

SoCom (Social and Communication Difficulties Support Group)

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Who may want to join SoCom?

- SoCom is an inclusive group aimed at supporting individuals who may feel isolated and struggling with their self-esteem and does not require you to have a diagnosis of anything to attend. It helps those who have any social anxiety, struggle to make and keep friends, have experienced bullying or abuse, have hypersensitivity to physical and emotional stimuli, are clumsy and chaotic and disorganised physically or in formulating ideas or assignments, have time-management issues, have difficulty communicating their thoughts easily and can misunderstand others, lack self-care and self-worth, and find transitions complicated and stressful.

What is the purpose of the group?

- SoCom aims to help develop a positivist approach to life, to better understand yourself and other people, through learning skills such as reflexivity, theory of mind, and mindfulness, so that you can gain personal agency and feel happier and less anxious and as such have a better chance of reaching your potential both academically and in life in general.

What does the group offer?

- The sessions primarily focus upon themes related to social and communication interactions, but this includes helping to develop group-working, presenting, employability, and organisational skills, as well as spending time exploring craft-based and other strategies to support wellbeing, plus playing games and watching films with discussion of related themes. It seeks to develop understanding of self and others through discussions on psychological theory and encourages personal reflection on difficult life experiences to try to learn how to address them positively and gain skills to overcome any such future issues of a similar nature. Overall, this group looks to help you to avoid finding yourself in unhealthy situations and to develop a positive view of life so that you have self-belief in your own ability cope with all that it throws at you without becoming overwhelmed and self-advocacy to achieve this.

What you will gain

- Being a part of the group helps to realise that your experiences or anxieties are not something felt only by you. You will gain acceptance to be yourself so that you can let down your guard and relax and you will discover a friendly group who are supportive and understanding.
- Having a landmark each week to aim for can help you to know you will have someone to talk to about your worries and that this will help to find ways to overcome them. It will also help to organise your time, as will the content of some sessions, thus providing a scaffolding for your life on which to fit strategies for wellbeing in a regular manner.
- Most of all the group will help you to develop self-understanding and self-esteem, which is essential for you to gain happiness.

What to expect

- Sessions run weekly, currently this is presented online, but once sessions can occur in person they will also run regularly (day, time, location and regularity dependant on each campus), with the themes continuing to be posted online each week and group discussion also accessible in this medium. Online discussions will include group members from more than one campus. Sessions will rotate between the different types of themes: psychological understanding, wellbeing strategies (often craft-based or mindful), group activities such as gaming and watching films, and practical strategies (life skills such as organisation and healthy eating).
- Meetings are held during hours when lectures are less likely. For the in-person meetings, the rooms are set out in a café-style with fidget toys, jigsaws and other activities available so that there are non-human things to focus on if required. Nobody is expected to engage in discussion unless they feel able to and if you wear dark glasses or headphones this is understood to be a sign that you do not wish to be engaged in conversation but will join in when you feel ready. There is always a quiet space available if you feel overwhelmed, as subjects which arise can trigger old experiences and this may be hard to process sometimes.
- There is always time at the end of a session to discuss any personal anxieties or concerns with the leaders and they can help signpost you to other support if required.