

# RECOMMENDATIONS TO COPE WITH STUDYING IN LOCKDOWN

This document provides a series of suggestions for coping with the current situation of lockdown brought on by Covid-19. The main purpose of these recommendations is to support you, both academically and in a personal way, in managing the online teaching environment more effectively, as it's new to many of us. There's no need to follow all of these suggestions very closely; they're just a brief guide that you can take certain pointers from and then put into practice whatever suggestions you find helpful.

The suggestions are arranged into three different blocks. The first one analyses the situation that we all find ourselves in from an emotional point of view. The second one looks at things relating to the general context. Finally, the third one aims to support your study routines by means of practical tips.

## THE CURRENT SITUATION

- a) It's very important to be well aware of the situation we're going through and to keep ourselves properly informed; this means avoiding information overload and also trying to make sure that the information we receive is carefully contrasted.
- b) Identify your cognitive and emotional reactions with complete normality. We all have the right to have contradictory thoughts and feelings, to be confused, frightened, stressed and restless.
- c) But we should all try hard to put aside our most negative feelings; that way we can adapt ourselves in a far more balanced way to new situations.
- d) To deal with this lockdown in a balanced way means understanding, learning about and adapting ourselves to the context. It means adapting in progressive and continued way, using all of our cognitive, emotional and social resources.
- e) Remember at all times that we are not alone. To foster cognitive and emotional well-being, it's highly recommended to keep your support network active, as much as you possibly can.

## STUDYING IN A SHARED SPACE: HOME

Dialogue and reflection: The reality of lockdown is different for everyone. But we do need to come to an agreement with others about routines at home. And we also need to bear in mind that everyone else at home is facing the same situation as us, one that's been imposed and that we don't control.

Communication, empathy and flexibility: We need to create spaces for communication that help us all live together and that make sure everyone's needs are being met. Taking a brief break from our day-to-day

concerns and adopting a little bit of perspective to look at things from the outside, if that's at all possible, can help us come to terms with reality and understand other people's reactions.

Speaking and listening when there's conflict: Conflicts inevitably happen in moments like these. Ensuring that there are opportunities to speak together, to share our concerns and to understand different points of view is crucial. We need to speak rationally to avoid getting stuck in meaningless arguments that add to feelings of dissatisfaction and create misunderstanding at home.

We need to promote assertive communication when facing conflict or daily difficulties. This means talking openly and clearly about the ways in which situations, types of behaviour and certain comments make us feel, rather than simply complaining about other people's words.

Working on emotions and feelings: Giving ourselves some moments of calm for writing down our thoughts, fears, recurrent ideas or feelings, can help us to understand exactly what we're going through as well as helping us to communicate better with everyone at home. In fact, writing down or even recording our feelings can actually be a resource for our learning processes.

Making expectations and aims more flexible: The current lockdown situation implies uncertainty. This reality calls on us to be able to rethink our expectations and aims. Giving ourselves a space for reflection and for reconsidering our expectations can help us to generate new scenarios for satisfactorily managing this confinement at home.

Organise, prioritise and relativise: Evaluating the immediacy of all our needs is a key element for dialogue in this shared confinement. At a time like this, not all our problems can be solved immediately. We're all living through a process and, as such, this means learning to be patient, setting priorities and being prepared to give up on certain things.

Sharing our home-related concerns: When facing conflict that comes from the times before confinement, depending on its seriousness, it's important to share your thoughts with the people you trust. Remember that physical isolation is not the same as social isolation, and also that asking for professional help or guidance can provide you with an alternative view of your circumstances.

## **TAKING CARE OF OURSELVES AND BUILDING NEW HABITS**

1. It's very important to keep up care routines for our body and mind.

Waking up and going to sleep at different times every day doesn't help us to create a decent rhythm for studying. Organising a motivating or satisfying activity can help us get out of bed in the morning. Taking a shower, having breakfast and changing out of our pyjamas are all examples of beginning a routine that will then continue with an interesting activity (whether that's something shared with the

people at home, for example, or doing exercise, or studying something that's really motivating). If you have an online class in the morning, prepare the material and create a good space for listening and participating actively. Taking care of your diet, keeping a meal schedule, getting enough rest, taking a nap, exercising, and getting ourselves going again are all key actions to take at this time.

## 2. Structuring time by making a schedule.

During lockdown, there will be moments that simply overwhelm us; we'll also very probably feel that there's just not enough time to get all our university work done. This, and other things, will sometimes make the day feel very long. As much as possible, developing a weekly schedule (which can be posted above your desk) will make you feel, in a certain way, that you're taking control of the decisions made throughout the week, and are turning them to your advantage.

It is important to differentiate between actions that you carry out over the week and those that you do at the weekend. During the weekend it's good to try doing different activities and create different routines. A schedule like this can help our academic tasks. This might be talking with friends, having an online meeting with classmates, helping out with housework, finally having that conversation with someone at home that you've been putting off, listening to a friend, taking the dog for a walk, whatever. And it also helps to clarify the schedule for virtual classes, personal or shared study hours, etc.

It's important to have leisure time and to be able to establish a time frame for this that's different from study time. These needs are distinct, so we have to make sure that they occupy distinct moments. And we have to find a place for boredom in all of this.

## 3. Maintaining a routine for studying and reading.

It's crucial to keep up a good rate of daily study beyond our online classes. Setting a maximum of two hours' study time with short breaks to disconnect will help us from feeling too tired. When taking advantage of these study times, it's also a good idea to carry out a range of activities such as drawing up study material, doing practical exercises, writing essays and papers, researching topics, revising and reviewing notes, etc. Varying study methodologies, depending on the nature of the subjects, helps us avoid monotony and that sense of fatigue that can come from reading and memorising exclusively.

Also, an interest in non-academic reading (as a source of personal satisfaction) is essential for university students. Lockdown is a very good time to finally get down to that book you've been meaning to read.

## 4. Online classes and keeping in touch with classmates.

To stay up to date with the online classes for each subject and with the topics that those classes cover, check the information you have on this with other classmates. Get yourself organised before the online sessions to improve your concentration, to be able to take notes if necessary, and to intervene effectively in case of doubt. The best moment to speak to your teachers about anything that might need further explanation is just after the online session. It's helpful to have a list of issues to hand that you might need to discuss either during the session or after class. This is also a suitable time to ask for help on anything that you're unclear about, either in terms of content or methodology, and that might be causing you some anxiety or concern when studying the subject or preparing for an exam.

Your involvement and active participation will help you cope effectively with the subject and allow you to develop your knowledge. Teachers have a whole range of methodologies and attitudes and this range can sometimes leave you feeling confused and overwhelmed. Online classes, e-mail or other means of communication provided by your teachers during this period of "virtual" teaching are all ideal tools for actively raising difficulties and making suggestions. The current situation needs us all to adapt to things, and your own feedback is really important in all of this.

Take advantage of online classes to keep in touch with your classmates; for example, you could set up shared study meetings or arrange group meetings with your classmates where you can discuss particular problems and think about useful tools you may have found for dealing with the specific difficulties of online classes.

## **FURTHER RESOURCES**

### **Educational Psychology Assessment Team (UAB)**

<https://www.uab.cat/web/unitat-d-assessorament-psicopedagogic-uap/-atencio-psicopedagogica-1345719429993.html>

### **Psychology and Speech Therapy Service (UAB)**

<http://sct.uab.cat/spl/>

### **Emotional Support App (Government of Catalunya)**

<https://gestioemocional.catsalut.cat/>

### **Psychological Assessment (The Catalan College of Psychologists)**

<https://www.copc.cat/ct/noticias/1050/EI-COPC-posa-a-l-abast-de-la-ciutadania-un-tel-fon-d-assessorament-psicol-gic>

### **Assistance in Situations of Gender Violence (Government of Catalunya)**

[http://dones.gencat.cat/ca/ambits/violencia\\_masclista/recursos\\_atencio/telefon\\_900/](http://dones.gencat.cat/ca/ambits/violencia_masclista/recursos_atencio/telefon_900/)

