

MOTIVATION

STUDENT COUNSELLING

WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

If you would like to make an appointment to see a counsellor to learn more about this topic, please contact the counselling service on your campus.

Distance students can contact any of the campuses. Please tell the receptionist if you need an urgent appointment.

CONTACT DETAILS

ALBANY

Health and Counselling

Hours 8.30am - 5.00pm

Monday - Friday

Phone (09) 443 9783

Email: Studenthealth@massey.ac.nz

MANAWATŪ

Student Counselling Service

Turitea Campus, Palmerston North

Hours 8.30am - 5.00pm

Monday - Friday

Phone (06) 350 5533

Email: s.counselling@massey.ac.nz

WELLINGTON

Student Counselling Service

Hours 8.30am - 4.30pm

Monday - Friday

Phone (04) 801 2542

<http://crow.massey.ac.nz>

<http://health-counselling.massey.ac.nz>



MOTIVATION

How did you feel on your first day of uni?

Excited, nervous, all revved up and ready to go, motivated to do well?

Did you start off well, attending all lectures, making full notes, doing extra reading?

▶▶ Fast forward a few months. Feeling weighed down by assignments, deadlines, struggling with a head cold, can't quite get motivated to get onto that assignment with the looming deadline?

Motivation is a key issue for students. At university the onus of responsibility shifts towards the student to make sure things happen. A deadline feels along way away at the beginning of semester, or the task of putting an assignment together just seems too big without someone breaking it down for you, and you put it off, until now the pressure is on and you feel overwhelmed. "What can I do to stay motivated and on track?" you may ask.

Motivation is defined as the process that initiates, guides and maintains goal-oriented behaviours. I am motivated to drink if I am thirsty, I am motivated to work because I will get paid, I am motivated to be kind because I will feel good about myself, and others will appreciate me.

It's often not that straightforward, however. In each situation there is a complex mix of factors that impact motivation. You may have heard of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation — I am motivated to work because I will get paid (extrinsic factor) but I am also motivated to work because I believe in what I am doing and believe I am making a difference to myself, my family or the world (intrinsic factors).

Factors that affect students in particular include the **student** - do they have the ability, do they value education, are they interested in what they are doing?; **the relationship with their lecturers** - do they find the teachers engaging, interested in them, fair in their assessments, available for appropriate support; **the content and method of the student's course** - is it interesting, does it feel relevant to their wider life goals, and **the environment** - is the student in a safe, positive environment that meets basic needs and encourages growth?

IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING WITH MOTIVATION YOU MIGHT LOOK AT THESE FACTORS AND SEE IF THERE ARE SOME NEEDS THAT ARE NOT BEING MET

QUESTIONS TO ASK COULD BE:

AM I ACHIEVING AS I NEED / WANT? If not, is this because I am not suited to the course, to the method of study? Am I struggling to connect with my lecturers and their teaching style? If this is the case talk to an Academic Advisor or someone in the Career and Employment Service.

AM I SETTLED IN MY PERSONAL LIFE? When we have a lot of other 'stuff' going on, this can have a significant impact on our levels of motivation. Too much stress can result in negative thinking, feeling overwhelmed and distracted. If this is the case talk to someone in one of our Health and Counselling services.

DO I KNOW WHAT MY LARGER GOAL IS? A clear sense of direction can help us to stay motivated when the course is demanding. It may be harder to stay motivated if you are at uni because your parents / teachers / friends thought it was a good idea. A Careers service advisor or counsellor can help you work out what you want, and its not too late if you arrive at uni not knowing why you are here!

HAVE I GOT THE ART OF STUDYING SUSSED? Being a successful and motivated student is as much about knowing how to study as about knowing the content of your course. The step up to this more research based study can cause you to feel unsettled, and to lose motivation. It's hard to keep on track when you feel lost! If this is you make sure you head to our Centre for Teaching and Learning Centres who can guide you and show you how to get to grips with the 'how to' of uni study.

GETTING IT IN BALANCE

After you have worked through these questions, if you are still struggling with your levels of motivation you might have a look at the balance in your life. Sometimes it is hard to stay motivated if we do not have a good enough life balance.

This is not just about time management, although that is a part of it. It is almost about 'energy management', which includes not only demands of uni work, paid work, voluntary involvement, time with friends, but balancing the stress that we are under, stress that comes from the demands of the things listed above and our internal response.

When we are under a lot of stress and feeling overloaded our brain prioritises coping with the overload, and things like study fall down the list of priorities. Motivation sometimes returns when we lower our stress load, because it allows our brain to relax and bring things like study back into focus.

DO A 'STRESS INVENTORY.'

Have a think about what you have got going on in your life.

What stressors are impacting you? Ask yourself if you can make a small change to lessen the impact of the stressor on you—and there are two possible ways to do this

Make a change that removes the stressor. This might mean dropping a shift at work, or taking a break from some other commitment.

Make a change that lessens the impact of the stressor. This might mean making a daily walk a priority, learning how to breathe effectively, taking time each day to reflect on something you are grateful for, or skyping family.

A MOTIVATION EXERCISE

Sometimes motivation seems to leak away, because we are so close to the detail of our course that we lose sight of the big picture

STORY BOARD IT

- Get 3 sheets of paper and some crayons
- On sheet one draw a picture that represents how your current situation feels. Write some words to describe what you are thinking and how you feel about it
- On sheet two draw a picture of where you imagine yourself to be in 5 years. Be as detailed as you can be. Write some words that describe what you are thinking and feeling about this future scenario
- Put sheet three in the middle. Draw, write or diagram small steps that can help you move from sheet one to sheet two.
- Finally write some wise advice from the you in your future picture, to the you in your current picture.

