

# Vitamins for My Mind

## A vacation in the middle of school

Taking a vacation when you are in the middle of semester is difficult, but for Catherine Prentice, a fifth year student, going to a counsellor at Student Services is her vacation.

“I always tell people that it’s like vitamins for my mind and I love going,” says Prentice. “It’s like a vacation in the middle of school, to go and relax and talk to someone who listens.”

## Counselling at UFV

The counsellors at UFV’s Student Services provide students with a confidential and non-judgmental place to talk.

“There is a perception that if you talk to a counsellor you are screwed up, that you are crazy. And that’s not actually the case. I think that kind of attitude is still out there when really it is pro-active to speak to a counsellor,” says Eileen Burkholder, one of the UFV Counsellors.

Counsellors also help students develop stress-coping mechanisms. According to Prentice, “If you learn good coping mechanisms while you are in school then you are going to fare better in the real world.”

## Workshops available

Student Services runs workshops to “train a person’s mind to access their natural ability to calm themselves so that they can access their energy more effectively.”

The workshops teach the mindfulness techniques developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn. Zinn is Professor of Medicine Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. These techniques come from our often-overlooked natural abilities to relax ourselves.

“Most people know about fear, as in flight, fight or freeze, but we don’t talk about our relaxation response,” Burkholder said. “If we put our minds in a certain environment, then we relax.”

## Ignoring symptoms

Developing mindfulness can help us identify when we are stressed. Ignoring symptoms of anxiety or depression – inability to concentrate, lack of sleep or appetite, low self-esteem – is often a reason why students don’t seek help when they should.

“We know it’s serious when a person is not able to ... get up in the morning and attend class,” Burkholder said. “They have a change in eating or sleeping patterns, their activity is different in areas they used to be interested in. They need help right away.”

The UFV Counselling Department offers free screening and education about Depression, Anxiety, Mood Disorders, and Risky Drinking.

## Want More Information?

The Counselling Department and the Academic Success Centre are your best sources for advice and information on issues related to learning, studying, time management, and academic performance.

Confidential appointments are offered by the Counselling Department. Please contact Student Services at Abbotsford – 604-854-4528 (B 214) or Chilliwack – 604-795-2808 (A 1318) to make an appointment.

## After hours crisis assistance

After hours, students can phone 1 877 820 7444. The crisis line provides 24/7 support information. “A crisis doesn’t mean that the person is falling apart,” Burkholder said. “It means that they are ... uncomfortable in some way and they need someone to talk to.”

Online support can be found at [www.heretohelp.ca](http://www.heretohelp.ca). This site is run by BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions.

With thanks to Catherine Prentice, David Miller of the Cascade Newspaper, and Eileen Burkholder.

## The Counsellors at UFV can help you with...

### Career Planning

*Help! I'm undecided about my career.*

Most students come to university as a step towards a satisfying career, yet many are not sure what that career might be. Counsellors offer career counselling to help you explore your skills and interests, help you research educational programs and occupational areas that suit you, and help you decide how to choose a career goal.

### Success Skills

*I want to study more effectively,  
not just harder!*

If you are having trouble with your courses, or if you are "doing OK" but want to do better, then effective motivation skills, personal management strategies and study skills can help. Do you want to improve your memory, your note taking, your reading or other skills? Counsellors can work with you individually and in workshops to improve your effectiveness in studying and achieving success.

### Personal Counselling

*Ugh...! I do NOT need these  
problems right now!*

Coming to university is sometimes a big change, and when you have changes in your life, personal problems may appear, too. If you are having difficulties, Counsellors are here to help at no charge. The UFV Counsellors are trained professionals who can help you explore your options without telling you what to do. All our counselling is confidential within the limits of law. Just contact Student Services - you don't need to tell the folks at the front desk any details when you book a personal counselling appointment.

Emergencies happen. If you have an emergency, the Counsellors at UFV will see you as quickly as possible.

**The UFV Counsellors are in Student Services:**

**On the Abbotsford Campus: Room B-214, phone 604 854 4528**

**On the Chilliwack Campus: Room A-1318, phone 604 795 2808**