

Another term (Facebook Forum post 27 April 2020)

And so another term begins .. and for those of us who are living in College, even if we've managed to take a few days off at some point over the break, today might feel a bit odd, a bit flat – as if it's supposed to mean something to be starting a new term, but in fact nothing feels that different.

It's easily explained: we haven't had the opportunity to leave College, take the usual time out to see non-College friends and family, maybe go on holiday, and we also haven't had the fun of piling back into College again at the end of the break.

Getting away physically is often a really helpful way of clearing our heads and getting some perspective on things.

And when we lose perspective it's not unusual for things to affect us more emotionally. We can turn in on ourselves, and that's when little things which normally wouldn't bother us can assume larger proportions, and lead to us feeling more on edge than usual – maybe quicker to feel angry, or teary, or critical, or a bit low.

This emotional volatility is in many ways a perfectly understandable response to the current situation .. but there are things that we can do to address it.

Here are some practical suggestions:

- 1) **Have a regular routine** each workday. Structure is a massive stabiliser. Get one of the weekly study plans from around college, and put together a plan – let me know if you'd like help drawing one up.

A '5x5' plan can be a very effective way to go: 5 focused hours of work 5 days a week. And plan to work in those parts of the day when you know you'll be at your most productive.

- 2) Structure doesn't mean everything is drearily the same (though it's really easy for it to feel this way when everything is online).

Add texture to your day. If you were studying at Uni you'd have natural breaks several times a day, such as the walk to Uni for a lecture, going to a library, catching up with friends for a coffee.



Build some of the same sorts of things into your workday: go for a ten-minute walk to the river and back before watching a lecture; support local businesses and go and grab a coffee from up the road mid-afternoon.

And plan things to look forward to for evenings and weekends.

- 3) **Connect with people outside college**, including in person where you can do so safely – maybe a walk with a uni friend, or a chat with someone from home, or an old coll you haven't seen for a while.

If you're worried about yourself or others, do talk to someone here at college – we're very happy to have a chat, and also to hook you into some external support if that would be useful.

And, as always, be kind to yourselves and others. It's more important than ever that college is a positive and encouraging place for all of us to live in – think about the role that you can play in helping to create a really supportive community here.