

**Managing Study and Family Difficulties: A Short Guide**

- This can be tough. Difficulties back home can happen to any of us - family illness, bereavement, need for support in a crisis or an ongoing social or health difficulty where we may act as carers. For most of us, family comes first, but University is an important landmark in your life and career. It can feel difficult to do your best for both.
- A crisis back home or an ongoing difficult family situation can leave you feeling stressed, shocked and grieving. Sometimes people can feel too embarrassed or ashamed to tell others. However it is likely to be useful to seek help early. Your tutor is a good first person to consult.
- Being torn between University and home can make it difficult for you to concentrate on studies and you may be afraid that you are not keeping up. This can lead to stress and worry. Please see your GP and make time to look after yourself, to exercise and eat well. Creating a tailored self help programme with SCS may also help.
- If you feel the need to make frequent or lengthy trips home, please negotiate your absences with your tutor/supervisor in advance, as they will be able to clarify the course demands and processes whereby mitigating circumstances can be taken into account.
- If you fear you may not manage to meet course deadlines flag this with your tutor as far ahead as you can, as there may be adjustments that can be made with sufficient notice.
- Try to keep some study going even in a small way - a couple of hours a day. You will feel less stressed, not more, if you can do this. Agree a realistic work programme with your tutor and build in frequent reviews to adjust this as necessary.
- Who else is helping back home? If you feel you are the only support, what help can you organise especially if the home situation is likely to be ongoing? Family, friends, social services, GP? Please don't struggle alone.
- Remember that it's best to be part of a helping picture, not all of it, and you have the right to your life as well.

**Study Strategy Sessions: Student Counselling Service, every Wednesday 12.30 - 1.20. Book your place at reception or at [www.bristol.ac.uk/student-counselling](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/student-counselling).**