

University of Amsterdam
Institute for Logic, Language and Computation (ILLC)

The Mental Health Guide
for the Master of Logic

DRAFT VERSION

Contents

1	Official Organizations of the UvA	1
2	Clearing Your Head	2
2.1	Exercise	2
2.2	Arts and Crafting	3
2.3	Seeing Green	4
2.4	Seeing Grey , Brown and the Rest	6
3	Daily Routines and Substance (Ab)Use	6
4	Minorities	7
4.1	Disabilities	7
4.2	Race, Gender and Sexual Orientation	9
5	Socializing	9
6	Mindfulness	10
7	Expectation Management	12
8	Quarantine	14
9	Compilation of Links	16
9.1	UvA/ILLC Links:	16
9.2	Places, Activities and Other Useful Sites:	17
9.3	Contact Information	19

Introduction

The following document is the mental health guide for the MSc programme in logic, at the Institute for Logic, Language and Computation, written specifically for both newcomers and seasoned students alike. With this guide, we are pursuing two interlinked goals:

1. On the institutional level, it is important to us to clearly signal that the ILLC and the MoL take the issue of mental health seriously, and that we advocate discussing these issues, while hopefully raising awareness and alleviating any 'sense of taboo' that surrounds the topic.
2. On the level of the students, we wish to give them *one* document where they can find multiple resources to deal with issues surrounding mental health, such as: tips for reducing stress in daily life, whom to contact for specific problems, interesting activities, expectation management about your studies, and much more. We hope to give you students of all stages something to work with, or at least provide you with starting points for getting help on your own.

As such, we wish to emphasize right at the start that the following resources **do not replace** professional help, **nor** does this 'compendium of tips and tricks' claim to be **exhaustive or fully comprehensive**. Our guiding idea behind this manual was simply: **Help students to help themselves**.

In the spirit of being a compendium, the following guide is divided into loosely connected sections, which form an amalgam of tips and tricks that we gathered during our studies, our personal lives, and in some cases personal history with mental illness, such as past nursing trainee programs in relevant institutions. As such, we will not back up every claim with an appropriate study or other scientific source. If you think that you found a serious blunder on our part, feel free to contact us via the address supplied at the end of this document. The same goes for any other suggestions for improvement – we are happy to hear them!

Concerning links and contact information, we have collected all relevant links at the end of this document, for your ease of access. So don't worry if we mention an interesting link somewhere during your reading – it's right there at the end again. **Also, in case you consult this guide to get help as quickly as possible, we have listed the links to the student psychologists and other relevant go-to places right at the beginning under section 1!** Last but not least, the links section at the end contains additional links that might be interesting or useful. We marked them with a "+". Please check them out!

With these things out of the way, I wish to make some acknowledgements. I wanted to thank my co-writers Rodrigo Almeida and Hugh Mee Wong for their constructive criticism and patience. They have both provided invaluable feedback, and in some parts they have essentially written the sections themselves. I also wanted to thank the other members of the OC Logic for their inputs on the penultimate draft. I have talked to many people about this document, and asked them for inputs or suggestions. I am indebted to their ideas and suggestions. If you do not find yourself in the following list even though you should be, the fault is entirely on me: Bas Kortenbach, Tianwei Zhang, Lukas Zenger, Anna Dmitrieva, Bingzi Jiang, Tobias Vonlanthen, Kolja Klein, Martina Moser, and all the students that motivated and urged me to rewrite the earlier version of my predecessor Angelica Hill. I hope she agrees with the alterations and additions I have made.

We hope you will find the following information useful, and also have fun reading the guide!

Sincerely, on the behalf of the OC Logic,
Simon D. Vonlanthen

Diemen, December 2020

1 Official Organizations of the UvA

To kick things off, we would like to mention all the official organizations the UvA has in place to help you with serious issues, such as more severe mental health problems, physical health, or harassment, before moving on to more day-to-day tips. The UvA provides official help in these capacities in the following form:

- **Student Psychologists:** Student psychologists are your number one address for more serious mental health issues, or if you do not wish to discuss your personal problems with someone else, such as friends, family, fellow students or other people from the campus. In this regard, student psychologists can offer help while maintaining strict confidentiality. If need be, they can also arrange for external professional help. However, keep in mind that their waiting lists can be rather long.¹ You can find out more about them on the following webpage:
<https://student.uva.nl/en/content/az/psychologists/psychologists.html>
- **Student Counsellors:** In contrast to a student psychologist, a student counsellor is not a trained mental health professional. Their job is to effectively help you with organizational matters surrounding your studies, such as financial matters and studying with a disability. You can find them on the following link:
<https://student.uva.nl/en/content/az/student-counsellors/student-counsellors.html>
- **Student Doctors:** Though this is a mental health guide, we wanted to at least mentioned one contact point related to physical health. The UvA has its own student doctors, which can be contacted on:
<https://www.huisartsenamsterdam.nl/>
They accept your student insurance, are friendly and efficient, and can refer you to a specialist if need be.
- **Confidential Advisers:** The UvA has a **procedure** in place **against all kinds of unwanted behaviour**, such as sexual harassment, violence, aggression, discrimination, intimidation and bullying. The UvA takes these occurrences very seriously, and

¹In this regard, we wholeheartedly recommend checking out *frisse gedachtes*, a platform run by students for students, focusing on providing help concerning mental health. You can check them out here: frissegedachtes.nl

the procedures are quickly processed in order to address and alleviate the situation as soon as possible. You can begin this procedure under the following link:

<https://student.uva.nl/en/content/az/confidential-adviser-for-undesirable-behaviour/confidential-adviser-for-undesirable-behaviour.html>

The confidential advisers are part of the institution handling general formal procedures, so if you wish to file other complaints, objections or appeals, the following link will help:

<https://student.uva.nl/en/content/az/complaints-objections-and-appeals/formal-procedure/formal-procedure.html>

- **Academic Mentors:** The MoL assigns to each student an academic mentor, who serves as the primary address to any questions or issues related to your studies at the ILLC. They will help you plan your curriculum, and can also be contacted about personal issues such as your personal fit for the programme or your abilities in tackling it. If you would prefer to discuss issues surrounding your own (dis)abilities with someone else, please consult sect. 4.1, or our programme coordinator (cf. below). If you don't know who your academic mentor is, feel free to contact Tanja.
- **Programme Coordinator:** Our programme coordinator Tanja Kassenaar is an excellent address if you need help with practically anything. We think it is fair to say that she is in many respects the heart and the soul of the programme. As such, she is happy to help you or refer you to somebody who can. You can reach her under: mol-illc@uva.nl.

2 Clearing Your Head

2.1 Exercise

Exercise is arguably the best counterweight to studying, for the simple reason that it uses all those components of your body that are generally left unused during '*brainwork*'. It also helps with physical health. After all, recall the old-fashioned slogan: "Healthy body, healthy mind!"

Now, it is important for you to note that doing exercise does not require anything in particular, apart from yourself – and perhaps some discipline. Easy access activities include,

but are not limited to: jogging, walking/hiking, cycling, as well as equipment-free workout or yoga routines. You can find the latter easily on relevant online video-sharing platforms, such as YouTube. Of course, you have to stay critical of the routines provided, but as long as the workout does not contain equipment, and you pay close heed to your own body, little can go wrong in this regard.

If you wish to add some equipment to your workout routine, there are cheap and easy options. Several stores in the Netherlands', such as *Action* and *Decathlon*, sell basic things such as weights, rubber bands, etc. at a reasonable price. These may not provide you with anything equivalent to gym equipment, but they are definitely easier on your purse.

If you wish to be more involved in something, a natural address would be the UvA's own sports center – the USC. They offer a large list of activities and types of sports – you are sure to find something that interests or suits you. You can check them out under: <https://uscport.nl/en/>. Keep in mind that participating in such activities requires a membership, though. However, compared with other sports clubs, the prices are arguably rather low.

Finally, if you are interested in something not offered by the USC, or you already bring a sports-related hobby with you, we strongly suggest to search for sports clubs that offer what you seek! Especially in the case of already practiced hobbies, we advise you to keep doing them – there is no good reason to stop doing a hobby you enjoy, especially since your studies will challenge you sufficiently, and you will need the occasional break!

2.2 Arts and Crafting

Besides working out and exercising, both performing art and crafting can provide relevant counterbalance to the intellect-heavy work you are doing everyday during your studies. As with previously practiced sports, we once again encourage and recommend maintaining any hobbies in this regard: Keep playing your instrument and painting your canvasses!

For those not already engaged in such activities, it might be interesting or you to learn that it has entered common sense in the domain of mental health care that learning a new (physical) skill can have a strong positive effect on existing mental blocks and moods. To this end: the more complex the skill to be acquired, the stronger the effect. As such, if you can afford it and always wanted to learn a new instrument, this would, for example, be a good time to do so!² The same goes for other arts and crafting related activities. However,

²Cf. section 2.4 for the UvA's own organization to this end – the CREA.

keep in mind that exercising might benefit you more overall, given that it also gets you out of your chair, which crafting or painting may not necessarily achieve!

2.3 Seeing Green

It is generally known that looking at green things has a calming effect on most people. In this vein, going out into nature can alleviate stress, but not just because of all the green plants. The calming effect can also arise from bodies of waters and animals. The radical change of scenery from campus to nature can do wonders on your general mood, operating on all levels of perception: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and feeling. Think about the prospects of smelling fresh sea air, or hearing birds chirp in a park, or observing waterfowl going on about their daily business. All of these things can help change moods and allow you to clear your head.

Luckily, Amsterdam is home to many great places to this end, such as the botanical garden³, the various parks and polders, and canals, all of these places swarming with waterfowl, plants and other beings that can have a calming and relaxing effect. Among the bigger and more popular parks are the *Vondelpark*, *Oosterpark*, *Westerpark* and *Rembrandtpark*. Close to the science campus is the *Flevopark*, and if you live in Diemen, we suggest visiting the *Diempolder*.

If you wish and can afford to travel a bit further away, the Netherlands is home to many national parks. Close to Amsterdam we have the *Waterleidingsduinen*⁴, and in the South-west one can find the *Veluwe* national parks.⁵ Of course, since we are in the Netherlands, there is a multitude of biking routes throughout the whole country, that will take you to many great vistas.⁶ If you have a bike, we strongly suggest to go biking in any national park!

³You can find out more under:
<https://www.dehortus.nl/>

⁴<http://www.amsterdamsewaterleidingduinen.nl/> – there is a small entry fee of 1 Euro per day, but it is definitely worth the money!

⁵<https://www.visitveluwe.nl/> or
<https://www.natuurmonumenten.nl/natuurgebieden/nationaal-park-veluwezoom> – the latter link contains more information on other parks!

⁶The following link contains a way to plan your routes:
<https://www.hollandcyclingroutes.com/online-cycle-route-planner>

Something green to look at:



Dutch countryside, featuring typical Dutch weather! Picture credit: Bingzi Jiang.

2.4 Seeing Grey, Brown and the Rest

If nature is less to your liking, Amsterdam offers a host of cultural activities – first and foremost museums. Since there are quite simply too many places to mention here, we refer to the links at the end of the guide for a list of places to check out. We think it is once more important to note that change of scenery can go a long way. In this regard, appreciating art – in all of its forms – is a safe bet on getting your mind off of things!

We want to make a special mention of CREA, the UvA's cultural student organization. It has a great variety of cultural activities and courses on offer, such as creative writing, photography, instruments, meditation, etc. It is, moreover, a generally nice place to hang out at! You can learn more under:

<https://www.crea.nl/?lang=en>

3 Daily Routines and Substance (Ab)Use

It is as good a time as any to offer some tips and tricks in relation to mundane things such as your sleep schedule, diet and the intake of recreational substances. The following list is supposed to serve as hints, tips and tricks to maintain a somewhat healthy daily life, without being robbed of too much fun. And of course, these things are individual – we aim only to provide some guidelines that helped us and countless others in the past. Specifically, we recommend the following things:

- Maintaining a reasonable sleep schedule is important for your general concentration levels – not to mention your overall physical and mental health. The former is important to keep in mind for those of you most likely to not have such a schedule, though: it will ultimately decrease your intellectual output if you push yourself too hard and work into every night of the week! As such, we recommend making sure that you get something between **7 and 9 hours of sleep** – most of the time.

Moreover, here is a link to some helpful tips about *how* to get those hours of sleep:

<http://healthysleep.med.harvard.edu/healthy/getting/overcoming/tips>

- As already mentioned many times so far, a good balance between studying and other activities is paramount. To this end, most students tend to take a break of **at least**

1h per day⁷ and **1 day per week** from studying. This should give you some time to recharge during working days, and something of a weekend. Again, we think these lengths are the *absolute minima*, that should be adhered to even when finishing term papers and during exam weeks.

- Coffee, black tea and energy drinks are *not*, contrary to popular practice among students, a viable substitute for water! Stay hydrated, and don't 'overdose' on caffeine. It might help in the moment, but too much caffeine will have your body adapt to it, meaning your productivity will be more and more dependent on it. Now, you might contest that a caffeine addiction is inevitable in this day and age anyway, to which we would reply, tongue in cheek, that it might still be worthwhile to keep it at bay for as long as possible!
- On a more serious note, we *strongly* recommend not taking *any* recreational substances, including alcohol and cannabis, *while* studying. It may seem commonsensical, but this is more often ignored than you might think. A similar moral applies to the use of enhancers such as adderall & Ritalin, with their well-known short- and long-term consequences. And while your free time is *your* free time, we would like to at least ask you to reflect on whether the use of drugs is the most healthy and risk-free way to clear your head and regain energy, compared to doing exercise and visiting museums – perhaps not!

4 Minorities

4.1 Disabilities

Speaking of things related to daily routines, there are those of you who might join the programme with a pre-existing condition that may hinder you in your daily activities. Studying at a high level is always a challenging endeavour, but it is all the more demanding if you have to cope with other factors that may affect your performance. Whether these are physical disabilities, neurodevelopmental disorders (such as ADHD/ADD, *dyslexia* or *dyscalculia*) or

⁷In this regard, more is obviously better, but try to stick to this even in exam weeks – it goes a long way!

one's availability for social interaction and engagement (such as being on the autism spectrum), these can quickly make someone feel inadequate and left out. Especially during the duration of an intense study programme, it is possible that some of these issues may come to bear more than usual. Thus, it is important to keep this possibility in mind.

Here, it is important for us that you are aware that these matters are taken into account in your studies, and there are provisions taken to try to level the playing field in these respects. The UvA and the MoL offer study advisers and counsellors that can help you figure out strategies and approaches to dealing with these issues. For the latter, please consult sect. 1. For the former, if you wish to contact the study advisers, you might have to contact either the study advisor for logic (1st choice) or the advisor for philosophy (2nd choice), given that the MoL is an interdisciplinary programme. You can contact them under the following links:

- Cecilia Sigvardsdotter, study advisor for logic, attached to the Faculty of Science (FNWI):
<https://www.uva.nl/en/shared-content/studentensites/fnwi/esc-gedeelde-content/en/az/study-adviser-esc/study-adviser-esc.html#Contact-your-study-adviser>
- Joost Molenaar, study advisor for philosophy, attached to the Faculty of Humanities (FGW):
<https://student.uva.nl/humanities/contact/study-advisers/study-advisers.html#Philosophy>

The specific provisions that can be arranged for you include:

- Alternative facilities in doing exams and extra time to finish them.
- Helpful tips and approaches on how to cope with such difficulties.
- Availability to do the exams on site (during times of quarantine).

In cases where such issues are not outwardly visible, you may desire to keep such things private. You should, however, not feel ashamed or be in fear of being ostracised for circumstances outside of your control, and, thus, you should also feel free to discuss such matters with your academic mentor if you feel like such factors may hinder your performance. If you are uncomfortable talking about these matters with your academic mentor, Tanja (cf. sect. 1) will be happy to help.

Finally, the UvA has a platform for students with disabilities to come together and discuss the obstacles and forms of overcoming them. You can learn more here:

<https://student.uva.nl/en/content/az/disability/student-disability-platform/student-disability-platform.html>

4.2 Race, Gender and Sexual Orientation

There might be aspects of your student life at the UvA that are negatively impacted due to your race, gender or sexual orientation. These might be little things that escape common notice, such as your race, gender or sexual orientation (not) being featured in the media of the university, which may cause distress in subtle ways. In this respect, it needs to be mentioned that the UvA takes issues related to diversity and inclusion very seriously.

For general concerns, the UvA's Diversity and Inclusion organization ought to be your first address. They offer workshops, events and a host of links related to the topic. You can find them under:

<https://www.uva.nl/en/about-the-uva/about-the-university/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-and-inclusion.html>

As far as sexual identity and orientation is concerned, the UvA has a student organization for the LGBTQ+ community – A. S. V. GAY – as well as the initiative 'UvA Pride'. They can be found under the following links:

- <https://www.asvgay.nl/?locale=en>
- <http://www.uvapride.nl/> (only available in Dutch)

Lastly, we would like to advertise the feminist reading group of the MoL. They discuss texts from feminist philosophy and adjacent fields in regular meetings. You can contact the organizers via the following email addresses: laura.vetter@student.uva.nl, maellehave-lange@gmail.com.

5 Socializing

Most if not all of the aforementioned activities are arguably better with company! As social creatures, we humans usually rely on regular social interactions in order to keep our minds healthy. Now, we are aware that not everyone is equally good or even interested in forming social bonds, and if you prefer to keep to yourself – and this has worked for you

well in the past –, there is clearly no need to change any of it. Nonetheless, the MoL is fortunately known for its generally welcoming and collaborative attitude and atmosphere, and we encourage everyone to get into contact with their fellow students – both for and beyond course work!

One can get in touch with other people in multiple ways, including, but not limited to: course work itself, sports-related activities, parties, cultural activities and simple circumstances such as being neighbours. Of course, activities such as parties need not involve the university *per se*, but the MoL has a nice student association – aptly named Ex Falso – that regularly organizes social activities. You can check them out here: <https://www.facebook.com/exfalso/>, and contact them via exfalso.illc@gmail.com, if you have any questions or wish to participate.

Keep in mind that forming *new* social bonds is not the only worthwhile social activity. For example, it might be an excellent idea to stay in contact with your family or your old friends, whether within the Netherlands or from abroad. In the latter case, especially, this is more easily facilitated than ever, thanks to a host of (free) platforms that enable video-chatting.

6 Mindfulness

Departing from the social sphere for a moment, we would also like to offer some actual techniques from contemporary psychotherapy that are easily applied on your own, and work well for individuals without a pre-existing psychiatric condition, too. Specifically, *mindfulness* has seen successful applications in modern third-wave behavioural therapies and beyond. However, please keep in mind that mindfulness is something that needs to be ‘trained’ to some degree. However, if it works, it works wonderfully, as we can attest from personal experience.

The general idea is to focus on a specific part of your perception, ignoring and ultimately blocking out all thoughts and other mental activities. This way, you end up being completely ‘in the moment’. There are many guidelines and books about mindfulness and related exercises, and the UvA hosts its own mindfulness group.⁸ We wish to give you three

⁸You can find them here:

<https://student.uva.nl/en/content/az/training-and-workshops/psychological-support/mindfulness/mindfulness.html>

exercises and some general tips that might help you in your daily life, and maybe get you interested in the UvA mindfulness group and mindfulness in general:

- **Specific Exercises:** In all those exercises, the goal is to focus on specific aspects of your perception, simply ignoring any thoughts, emotions or other mental happenings. This blotting out of 'mental noise' will be hard in the beginning, but should become increasingly easy with more experience. It is important to not beat yourself down if your mind wanders off back to your thoughts. **Mindfulness is not a competition!** Try to accept that your mind will wander off time and time again, and simply try to return to the object of focus each time.
 - *Long Meditation:* Find yourself a comfortable place, preferably where you can be comfortably seated. Close your eyes and focus first on the effect gravity has on your body. The focus at this point is on the tactile component of perception. Next, focus on your posture. Try to figure out the 'quality' of your posture: Is it a dignified posture? A humble one? Upright? Slanted? Next, shift your focus away from how your body feels towards your breathing. Try to maintain deep breaths, and alternate your focus between the feeling of air passing through your body and the sound of it. Lastly, open your eyes and focus on your visual perception. Focus and study the specific details of the objects in front of you⁹, or alternatively focus on your auditory or olfactory perception. Each of these stages should last at least one minute. However, it is not necessary to set up any timers – move from one of the four stages to the next whenever you feel like it. It is also nice to remain at the last stage for about 5 minutes, alternating between all five of your perceptual modalities.
 - *Short Meditation:* As a stripped down version of the previous exercise, you can alternatively use only one of the four stages. Both the first and the last can be used easily 'in the moment'. For the former, simply focusing on the feeling of gravity on your body is usually enough, while for the latter, you can ask yourself the questions: "What do I see/smell/hear/taste/feel?" in turn.
 - *Finger Game:* Compared to the former exercises, this one takes (even) less time and can be done quickly and automatically during other activities. Put your left

Be aware that you will have to register first, and that the waiting lists are unfortunately rather long!

⁹In relation to section 2.3: If you have plants, they are a congenial object to put up in front of you!

thumb on your left index finger, while putting your right thumb on your right pinkie. Then, from left to right and back, tip all other four fingers with your thumb, having the fingertips touch at each stage. The focus here is, of course, on the tactile component of perception. Since many people struggle with the coordination component, this helps well with 'shutting down' the mind – recall the earlier comment on learning new things in section 2.2!

- **General Remarks:** Mindfulness can be exercised in many ordinary circumstances as well. For example, you can train it when drinking water (focusing on the taste, the tactility of the water running down your throat), using hand cream (focusing on the feeling, or the smell of the cream), or, harking back to section 2.3, focusing on the visual perception of an animal, a plant, or a body of water while being outside.

7 Expectation Management

For us, *this section is arguably the most important one*. So far, the guide has focused on alleviating stress, but has done little to help you prevent it in the first place. Since there are a lot of potential sources of distress, some highly individual, we can, and will, only focus on those specifically related to our study programme.

In this regard, we think the issue of *expectations* takes center stage. Specifically, the trouble usually pertains to a mismatch between what one *can* do, what one *really ought* to do, and what one *is doing*, such as when a student believes they have to pass a certain course, or need a good grade, and hence invest a substantial amount of time into such a project – potentially to the degree of obsession. This is usually fuelled/paired with a self-esteem that is tied to success in certain areas of life, chiefly among them academic success. While it is not within our competence to help with self-esteem issues, we think that keeping the following points in mind might be of help nonetheless:

1. *Everyone* suffers from imposter syndrome at some point, i.e. the feeling of being out-of-place because one believes they know little to none, seemingly in contrast to everyone else. The very fact that *everyone* has that, shows (i) how normal the phenomenon is and (ii) calls into question what weight such an experience should be given. Thus, having this experience is normal, and need not be cause for concern!

2. Your career (academic or otherwise) does *not* depend on single grades or courses. Neither PhD programmes nor the private sector hires people because they had a 9.0 in subject *X*. Also, not being able to take a certain course is equally no catastrophe – at worst taking another course simply diversifies your portfolio! In this vein, it is also crucial to mention that it is *absolutely* normal to drop courses, and it is *not* necessary to book more than 30 EC per semester.
3. In general, your grades might drop quite a bit compared to your previous programme of study. The further you progress within academia, the better your peers will be as well. As such, this does not mean you are getting worse (chances are: quite the opposite!), but given you are among the best now, your potentially only average performance does not disqualify you in any way.
4. In relation to the last comment, it is important for 1st year students especially to keep in mind that your skills and capacities will improve rapidly. Moreover, it pays off well in the end to be *incremental* in choosing what you wish to tackle, such as specific courses. As always, your academic mentors will be happy to help in this regard!
5. Given that the MoL is in many parts a study programme dealing with highly abstract matters, and that such abstract areas of study have a tendency to be frustrating, frustration itself is all but inevitable. Again, this is the fate of (almost) everyone in this programme! We think it is important to keep in mind that as long as the frustration generally stems from a *learning* experience, things are usually in good order. If you think it does not, we would recommend getting in touch with others, such as fellow students and student mentors, and see if they have (had) any similar experiences. There *are* courses which take their difficulty level a bit too far, so don't stoically accept everything thrown at you!
6. Don't be afraid to contact other students or lecturers (including TAs) for assistance in academic matters. Chances are your co-students are in the same boat as you, and the academic staff *wants* you to succeed, hence they will be happy to assist you, if they have the time.

As a final note and a specific help for study-stress, it might be helpful to use to-do lists. We all get into situations where we feel overwhelmed by the workload. To this end, making a to-do list where the individual points are *smaller* tasks can help with cutting down the workload into sizeable portions that can be tackled in turn. You might see that any large

workload tends to look rather manageable rather quickly with this technique. The slogan here is the good old-fashioned “Divide and conquer!”.

8 Quarantine

Given the time at which this guide was written, it would be a crime not to include a section dedicated to issues arising due to (partial) lockdowns. As such, you will find a list of tips below, that we all centred around one slogan: “**Try to keep things as normal as possible!**”.

While most if not all of the previous points are even more important in case of a (partial) lockdown, the following are additionally helpful in adhering to the above slogan:

1. **Keep a daily schedule:** Try to wake up at a specific time, go to bed on time, have fixed times for meals. It is easy to let things go ‘off-rails’ if you have minimal contact with other people, and if you do not need to be present on location for things such as courses. Ultimately, though, letting things go off-rails only adds to the (potential) feelings of desperation or hopelessness.
2. **Keep things organized:** Keep your room tidy, keep an agenda for appointments and (online) activities, keep your apartment tidy, etc. Tying into the comment above, keeping things clean and tidy not only staves off the aforementioned feelings, but it also tends to give an impression of success and help you ‘keep your head above water’.
3. **Keep taking care of yourself:** This pertains especially to your body. It is common knowledge in dealing with illnesses such depression that keeping yourself clean, shaved, styled, etc. helps in dealing with depressive moods, by means of activating you. Accordingly, it stands to reason that this will also help in case of (partial) lockdowns and the resulting decline in personal care and depressive episodes.
4. **Pick up an indoor hobby:** Examples include crafting, painting, cooking or gardening (if applicable). This way, you can (i) stay occupied, (ii) do things with your body (and not the mind), and (iii) negate the need to be outdoors and/or have access to facilities. It does not matter if the results are sub-par – this is once more not a competition – and you can always safely cremate your creations once a lockdown is over...
5. **Stay in contact:** Even though it is already mentioned above, keeping in contact with other people *is* **paramount**. Of course, your access to social interaction might

be severely limited, but even a chat with the neighbours via the balcony, or with the garbage collectors, or with friends and family online is better than nothing. We thus strongly encourage you to stay in contact with whomever happens to be available!

6. **Write down positive things:** If the going gets really tough, writing down 3 positive things per day can be a great exercise for keeping a positive attitude. These do not have to be large achievements, but can be little things, such as “The bird in front of my window this morning looked pretty” or “I finished side task X today”.¹⁰

¹⁰Recall the to-do lists of section 7!

9 Compilation of Links

9.1 UvA/ILLC Links:

- Student psychologists:
<https://student.uva.nl/en/content/az/psychologists/psychologists.html>
- Student counsellors:
<https://student.uva.nl/en/content/az/student-counsellors/student-counsellors.html>
- Student doctors:
<https://www.huisartsenamsterdam.nl/>
- Cecilia Sigvardsdotter, study advisor FNWI:
<https://www.uva.nl/en/shared-content/studentensites/fnwi/esc-gedeelde-content/en/az/study-adviser-esc/study-adviser-esc.html#Contact-your-study-adviser>
- Joost Molenaar, study advisor FGW:
<https://student.uva.nl/humanities/contact/study-advisers/study-advisers.html#Philosophy>
- Confidential advisers:
<https://student.uva.nl/en/content/az/confidential-adviser-for-undesirable-behaviour/confidential-adviser-for-undesirable-behaviour.html>
- Formal procedures:
<https://student.uva.nl/en/content/az/complaints-objections-and-appeals/formal-procedure/formal-procedure.html>
- Tanja Kassenaar, MoL coordinator:
mol-illc@uva.nl
- Disability platform:
<https://student.uva.nl/en/content/az/disability/student-disability-platform/student-disability-platform.html>
- Ex Falso:
<https://www.facebook.com/exfalso/>
Mail address: exfalso.illc@gmail.com

- Mindfulness group:
<https://student.uva.nl/en/content/az/training-and-workshops/psychological-support/mindfulness/mindfulness.html>
- CREA:
<https://www.crea.nl/?lang=en>
- Diversity and Inclusion:
<https://www.uva.nl/en/about-the-uva/about-the-university/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-and-inclusion.html>
- ASV Gay:
<https://www.asvgay.nl/?locale=en>
- UvA Pride:
<http://www.uvapride.nl/>
- MoL feminist reading group:
laura.vetter@student.uva.nl
maellehavelange@gmail.com

9.2 Places, Activities and Other Useful Sites:

- Tips for Sleeping:
<http://healthysleep.med.harvard.edu/healthy/getting/overcoming/tips>
- UCS:
<https://uscsport.nl/en/>
- Botanical garden:
<https://www.dehortus.nl/>
- Waterleidingsduinen:
<http://www.amsterdamsewaterleidingduinen.nl/>
- Veluwe:
<https://www.visitveluwe.nl/>
<https://www.natuurmonumenten.nl/natuurgebieden/nationaal-park-veluwezoom>

- Planning your cycling routes:
<https://www.hollandcyclingroutes.com/online-cycle-route-planner>
- + Mezrab: A space for storytelling, music, laughs, tears and home-made lentil soup!
Especially fun on a Friday evening:
mezrab.nl
- + Cinema of the Dam'd: Cheap, fun and quirky cinema next to Vondelpark:
<http://cinemaofthedamd.nl/>
- + Flea market Noord: The largest flea market in Europe – once every month! Check the link for the dates:
<https://ijhallen.nl/en/>
- + Frisse Gedachtes: A forum run by students for students in need of help related to mental health. An excellent place not just by itself, but also in times of quarantine when the student psychologists tend to be overrun. Wholeheartedly recommended! Check out their website to find out how it works:
frissegedachtes.nl
- + Rijksmuseum: national museum of arts and history
<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en>
- + Stedelijk museum: contemporary art
<https://www.stedelijk.nl/en>
- + Van Gogh museum: self-explanatory!
<https://www.vangoghmuseum.nl/en>
- + Anne Frank huis: self-explanatory!
<https://www.annefrank.org/en/>
- + Tropenmuseum: foreign cultures and countries
<https://www.tropenmuseum.nl/>
- + Eye filmmuseum: photography and film
<https://www.eyefilm.nl/en>

9.3 Contact Information

Found anything wrong with the document? Any blunders? Are there places people ought to see but we neglected to list? Then feel free to get in touch with us! You can reach us under the following email address: oclogic-science@uva.nl. Please include “Mental Health Guide” in your subject line, so that we can easily recognize what it’s about!

*We hope you enjoyed reading the mental health guide, and that we were able to help you
to help yourself!*

*Sincerely,
The Authors,
Simon, Rodrigo & Hugh Mee*