



TUS Midlands Student Counselling Service Newsletter

Newsletter Content

Motivation

- Q & A with Student Counsellor
- Understanding Motivation, Factors for feeling Unmotivated, and Cultivating your Motivation



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Motivation Q & A with Student Counsellor Deirdre Hanamy

To what extent do structure and routine contribute to sustaining motivation in the academic year?

It is important to be aware of the impact our day-to-day routines and activities have on our motivation. As humans, we are creatures of habit, and some habits are more beneficial than others. Balance is key, if we can do academic work regularly even just for short periods, it can be much easier to maintain our motivation. Building a routine that works for you generally takes some planning and experimentation, we must create space for breaks, fun, and things we enjoy, as well as time for work, study, and class.

What recommendations would you provide to a student encountering difficulty in self-motivation?

Firstly, I might ask them to imagine someone telling them they're no longer eligible to attend college. How does this feel? Sometimes, simply asking yourself this question can be motivating. Remembering WHY you want this qualification; how valuable will it be to you and your life? Identifying your goals and the rewards you hope to get in the future can be helpful.

How does practicing self-compassion contribute to fostering motivation in students?

Many of us fall into patterns of self-criticism in which we are much harder on ourselves than we would ever be towards others. While we may believe this helps with our motivation, the research is conclusive that self-criticism is connected to lower levels of well-being, motivation, and achievement. It has been described as a 'motivation of fear', and tends to leave students more susceptible to perfectionism and procrastination. Conversely, self-compassion is the ability to treat ourselves with kindness and understanding when we are facing difficulties. It has been described as a 'motivation of care' and when it is developed as a student, the seat of motivation shifts. It helps students foster a growth mindset, which is the belief that our abilities and skills can be improved through effort and learning. A growth mindset can motivate students to set challenging and meaningful goals and to persist in the face of obstacles and setbacks.

Imagine you have an exam coming up and you tell yourself you cannot under any circumstances fail the exam and if you do you are nothing but a failure! How do you think you will feel? When we are stuck in this loop of thinking we can be left feeling very anxious and have more difficulty concentrating and staying motivated. When we cultivate self-compassion, we shift our perspective. Instead of fearing failure on an exam, we acknowledge that a potential failure doesn't define us as individuals. By recognising that failing an exam doesn't make us failures, we can maintain concentration and motivation more effectively.

Motivation

Understanding Motivation

Motivation is the driving force that fuels our desires, ambitions, and actions. It is the spark that propels us forward, enabling us to overcome obstacles and achieve our goals. Whether it's the pursuit of academic excellence or personal growth, motivation plays a pivotal role in our journey towards fulfilment and achievement.

Motivation is a complex concept that encompasses various factors, both internal and external, that influence our willingness and enthusiasm to pursue and persist in our endeavours. It is a force that can propel us to reach new heights, tap into our potential, and push beyond perceived limitations.

Factors for feeling Unmotivated



Cultivating your Motivation

1. **Set Clear and Specific Goals:** Define your goals in a clear and specific way. When your goals are well-defined, you have a clear target to work towards, which can increase your motivation and focus.
2. **Find Your "Why":** Reflect on *why* your goals and aspirations are important to you. Understanding the deeper meaning and purpose behind what you want to achieve can enhance your motivation and keep you engaged during challenging times.
3. **Create a Plan:** Develop a detailed plan outlining the steps needed to achieve your goals. Having a roadmap helps you stay organized, provides structure, and makes the process feel more manageable, increasing your motivation.
4. **Develop a Positive Mindset:** Cultivate an optimistic mindset. Challenge negative self-talk and focus on your strengths and past successes. Believing in your abilities and maintaining a positive outlook can boost motivation and resilience.
5. **Take Action:** Sometimes, taking that first step is the hardest part. Take action, even if it's a small step, to create momentum and build motivation. Once you start, you'll often find that motivation follows action.
6. **Adjust and Refocus:** Review and adjust your goals and strategies as needed. Circumstances change, and it's essential to adapt. Refocus on what truly matters to you and make necessary adjustments to align your goals with your current goals.
7. **Learn from Setbacks:** View setbacks as learning opportunities rather than failures. Embrace a growth mindset and use setbacks as stepping stones for improvement. Learning from challenges can increase resilience and keep motivation alive.
8. **Celebrate Progress:** Celebrate your achievements along the way. Recognise and reward yourself for your hard work, even for small victories. Celebrating progress reinforces motivation and provides a sense of accomplishment.