

Consultation for students suffering from the psychological impacts of the spread of novel coronavirus

With the spread of the new coronavirus infection, it is possible that university students will experience various effects on their education, research and daily life. The following are examples of the psychological impacts that can be expected of anyone under these circumstances. Psychological impacts are generally less visible as they are usually kept inside the individual, so please refer to the following advice regarding self-care and how to seek counseling sessions. **Freshmen are also eligible to use the Student Advice and Counseling Center. Please contact the reception desk by email. Please feel free to contact us for any worry or problem you may have.**

About the psychological impacts on students

■ Examples of the psychological impacts of infectious disease epidemics

- You may become uneasy about getting infected, or spreading the infection to others by your actions, etc.
- It is normal to feel nervous or uncomfortable about your daily physical condition and health care.

■ Examples of psychological impacts associated with cancellation or change of various appointments

- With the cancellation or postponement of academic conference presentations, study abroad, internships, and club activities, the opportunity to demonstrate the results of the past achievements is no longer possible, resulting in psychological shock and loss.

■ Examples of the psychological impacts of shrinking interpersonal relationships

- With fewer opportunities to interact with others, and to keep in touch and feel fulfilled, it is easier to have psychological frustration and to feel depressed.
- People who originally had weaker social relationships are more likely to be isolated.
- The daily information network is shrinking, and it becomes difficult to get important information. So anxiety and confusion are likely to occur.

■ Examples of the psychological impacts of staying at home and social distancing

- You feel uneasy or frustrated about the limitations of freedom.
- Activity during the day decreases, and the disturbance of your life rhythm such as the reversing of days and nights is likely to occur due to taking naps and sleeping for a long time.
- It becomes difficult to relieve stress because it is not possible to use your usual coping strategies such as activities, motivations, and the social interaction.
- The longer you stay home, the more likely you are to encounter conflicts in relationships with your family and roommates (in dormitories and room shares).
- As you are at home all the time, you may be more worried more than usual about making noise or disturbing your neighbors in your apartment/dormitory, so your dissatisfaction and stress are more likely to increase.

■ Examples of psychological impacts of misunderstandings and prejudices

- In areas that are declared as being in a state of emergency, countries and regions with a large number of infected people, organizations and institutions that have tested positive for infection, excessive vigilance and exclusion are likely to occur.



About psychological impact on students (continued)

■ Possible examples of psychological impact due to the lack of guidelines and framework for university life

- ❑ Postponement of the start of classes, change of schedule, and other uncertainties causes a continuous lack of guidelines and frameworks for research activities and learning tasks, and this leads to a necessity of individual judgments and actions, and this may cause anxiety and hesitation.
- ❑ As learning and research habits become difficult to form, motivation and goals are likely to be lost.

■ Possible examples of psychological impact due to continued lack of study prospects

- ❑ Plans concerning research activities, extracurricular activities, job hunting have changed, and these uncertain situations continue, causing anxiety and impatience.
- ❑ If information is inaccurate, anxiety and impatience make it easier for you to believe it or spread it to others.

■ Possible examples of psychological impact of worries and problems in your regular university life

- ❑ It becomes easier to procrastinate the worries and problems that leads to their worsening.
- ❑ Students who showed reluctance to proceed to the next stage or level of education will find it more difficult to have a positive attitude toward classes and research activities due to the delay of the start of classes or a change in class style.
- ❑ Painful memories of past disasters and emergencies can be easily recalled.

■ Possible psychological effects of consulting with others

- ❑ You may hesitate to consult or get support from other people because you may think “other people have it harder than I do, so I shouldn’t bother them with such trivial things. I should be patient.
- ❑ When a local state of emergency has been declared, for example, it is difficult to talk to family members about your own worries and concerns because you must be worried about them.
- ❑ It's easy to feel lonely and anxious when you don't have a chance to talk to people close to you, and you are easily taken in by seemingly friendly people belonging to cults or running scams.
- ❑ to procrastinate the worries and problems that leads to their worsening.

■ Possible examples of psychological effects associated with economic impact

- ❑ A decrease in family income due to worsening economic conditions, or a decrease in part-time income due to voluntary self-quarantine or downsizing of part-time jobs, causes anxiety about life.

■ Possible psychological effects on international students

- ❑ It is easy to become isolated in your study abroad destination. The prospect of continuing your study abroad becomes difficult, and it is easy to become less motivated and more anxious.
- ❑ Language barriers make it difficult to obtain national and local information, which can lead to anxiety and distrust. Since it is difficult to get information about the situation in your own country, it is easy to become anxious and worried about your family and friends. The gap between the family in the home country and the student's intentions to continue studying abroad is likely to grow larger, and anxiety, anger, and depression are likely to arise.

Coping with psychological effects

■ Get the right information

- ❑ Refer to information provided by universities, national and local governments, and academic organizations.
- ❑ Do not spread unconfirmed information directly to other people or through SNS.
- ❑ Be careful not to say or do things that exclude others based on misunderstanding or prejudice.

■ Stay connected and prevent isolation

- ❑ Even if you can't spend time together as a group, take the opportunity to interact with your peers and family via email, phone, or remote video conferencing systems, as well as using social distancing in appropriate locations.

■ Maintain a good rhythm in your daily life and get moderate exercise.

- ❑ As in normal college life, try to have a rhythm in your daily life where you are active during the day and go to bed at night.
- ❑ A nap of more than 30 minutes or a short sleep later in the evening can disrupt the rhythm of your life, so be careful!
- ❑ Excessive consumption of caffeine and alcohol can also disrupt your sleep rhythm, so be careful about the amount and frequency of your intake!
- ❑ Incorporate moderate exercise such as calisthenics and stretching in your room, walking or cycling outdoors away from crowds.

■ Recognize and understand this unusual state of being

- ❑ Every person has some kind of psychological reaction when we are in a crisis situation or an unusual life situation. It is important not to deny feelings that you are different from your usual self or think that you are overly anxious, but to see it as a natural response.

■ Create specific goals.

- ❑ Whether it's a one-day goal, a week's goal, or a month's goal, make it an achievable goal that you can do because of these opportunities.
- ❑ It should not be an overly difficult goal, but something that gives you a moderate sense of accomplishment.
- ❑ It's also a good idea to keep track of your accomplishments each time and work with your peers.

■ Get advice, get support

- ❑ Even if it seems like a trivial matter, don't keep it to yourself. Talk about it with someone.
- ❑ The first person you should talk to is a family member, friend, faculty member, or professional counselor who is easy to talk to.



Coping with psychological effects (continued)

■ Know the signs of mental health problems.

- Can't sleep. Can't fall asleep. Waking up immediately. Sleeping too much.
- Losing your concentration.
- What you used to enjoy is no longer enjoyable.
- A drop in mood. You become pessimistic and despairing.
- You feel frustrated for no reason.
- You always feel tired. You don't feel like doing anything.
- You feel like you're going to disappear. A sense of psychological distress persists.
- It's hard to be alive. There are many times when you feel you want to die.
- A boring thought comes to mind and you get caught up in it.
- You are afraid to meet people and began to avoid them.
- Forgetting things and dropping things a lot recently.



If any one of these lasts for a week or two, please consult an expert.

Student Advice and Counseling Center (SACC)

Hokkaido University's Student Advice and Counseling Center

Student Counseling Office...Counseling by clinical psychologists.

International Student Counseling Office: Counseling by English-speaking experts

Accessibility Services Office...Professional support for students with disabilities

"Peer Support Unit" ... Support for students by students

The confidentiality and privacy of the contents of the consultation will be protected.

We also provide professional advice to faculty, staff and parents regarding students.

➤ There is various other useful information available on our website.

■ Website

<https://www.sacc.hokudai.ac.jp/>

■ TEL

011-706-7463 (Japanese)

011-706-8001 (English available)

■ E-mail

yoyaku@sacc.hokudai.ac.jp (Student / International Student Counseling Office)

aso@sacc.hokudai.ac.jp (Accessibility Services Office)

■ Address

〒060-0815 2nd Floor, Student Communication Station, Hokkaido University, Kita 15-jo Nishi 8-chome, Kita-ku, Sapporo



Other on-campus consultation organizations

- Hokkaido University Health Center (<https://www.hokudai.ac.jp/hoken/>)
- Other on-campus consultation organizations (See "Hokkaido University Student Help Guide") (https://www.hokudai.ac.jp/gakusei/190528_otasuke2019.pdf)

Medical care outside the campus

■ Emergency Medical Consultation Center Sapporo (available 24 hours) : #7119

If you have symptoms resembling the novel Coronavirus, we can help you to register for consultation. We can advise you in English, Chinese, Korean, Thai, Malay and Russian.

Counseling outside the campus

■ Hokkaido Lifeline (社会福祉法人 北海道いのちの電話) (available 24 hours)

[011-231-4343](tel:011-231-4343), [0570-783-556](tel:0570-783-556), [0120-783-556](tel:0120-783-556)

■ Sapporo City Sapporo Mental Health Center (札幌市 札幌こころのセンター) (For Sapporo citizens)

Mental Health phone consultation [011-622-0556](tel:011-622-0556), [0570-064-556](tel:0570-064-556)

<http://www.city.sapporo.jp/eisei/gyomu/seisin/>

■ Hokkaido Mental Health Care Center (北海道立精神保健福祉センター) (not limited to Sapporo citizens)

Mental Health phone consultation [0570-064-556](tel:0570-064-556)

<http://www.pref.hokkaido.lg.jp/hf/sfc/>

■ Sapporo City Young Adult Support station (札幌市 若者サポートステーション) (unemployment, social withdrawal)

[011-223-4421](tel:011-223-4421)

<http://saposute.net>

■ Japanese Society of Certified Clinical Psychologists (一般社団法人 日本臨床心理士会) [03-3813-9990](tel:03-3813-9990)

Regular phone consultation 9:00-12:00 (金) 19:00-21:00 (月～金)

<https://www.jsccp.jp>

■ Sapporo City Emergency Mental Health Information Center (札幌市 精神科救急情報センター) (emergency consultation during nights and holidays)

夜間 17:00～翌朝9:00, 土・日・祝・休日 9:00～翌朝9:00 [011-204-6010](tel:011-204-6010)

Consultation outside campus in case of criminal complaints, consumer complaints, and legal problems

* In case you become the victim of criminal abuse or theft, report without hesitation as soon as possible.

■ Hokkaido Prefectural Police Consultation Center (available 24 hours) : #9110

■ Hokkaido Consumer Consultation Center : [050-7505-0999](tel:050-7505-0999)

■ Legal Consultation: Sapporo City Legal terrace (Houterasu, Japan Legal Support Center) : [050-3383-5555](tel:050-3383-5555)

■ Consultation for victims of crime (Nationwide support network) : [011-232-8740](tel:011-232-8740)

■ Consultation with lawyers regarding criminal cases (Sapporo Bar Association): [011-251-7822](tel:011-251-7822)

■ Victims of sexual harassment 110 available 24 hours): [0120-756-310](tel:0120-756-310), [011-242-0319](tel:011-242-0319)

References

- American Psychological Association (2020). Keeping Your Distance to Stay Safe. (日本心理学会誌「もしも『距離を取る』を求められたなら：あなた自身の安全のために」)
- 日本赤十字社 (2020). 「感染症流行期にこころの健康を保つために」シリーズ
- 緊急時のメンタルヘルスと心理社会的サポート (MHPSS) に関する機関間常設委員会 (IASC) リファレンス・グループ (2020). 新型コロナウイルス流行時のこころのケア ブリーフィング・ノート version 1.5 (日本語版)
- 東京大学相談支援研究開発センター(2020). 教職員の皆さまへ～新型コロナ感染防止対策に伴う、心理面の対応について～