

# Asking for Help

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14 October 2022



The Open  
University



## Who we are

- An Introduction to the Personal Learning Advice Service



## What help and support is available whilst studying?

- Overview of OU help and support
- Links to key help and support resources



## Asking for help or support

- Reflective help activity
- Top tips on asking for help or support



## Take aways and next steps

- Your actions



## WHO WE ARE

- A team of 25 staff, known as the '**Personal Learning Advice (PLA) Service**'.
- Established in 2021 to support students from groups currently underrepresented in Higher Education in the UK – read more [here](#)
- We support students through coaching and mentoring to improve confidence, maintain motivation, develop resilience, identify and work towards study goals, and manage studies-life-work balance.
- The PLA Service is a **pilot project**. We are working with OU Faculties to identify and support students. All students eligible for a PLA are currently **contacted directly** by us.
- To date, we have supported students who are carers, care-experienced, students with mental health needs, and Black students.
- If you would like to know more about our service visit: [Website: Personal Learning Advice Service \(open.ac.uk\)](https://open.ac.uk)



# HELP AND SUPPORT AVAILABLE

## Study Support

- contact your tutor or your Student Support Team (SST).

Contact details can be found on Student Home.



**Personal Support**  
- 24/7 online support from **Talk Campus**.

Text support from **Shout 85258**.

You can access this support [here](#) via the OU Help Centre.



## LINKS TO KEY HELP AND SUPPORT

- Help with understanding your career pathway/finding a new job – [Careers and employability | Help Centre | The Open University](#)
- Finding peer support at the OU – Find out more about the OU Student Association Peer Support initiative [Peer Support \(oustudents.com\)](#)
- Financial support for your studies - [Payment, bursaries and enrolment | Help Centre | The Open University](#)
- Wellbeing and mental health support during your studies - [Mental health, wellbeing and keeping safe | Help Centre | The Open University](#)
- Disability support/long or short term health conditions support during your studies – [Disability support | Help Centre | The Open University](#)
- Computing Helpdesk - [Website: Computing Guide \(open.ac.uk\)](#)
- Library support and resources – [Library | Help Centre | The Open University](#)



# Asking for help – top tips and activities



# ASKING FOR HELP

Take a minute to think about the word

**HELP**

What words, thoughts, ideas or feelings  
immediately come to mind?



**Share your words, thoughts, ideas or feelings in the 'Chat'**



## ASKING FOR HELP



Words, thoughts, ideas or feelings shared by previous OU students.





# THOUGHTS OR BELIEFS THAT CAN STOP US

1.

Fear of judgement by others.

2.

I don't want to be a nuisance/burden.

3.

I should know.

4.

I have to do it alone.

5.

I should be able to cope.

6.

I'll look like a failure.

7.

Asking for help is a sign of weakness.

8.

I don't want others to know I need help.

9.

I should be independent.

10.

I'm overwhelmed I don't even know where to start.

11.

Explaining what help I need will be exhausting.

12.

I'm self-conscious.



13.

I should be strong (super-man or super-woman)

14.

Others deserve/need more help than me.





# REFRAMING THOUGHTS OR BELIEFS

1.

Judgement by others is not in my control

2.

A problem shared is a problem halved.

3.

It's OK not to know. I am learning.

4.

I'm not alone. Others are there to help me.

5.

Everyone can struggle.

6.

Support leads to success.

7.

Asking for help is a sign of strength.

8.

Others often want to help me.

9.

You don't have to go it alone.

10.

Take one small step at a time.

11.

Explaining what help I need will be worth it in the end.

12.

I'm self-aware. I'm noticing how I'm feeling about this.



13.

I am good enough.

14.

I am deserving of help.





## BENEFITS OF ASKING FOR HELP

***‘Don’t be afraid to ask questions. Don’t be afraid to ask for help when you need it. I do that every day. Asking for help isn’t a sign of weakness, it’s a sign of strength because it shows you have the courage to admit when you don’t know something, and that then allows you to learn something new.’ –***

**Barack Obama**



# BENEFITS OF ASKING FOR HELP

Asking for help can move you from your **FEAR ZONE** into your **LEARNING** and **GROWTH ZONES**



# Asking for help: reflective activity

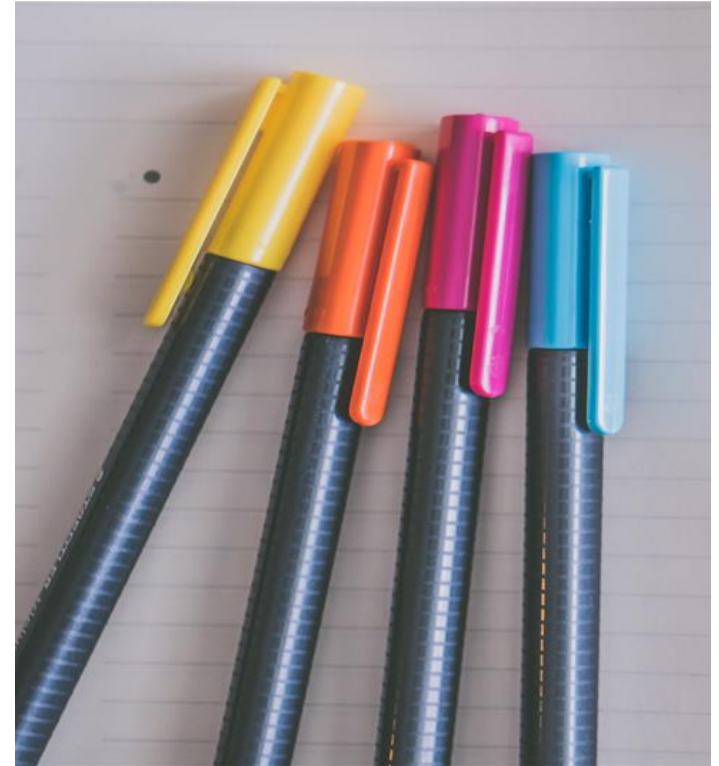


## REFLECTIVE HELP ACTIVITY

**Take a couple of minutes to think about a time you asked for help, or you've wanted to ask for help.**

**It can be something large or small. It can help to write down your responses.**

**You will not be asked to share your scenario or responses.**





## REFLECTIVE HELP ACTIVITY

**How did you know you needed some support/help?**

**What signs were there for you personally that told you to reach out for support?**

**Were there any obstacles/barriers you faced in asking for support? (within yourself or externally)**

**What actions did you take?**

**What did you learn from this experience? (if anything)**

**What, if anything would you do differently?**



**Would anyone like to share their experience of that exercise?**

**How was that?**

**Please post in the 'Chat' or feel free to put your camera on and chat!**

**This is a question to invite how you found the exercise itself. You do not need to share your scenario or responses.**







1. Reflect on your beliefs about asking for help
2. Identify the expertise/expert - who you can ask?
3. Timing matters – don't leave things to the last minute
4. Clarity is key – be clear about what you need help with
5. Taking action – draft your e-mail or decide what you want to say

Each month we publish an article which represents a new opportunity to focus on your personal and professional development to support your studies, work and life. In this article we're looking into asking for help during your studies and top tips on the best way to approach this.

Being an OU student can be both a fantastic and a challenging experience at times. During the ups and downs of your OU studies it's likely that you'll need to ask for help.

Being able to ask for help when needed is an essential study skill for success. It's not just about problem solving but is part of developing your knowledge and self-awareness. Asking for help is often the first step in taking action.

Students often say that they feel asking for help is difficult, makes them feel like they've failed, makes them feel vulnerable or weak and takes them outside their comfort zone. Some students don't want to make a fuss or cause a bother.

At the OU we believe asking for help is a strength not weakness, and we know it takes courage to reach out. During your OU study journey it's useful to remember that

HOME QUIZZES STUDY IDENTITY LIFESTYLE COMMUNITY HELP

5 things to do before your module start date

My experience of embarking on my Open University degree, while working full time!

OpenLearn – learning how you study best

Self Coaching, Session 7 Personal Learning Advice Service

Read the full Top Tips article here:  
[Understanding Yourself: You're not alone...it's OK to ask for help - THE HOOT \(thehootstudents.com\)](https://thehootstudents.com)



## TAKE AWAYS.....and.....NEXT STEPS

We hope this session about '*Asking for help*' has been useful...

If you feel comfortable, please post in the 'Chat' any aspects of the session that you've found useful. What might you do now or do differently as a result of attending the session today?

Also/alternatively please take some time to think about what your 'next steps' or action might be to ensure you can access support or help when you need it...so you can reach your full potential.

**WISHING YOU SUCCESS IN YOUR FUTURE STUDIES!**

**Thank you**  
*Any questions?*



Contact us at

[PLA-Services@open.ac.uk](mailto:PLA-Services@open.ac.uk)