



carecoins

UNiDAYS

When Uni Doesn't Feel Built for You

Mental health support for students who don't always feel seen – and what can help you feel more grounded, more supported, and more yourself.

Let's start here

University is often described as “the best years of your life.” You’re supposed to make lifelong friends, discover your passions, join societies, feel free and confident and inspired. But for many students, that picture doesn’t quite match reality.

If you’ve ever found yourself thinking:

“I don’t see anyone else here like me.”

“I don’t think they understand where I’m coming from.”

“I’m trying to keep up but I don’t feel like I belong.”

- then this Carecoins guide is for you.

Maybe you’ve never seen your culture or background reflected in your course content. Maybe your beliefs, your identity, your way of speaking, or even your living situation make you feel out of step with the people around you. Maybe you’ve struggled to ask for support because you’re not sure you’ll be understood, or you’re tired of explaining yourself.

We’re here to say: there’s nothing wrong with you – and you’re not alone in feeling this way.

This isn’t a guide about labels. It’s about meeting you where you are, recognising the very real mental load that comes with feeling underrepresented, and helping you find ways to feel more supported, more at ease, and more yourself – without having to twist to fit into spaces that don’t quite reflect you.

The quiet toll of not feeling fully seen

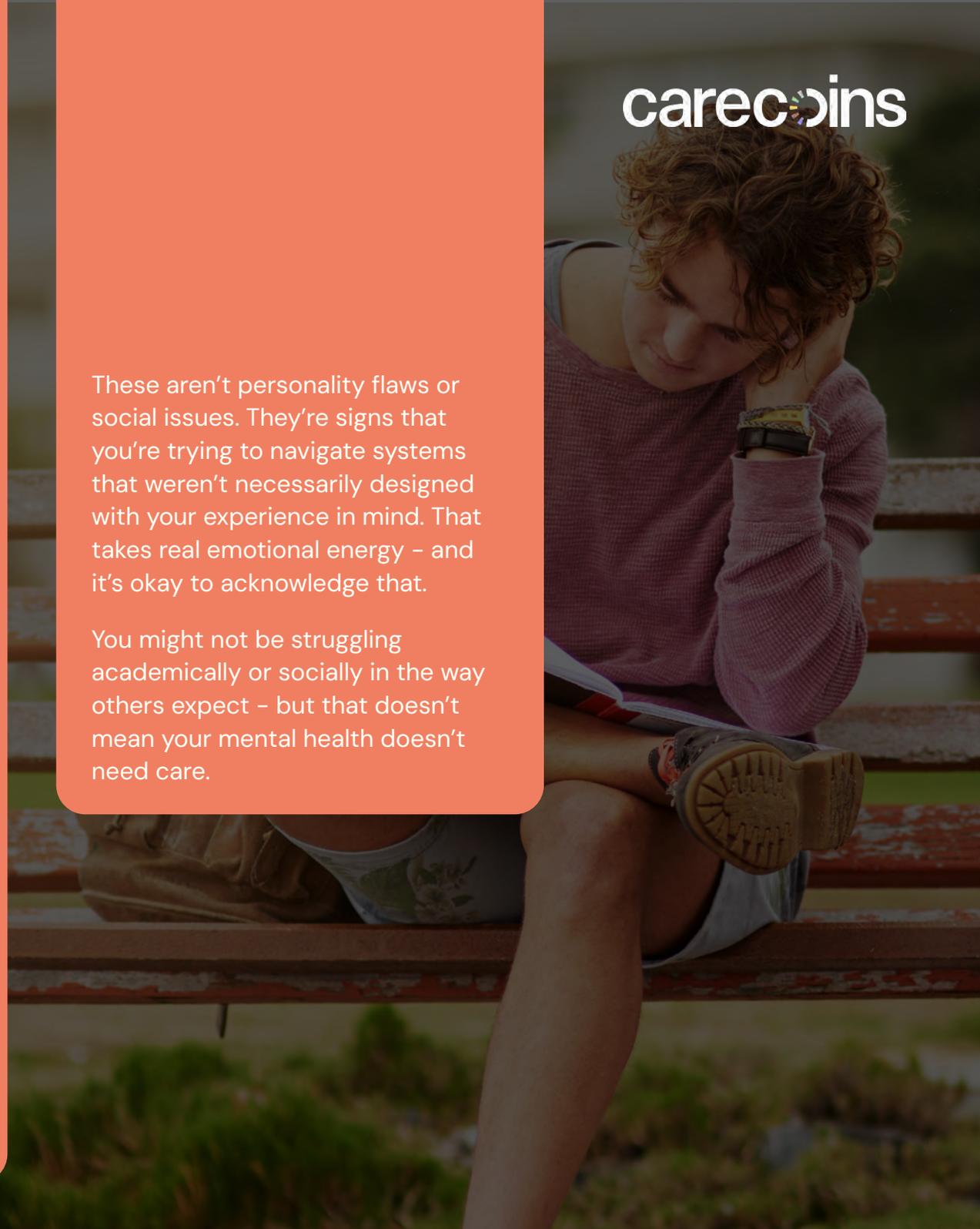
It's easy to underestimate just how exhausting it can be to constantly feel like you're on the outside. It's not always dramatic or loud. Sometimes it's just a low-level hum in the background – a steady drip of being misunderstood, misrepresented, or missed entirely.

This might look like:

- ☪ Holding back your real thoughts, humour, or voice in conversations
- ☪ Feeling awkward or unwelcome in certain spaces on campus
- ☪ Having to over-explain your context, values, or identity
- ☪ Worrying about being judged – or about confirming a stereotype
- ☪ Avoiding wellbeing support because you're not sure it was made with you in mind
- ☪ Feeling like you're living in two worlds – uni and home – and neither one fully gets the other

These aren't personality flaws or social issues. They're signs that you're trying to navigate systems that weren't necessarily designed with your experience in mind. That takes real emotional energy – and it's okay to acknowledge that.

You might not be struggling academically or socially in the way others expect – but that doesn't mean your mental health doesn't need care.



You don't need to change to belong

When you spend enough time in spaces that don't fully reflect you, it's easy to internalise the idea that you're the one who needs to adjust. That you need to smooth your edges, tone it down, toughen up, or make yourself easier to digest.

But let's be really clear: your value isn't something you need to prove. Your presence isn't something you need to justify. You're allowed to show up exactly as you are – without apology.

Some gentle truths:

- 🌀 You are not too sensitive for naming a problem
- 🌀 You don't have to earn rest or understanding
- 🌀 You're allowed to ask questions, ask for help, or opt out of things that don't feel right
- 🌀 Belonging isn't about being accepted by everyone – it's about feeling safe to be yourself with a few trusted people
- 🌀 You deserve the same level of support and respect as anyone else – no exceptions

Feeling like an outsider isn't something you caused. It's something you're responding to – **and you're allowed to look after yourself through it.**



Finding spaces that feel like home

One of the biggest misconceptions about uni life is that “your people” will find you straight away – and that if you haven’t found them, you’re doing something wrong. But sometimes, it takes time to find spaces that feel good, comfortable, and real.

If you’ve been feeling disconnected, that doesn’t mean there aren’t people out there who will get you. It just means you might need to look in spaces that feel softer, safer, and more aligned with who you are.



Here are some ideas:

- ☞ Look into identity-based or interest-based societies (faith groups, cultural societies, queer collectives, neurodiverse student networks) – you don’t have to be loud or social, just present
- ☞ Try student-run peer support spaces where people are encouraged to show up authentically
- ☞ Attend quieter, low-pressure events – like film screenings, book clubs, or craft nights
- ☞ Reach out to one person who made you feel seen in a seminar, class, or past group – one connection can be enough to start
- ☞ If nothing feels quite right yet, you’re still allowed to keep showing up gently – even in small ways

You don’t need a crowd. **You need connection.**
And it’s not too late to find it.

Managing the mental load of always having to explain yourself

One of the most exhausting things students often describe – especially if they feel different to the people around them – is the unspoken expectation to explain. To justify their reactions, beliefs, family situation, identity, or even their boundaries. That mental effort adds up.

It might show up like this:

- 🌀 Feeling like you have to speak for a whole group, culture, or experience
- 🌀 Wanting to express something in a seminar but holding back because it might “cause a thing”
- 🌀 Being asked insensitive or personal questions, and not knowing how to respond
- 🌀 Getting tired of constantly adjusting your language or tone so others don’t feel uncomfortable
- 🌀 Worrying you’ll be labelled as difficult or overly emotional for just being honest

The truth is: it’s not your job to educate everyone, absorb everyone else’s comfort levels, or filter your experience so it makes sense to them.

Here are some ways to protect your energy:

Give yourself permission to say, **“I don’t feel like getting into that right now.”**

You can set boundaries kindly – **“I’d rather not discuss that in this space.”**

Seek out people who already understand or are actively doing the work to listen better

Notice when you’re self-censoring – and ask if that’s something you really want to carry

It’s not unkind to protect yourself. It’s wise, and it’s necessary.

You’re not here to perform your identity. You’re here to learn, grow, and look after yourself – and you’re allowed to prioritise that.

Managing the mental load of always having to explain yourself

When your mental energy is going into things other people don't even notice – like fitting in, translating the culture, masking your neurodivergence, or preparing for the next microaggression – it's no wonder you feel tired before the day even starts. That's not weakness. That's survival work.

So your self-care might need to look different too.

It doesn't have to be flashy, performative or aesthetic. It just needs to give something back to you.

Here are a few ideas that might feel good:

Curate your feed

Follow creators, artists, or educators who reflect your values and your lived experience

Rest without guilt

Especially if you've spent the day code-switching, translating, or holding yourself together

Make space for identity

Affirming things – whether that's music, food, film, tradition, fashion, language or prayer

Build your own rhythm

Not everyone thrives under hustle culture – slow mornings, sensory breaks, and solo time count

Let joy be part of your care

It's okay to watch something silly, be around people who make you laugh, or reconnect with what made you feel like you again

You don't have to earn your right to rest or joy. Looking after yourself isn't a reward – it's a necessity.



Where to Get Support

Whatever you're facing – whether it's something overwhelming or just a quiet feeling that something's off – you don't have to go through it alone. Support is there for you, no matter how big or small things might feel. Reaching out doesn't mean you're failing – in fact, it takes a lot of strength to say, "I'm not okay right now." Your mental health matters just as much as your grades, your goals, or anything else you're juggling and you're allowed to put yourself first. There are people ready to listen and help when you're ready:



On Campus:

- 🕒 **University counselling services** (waiting lists can be long — reach out early)
- 🕒 **Student union or welfare officers**
- 🕒 **Personal tutors and academic advisors**
- 🕒 **Peer support groups**

External Resources:

- 🕒 **Student Minds:** studentminds.org.uk
- 🕒 **Mind:** mind.org.uk
- 🕒 **Papyrus:** For suicide prevention in young people papyrus-uk.org
- 🕒 **Samaritans:** Call 116 123 anytime, for free

Self-Help Tools:

- 🕒 **Apps:** Headspace, Calm, MoodTools, Student Health
- 🕒 **AppTogetherall:** A peer support community available to many students
- 🕒 **Podcasts:** “The Mindful Student”
“Happy Place”
- 🕒 **Speak to friends and family**

If you need the extra support...

We know that taking the first step can feel overwhelming — but you don't have to do it alone. Through our partnership with **UNiDAYS**, students can now access personalised, high-quality mental health support at an exclusive discount:

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40% off your first 3 Carecoins –
Covering your initial consultation and first hour of therapy

20% off all future sessions –
Because support should be sustainable

Whether you're struggling with stress, feeling stuck, or just need someone to talk to, our carefully matched therapists are here to help you feel heard, supported, and empowered — every step of the way.

Learn more or book your session now at:

t: **0300 002 0061**

e: **care@carecoins.co.uk**

Because **your wellbeing** is worth investing in — and we're here **when you're ready**.