



CHRIST

(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)
BANGALORE | DELHI NCR | PUNE

Student Wellbeing Companion

Editor
A. Sabu John

VOLUME I

A practical guide for university life

Editor

A. Sabu John

Student Wellbeing Companion

VOLUME I

Arriving, Belonging, Safety and Health

A practical guide for university life

Editor

A. Sabu John

School of Psychological Sciences



Volume I

Student Wellbeing Companion, Volume I
Arriving, Belonging, Safety and Health

A practical guide for university life

Edited by
A. Sabu John

Published by
CHRIST (Deemed to be University)
Dharmaram College Post
Hosur Road, Bengaluru 560029
Karnataka, India

First Edition, 2026
Copyright © 2026 CHRIST (Deemed to be University)
All rights reserved.
ISBN: 978-93-95830-08-9

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted, or distributed in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher, except for brief quotations used for review, academic, or educational purposes with proper acknowledgement.

Printed and bound in India by
National Printing Press
Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

For queries related to this publication, contact:
studentwellbeing.resources@christuniversity.in



FOREWORD

There are moments in higher education when we are reminded that the life of a student cannot be understood only through marks, attendance, credits, achievements, placements, or institutional milestones. Behind every academic journey is a human journey. Students are not only learning subjects. They are learning how to live, relate, cope, choose, recover, and grow.

The World Health Organization estimates that globally, one in seven adolescents aged 10 to 19 years experiences a mental disorder, while suicide remains the third leading cause of death among young people aged 15 to 29 years. These are not distant statistics. They ask every educational institution to reflect on the environments we create, the support systems we build, and the language we offer to young people who may be struggling silently.

Across the world, universities are increasingly recognising that higher education cannot remain limited to academic instruction, professional training, research output, and career preparation. A university is also a living community. It brings together young people from different regions, cultures, languages, disciplines, economic backgrounds, family contexts, and life experiences. In such a setting, student well-being cannot be treated as a separate concern placed at the margins of university life. It must become part of the culture of the institution.

The inspiration for this book came from a simple but powerful experience. During an institutional visit, we came across a support resource developed for students in a medical education setting. It recognised that professional training does not only involve academic instruction, clinical exposure, protocols, and procedures. It also involves fatigue, emotional strain, difficult encounters with suffering and death, and the inner demands of learning to serve others responsibly. That resource acknowledged something important: students need support not only for what they are expected to do, but also for what they are expected to carry.



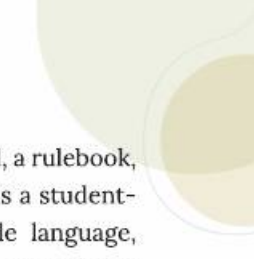
That insight stayed with us. It led us to ask a similar question in the wider university context. What do students carry as they move through higher education? They carry expectations, dreams, uncertainties, family hopes, academic pressure, social comparison, financial concerns, friendship struggles, loneliness, questions of identity, digital pressures, internship anxieties, and the desire to belong. Some carry these lightly. Some carry them quietly. Some carry them without knowing how to name what they are going through.

At CHRIST (Deemed to be University), student well-being has been supported through multiple efforts within the University's academic and student support ecosystem. The Centre for Counselling and Health Services has been an important part of this work, offering counselling support while also engaging students through peer training, well-being conversations, de-stress spaces, awareness activities, and reflective digital messages. These efforts remind us that care is not limited to a counselling room. It can also be present in everyday campus spaces, peer conversations, timely messages, and small opportunities for students to pause and seek support.

The Student Wellbeing Companion grows from this same conviction. Universities have policies, handbooks, procedures, mentoring systems, counselling services, and student support structures. These are necessary and valuable. Yet students also need something more accessible and personal: a resource that speaks to the everyday emotional and developmental realities of university life. They need language for homesickness, belonging, conflict, body care, safety, anxiety, academic pressure, procrastination, peer support, and future readiness. They need gentle tools that help them pause, reflect, act, and reach out at the right time.

Developed at CHRIST (Deemed to be University), this companion reflects our commitment to holistic education and student well-being. CHRIST is home to students from diverse regions, languages, cultures, academic disciplines, family backgrounds, and life experiences. Such diversity is one of the University's greatest strengths. It also reminds us that student well-being cannot be reduced to one story, one solution, or one form of support. The concerns of students are layered, and our response must be thoughtful, practical, inclusive, and humane.

This companion has been developed through a collaborative process involving student voices, counselling perspectives, academic insight, review, editorial



development, and design. It is not intended to be a clinical manual, a rulebook, or a replacement for counselling or professional care. Rather, it is a student-facing guide that offers psychological understanding in simple language, practical tools for everyday use, reflection prompts, peer support ideas, help-seeking cues, and pathways for further exploration.

The present volume, Volume 1 of the Student Wellbeing Companion, focuses on some of the foundational experiences of student life: arriving, adjusting, belonging, building relationships, staying safe, and caring for health and everyday well-being. These are not small matters. The way a student settles into university life often shapes how they experience the years that follow. A student who feels less alone, understands their own adjustment, builds healthier relationships, and knows where to seek support is better placed to participate meaningfully in academic and campus life.

Although this companion has been developed within CHRIST, its purpose is not limited to one university. The experiences addressed here are shared by students across higher education contexts in India and beyond. Adjustment, belonging, relationships, health, safety, emotional regulation, academic stress, campus participation, and future uncertainty are part of the wider student journey. I hope this companion will therefore be meaningful not only to the students of CHRIST, but also to educators, counsellors, student support professionals, families, and institutions that care about the well-being of young people.

This book also carries an important message for students: seeking help is not a weakness. It is a wise and responsible act. Self-help has value, but it has limits. When distress becomes intense, persistent, unsafe, or disruptive to daily functioning, students must be encouraged to reach out. A healthy university culture is one where support is not hidden in the background, but made visible, accessible, and free from shame.

I appreciate the School of Psychological Sciences, the Centre for Counselling and Health Services, the editor, contributors, reviewers, student participants, and design team who have worked together to bring this publication to life. Their efforts reflect a meaningful collaboration between academic knowledge, counselling practice, student experience, institutional care, and peer participation.



May this book help students feel seen, supported, and encouraged. May it help them recognise that they are not alone in their struggles, that growth takes time, and that well-being is central to education. May it also inspire universities everywhere to continue building learning communities where excellence and care stand together.

Dr Fr Joseph C. C.

Vice Chancellor

CHRIST (Deemed to be University)

EDITOR'S NOTE

This two-volume companion began with a simple but important question: how can students be supported not only to study well, but also to live through university life with greater awareness, steadiness, and care?

The idea for this resource emerged from a university-level concern for student well-being. During institutional visits, the Vice Chancellor and Registrar had encountered a support resource developed for students in a medical education setting. It was designed to help them cope with the fatigue, pressure, emotional burden, and demanding routines of professional training. That idea stayed with us. In a large and diverse university context, where students come from different regions, languages, cultures, programmes, family backgrounds, and life experiences, the need for a practical well-being companion felt both timely and necessary.

At CHRIST (Deemed to be University), student life is not limited to classrooms, assignments, examinations, and placements. It also includes adjustment, belonging, friendships, conflict, homesickness, identity shifts, emotional stress, sleep, food, safety, digital life, money choices, participation, internships, and questions about the future. Many students move through these experiences quietly. Some may have language for what they are going through. Others may only know that something feels difficult, confusing, or heavy. This companion was created to offer that language, along with tools, reflection prompts, and practical ways of taking small steps.

The project was initiated through the vision of the Vice Chancellor's Office and facilitated by the Registrar. It was then taken forward through the School of Psychological Sciences, in collaboration with the Centre for Counselling and Health Services. From the beginning, we wanted this companion to be grounded in student voices, not only in expert assumptions. The first stage therefore involved a structured needs analysis through focus group discussions with student representatives across programmes. These conversations helped us listen to what students were actually experiencing, what they wished they had known earlier, and what kind of support language felt useful to them.



The inputs from the student consultations were then analysed and consolidated into broad areas of student life. These became the seven domains of the companion: arriving and adjusting, belonging and relationships, staying safe and healthy, mind and emotions, academic life and motivation, campus life and balance, and future readiness. This structure was intentional. It reflects the idea that student well-being is not one single topic. It is a layered experience shaped by personal, social, academic, physical, emotional, institutional, and future-oriented concerns.

The next stage involved developing a content pool with the support of post-graduate psychology students. Their contributions helped us gather ideas, themes, examples, and possible activities. These early drafts were not treated as final chapters. They became the foundation from which the manuscript could be reviewed, reorganised, rewritten, and shaped into a more consistent student-facing companion. This was important because a resource like this cannot simply be a collection of separate chapters. It needs a shared voice, a common structure, and a clear sense of purpose.

The draft then moved through review and revision. The Centre for Counselling and Health Services offered feedback from the perspective of student support and counselling practice. Experienced academic reviewers also examined the manuscript and provided valuable suggestions. These reviews helped us strengthen the tone, clarify the support language, and ensure that the content remained responsible, practical, and sensitive to the realities of university students.

A major part of the editorial work involved bringing all chapters into a common structure without making them feel mechanical. Each chapter was developed to include relatable student experiences, a simple explanation of the concern, a psychological anchor, practical strategies, peer support guidance, help-seeking cues, a toolkit, reflection prompts, one small step, and further resources. The aim was to create chapters that are readable, psychologically grounded, and usable, without sounding like a textbook or a counselling manual.

This first volume brings together the opening three domains of the Student Wellbeing Companion: Arriving and Adjusting, Belonging and Relationships, and Staying Safe and Healthy. These domains attend to some of the earliest and most foundational concerns of university life: settling into a new environ-



ment, finding one's place, navigating relationships, caring for the body, understanding safety, and learning when and how to seek support. These concerns may seem ordinary, but they often shape how students experience the rest of their university journey.

This companion is not meant to diagnose students, replace counselling, or offer perfect answers to complex problems. It is a companion. Some students may read it when they are missing home. Some may turn to it when conflict, anxiety, academic pressure, or digital overload feels difficult to manage. Some may use it to support a friend. Some may read it gradually across the year and use it as a space for reflection. There is no single correct way to use it.

At the same time, the companion carries a clear support philosophy. Self-help can be meaningful, but it has limits. When distress is intense, persistent, unsafe, or begins to affect daily functioning, reaching out is important. Across the chapters, students are encouraged to seek support from trusted people, counsellors, mentors, student support systems, medical professionals, or emergency services depending on the nature and urgency of the concern.

Although this project is rooted in CHRIST (Deemed to be University), the themes addressed here are not limited to one institution. Students across higher education settings encounter transition, belonging, pressure, uncertainty, relationships, risk, and growth. For that reason, the companion has been written in a way that honours its institutional origin while remaining meaningful to students in wider contexts.

I am grateful to everyone who contributed to this journey: the university leadership that made the project possible, the School of Psychological Sciences, the Centre for Counselling and Health Services, student participants, content contributors, reviewers, revision supporters, and the design team. Each stage added something necessary.

More than anything, I hope this volume helps students feel a little less alone in what they are navigating. If it helps a student name an experience, take one small step, support a friend more wisely, or reach out at the right time, it would have served its purpose.

A Sabu John

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This two-volume companion was made possible through the vision and support of CHRIST (Deemed to be University) and its commitment to student well-being. We gratefully acknowledge *Dr Fr Joseph C. C.*, Vice Chancellor, whose vision initiated this project, and *Dr Anil Joseph Pinto*, Registrar, for facilitating its development through the University's academic and student support structures.

We express our sincere gratitude to *Dr Surekha Chukkali*, Dean, School of Psychological Sciences, for her leadership and support in guiding this project through the School.

We also acknowledge the Centre for Counselling and Health Services, especially *Ms Ashly George*, *Ms Deepa Venu Kumar*, *Ms Smita Hemant Prabhu*, and the wider CCHS counselling team, for their active collaboration from the earliest stage and for their contributions to the conceptualisation, student consultation, review, and student support orientation of the companion.

We acknowledge *Dr Hema M. A.* from the Department of Psychology for her role in the initial conceptualisation, analysis of student inputs, and development of the overall content structure. We are also grateful to *Dr Bhavani S.*, Dean, School of Humanities and Performing Arts, and *Dr Suparna Majumdar Kar*, Head, Department of Sociology, for reviewing the manuscript and offering thoughtful suggestions.

We sincerely thank the postgraduate student contributors who helped build the initial content pool for this project. We also acknowledge *Pari Shah*, *Sanjana Sudhindra*, and *Sreyas R Nair* for their support during the revision, coordination, and editorial refinement stages.

We thank the design team, *Hari Prasad B K*, *Abhishek Paul P*, and *Varnikha Shekhar*, for helping translate the manuscript into a student-friendly visual format.

Most importantly, we thank the students who participated in the focus group discussions and shared their experiences with honesty. Their voices helped shape the direction, tone, and purpose of this companion.

Project Team and Contributors

Institutional Vision and Initiation

Dr Fr Joseph C. C.

Vice Chancellor

CHRIST (Deemed to be University)

Institutional Facilitation

Dr Anil Joseph Pinto

Registrar

CHRIST (Deemed to be University)

Academic Leadership

Dr Surekha Chukkali

Dean, School of Psychological Sciences

CHRIST (Deemed to be University)

Project Lead, Editor and Coordinator

Dr A. Sabu John

School of Psychological Sciences

CHRIST (Deemed to be University)

Collaborating Unit & Review Team

Centre for Counselling and Health Services

CHRIST (Deemed to be University)

Core Conceptualisation and Student Consultation Team

Dr Hema M. A.

Assistant Professor, School of Psychological Sciences

CHRIST (Deemed to be University)

Ms Ashly George | Ms Deepa Venu Kumar | Ms Smita Hemant Prabhu

Centre for Counselling and Health Services

CHRIST (Deemed to be University)

Publication Advisory and Support

Dr Malavika Menon | Mr Jerry Mathew

Centre for Publications

CHRIST (Deemed to be University)

Content Development Team

Pranhavya Karthikeyan | Gianna Sarah Theodore | Shreya Rajaram Bandgar
MSc Clinical Psychology

Miloni R. Shah | Aashna Vora | Tushar B. Nair | Aishwarya Venkataraman Meenakshi
MSc Counselling Psychology

Ariha Keval Sheth | Pari Shah
MSc Educational Psychology

Rebecca Nicole Dias | Sanjana Sudhindra
MSc Human Resource Development

Editorial Revision and Coordination Support

Pari Shah
MSc Educational Psychology

Sanjana Sudhindra
MSc Human Resource Development

Sreyas R Nair
PhD Scholar, Psychology

Expert Reviewers

Dr Bhavani S.
*Dean, School of Humanities and
Performing Arts
CHRIST (Deemed to be University)*

Dr Suparna Majumdar Kar
*Head, Department of Sociology
CHRIST (Deemed to be University)*

Design Team

Hari Prasad B. K.
MCA

Abhishek Paul P
BA Economics Honours

Varnikha Shekhar
MA Media and Communication Studies

About This Book

VOLUME I

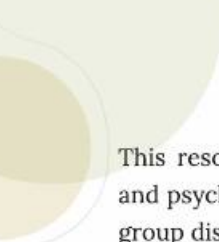
“The first steps into university life can feel uncertain, but with care, connection, and support, they can become the beginning of belonging.”

This volume is part of the Student Wellbeing Companion, a two-volume student well-being resource for university life. It has been created to help students understand, reflect on, and respond to some of the personal, social, emotional, academic, and everyday challenges that can come with being in university.

University life is often described as exciting, independent, and full of opportunity. It can be all of that. It can also feel confusing, lonely, demanding, uncertain, and overwhelming at different points. Students may be adjusting to a new campus, new friendships, academic pressure, shared living, changing identities, emotional stress, safety concerns, financial decisions, digital life, internships, and questions about the future. This companion brings these experiences together and offers simple language, practical tools, reflection prompts, and support-oriented guidance.

Volume I focuses on the first three domains of the companion: Arriving and Adjusting, Belonging and Relationships, and Staying Safe and Healthy. These domains attend to some of the foundational experiences of university life: settling into a new environment, finding one's place, building relationships, navigating shared spaces, caring for the body, understanding safety, and knowing when support may be needed.

The companion is written primarily for university students across years, programmes, campuses, and backgrounds. It may also be useful for faculty mentors, counsellors, peer leaders, student support teams, and families who want to understand student well-being more closely.



This resource emerged from a university-level effort to create a practical and psychologically grounded companion for students. Student voices, focus group discussions, content development, expert review, counselling perspectives, editorial revision, and design work have shaped its final form. While the project is rooted in the context of CHRIST (Deemed to be University), the themes addressed here are relevant to students in many higher education settings.

This volume is not a rulebook, diagnostic manual, therapy substitute, legal guide, or emergency support resource. It does not claim to solve every difficulty that students may face. Instead, it offers a companion for reflection, awareness, skill-building, and timely help-seeking.

You may use this volume when you want to understand yourself better, support a friend, try a practical tool, prepare for a difficult conversation, reflect on a concern, or recognise when more support may be needed. Some parts may feel useful immediately. Other parts may become relevant later. You do not have to take everything in at once.

The hope is simple: that this volume gives you a little more language, steadiness, and direction as you begin, belong, care for yourself, and move through university life.

How to Use This Volume

You do not have to read this book in order.
Use it in the way that fits the moment.

Start Where You Are

Some days, you may want to go straight to the chapter that speaks to what you are experiencing.

- **Feeling unsettled in a new space?**
Begin with the chapters on transition, campus adaptation, homesickness, shared living, or identity shifts.
- **Missing home or finding it hard to adjust?**
Go to the chapters on homesickness, distance, cultural adaptation, or finding your footing.
- **Trying to find your place among people?**
Look at the chapters on community, belonging, inclusion, close relationships, assertiveness, conflict, or peer support.
- **Finding relationships confusing?**
Use the chapters on friendship, romantic or close relationships, assertive communication, conflict, gossip, and peer support.
- **Trying to care for your body, safety, and everyday routines?**
Move to the chapters on food, sleep, movement, substances, consent, safety, and help-seeking.
- **Wondering when to reach out?**
Pay attention to the “When to Reach Out” sections across chapters and the support guidance towards the end of this volume.

At other times, you may choose to move through the book gradually, one domain at a time.

Look for These Features

Each chapter has been designed to help you move from awareness to action.

- **Quick Check**
Use this when something feels familiar, but you are not sure how to name it.
- **Opening Story or Scenario**
Begin here when you want to see how the chapter theme may show up in student life.
- **Psychology Anchor**
Look here when you want to understand why an experience may be happening.
- **Practical Strategies**
Use these when you want clear, realistic steps that can be tried in everyday life.
- **Toolkit / Try This / Tracker / Script**
Go here when you need something practical to do, write, practise, or plan.
- **Journal Away**
Use this when you want to pause, reflect, and connect the chapter to your own life.
- **Peer Support**
Read this when you are wondering how to support a friend without taking over.
- **When to Reach Out**
Pay attention to this when a concern feels too heavy to manage alone.
- **One Small Step**
Use this when you want one simple action to try after reading.
- **Chapter at a Glance**
Read this when you want a quick recap of the key ideas.



Explore Further

Go here when you want additional readings, videos, worksheets, or digital resources.

This volume is designed for both printed and digital use. If you are using a printed copy, you may write directly into the reflection spaces and activities. If you are using a digital copy, you may type, annotate, use a tablet, or keep a separate notebook alongside it. In the digital version, links may be clicked directly. In the printed version, QR codes will guide you to chapter-wise resources.

Use the volume at your own pace. Pause when you need to. Skip what does not fit your situation. Return to a chapter when it becomes relevant. Try one small step before trying many things at once.

The Student Well-being Companion Across Two Volumes

The complete Student Wellbeing Companion is organised into seven domains across two volumes. Together, the two volumes help you explore well-being in a balanced and connected way.

This first volume includes the opening three domains.



Arriving and Adjusting

helps you settle into new spaces, routines, relationships, and versions of yourself.



Belonging and Relationships

helps you build connection, communicate with care, and find your place without losing yourself.



Staying Safe and Healthy

helps you care for your body, choices, boundaries, safety, and everyday well-being.



The remaining four domains continue in Volume II:

- Mind and Emotions;
- Academic Life and Motivation;
- Campus Life and Balance;
- Future Readiness.

How the Domains Work

- Each domain begins with an opener page.
- Each domain includes chapters connected to that area of student life.
- Each domain ends with a short reflection page.
- You may move through the domains in order.
- You may also go directly to the domain that feels most relevant right now.

A Note on Well-being and Support

Some parts of this volume may feel close to your own life. A chapter may remind you of something you are going through, something you have avoided thinking about, or something that concerns a friend. If that happens, you can slow down. You may pause, skip a section, return later, or use this volume alongside a trusted person.

Self-help can be useful, especially when you are trying to understand an experience, name what is happening, reflect on a pattern, or try one small step. At the same time, not everything should be handled alone. If distress feels intense, continues over time, affects sleep, eating, attendance, studies, relationships, safety, or daily functioning, support from another person may be important.

Reaching out is not a sign of weakness or failure. It can be a wise and responsible step. Depending on the concern, support may come from a counsellor, mental health professional, faculty mentor, trusted adult, student support service, residence or hostel support person, medical professional, or another reliable support system.

If you ever feel unsafe, at risk of harm, unable to stay safe, threatened, assaulted, medically unwell, or in immediate danger, seek urgent help from available emergency services, campus authorities, local support systems, or a trusted responsible adult.

This volume can offer language, reflection, tools, and direction. It is not meant to replace counselling, medical care, legal advice, crisis support, or emergency intervention when these are needed.

Digital Resource Hub



View Resource Online



Scan to Open

This two-volume companion is supported by a Digital Resource Hub that brings together readings, videos, worksheets, and additional learning resources. The hub is designed to help you explore a topic further after reading a chapter.

The resources are organised by volume, domain, and chapter, so that you can move easily from a chapter in the printed book to the corresponding digital resource page. Each chapter's Explore Further section connects to selected readings and videos related to that chapter's theme.

The resources included in the hub have been curated for student learning and reflection. They are drawn from publicly available sources such as universities, counselling centres, mental health organisations, educational platforms, and other relevant creators. They are not owned or created by this companion unless specifically stated. Each resource remains the work of its respective author, organisation, or platform.

You can use the Digital Resource Hub in two ways. If you are reading the digital version of this volume, you may click the links directly. If you are using a printed copy, you may scan the QR codes to access the relevant resource pages. These resources are meant to support further understanding. They are not a substitute for counselling, medical care, legal advice, crisis support, or emergency assistance.

Because online content can change over time, some links may be updated, moved, or replaced in future versions. The Digital Resource Hub allows the companion to remain connected to useful resources without crowding the printed pages with long web links.

Use the hub when you want to learn more, revisit a topic, watch a short video, or explore a reading connected to a chapter that felt relevant to you.

Contents

Domain 1 : Arriving and Adjusting

Chapter 1: Transitioning to University Life	1
Chapter 2: Cultural and Campus Adaptation	15
Chapter 3: Managing Homesickness and Distance	30
Chapter 4: Shared Living and Roommate Boundaries	43
Chapter 5: Exploring Identity Shifts	57

Domain 2 : Belonging and Relationships

Chapter 6: Finding Community in a Diverse Campus	73
Chapter 7: Building Belonging and Inclusion	87
Chapter 8: Romantic and Close Relationships	101
Chapter 9: Learning to Be Assertive	115
Chapter 10: Dealing with Gossip and Conflict	129
Chapter 11: Peer Support	143

Domain 3 : Staying Safe and Healthy

Chapter 12: Food, Eating, and Body Basics	159
Chapter 13: Sleep and Movement	171
Chapter 14: Substances and Risk Awareness	185
Chapter 15: Sexual Health and Consent	200
Chapter 16: Safety, Harassment, and Knowing Your Rights	215

growth

home

transition

homesickness

identity

DOMAIN 1

Arriving and Adjusting

belonging

adjustment

change

routines

independence



CHAPTER

1

Transitioning to University Life

*Finding your footing in
a new place*

Starting university can feel exciting and unsettling at the same time. One part of you may feel ready for a fresh start, new people, new spaces, more freedom, and a different rhythm of life. Another part may quietly miss what felt known: familiar faces, predictable routines, home food, old classrooms, and people who already understood you.

Whether you have moved to a new city, shifted into a hostel, or entered a campus that feels much larger than your previous world, the change can feel bigger than expected. Your days may now include lectures, attendance, assignments, group work, canteen conversations, messages from home, and moments where you are not sure where you fit yet.

Some days may feel hopeful. Other days may feel strangely lonely. You may look around and think everyone else has already adjusted, found friends, or learnt how things work. But adjustment is often quieter than it looks. Many students are still figuring things out, even if they seem confident from the outside.

This chapter is about that beginning phase: the space between leaving what was familiar and slowly building a life that begins to feel like your own.



Quick Check: Is This Showing Up for Me?

Tick any statements that feel true for you right now.

☐

I feel excited and overwhelmed at the same time.

☐

I often think others have adjusted better than I have.

☐

I miss my old routines, people, or sense of familiarity.

☐

I feel unsure about where I belong on campus.

☐

I want to reach out to people but hesitate or overthink it.



If a few of these feel familiar, it does not mean you are doing university life wrong. It may simply mean you are in the middle of transition.



Why This Transition Feels So Big

Starting university is not just one change. It is many changes arriving together.

You may be adjusting socially. The people around you are new. Friendships that once felt automatic may now need effort, timing, and courage. You may miss old group chats, school friends, family conversations, or the comfort of being known without having to explain yourself.

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE

It can also show up in hostel life or daily commuting. A hostel room may not yet feel like home. A long journey to campus may leave you tired before the day begins. You may miss festivals, food, family routines, or the small comforts that once gave your day shape.

Social media can make this harder. When others post photos with new friends, club events, café visits, or late-night conversations, it can look as if everyone has found their place. What you do not see is the awkwardness, uncertainty, and loneliness that many people also carry.

These moments are not signs that something is wrong with you. They are signs that your life is reorganising itself. You are learning new routes, new expectations, new relationships, and new ways of taking care of yourself. That takes energy. It also takes time.



The Psychology of Transition

Four factors that shape adjustment

One helpful way to understand transition comes from Schlossberg's work¹ on how people adjust to major life changes. In simple terms, transition becomes easier to understand when you look at four areas: the situation, the self, support, and strategies.

Situation asks: What is changing in my life right now?

For a student, this may include a new campus, new academic expectations, more independence, or distance from home.

Self asks: What strengths, habits, values, and coping patterns am I bringing into this phase?

You may be shy, outgoing, organised, anxious, curious, cautious, or still discovering how you respond to change. All of these shape adjustment.

Support asks: Who or what can help me?

Support may come from family, classmates, seniors, faculty mentors, counselors, hostel staff, peer groups, or one trusted friend.

Strategies asks: What small actions can help me cope?

This may include building routines, asking for help early, showing up in low-pressure spaces, staying connected with home, or naming what you feel instead of pushing it away.

The point is not to have everything figured out immediately. The point is to notice what is changing, understand what you need, and choose small actions that make the week feel more manageable.

Once you understand what is changing, the next step is to make the transition more manageable in daily life. You do not need to solve university life all at once. Repeated, realistic actions can help unfamiliar spaces begin to feel less distant.



Small Ways to Find Your Footing

1 | Start with Low-Pressure Spaces

You do not have to begin by walking into the biggest event or joining the loudest group. Start with places where interaction feels easier, such as the canteen, library, corridor outside class, a study group, or a club orientation.



Try this: Choose one campus space and return to it a few times this week. Familiarity often grows through repeated presence.

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE

5 | Use Support Early

Support is not only for crisis moments. Asking questions, speaking to seniors, meeting a faculty mentor, approaching a counsellor, or joining a peer group can help you adjust before stress builds up.



Try this: Identify one person or support space you could approach this week, even for a small question. Reaching out early is a wise step, not a sign that you are failing.



If a Friend Is Finding It Hard Too

Sometimes transition does not show up loudly. A friend may not say, “I am struggling.” Instead, you may notice that they seem quieter than usual, avoid plans, miss classes, eat alone often, or talk about feeling out of place. These signs do not always mean something serious is happening, but they are worth noticing with care.

You do not need to become their counsellor or solve the problem for them. Often, the most helpful support is simple, steady, and respectful.

You might say:

- “You seem a little quieter than usual. Do you want to talk?”
- “I’m going to the canteen. Do you want to come with me?”
- “This phase can feel confusing. You don’t have to figure it out alone.”

Try not to dismiss their experience with phrases like “Everyone goes through this” or “Just adjust, it will pass.” Even when such statements are meant to reassure, they can make someone feel unheard.

Support can be as small as saving them a seat, walking with them after class, checking in without pressure, or helping them find the right person to speak to. If their distress seems to be affecting their sleep, eating, attendance, motivation, or sense of safety, gently encourage them to reach out to a counsellor, faculty mentor, trusted senior, trusted adult, or student support service.

Being a good friend does not mean carrying everything for someone else. It means helping them feel less alone while also knowing when more support may be needed.



When Support Can Help

Adjustment takes time, and it is normal to feel uncertain during the first phase of university life. Still, self-help may not be enough if the struggle begins to affect your daily functioning. Consider reaching out to a counsellor, faculty mentor, trusted senior, trusted adult, residence or hostel support person, student support service, or mental health professional if you notice:

- ongoing sadness, anxiety, loneliness, or overwhelm
- changes in sleep, appetite, energy, or motivation
- difficulty attending classes, focusing, or completing basic tasks
- withdrawing from people or avoiding most campus spaces
- feeling unable to cope with the transition on your own

You do not have to wait until things become unmanageable. Support can help you understand what is happening, organise your next steps, and feel less alone while you adjust.

If you ever feel unsafe, at risk of harm, or unable to manage the day safely, reach out immediately to a trusted person, campus authority, emergency service, or local crisis support.



Toolkit: Finding Your Footing Checklist

Use this when you feel overwhelmed, out of place, or unsure where to begin.

Step 1: What Is Changing for Me?

Tick what applies right now.

- ☐ New campus or city
- ☐ New people and social spaces
- ☐ Academic pressure or uncertainty
- ☐ Less structure and more independence
- ☐ Missing home or old routines
- ☐ Feeling unsure where I belong
- ☐ Other: _____

What feels hardest right now?

Step 2: Check In With Myself

Right now, I feel:

- ☐ Excited
- ☐ Overwhelmed
- ☐ Lonely

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE



Journal Away

Take a few minutes to reflect.

What changes am I currently adjusting to in university life?

What part of my old routine or support system do I want to carry with me?

Who are the people or spaces that make me feel even slightly more settled?

What is one small step I can take this week to support myself?



Ask a Senior

What helped you find your footing when you first started university?

When I first joined university, it took time to adjust to the routines, rules, deadlines, and pace of campus life. What helped me was noticing the small things that made the place feel warmer, such as supportive teachers, familiar campus spaces, and friends going through the same adjustment. I also learnt to ask questions, even the simple ones. Clearing doubts early helped me grow instead of carrying confusion forward.

Pinal Sawasukha

Batch of 2020-2022



Chapter at a Glance

- Transitioning to university affects your social, academic, and emotional life at the same time.
- Feeling uncertain, lonely, or overwhelmed can be part of adjustment, not a sign of failure.
- Routines, low-pressure social steps, and early support can make the transition more manageable.
- You do not have to figure everything out alone. Support and connection can help you find your footing.



Explore Further

 [View Resource Online](#)

For readings and videos on university transition, adjustment stress, and settling into campus life, visit the Chapter 1 resource page.



Scan to Open



Endnote

¹ Schlossberg's transition framework looks at four areas that shape adjustment: situation, self, support, and strategies. Here, it is used as a simple way to understand what is changing and what kind of support may help.





CHAPTER

2

Cultural and Campus Adaptation

*Bridging worlds while
finding your place in
campus life*

The first few days on campus can feel exciting, but also strangely unfamiliar.

Maybe it is your first week in the hostel. The room has finally become quiet after a long day of orientations, introductions, and trying to remember where everything is. You lie in bed scrolling through your phone. A video appears of someone laughing with their family over dinner, and for a moment, you are reminded of home.

Back home, the people, food, language, routines, and small everyday habits may have felt familiar. Here, even simple things can feel different. You may not yet know where to sit, whom to talk to, or how to join a conversation that already seems to have its own rhythm.

Around you, others may seem to be adjusting faster. They appear confident, move easily through campus spaces, and seem to have already found their people. You may attend classes, reply to messages, and keep going through the day, but somewhere inside, a quiet question may remain:

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE



Practical Strategies

1 | Blend, Don't Replace

You do not have to become someone else in order to belong. Keep one familiar habit from home, such as a planned call, prayer, journaling, familiar music, or speaking in your home language.



Try this: Choose one small home routine you can continue this week.

2 | Start Small Socially

Connection does not have to begin with deep friendship. Start with small, low-pressure interactions, such as smiling at someone from class, asking about an assignment, or sitting near someone during lunch.



Try this: Begin one short conversation this week without expecting it to become anything more.

3 | Build Micro-Routines

When everything feels new, small routines can create stability. Start with a few daily anchors, such as regular meals, one academic task, a short walk, or one planned conversation.



Try this: Make a four-item checklist for the day: food, study, self-care, and connection.

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE

Listen without rushing to fix the feeling. Avoid dismissing their experience with lines like “You’ll get used to it” or “Everyone goes through this.” Even if these statements are partly true, they may make the person feel unheard.

Support can also be practical. You can invite them for a meal, walk with them to class, help them understand a campus process, or include them in a low-pressure conversation.



When to Reach Out?

Adjustment takes time, and many students feel unsettled during the early phase of university life. However, self-help and waiting it out may not be enough when loneliness, homesickness, or confusion:

- continues for several weeks without easing
- becomes intense or overwhelming
- affects sleep, appetite, health, attendance, or academic work
- makes you feel hopeless, unsafe, or unable to manage the day

Reaching out does not mean you have failed to adjust. It means you are taking your well-being seriously.

You could speak to a counsellor, faculty mentor, trusted senior, residence or hostel support person, family member, or another reliable person in your support system.

If you ever feel at risk of harming yourself, feel unsafe with someone else, or feel unable to stay safe, seek immediate help from emergency services, campus authorities, a trusted adult, or the nearest available support person.



Toolkit: Bridging Home and Campus

This toolkit helps you notice what you are carrying from your familiar world and how you are adjusting to your new campus world.

Part 1: Cultural Identity Mapping



Use this when: You feel caught between your familiar life and your new campus life.

1 | My Familiar World

This may include family, language, food, faith, region, routines, values, relationships, or personal habits.

My Familiar World includes

2 | My New Campus World

This may include hostel or day-scholar life, classmates, group work, clubs, independence, campus spaces, new routines, or new expectations.

My new Campus world includes

3 | My Bridge Between Both Worlds

One part of my familiar world I want to carry forward:

One part of campus life I want to explore:

My bridge between both worlds could be:

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE



CHAPTER

3

Managing Homesickness and Distance

*Growing Away, Not
Growing Apart*

It can happen at the most ordinary time.

You may be sitting in your room after a long day when a familiar song begins to play. Suddenly, you remember home. The sound of someone calling you for dinner. The smell of food you once complained about but now miss. The comfort of your own bed. The ease of being around people who already know your moods, habits, and silences.

Some days, you may feel proud of yourself for managing things independently. On other days, a small reminder can make the distance feel heavier than expected. A family photo, a festival celebration, a video call, a familiar language, or an empty evening can bring up a wave of longing.

Homesickness can feel confusing because it often arrives alongside growth. You may want to be here, study here, make friends here, and build a life here. At the same time, you may deeply miss the people, routines, and places that made you feel held.

Both can be true. You can be growing into a new life and still miss the old rhythms that shaped you.



Quick Check: Is This Showing Up for Me?

Tick any statements that feel true for you right now.

☐

I often think about home when I am alone.

☐

Small things like songs, food, reels, festivals, or calls remind me of home.

☐

Evenings or weekends feel heavier than the rest of the day.

☐

I hesitate to call home because I feel emotional afterwards.

☐

I feel like I have not fully settled into this place yet.



If some of these feel true, this chapter is for you.



What Homesickness Is Really About

Homesickness is not only about missing a physical place. It is often about missing the feeling of being known.

At home, many things may have felt familiar without explanation. People may have understood your routines, your food preferences, your moods, your language, your family patterns, and your way of being. Even if home was not perfect, it may still have offered some sense of predictability.

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE



One Small Step

This week, choose one action that connects you to home and one action that settles you where you are now. For example, call someone from home for a few intentional minutes, then spend 10 minutes in a campus space you want to become more familiar with.



Explore Further

 [View Resource Online](#)

For readings and videos on homesickness, emotional distance, and staying connected while adjusting to university life, visit the Chapter 3 resource page.



Scan to Open



Endnote

¹ Attachment and safe bonds refer to the emotional connections that help people feel secure, comforted, and grounded. Here, they are used to understand homesickness, not to label a student's attachment style.





CHAPTER

4

Shared Living and Roommate

*Sharing a Space
Without Losing Your
Peace*

"My roommate's alarm wakes me up every morning, but somehow, it never wakes them. Their calls go on late into the night. Their things keep appearing on my desk. I do not want to fight, but I also do not want to feel uncomfortable in my own room."

Shared living often begins with excitement. There is someone to talk to after class, someone who knows when you return late, someone who may eventually become a friend. For many students, hostel life also brings a new kind of independence. You are away from familiar routines and learning how to live with people from different backgrounds.

But after a few days or weeks,

The small things begin to matter

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE

connection

friendship

support

inclusion

trust

DOMAIN 2

Belonging and Relationships

respect

acceptance

listening

boundaries

togetherness



CHAPTER

6

Finding Community in a Diverse Campus

From Strangers to Stories

The first few weeks on campus can look exciting from the outside. New classrooms, conversations, routines, and possibilities. But from the inside, it can sometimes feel like standing in the middle of a crowded place and still wondering where you fit.

You may walk into the canteen with your tray, scan the tables, and suddenly feel unsure about where to sit. You may enter a classroom where people already seem to have formed pairs. You may notice a club poster that looks interesting, but the thought of walking in alone makes you turn away.

It is the kind of moment even Peter Parker might understand. He may have faced the Avengers, but stepping into a new space and not knowing where to belong can still feel difficult in a very human way.

University can sharpen this feeling because people arrive with different languages, regions, cultures, schools, experiences, and personalities. Some students seem confident from day one. Some quietly wait to be noticed. Some make friends quickly, but still feel lonely inside.

If you have ever looked around and thought, “Everyone else seems to have found their people,” this chapter is for you.

Belonging does not always begin with a best friend or a perfect group. Sometimes, it begins with one familiar face, one shared laugh, one repeated hello, or one small invitation that makes campus feel a little less unfamiliar.



Quick Check: Is This Showing Up for Me?

Tick any statements that feel true for you right now.

- ☐ I sometimes feel lonely even when I am surrounded by people.
- ☐ I want to join conversations or groups, but I hesitate.
- ☐ I feel like others have already found their people.
- ☐ I avoid some campus spaces because I feel awkward going alone.
- ☐ I compare my social life with what I see around me or online.
- ☐ I wish I had at least one place on campus where I felt comfortable.



If a few of these feel familiar, it does not mean you are failing at university life. It may simply mean that your sense of belonging is still taking shape.



What Does Community Really Mean?

Community is not just a large friend circle. It is not about being invited everywhere, always having plans, or never eating alone. Community means having spaces, people, and relationships where you feel seen, accepted, and connected.

For some students, community may look like a group of close friends. For others, it may be one classmate they can sit with, a club where they are recognised, a roommate they can talk to, a mentor who remembers their name, or a quiet corner of campus that starts feeling familiar.

Many students expect belonging to happen quickly. They imagine that university friendships will form instantly, that roommates will become close immediately, or that the right group will appear on its own. When that does not happen, they may begin to wonder whether something is wrong with them.

But belonging is rarely instant. It usually grows through repetition. You attend the same class. You sit near the same person. You show up to the same club. You exchange small comments. You ask one question. You reply to one message. Over time, these small moments begin to carry meaning.

Finding community also does not mean changing yourself to fit every space. In a diverse campus, you will meet people who think, speak, dress, pray, celebrate, study, and socialise differently from you. Building community means learning how to stay open to others while also allowing yourself to belong without pretending to be someone else.

The goal is not to be liked by everyone. The goal is to build enough genuine connection that you can begin to say, "There are people and places here where I can be myself."



Where Loneliness Hides on Campus

Everyday moments that shape belonging

Loneliness in university does not always look dramatic. Often, it hides in ordinary moments.

It can show up when you carry your food through the canteen, trying to decide whether to sit alone or ask someone if you can join. It can appear in a class WhatsApp group where people share inside jokes that you do not understand

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE



CHAPTER

7

Building Belonging and Inclusion

*Making Space for
Everyone*

Picture this: tomorrow, the world quietly flips.

Every lecture hall is designed for left-handed people only. The desks feel awkward. Door handles open the other way. Everyone around you seems to understand a set of unspoken rules, but you are always a few seconds behind. Group discussions are built around references you do not know. People speak in a language or style that they understand easily, while you keep trying to catch up.

When you hesitate, someone smiles and says, "It is not that hard. You will get used to it." And maybe you would. Eventually.

But something would still feel different. You might move more carefully, think twice before asking a question, or stay quieter in group work. Over time, the effort of adjusting to a space that was not made with you in mind can become tiring.

That is often what exclusion feels like.

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE

You do not need to become their counsellor. Your role as a peer is simpler: notice, include, listen, and encourage support when needed.



You could say:

“That sounded uncomfortable. Do you want to talk about what happened?”

“I noticed you have been a little quiet in the group. Would you like to sit with us today?”

“I am sorry that happened. I am glad you told me.”

Sometimes, support is not about giving advice. It is about making the next moment less lonely. Sit with them. Invite them without pressure. Help them think through who else they can speak to if the issue continues.

If someone is experiencing repeated exclusion, bullying, discrimination, harassment, or distress that is affecting their daily life, gently encourage them to speak to a counsellor, faculty mentor, trusted adult, student support service, or another appropriate support person.

Instead of

“You are overthinking it.”

“Everyone feels left out sometimes.”

“Just ignore them.”

“They probably did not mean it.”

“You should confront them.”

Try

“I can see why that felt difficult.”

“Do you want to tell me what happened?”

“Would it help to think through what you want to do next?”

“Impact matters, even if it was not intentional.”

“What would feel safe and realistic for you right now?”



When Exclusion Starts Affecting You

Feeling left out once in a while can happen in any new environment. But if exclusion becomes repeated, targeted, or emotionally heavy, it deserves attention.

Consider reaching out for support if:

- you constantly feel anxious, guarded, invisible, or unsafe in a space
- you begin avoiding classes, groups, events, or common areas because of how you are treated
- your sleep, mood, motivation, concentration, or confidence is affected
- you experience repeated comments, jokes, isolation, bullying, discrimination, harassment, or online targeting
- you face barriers related to access, language, disability, identity, finances, or background that make participation difficult
- you feel unable to manage the situation alone

You can speak to a counsellor, faculty mentor, trusted senior, residence or hostel support person, student support service, accessibility support, or a trusted adult. If there is immediate danger, threat, or risk of harm, seek urgent help from emergency services or appropriate campus authorities.

Reaching out does not mean you failed to handle the situation. It means you are taking your safety, dignity, and well-being seriously.

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE

boundaries

body

consent

choices

nourishment

DOMAIN 3

Staying Safe and Healthy

respect

wellness

balance

self-care

protection



CHAPTER

12

Food, Eating, and Body Basics

*Nourishment Without Guilt or
Pressure*

You leave your room in a hurry because the first class starts in ten minutes. Breakfast can wait. By mid-morning, your stomach feels strange, but coffee feels easier than food. Lunch becomes something quick between classes. By evening, you are tired, distracted, and wondering why your focus disappeared halfway through the day.

Some days, food feels simple. On other days, it gets tangled with time, stress, money, hostel routines, canteen queues, body image, guilt, or pressure from others. You may know that your body needs care, but university life does not always make that care easy.

This chapter is about noticing how food, energy, mood, concentration, and body care are connected in everyday student life. Sometimes, one small, regular act of nourishment can help you feel a little more steady in a very full day.

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE



Toolkit: Bridging Home and Campus

Use this when your eating routine feels rushed, irregular, or affected by stress.

This is not a tool for tracking calories, weight, or “good” and “bad” foods. It is a simple check-in to help you notice whether your body is receiving some regular care during the week.

Part 1: Check In for Five Days

Day	Did I eat something at regular points in the day?	Did I drink enough water?	How was my energy?	One small care step I took
Day 1	☐ Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ Not Really	☐ Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ Not Really	☐ Low ☐ Okay ☐ Steady	
Day 2	☐ Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ Not Really	☐ Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ Not Really	☐ Low ☐ Okay ☐ Steady	
Day 3	☐ Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ Not Really	☐ Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ Not Really	☐ Low ☐ Okay ☐ Steady	
Day 4	☐ Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ Not Really	☐ Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ Not Really	☐ Low ☐ Okay ☐ Steady	
Day 5	☐ Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ Not Really	☐ Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ Not Really	☐ Low ☐ Okay ☐ Steady	

Part 2: Add One Small Thing

On days when food feels rushed or incomplete, try adding one simple option that is available to you, such as curd, fruit, dal, egg, chana, nuts, milk, sprouts, vegetables, rice, chapati, dosa, poha, upma, a sandwich, or any familiar food

that helps you feel a little more steady.

Part 3: Notice the Pattern

At the end of five days, ask yourself:

- When was eating easiest for me?
- When did I skip or delay food the most?
- What helped my body feel steadier?
- What is one small routine I can repeat next week?



Journal Away

Take a few minutes to reflect.

When do I usually skip, delay, or rush food during university days?

What messages have I picked up about food or my body, and are they helping me care for myself?

What is one small food routine that feels realistic for my current schedule, budget, and living situation?

How can I treat my body with more respect, even on days when my eating is not perfect?

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE



CHAPTER

15

Sexual Health and Consent

Respect, Safety, and Boundaries

For many students, conversations about sex are not really conversations at all. They may arrive as warnings, jokes, silence, rumours, moral judgement, or casual peer pressure. One person says, “*Don’t even talk about it.*” Another says, “*Everyone is doing it.*” Someone else laughs when boundaries are mentioned, as if discomfort is something to hide.

In the middle of these mixed messages, it can become difficult to hear your own voice. You may know what you value, but still feel unsure how to express it. You may not want to be in a relationship or any sexual situation, but still feel pressure to seem “mature” or “normal”. You may also encounter situations where someone else’s expectations, jokes, flirting, or assumptions make you uncomfortable.

This chapter is not here to encourage sexual behaviour, sexual entanglement, or relationships during university life. Your education, safety, dignity, and personal values matter. This chapter is here to help you understand consent, boundaries, and respectful communication if you encounter situations where these issues arise.



Quick Check: Is This Showing Up for Me?

Tick any statements that feel true for you right now.

- ☐ I sometimes feel unsure whether I am allowed to change my mind.
- ☐ I feel pressure to match what others seem comfortable with.
- ☐ I find conversations about boundaries awkward or difficult.
- ☐ I struggle to separate my own choice from peer or cultural pressure.
- ☐ I have been in situations where silence, joking, or confusion made things unclear.



If a few of these feel familiar, it does not mean something is wrong with you. It may simply mean that you need clearer language, stronger boundaries, and support that respects your values.



What Consent Really Means

Consent means clear, voluntary, mutual, and ongoing agreement to a specific action. It is not guessing. It is not silence. It is not pressure. It is not “they did not say no, so it must be okay.”

Consent involves a clear yes that is freely given. It also means that anyone can pause, refuse, ask for more time, change their mind, or stop at any point. Saying yes to one thing does not mean saying yes to everything. Saying yes once does not mean saying yes forever.

This matters because confusion can easily be mistaken for agreement. A person may laugh because they feel nervous. They may go quiet because they feel

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE

4 | Respect a Changed Mind

Consent is ongoing. Someone may agree earlier and feel differently later. You may also change your mind. A changed mind does not need to be debated or punished.



Try this: If someone pauses, hesitates, or says no, respond with, “That is okay. We can stop.”

5 | Speak About Boundaries Before Things Become Intense

It is often harder to express a boundary when emotions are already high. Talking earlier can prevent confusion later.



Try this: Before entering a private or emotionally intense situation, name your limit clearly: “I am comfortable spending time together, but I do not want this to become physical.”



Words You Can Use

When you feel awkward, it helps to have language ready. These are not scripts you must memorise. Use them as starting points and adjust them to your own voice.

To slow things down:

- “I need to pause for a moment.”
- “I do not want to rush this.”
- “I am not sure, and I want to think clearly.”

To set a boundary:

- "I am not comfortable with this."
- "I do not want to go further."
- "Please do not ask me again after I have said no."

To check consent:

- "Are you comfortable?"
- "Do you want to continue?"
- "Is this okay with you, or would you rather stop?"

To respond respectfully:

- "Thank you for telling me. We can stop."
- "I respect that."
- "You do not need to explain."

To leave a pressured situation:

- "I need to go now."
- "This does not feel right for me."
- "I am going to call someone and step out."

If someone mocks, pressures, guilt-trips, threatens, or repeatedly pushes after a boundary is expressed, the issue is no longer awkward communication. It is a safety and respect concern.



If a Friend Is Navigating Pressure or Confusion

A friend may come to you after an uncomfortable interaction, a confusing relationship moment, unwanted pressure, or a situation where they are unsure what happened. Your role is not to investigate, judge, or decide for them. Your role is to listen, support, and help them reach the right kind of help if needed.

Start by believing that their discomfort matters. You do not have to know all the details before you respond with care.

You can say:

- "I am glad you told me."
- "That sounds really difficult."
- "You do not have to decide what to do immediately."
- "Would you like support in speaking to someone you trust?"

PREVIEW ONLY

Even well-meant questions can sound like blame when someone is already feeling confused or shaken. Instead of asking why they did or did not do something, ask what they need now.

Support can look like sitting with them, helping them contact a trusted per-

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE

NO PREVIEW AVAILABLE

Where to Seek Support

Support can look different depending on what you are facing. Sometimes, support may come from a friend, senior, mentor, family member, teacher, or someone you trust. At other times, it may be important to reach out to a counsellor, medical professional, university authority, grievance body, emergency service, or other formal support system.

You do not have to wait until a concern becomes unmanageable before asking for help. Seeking support early can make a difficulty easier to understand, organise, and respond to.

If the concern is emotional or mental health related

This may include ongoing sadness, anxiety, panic, loneliness, grief, stress, burnout, hopelessness, emotional numbness, loss of motivation, or feeling unable to cope.

You may consider reaching out to:

- a university counsellor or counselling centre
- a mental health professional
- a trusted faculty mentor, student support staff member, or responsible adult
- a trusted family member, friend, or senior
- a mental health helpline or tele-counselling service

In India, students may also consider **Tele-MANAS**, the national tele-mental health service, by calling **14416** or **1800-89-14416**.

If the concern is academic

This may include difficulty keeping up with classes, repeated missed deadlines, examination stress, fear of failure, difficulty understanding course expectations, attendance concerns, or hesitation to ask for help.

You may consider reaching out to:

- a faculty member or course teacher
- a faculty mentor or academic advisor
- a peer mentor or trusted senior
- a learning support centre, if available
- the relevant academic office or department

Academic support is not only for crisis moments. Asking questions early can prevent confusion from becoming heavier later.

If the concern is hostel, residence, or shared living related

This may include roommate conflict, lack of privacy, unsafe living conditions, repeated boundary violations, sleep disturbance, bullying, intimidation, or difficulty adjusting to shared living.

You may consider reaching out to:

- a hostel warden or residence life staff member
- a student support office
- a faculty mentor or trusted adult
- a counsellor, especially if the situation is affecting sleep, mood, safety, or daily functioning
- an appropriate institutional authority if safety, dignity, or rights are affected

You do not have to tolerate an unsafe or repeatedly disrespectful living situation in silence.

If the concern is harassment, bullying, ragging, discrimination, or threats

This may include repeated targeting, intimidation, humiliation, stalking, cyberbullying, sexual harassment, caste-based or religion-based discrimination, disability-related exclusion, gender-based or sexual orientation-based harassment, ragging, blackmail, threats, or non-consensual circulation of images or messages.

You may consider reaching out to:

- the appropriate university grievance redressal body
- anti-ragging committee or anti-ragging support system
- internal complaints committee or sexual harassment redressal mechanism, where applicable
- student welfare office or dean of students
- campus security or local authorities, depending on the seriousness of the situation
- a counsellor or trusted adult for emotional support and next steps

In India, the UGC Anti-Ragging Helpline is **1800-180-5522**. For women in distress, support may also be available through the Women Helpline **181** or the National Commission for Women helpline. In emergencies, call **112**.

If the concern is medical or physical health related

This may include illness, injury, fainting, severe pain, eating or sleep concerns affecting health, medication concerns, substance-related health risks, or any situation needing medical attention.

You may consider reaching out to:

- a doctor or medical professional
- a campus health centre, if available
- a hospital or emergency care service
- a trusted adult or university staff member who can help you access care
- emergency services if the situation is urgent

If a health concern feels serious, sudden, or unsafe, do not wait for it to pass on its own.

If the concern involves substance use

This may include loss of control over alcohol, nicotine, cannabis, non-prescribed medication, stimulants, or other substances; using substances to cope with distress; pressure from peers; blackouts; risky behaviour; withdrawal symptoms; or concern about a friend's use.

You may consider reaching out to:

- a counsellor or mental health professional
- a doctor or de-addiction professional
- a trusted adult or responsible support person
- emergency services in case of overdose, unconsciousness, breathing difficulty, severe confusion, or physical danger

Substance-related risk should be taken seriously. It is safer to seek help early than to wait for the situation to become dangerous.

If you are worried about a friend

You do not have to solve everything for them. Start by listening, staying calm, and helping them connect with the right support.

You might say:

- "I am concerned about you. Would you like to talk, or should we find someone who can help?"
- "I can sit with you while we call someone."
- "You do not have to handle this alone."

If your friend is unsafe, at risk of harm, being threatened, medically unwell, or unable to manage the situation, involve a trusted adult, university authority, emergency service, or local support system immediately.

A Final Reminder

Support systems may differ across universities and locations. Contact details may also change over time. For university-specific support, check your institution's official website, student handbook, counselling centre page, student support office, residence or hostel office, or emergency information channels.

For urgent danger, medical emergency, assault, self-harm risk, or immediate threat to safety, seek emergency help immediately.

If You Need Immediate Help

Some situations need urgent support. Self-help, waiting, or handling it alone may not be enough.

Seek immediate help if you or someone else:

- may be at risk of self-harm or suicide
- feels unable to stay safe
- is being threatened, assaulted, stalked, blackmailed, or forced into something
- has experienced sexual assault, severe harassment, or violence
- has taken an overdose or may be in substance-related danger
- has fainted, is unconscious, has difficulty breathing, or needs urgent medical care
- is experiencing severe panic, confusion, or distress that feels unmanageable
- is in immediate physical danger
- is a child or minor in need of urgent protection

In an emergency, contact local emergency services immediately. In India, **112** is the single emergency response number. If you are under 18 or are supporting a child in distress, **Child Helpline 1098** may also be contacted.

If possible, move to a safer place, stay near people you trust, and do not remain alone while waiting for help. If you are helping someone else, stay with them if it is safe to do so, contact appropriate support, and do not promise secrecy when safety is at risk.

Immediate help is not an overreaction when safety is involved. It is the right next step.

Share Your Feedback



Scan to Open

This two-volume companion has been created as a practical resource for students navigating university life, well-being, relationships, academic pressure, campus participation, and future readiness. Your feedback can help improve future editions and make the companion more useful for students.

If you have read a chapter, tried a tool, used a reflection prompt, accessed the Digital Resource Hub, or used the companion to support someone else, we would be grateful to hear from you.

You may share feedback on:

- what you found useful
- what felt clear or relatable
- what could be improved
- which tools, chapters, or resources helped
- what you would like to see in future editions

In the feedback form, please indicate whether your response is about **Volume I**, **Volume II**, or **both volumes**.

Please do not use the feedback form to share urgent concerns, counselling needs, crisis situations, or confidential personal information. If you need support, please reach out to a trusted person, your university support system, a mental health professional, or emergency services where needed.

Scan the QR code to share your feedback.

Thank you for helping us strengthen this resource for students.

About the Editor

Dr A. Sabu John is a counselling psychologist, counsellor educator, researcher, supervisor, trainer, and Assistant Professor at CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru. His academic and professional work has consistently centred on counselling psychology, student development, psychological well-being, experiential learning, and applied mental health training.

He holds a PhD in Psychology, with doctoral research focusing on the professional quality of life, counselling self-efficacy, self-compassion, meaning, and self-care of trainee counsellors. This research background, along with his long-standing work with university students and counsellors-in-training, informs his sensitivity to the emotional, academic, relational, and developmental realities of student life.

Over his decade-long association with CHRIST, Dr John has contributed to counselling education, student-centred learning, academic support, institutional development, and administrative leadership. He played a key role in the formative academic and administrative development of the Delhi NCR campus and was associated with the Centre for Academic and Professional Support, where he contributed to learning enhancement, mentoring, and student-focused initiatives. He has also guided student boards, research initiatives, training programmes, and field-based learning experiences.

Dr John is a sought-after trainer in India and internationally, and has facilitated programmes in psychological well-being, counselling, mentoring, psychological safety, educator development, mindfulness, self-care, leadership, and personal development. His applied work has included collaborations with NGOs, rehabilitation contexts, correctional facilities, and community mental health initiatives, including student-led correctional rehabilitation work recognised by the Uttar Pradesh Police.

As a practising counselling psychologist, he works with individuals and groups across developmental, academic, relational, emotional, and life-stage concerns. His combined experience as a counsellor, teacher, researcher, trainer, supervisor, and institutional contributor has shaped his editorial leadership of the Student Wellbeing Companion.

About the Publisher

CHRIST (Deemed to be University) is a multidisciplinary university guided by the vision of **Excellence and Service**. Rooted in the educational legacy of St Kuriakose Elias Chavara, the University understands education as a means of formation, dignity, access, and social contribution.

The University's mission is to nurture the holistic development of individuals so that they may make meaningful contributions to society in a dynamic world. Its core values include faith in God, moral uprightness, love of fellow beings, social responsibility, and the pursuit of excellence. These values shape the academic, personal, interpersonal, and social formation of students across its campuses.

From its beginnings as Christ College in 1969, CHRIST has grown into a university with campuses in Bengaluru, Delhi NCR, and Pune Lavasa. It brings together students from different regions, languages, cultures, disciplines, and countries, creating a vibrant higher education environment marked by diversity, learning, dialogue, service, and community life.

CHRIST offers undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral, and online programmes across a wide range of disciplines. Alongside academic and professional excellence, the University emphasises graduate attributes such as leadership, communication, personality development, social sensitivity, self-awareness, empathy, respect for others, and responsible participation in society.

The University has been recognised through national and international ranking frameworks and is accredited by NAAC with an A+ grade. While such recognitions affirm its academic standing, the deeper identity of CHRIST lies in its commitment to forming students who combine knowledge with character, competence with compassion, and achievement with responsibility.

This publication reflects that commitment. The Student Wellbeing Companion is a practical contribution to students navigating university life, grounded in the belief that higher education must attend not only to academic success, but also to the personal, relational, emotional, cultural, and social dimensions of student growth.

Reflections

Student Wellbeing Companion, Volume I is a practical guide for university students navigating the early and foundational experiences of university life.

This volume focuses on arriving, adjusting, belonging, relationships, safety, health, body care, shared living, peer support, and help-seeking. It offers simple explanations, reflection prompts, practical tools, peer support guidance, and cues for knowing when more support may be needed.

Grounded in psychological insight and developed through student consultation, counselling perspectives, academic review, and editorial development, this volume is designed to help students understand what they are experiencing, take small steps, support friends wisely, and reach out at the right time.

Students may read it gradually or turn directly to the chapter that feels relevant in the moment. Developed at CHRIST (Deemed to be University), this companion is intended for students, educators, counsellors, mentors, and student support professionals across higher education contexts.

Companion Volume

Volume II continues the Student Wellbeing Companion through mind and emotions, academic life and motivation, campus life and balance, and future readiness.

Published by

CHRIST (Deemed to be University)

Bengaluru, India



MRF: ₹600/-