

Meet the TRANSACT Peer Supporters

Işıl Baştuğ



Hey everyone! I am Işıl from Turkey. I am a second year Psychology with Education student. I like learning new languages, exercising and exploring London like a tourist (as I actually am 😊). Last year, I had a chance to support my peers as a peer link worker. While I was providing support, I realized how different but, at the same time, how similar our struggles were. Simply knowing that there was someone that we could talk to was comforting to all of us, including myself. That showed me the importance of accessible mental health and well-being support and I believe peer support to be valuable and powerful in that sense. Even if it is not in the context of peer support, I think our mutual experiences can help us support each

other in a better way. That's why I am also working as a transition mentor and support first year students while they are transitioning into their university life. Through all these opportunities, I have gained a thorough understanding of the possible problems we all may be struggling with and also the support available to us in and out UCL. I hope to support you to the best of my ability. Whether you are looking for a specific support or just for a lovely chat, I am here! Just book an appointment with me.

Sorana Bucseanu

My name is Sorana, and I am currently in my final year, studying Language & Culture. In the past few years, I have experienced a lot of challenges, from moving to London from an Eastern European country, trying to balance extracurricular activities, a part-time job, and my studies, to trying to sort through the many free, wonderful services that UCL has to offer. Going through all these experiences, I have seen just how important prioritizing mental health is and how easy it can be for your wellbeing to be affected by such a demanding environment. Seeking support at uni can be scary, but it is also one of the most enriching experiences and peer support is a valuable tool that can help you tackle some of the challenges you are facing. I am excited to be part of the PsychUP for Wellbeing team and to contribute to provide support to other students online.



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Andrey Chau



Hi! I'm Andrey, one of the Senior Peer Supporters. I'm a final year BSc Psychology and Language Sciences student from Hong Kong. In my spare time, I love trying new vegetarian recipes, playing cozy games, and reading thrillers. Before moving to London, I also lived in Toronto. At the start of university, I remember how daunting and overwhelming it was to navigate the huge amount of new information thrown at me while adjusting to living in a new country. It felt like everyone had it together, and I was the only one struggling. After talking to other students, I realised I was not alone. It was really helpful and beneficial to connect with other people who shared similar worries and concerns. As a Senior Peer Supporter, I hope to create a non-

judgmental space for students to share their concerns as well. Whether you're looking for someone to listen or to signpost, I would love to help and chat further :)

Yasmine Deflaoui

Hi, my name is Yasmine! My pronouns are she/her and I come from a North African ethnic background. I am a new starter here at UCL, and I am currently undertaking a Masters in clinical mental health sciences. Prior to this, I graduated with a degree in Psychological and Behavioural Sciences at Cambridge. Having dedicated my studies to the field of psychology and mental health, I strongly advocate for the maintenance of wellbeing, self-care and open discourse surrounding mental health - especially in a university setting and amongst the student community. I am also currently working as an assistant psychologist in a CAMHS unit in London, and am constantly being enriched by such stimulating environments with a core-focus on welfare and mental healthcare. My previous work and extra-curricular commitments have been tailored around BAME-centred welfare practices, opening safe spaces to all, as well as access and outreach for disadvantaged students. I hope I am able to extend this as part of PsychUP for Wellbeing, by making sure the provision of support, resources and care are made available to all who may need it!



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Georgia Gill



My pronouns are she/her, and I'm currently studying an MA in Human Rights on a part-time basis here at UCL! Prior to this, I graduated with a first in BA Sociology with Criminology from the University of York, where I also spent a lot of my time volunteering with local human rights and legal aid networks. Most of my extra-curricular work has been centred on providing formal and informal support for men, women, families, and members of the LGBTQ+ and disabled community. Alongside my own experiences of growing up as a Queer woman, the time I have spent with these groups has exposed me to the importance of mental health discourses, specifically in maintaining self-care in light of the disparities that affect the welfare of many of the groups listed above. I hope to bring this

experience to the PsychUP for Wellbeing programme, and to help establish a truly safe and supportive space here on campus!

Fariyah Haroon

Hi, my name is Fariyah Haroon, and I am a 3rd year BSc Psychology student. I am from the UK and have long been passionate about the topic of mental health, particularly in young students and adults. I strongly believe that all individuals should have the appropriate access to support regarding mental health and being involved in peer support is one of my contributions to this. Aside my volunteering work on befriending and working with clients at a psychology clinic, I am an active university peer supporter that is dedicated to helping students, whether that is by listening or providing resources. This opportunity has personally been very useful for me in providing help and resources, something which I would have used earlier at the start of my university degree during the pandemic. I hope using peer support will allow better access to support and help promote student well-being.



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Sofia Hong



Hi, I'm Sofia! I'm from Hong Kong and a final year student on the BSc Psychology and Language Sciences course. I remember starting university during COVID, when lockdowns and Zoom classes were the norm. Trying to juggle homesickness, transitioning from secondary to tertiary education, and socialising felt really overwhelming. Being an international student, I especially understand how daunting it can be to study in a new country with family miles away. Thankfully, I was able to connect with a few peers and express my experience with university and worries in my personal life. I was glad that my peers were able to listen to me, and I

remember how relieved I felt when they echoed my opinions and validated me. It also helped me feel more confident, and that is why I really value peer support and wish to help support others. Please feel free to book a session with me, I would love to chat with you and discuss any worries you might have :)

Charlie Johnston

Hi there, I'm Charlie. I'm a Final Year Modern Languages student and my pronouns are he/him. I grew up in the North of England but moved here for university in 2018. My interests include going to concerts and art exhibitions, dance, movies and I love chatting to new people and learning from others. Having previously used the mental-health services of UCL, I am so inspired to give-back to the student community via this project and share what I have learned and experienced. Peer support is an invaluable resource for students as it provides tailored, friendly and practical advice from people who truly understand the student environment. There is nothing worse than facing mental health problems as a student, whilst juggling so many responsibilities, stresses and commitments, and thinking where do I start? I am keen to help you solve this question, put you on the right track to wellbeing and alleviate your worries in the process.



I have been at UCL for 5 years now, so I have a wealth of experience of studying here and have encountered first-hand many of the challenges that face our students. Issues like taking an

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interruption of studies or the Year Abroad are topics of which I have a lot of insight and furthermore, as an LGBTQ+ student, I understand that university poses many additional challenges to this community during these pivotal formative years, and I would love to share my diverse experiences and support to anyone who needs help. Looking forward to meeting you!

Michel Krysiak

My name is Michel (they/them), and I am an Eastern European international student. I have moved to England almost four years ago for my undergrad in Philosophy, which I was awarded at the Durham University. Then, I moved to London to further my studies here at UCL, where I am pursuing an MA in Legal and Political Theory. The last couple of years in my life were defined by a transition to a completely new culture, and as much as it was difficult, I was also pleasantly surprised by the comprehensive systems of support that are offered to students in the UK. In my undergrad, I was involved in welfare, focusing mostly on the well-being of LGBT+ students, but I was also an international rep and worked closely with the disability support and the working-class rep, as they closely relate to my own experiences and interests. As a peer supporter, I hope to be able to fully adopt an intersectional approach and create an inclusive, accessible safe space.

Ee Vi Lim



As the first person in the family to study abroad, I realised the importance of building a strong support system from my hallmates, course mates, clubs and societies, and wellbeing services in UCL. These people helped me to walk out of the feeling of foreignness and make London a home.

As a second-year undergraduate law student, I can understand that adapting to the workload and demanding courses in university are not easy. In the face of various insecurities and pressures of feeling like I could be doing better, I find that speaking to a peer who may share similar experiences helps to put the seemingly large problems into clearer perspectives.

I think that it is important to have a balanced lifestyle and I like to do regular meditation and self-reflection. From my experience, being mindful of the little things in life, be it good or bad, can help us to better appreciate the blessings that may have gone unnoticed. Hence, I hope that in this peer support session you can have someone to think through things with you in a time and space that is safe.

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Emma Owens



Hey, I'm Emma and I'm a geography student in my final year! I am really thankful that I am on the TRANSACT peer support team as it means I am able to provide guidance and advice to those in similar positions to me – something I was unable to access when I needed it! As a first-generation student with an access offer (and a fresher during covid!), I felt very out of my depth and isolated at the beginning of my university journey. I found it very difficult to find people 'like me' at UCL despite it being filled with so many students, even after looking long and hard. But eventually, I was able to suss out those most similar to me and begin to enjoy university. So, I here if you need to chat about struggling to fit in, friendship woes, family struggles or just need a

general chat, I'm here to listen!

Vedika Mathur

My name is Vedika and I am a second-year geography student here at UCL. I signed up to be a peer supporter because so many people struggle with mental health, especially when thrown into the deep end at university, and it's important that help is accessible to everyone.

As someone who has struggled to reach out for support in the past, I know it can be really daunting. I am grateful for the people that helped me to navigate challenges I encountered, and hope show up for others in the way they need.

The peer support project is creating a space for people to reach out to their fellow students, who care about you and are here to listen.

This is for everyone, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, and background. I am also a woman and a person of colour, which I know brings a different aspect to people's experience.

You can come to me to talk through anything; academic pressures, family demands, friendship difficulties, heartbreak, struggling to find your feet at uni - or just for an informal chat :)



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Karin Noskova



My name is Karin and I am an international student from Slovakia. Here at UCL, I study BA Education Studies with a special interest in social justice and education. In the last five years, I have worked with individuals from various marginalized backgrounds (especially Roma youth and children with various special educational needs and disorders). Thanks to this professional experience, I learnt that it is important to provide not only good quality education for all, but also pastoral care. In high school, I was a Peer Counsellor offering 1-2-1 sessions for students who approached me with their academic and mental health worries. I am currently holding a position of a transition mentor for the incoming UCL students for the second year as well. I believe peer support is very special support because it gives space to students to

have somebody to talk to if they are ashamed to raise their worries with adults or when they think adults cannot understand their specific problems. Therefore, I believe that programs like TRANSACT can be that needed bridge which can connect students in need with the service they need.

Aditi Rao

Hello! I am Aditi, a second-year law student from Bangalore, India. My pronouns are she/her. I joined the TRANSACT project as a peer supporter, as I felt it resonated with me quite well. I struggled to integrate into university during my first year and felt immense pressure to settle in rather early on. I was quite overwhelmed by the changes, and it affected the quality of my overall university experience. At the time, I would have appreciated knowing more about the accessibility of the services provided by the peer support community at UCL. I struggled with anxiety, and it would have eased my nerves to hear about shared experiences, from a peer, in a confidential setting. Joining the Mental Health First Aider course last year helped me appreciate the importance of frequently checking in on my mental health and has helped me gain a better understanding of how I can support my friends and family as well. I have shared caretaking responsibilities for a mentally disabled family member during high school. Feel free to reach out



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to me for a chat, I am open to discussing any concerns you may have! (Ps: I love watching anime and taking long walks while listening to indie music during my free time)

Noor Sharif



Hi! I'm Noor, I'm a 3rd Year Anthropology student from Yorkshire. While I was born in London, I found it quite overwhelming living here. As my first and second year of uni was directly affected by COVID, I really struggled with my mental health and finding community, however I was genuinely surprised by the range of support UCL offered! But it's not just that that helped me. I think finding community, or specifically talking to people who had similar backgrounds, communities and experiences made a huge difference.

Especially as someone who fits into multiple minorities I understand the importance of talking to someone who can begin to relate,

and that's why I decided to become a TRANSACT Peer Mentor! :)

Marie Song

Hello! My name is Marie (she/her), and I'm currently in my second year studying undergraduate Psychology. As an international student coming from an Asian background, I faced a lot of challenges when I first moved to London last year. It took me a long time to adapt to the new environment, get used to new culture, and get to know very different people, not to mention keeping up with my studies. Going through such experiences and talking with people from a variety of backgrounds who have experienced similar situations, I realised that our mental health is significantly affected by the environment which can be demanding, and how closely it was linked to our wellbeing. UCL offers a wide range of support in terms of student wellbeing, but I also understand that it can sometimes be daunting to reach out for help – as I felt the same in the past. I hope to bring my experiences to this PsychUP for Wellbeing programme, opening safe spaces and providing support to all people who may be in need.



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Alexandra Thacker



Hi, I'm Alexandra and I'm a second year Law student from Essex. I found my first year at university quite overwhelming, especially as a first-generation student, the jump from Sixth Form bigger than I had expected, both academically and socially. As a result, I felt my mental health suffered, and whilst I knew support was available, I was hesitant to ask for it, fearing my issues were not 'big enough' to warrant talking to a professional. Eventually I did voice my concerns and it really helped, I realised just how common my anxieties were and that I could work on managing them. Peer support is about providing a safe, unintimidating space to talk through worries with fellow students who can relate, and a great place to start if other options seem daunting.

Cordelia Vesely

Hi my name's Cordelia; pronouns she/her. I am a final year undergraduate student studying Arts and Sciences here at UCL. I like playing sports, reading, cooking, animals and being outdoors.

I have been a student carer for some of my time here at UCL and also prior to coming to University. Taking on that responsibility, I felt that my experiences of growing up were often different to that of my peers and I felt lonely because I didn't know anyone else who was in the same situation. Being a carer also meant limited free time, which affected my ability to study, socialise and look after myself.

After I began to share my experiences with friends, they encouraged me to contact UCL Student Support and Wellbeing, who provided me with counselling and referred me to external resources. Talking to someone helped me process my experiences and taught me that sharing your thoughts and feelings in a safe environment can be really beneficial. I now understand the effects that being a student carer had on my mental health and I trained to be a TRANSACT mentor because I wanted to reach out and support other students going through similar experiences.

