



MONASH
University

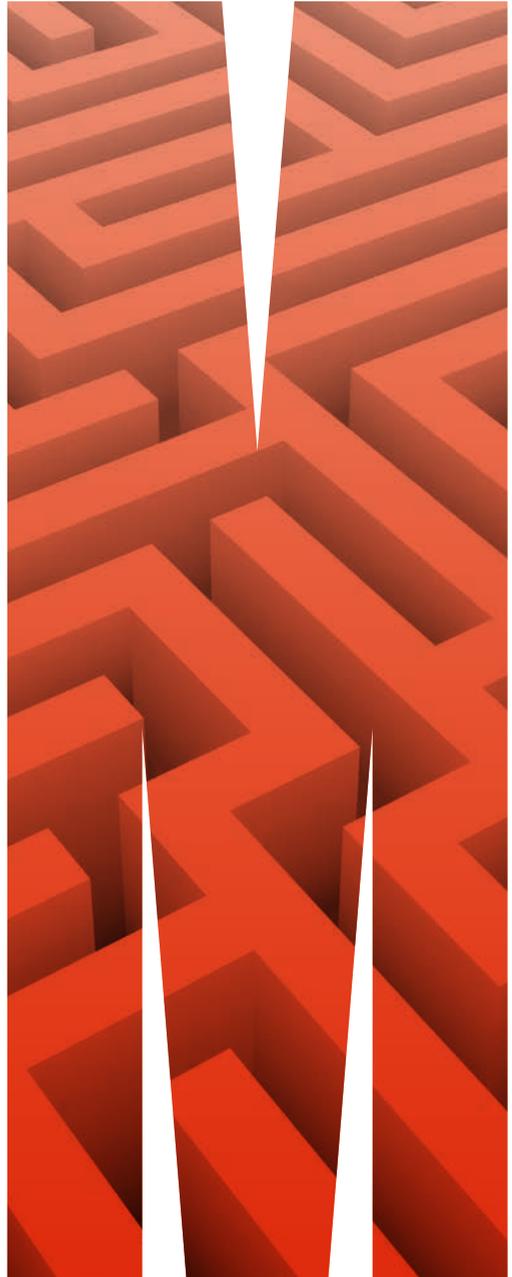
MONASH
MEDICINE,
NURSING AND
HEALTH SCIENCES

MANAGING THE MAZE

A FACULTY GUIDE
FOR ACCESSING
STUDENT SUPPORT

PRODUCED BY THE FACULTY OF
MEDICINE, NURSING AND HEALTH
SCIENCES IN CONJUNCTION WITH
THE MONASH UNIVERSITY MEDICAL
UNION OF STUDENTS (MUMUS)

monash.edu/medicine





INTRODUCTION

University is an exciting time full of new experiences and new beginnings.

It is the gateway to your chosen career, and will give you the opportunity to contribute to the field(s) in which you work. The vast majority of students encounter change throughout their time at university. And whilst change can be positive, it can also be challenging.

As you progress in your medical journey, you may often feel that you are in 'unfamiliar' territory – you will be exposed to different ways of *thinking* about the world, different ways of *being* in the world, and challenging situations that may make you feel uncomfortable.

It can also be a time of *firsts*:

- It may be the first time you have to make decisions independently,
- It may be the first time you have lived away from home,
- It may be your first experience of independent self-directed learning,
- And it may be the first time you have to consider financial pressures that you have never had to think about before.

Many of these *firsts* add to the excitement of your university years, but at times they can also culminate in feelings of confusion, distress, isolation, or even a sense of fear (of failing; of not being good enough; of letting yourself and others down).

At the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences (FMNHS), we recognise that these times can be tough, so this little booklet is a guide to help you successfully navigate your way through your medical studies when support is needed.

This booklet is not intended as a comprehensive guide to the full level of student support services available through the University student services,* but is a guide to the support available to you within the Faculty if you are struggling with your studies.

*** www.monash.edu/students/support**

COMMON MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

For many students, getting into a medical course is the realisation of a dream and the result of a lot of very hard work. Everyone comes with their own expectations of the course, of university, of themselves and others. These expectations are not always met and can lead to misconceptions about why things may seem more difficult than initially thought.

Some common myths and misconceptions are:

-  “Year 12 is the hardest year of study I will ever have.”  **FALSE**
-  “There is just so much work and I seem to be the only one not coping with it.”  **FALSE**
-  “I just need to know the ‘stuff’ that will be on the exams.”  **FALSE**
-  “If I tell anyone that I am not coping they will think I am ‘weak’.”  **FALSE**
-  “If I am struggling with my studies it means I am not suited to be a doctor.”  **FALSE**
-  “At school I was a top student but at Uni I am average – I’m hopeless at this.”  **FALSE**
-  “If I tell anyone that I am not coping, they will throw me out of the course.”  **FALSE**
-  “There is just so much to learn it is not possible to learn everything.”  **TRUE**

Many of these misconceptions can undermine a student's confidence in their ability to both manage their studies and succeed. This can also be a time of great personal growth and development, which is enriching and life enhancing, but at times can also foster self-doubt. The Faculty recognises that these feelings are common and students often need advice and guidance when life interferes with learning.

How will I know if I need to speak with someone within the Faculty?

From time to time everyone struggles with juggling the demands of medical studies and the challenges of life. These moments are often managed with the support of friends and family. Sometimes however, these moments are not as easily managed or persist longer than they should. Read through the following questions and see if any of them describe you at the moment:

- Do you feel upset a lot of the time?
- Do you feel upset in spite of talking to your friends about it?
- Do you find it difficult to motivate yourself to go to class?
- Do you feel overwhelmed by your university studies?
- Are you worried that you are not well but don't know who to talk to?
- Do you feel you cannot keep up with the work and you are not sure what to do about it?
- Do you feel that you are not coping but do not have anyone to talk to?
- Are you having trouble studying?
- Are you constantly feeling worried that you are falling behind?
- Are you experiencing a sense of anxiety whenever you are at university?
- Are you spending at least 2-3 hours per day using social media or gaming?
- Are you having difficulty communicating and studying in English?
- Are you having trouble adjusting to life in Australia?

If you have answered yes to any of these questions then it is important to talk to someone in the Faculty about it. Many students feel concerned that if they speak to a member of staff then they will be disadvantaged academically in some way. ***This is not the case.*** The Faculty want you to succeed and are very aware of the impact that personal struggles can have on academic success.





There are many times in life when circumstances challenge our coping skills. ***Acknowledging these and accessing the appropriate support is part of learning self-responsibility.*** Actively seeking assistance during difficult and/or distressing times is part of developing greater self understanding and self knowledge, which is an essential part of effective communication skills and ultimately effective patient care.

Students may also not approach staff members, as they are not sure who to approach, they are too embarrassed or shy, or they have spoken to other students who advise them not to speak to staff. The guide below is to help you identify the most appropriate person to approach to discuss your problem.

This guide in no way replaces the need for you to have your own GP or to consult them if you are concerned that you are unwell or that your health is compromised.

GUIDE TO ACCESSING STUDENT SUPPORT

Who should I speak to within the Faculty if I am having personal, social or academic problems, which are affecting my ability to meet my course expectations?



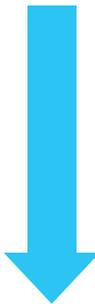
Communication is the key to successfully managing the impact on your studies of these difficult emotional periods in your student years. Notifying the appropriate staff member early that you are having difficulties is essential (see attached diagram). They are in the best position to advise and guide you about your academic options as well as suggest the best pathways for support and/or health care, if you haven't already accessed these.

The Faculty is currently developing *student advisory* roles and these personnel will be located at all clinical sites and University based campuses. The School of Medicine at Monash University is large and can feel very fragmented, especially in the clinical years of study. This may result in students feeling cut off from their usual support networks, or trusted care options. Each clinical rotation will have a nominated staff member who is the first point of contact for students, who can help you manage your problem. If in doubt, contact the Faculty course administrator.

Sometimes a student's studies are affected by their health. This can be related to a mental or physical problem; it might appear suddenly or have been present for a long time. Sometimes students are either not aware of the nature of their problems or are concerned that they may be asked to leave the course if they seek help. This can be very distressing for themselves, the students around them and for staff. If either you, or another student you know is suffering with a health complaint help is at hand (see Figure 1 on page 10)

MEDICAL STUDENT SUPPORT

**GOT A PROBLEM,
NEED ADVICE?**
WE CAN DIRECT YOU
TO APPROPRIATE
SERVICES



STUDENT



ADVISOR

UNIVERSITY SERVICES

- Accommodation
- Health Service
- Campus Life & Activities
- Career Connect
- Childcare
- Clubs & Sports
- Counselling Service
- Disability Services
- Financial Assistance
- International Student Support
- LGBTIQ (ally network)
- On Campus Security
- Rights & Grievances
- Safer Community Unit
- Spirituality & Chaplains
- Study Programs

FACULTY SERVICES

- Student Academic Support Unit (SASU)
- Faculty Student Services Including:
 - emergency loans
 - intermission
 - scholarships
- International Student Welfare
- Gukwonderuk Indigenous Engagement Unit
- Faculty Professionalism Unit (student liaison)

PEER SUPPORT

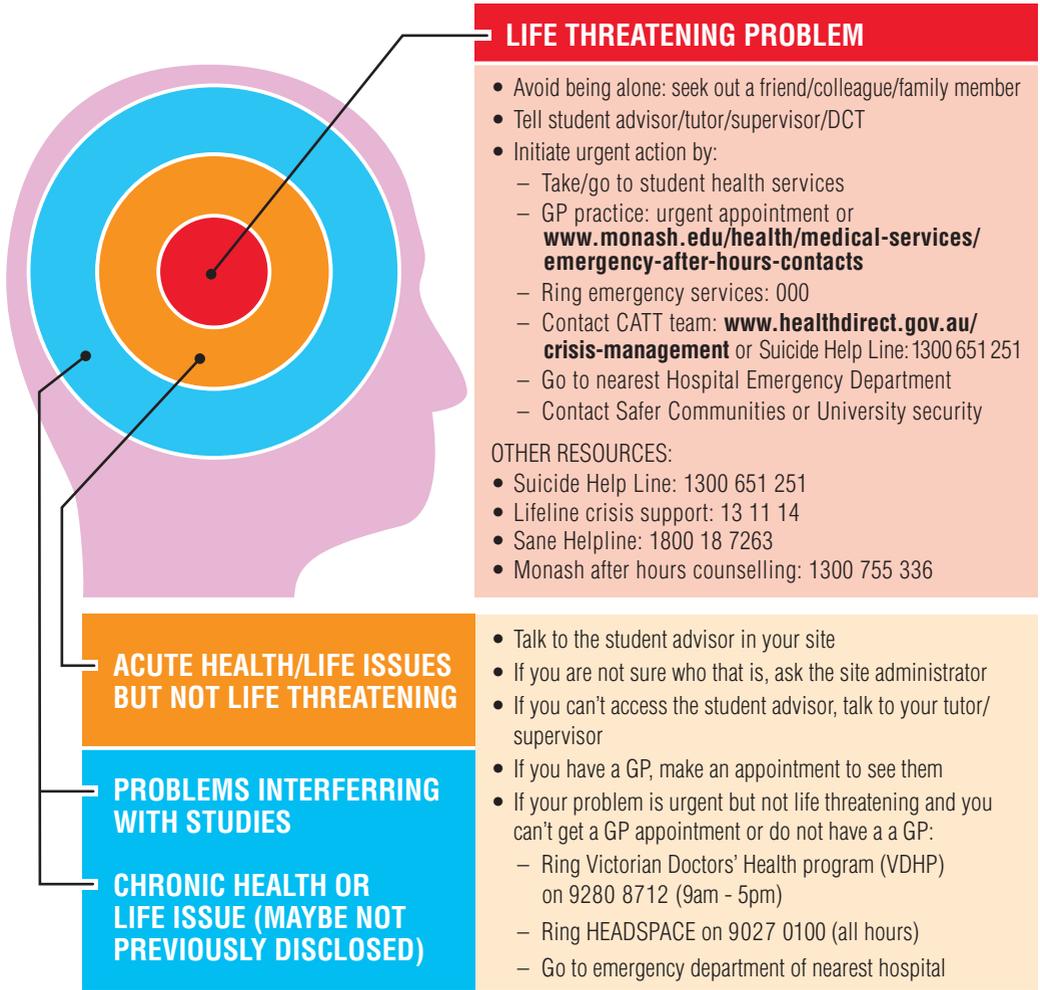
- MUMUS Community and Well-being Sub Committee
- *Eudaemonia* magazine
- MUMUS GP Network
- MOMENTUM, the MUMUS Mentor Network

EXTERNAL SUPPORTS

- Victorian Doctors Health Program
- Community Legal Services
- CAT Team

CONTACT: EMAIL: medstudentservices@monash.edu
TEL: 9905 2048
WEB: www.monash.edu/students/support

FIGURE 1: Action plan for student health issues.



HAS A STUDENT EXPRESSED SUICIDAL THOUGHTS TO YOU?

Do you think that they are at risk of self-harm?

THIS IS A POTENTIAL LIFE THREATENING PROBLEM – GO TO FIGURE 2, p13

Are you not sure?

TALK TO YOUR STUDENT ADVISOR/TUTOR/SUPERVISOR



ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT THE MENTAL OR PHYSICAL HEALTH OF ONE OF YOUR PEERS?

Tell them that you are concerned about them and encourage them to seek medical help and/or talk to your student advisor/tutor/supervisor.

REMEMBER: HELP IS ALWAYS AT HAND

FREQUENTLY ASKED STUDENT QUESTIONS ABOUT ACCESSING STUDENT SUPPORT



Will my contact with the student advisor be on my academic transcript?

No. Your academic transcript is purely a record of your academic performance.

Who is likely to be notified of my meeting with the Student Advisor?

Sometimes just being able to speak with someone about your concerns may be enough to help you deal with them. In order to ensure that each student's concerns are addressed appropriately, a secure record of this meeting will be kept independently of any academic record system. This ensures appropriate follow up occurs, should this be needed. Quite simply, we are here to help. Any suggested follow up will be in your best interests, you will be informed of the reason for this and your concerns will be treated with respect.

If the clinical director or academic director is concerned that your problems are more serious or may affect your academic performance then you may be referred to the Associate Dean Professionalism (student liaison). It is important to remember that this process works in parallel with your academic progress and is focussed on your best academic and personal interests. It does not directly impact on your assessment in any way.

Will the Student Advisor be able to deal with all my concerns?

On occasion your needs may be better addressed by other support services within the Faculty (or outside it). In particular, if there are concerns that your problem involves a physical or mental health issue you will be strongly encouraged to seek clinical care (see figure 1). Depending on the issue, you may be advised to contact one of the following people, or they may initiate a referral for you (with your consent):

- SASU (student academic support unit) for guidance re study and language skills
- Director International Student Welfare, FMNHS for additional support and guidance for international students.
- Disability support services for support or advice re reasonable adjustments for exams and assignments
- Your GP and/or counsellor. (Your GP may be able to develop a mental healthcare plan for you to assist with accessing Medicare funded psychological support)

If you don't have a general practitioner or counsellor then you have a number of ways of seeking further medical help:

- Contact the University's Student Health Advisory service (9905 3175).
- The MUMUS (Monash University Medical Students' Society) website lists a number of recommended GPs close to each rotation or university locality*.
- Contact the Victorian Doctor's Health Advisory Service (VDHP), their service is for medical students as well as doctors and they are a fully Medicare support service (Contact number: 9495 6011)
- Contact HEADSPACE – multiple offices and sites exist throughout Victoria. (Contact number: 9027 0100)
- Crisis support: Lifeline (13 11 14); CATT team (000)

What if my concern is for another student's well being rather than my own?

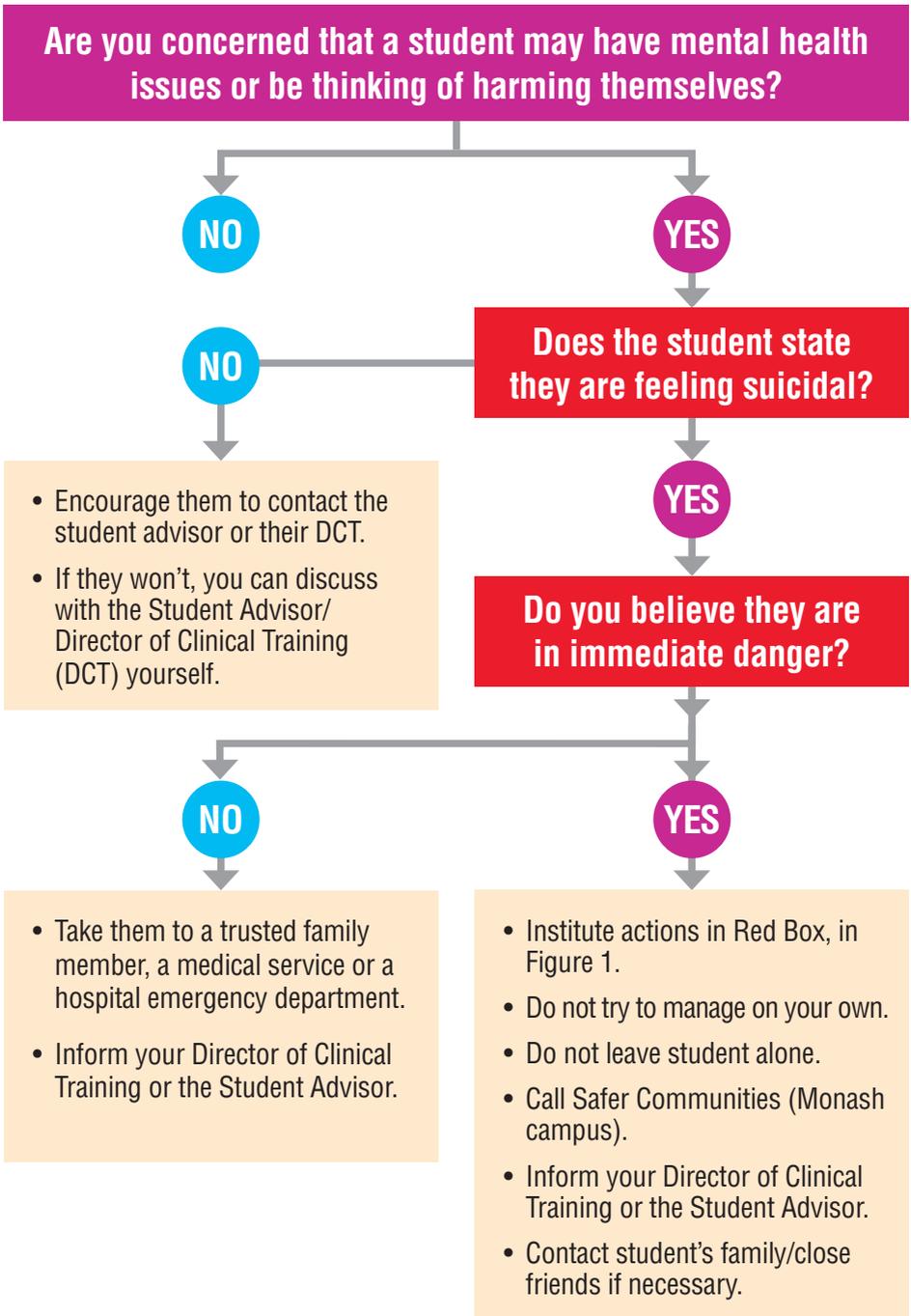
Often a student will share a concern about a personal health issue with another student. If you have concerns about another student's well-being or welfare then it is really important to let some one know, especially if the student is expressing thoughts of self harm (see Figure 2 on page 13).

* MUMUS, the Monash University Medical Students' Society, have created the 'Get-a-GP' guide in attempt to encourage medical students to find and regularly visit their own GP. The guide lists bulk billing GP services across Victoria. ^

mumus.org/item/679-get-a-gp

^ Information correct as of May 2016. Please confirm fees when booking an appointment.

FIGURE 2: Management pathway for a student with serious health concerns.



RESPECT. NOW. ALWAYS.

Monash University has a zero tolerance policy to sexual harassment, bullying (online or in person) and assault. The Safer Community Unit is here to support you and ensure your safety and protection.

If you're feeling threatened or unsafe, please contact them on 9905 51599 or email safercommunity@monash.edu

In an emergency phone 333 for security from any Monash phone or 000 for police.

Download the support app here:

<https://www.monash.edu/campus-support>

STUDENT SUPPORT RESOURCES

Emergency Services

Police/Fire/Ambulance	000
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University Services

University Health Services	9905 3175
University Counselling Service	9905 3020
After Hours Counselling Service	1300 788 336
Campus Security	Emergency: 333 (9905 3333) Non-Emergency: 9902 7777
Safer Community Line Sexual harassment/ violence & bullying)	9905 1599 safercommunity@monash.edu
Disability Services	9905 5704 disabilitysupportservices@monash.edu
Housing	Monash Connect 1800 666 274
Financial	Monash Connect 9902 6011
LGBTIQally@monash.edu	9905 9499

After hours emergency lines

Lifeline	13 11 14
Suicide line	1300 651 251
BeyondBlue	1300 224 636
Suicide Call Back Service for anyone affected by suicide)	1300 659 467
OCD and Anxiety Helpline	1300 269 438 or 9886 9377

Mensline Australia	1300 789 978
Kids Helpline (5 to 25 year olds)	1800 551 800
Headspace (for 12-25 year olds)	1800 650 890
Turning Point (drugs & alcohol)	1800 888 236
Gamblers Help	1800 858 858
Grief Line	9935 7400 (12pm to 3am)
The Compassionate Friends (grief)	1800 641 091 or 9888 4944

Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence

Sexual Assault Crisis Line	1800 806 292 or 9349 1766
Centre Against Sexual Assault	9635 3610
EDVOS (family violence)	1800 015 188

Sexuality

Gay & Lesbian Switchboard	1800 184 527
The HIV & Sexual Health Connect Line	1800 038 125

International Students

24 hour helpline	1800 056 449
Student Academic Support Unit	9905 4027
A/Prof Wendy McKenzie (international student welfare)	9905 9852 wendy.mckenzie@monash.edu

Indigenous Students

Ms Peggy Swindle Gukwonderuk Indigenous Unit	9905 3828 peggy.Swindle@monash.edu
Bunurong Health Service	9794 5933

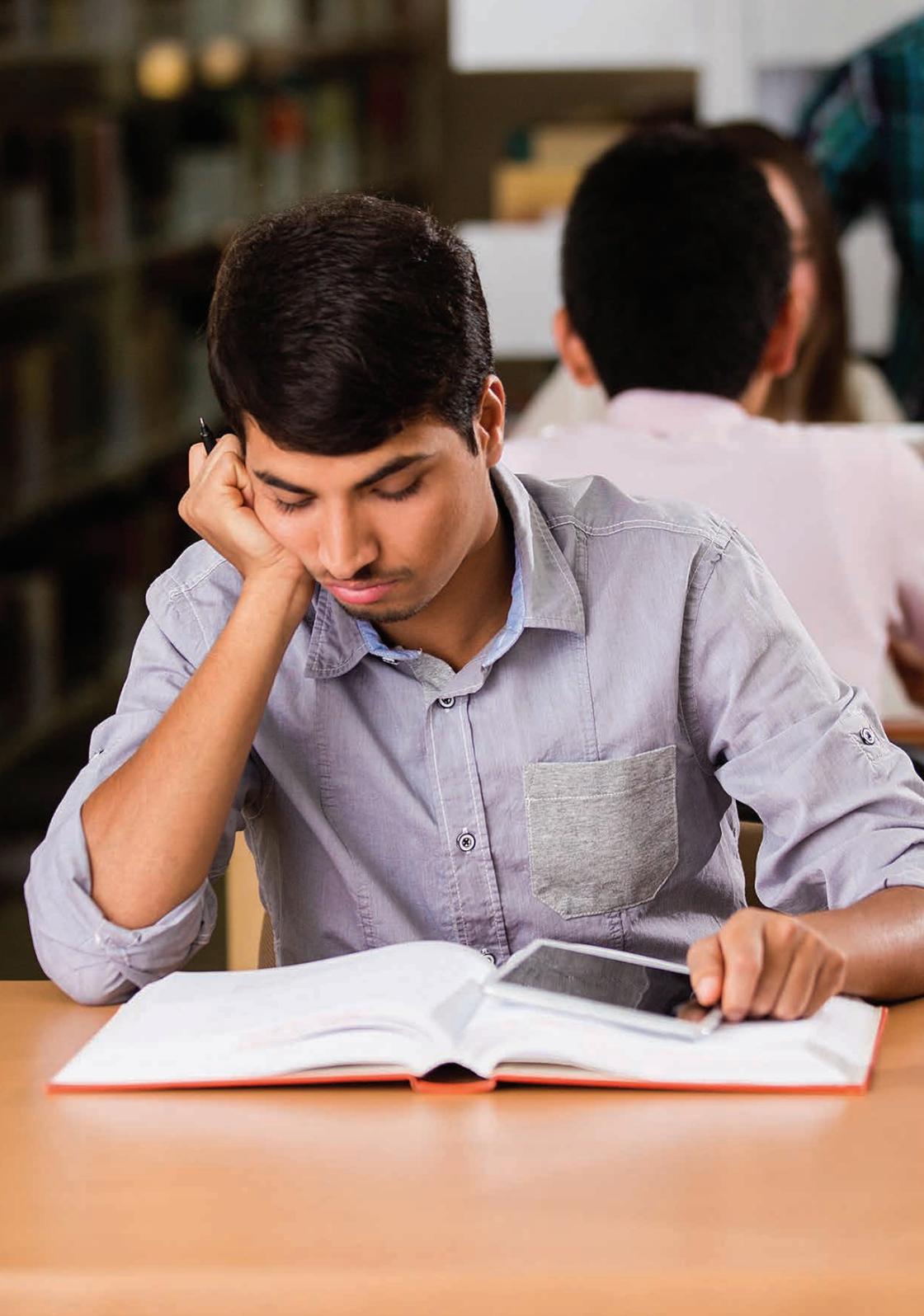
Local GP Clinics

Encompass Medical Centre Mount Waverley	8545 9955
Centre Road Medical Centre	9563 7766
Medi 7 Clayton	9013 9795

Apps, Websites & Podcasts

Respect, Now, Always Sexual Assault/Harassment Support Ap (Monash University) www.monash.edu/about/respect-now-always/download-the-app
Watch over me watchovermeapp.com/
The Check-in app www.youthbeyondblue.com/help-someone-you-know/thecheckin
Wesley Life Force service finder (suicide prevention) www.wesleymission.org.au/wesleylifeforceservicefinder
This way up. Improve your general wellbeing thiswayup.org.au/
Everymind, mental health and suicide prevention everymind.org.au/

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