spoiler alert - it isn't)

4) What do I fear if I were to let the self-criticism go?

# ***Self-Compassion***

**Visualisation-Meeting my compassionate friend...**



**1**

**Recognize your  
expertise**


**2**

**Remember what you  
do well**

**3**

**Realize there is no  
such thing as  
"Perfection"**

**Acknowledge and Accept your  
strengths**



# Re-frame the way you

# respond to failure.

Situations to discuss:

- Your application for funding has been rejected.
- You receive negative feedback from reviewer 2 on your journal article
- Your supervisor highlights issues with your research methodology

**Breako  
ut  
room  
questi**

What is a way to  
reframe these  
situations  
compassionately?

# 3 Minute

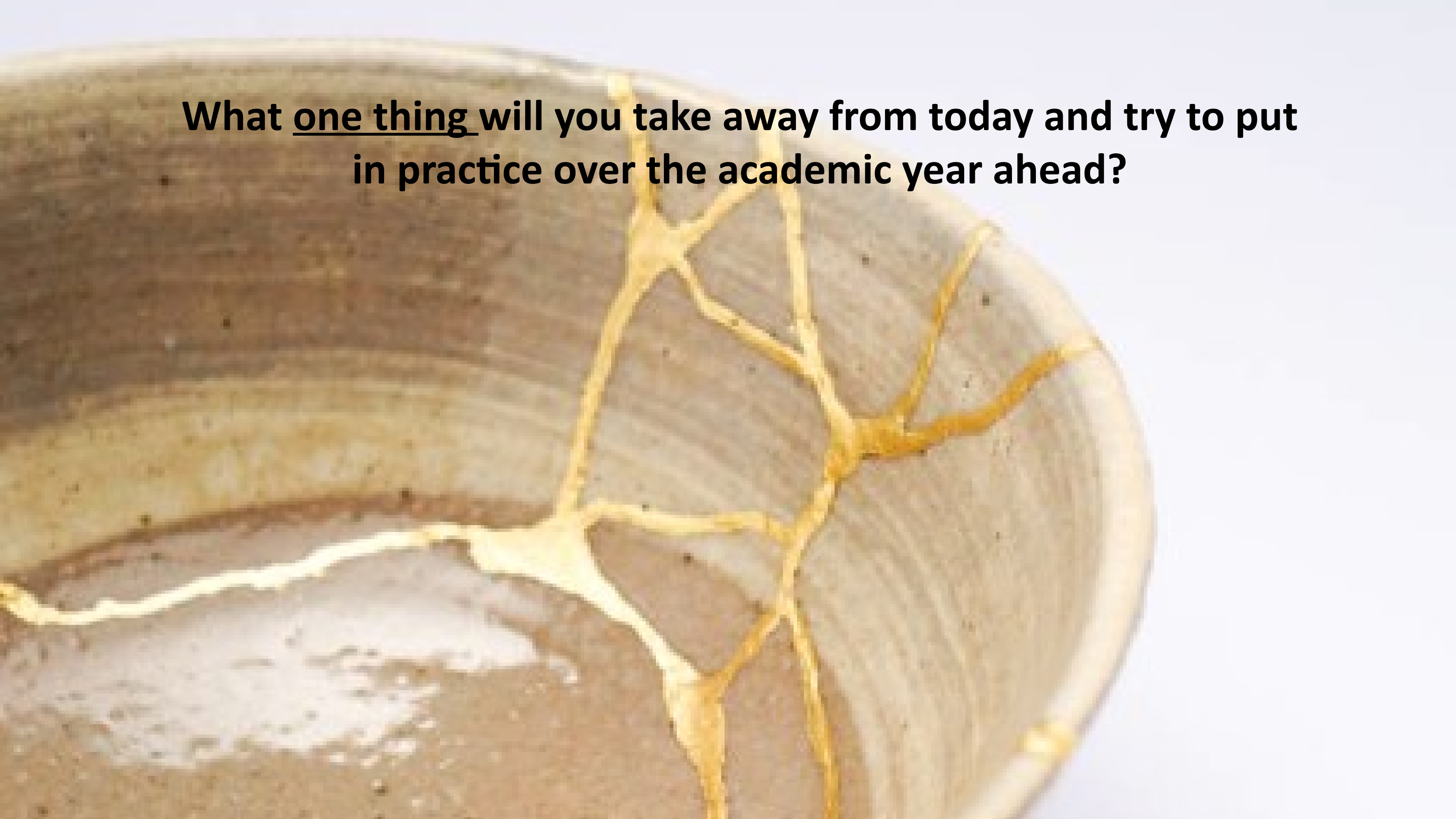
# Relaxation

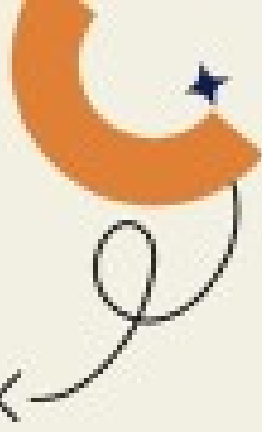
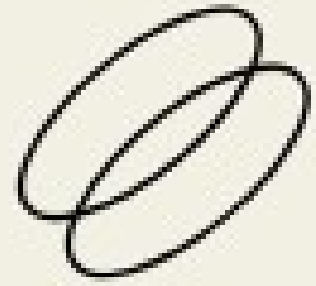
Rate current stress level out of 10

- Engage in simple breathing exercise
- Rate stress level again

[The Free Mindfulness Project - Free Resources](#)

**What one thing will you take away from today and try to put in practice over the academic year ahead?**





# HERE FOR YOU

IN TRINITY

STUDENT  
COUNSELLING

STUDENT 2 STUDENT

[STUDENT-COUNSELLING@TCD.IE](mailto:STUDENT-COUNSELLING@TCD.IE)

[STUDENT2STUDENT@TCD.IE](mailto:STUDENT2STUDENT@TCD.IE)

STUDENT LEARNING  
DEVELOPMENT

[STUDENT.LEARNING@TCD.IE](mailto:STUDENT.LEARNING@TCD.IE)

A SERVICE FOR  
EVERY SUPPORT

Senior Tutor:  
<https://www.tcd.ie/seniortutor/>

PG support:  
01-8961417  
[pgsupp@tcd.ie](mailto:pgsupp@tcd.ie)

Students' Union:  
[www.tcdsu.org](http://www.tcdsu.org)

Graduate Students'  
Union [www.tcdgsu.ie](http://www.tcdgsu.ie)

College Health  
Centre:

Ph: 8961556/  
8961591





9 pm- 2:30 am every  
night of term -Ph: 1  
800 793 793 /  
IM service on their  
website



Ph: 116 123,  
call in to  
Marlborough Street  
during the day for in-  
person support



Local GP  
DUBDOC - Ph:  
454 5604

**Out of  
Hours  
Support**

**Thank You!**