Good afternoon everyone!

I hope you are all well and doing as best you can whilst working from home. This week, after my first WFH top tips e-mail of the term, I thought I'd centre some attention around an issue that I know a lot of students ask questions about- low mood and depression.
 Depression is common and has a range of symptoms that differ from person to person such as: unusually low mood that does not go away, lack of energy and tiredness, difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much, loss of appetite and confidence. It might be that you have been experiencing some of these symptoms due to the change in teaching and lockdown which is perfectly natural, so Mental Health First Aid England define clinical depression as follows:

" The word depression is used in many different ways. Everyone can feel sad or blue when bad things happen. However, everyday 'blues' sadness is not depression. People with the 'blues' may have a short term depressed mood but they can manage to cope and soon recover without treatment."

" A clinical depression is one that lasts for at least two weeks and affects the person's behaviour and has physical, emotional and cognitive effects."

Although it can sometimes feel like the symptoms will last forever, in most cases, they fade over time with the right support and self care. Looking into a positive daily routine is useful, as is making sure that your diet is good and you exercise regularly. There are plenty of resources for tried and tested self care here: [https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/depression/self-care/](https://mail.bsfc.ac.uk/owa/redir.aspx?REF=BMU0O2S1xZV_-us6dE-BuSEcJwCChnhAvp3wXavSQ8aNsubjCcLYCAFodHRwczovL3d3dy5taW5kLm9yZy51ay9pbmZvcm1hdGlvbi1zdXBwb3J0L3R5cGVzLW9mLW1lbnRhbC1oZWFsdGgtcHJvYmxlbXMvZGVwcmVzc2lvbi9zZWxmLWNhcmUv)
 If you are worried that symptoms are severe and longer lasting, I would suggest that an e-consultation with your GP is a good idea, especially if you have experienced symptoms like those above for over two or three weeks. GPs won't always suggest medication although can talk you through your options, they will use their knowledge and experience to first offer support such as counselling, mood journals, checking in on symptoms over time and possibly other therapies like online CBT. There is a lot of hope for recovery with depression but it takes time and the right support. Reaching out to talk about it can be the first step, so speak to people at home, friends or myself/ your tutor if you want some further information. All of our tutors and learning support assistants are Mental Health First Aiders so will be able to direct you to the right support.

I have attached some information that was passed to me by the Anna Freud Foundation for those of you who have experience of depression. This study is designed for young people and offers a range of support through a new, online treatment programme to help you with symptoms and positive coping strategies. Please read and apply if you feel you might be suitable.
 As always, please share any tips and resources that you have found useful for supporting your own mental health (especially since WFH) and I'll make sure to share them with other students.

Take care,
Jen