Balancing Priorities

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University Counselling Service
Change can be disorienting
Cambridge - a period of transition
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The three circles model

- Threat and protection
- Drive and achievement
- Soothing and connection
Physiology

**Threat system:**
- Adrenaline, Cortisol

**Drive system:**
- Dopamine

**Soothing system:**
- Oxytocin, Endorphins
Threat and drive dominating the soothing system

- Threat and protection

- Drive and achievement

Soothing
How we can create more threat

- Catastrophic thinking
- Unhelpful comparisons
- All or nothing thinking
- Mind reading
- Selective attention to negatives
- Use of imperatives “should/must/ought”
When ur stressed out but you play it cool
Too many opportunities
Exaggerated threat, burnout and unhelpful soothing
How to regain balance

Which inner dialogue is more helpful:

Critical, complaining, punitive, harsh?

Warm, nurturing, encouraging?
Self management strategies

• Look after yourself: sleep, eat well, have fun…
• Encourage yourself often.
• Set yourself small, achievable, daily goals.
• Structure can be very helpful.
• Choose your friends wisely.
• Don’t be afraid to ask for help sooner rather than later.
Be strategic

- Engage in self-reflection.
- What difficulties have you encountered when studying in the past?
- What can you do to prevent this happening again?
- What helps you with studying?
- If you could do one helpful thing now, what would it be?
Sources of support

- Friends and family
- Tutor
- Supervisor/Director of Studies
- College Nurse & Chaplain
- Student Union
- Counselling Service
  - Website (self-help resources)
  - Groups and workshops
The University Counselling Service is on the 3rd floor of the

- Student Services Centre
- Bene’t Street
- Cambridge
- CB2 3PT
- Open 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday - (Tuesday and Thursday to 7.30pm)
Above all…