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Transitions Skills and Strategies

Avoiding and overcoming setbacks:

**Session instructions**

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| **Scenario 1**Student A has been working on his essay for the last two weeks. The essay is worth 25% of the overall mark for the module and it is saved on a USB memory stick. The day before the essay is due to be handed in, the student leaves his bag containing the USB memory stick on the bus. He has no other electronic copy of the work.Q.1 Identify who the student should communicate with about this problem. This is an opportunity to discuss support networks and options at your institution. The student should communicate immediately with the module leader or whoever will be marking the work. They may also be advised to communicate with their year tutor, personal tutor or programme leader.Q.2 Advise the student on how this problem could be solved or the outcome be improved.The student should be encouraged to contact the bus company lost property department while looking for other solutions. Although there is no electronic back up, is there a draft printed copy that could be scanned? If the academic staff who are involved are not able to extend the time period, then the student may be encouraged to start the work again and hand in a partially completed essay for the original deadline. This could include any preparatory work and research. Although this will not give the best mark it is better than a mark of 0.Q.3 If your advice is ignored, what could the student do that might make the situation worse? This could show a lack of academic resilience.The student could ignore the problem, give up and not submit, not take any responsibility for causing the problem, not communicate with anyone or be tempted to copy someone else’s work to get a quick plagiarised essay.Q.4 Suggest anything the student can do to make it less likely that this problem happens again.Realise that the essay is only worth 15% of the module mark. Take the opportunity to learn about backing up all electronic work and retaining multiple copies. They could also consider emailing draft versions of essays at various times and maintaining good version control of documents. |

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| **Scenario 2**Student B has been following a study plan for the three weeks leading up to the examination period. She arrives on the campus at 1.30 pm, 30 minutes before the time that she believes the exam is due to start. She meets another student who tells her that the exam started at 10 am that morning.Q.1 Identify who the student should communicate with about this problem.This is an opportunity to discuss support networks and options at your institution. The student should communicate immediately with the module leader or whoever is marking the exam. They may also be advised to communicate with their year tutor, personal tutor or programme leader.Q.2 Advise the student on how this problem could be solved or the outcome be improved.The first thing to note is that the student has been given information by another student. They should confirm this is correct by looking at the exam timetable or checking with the exams office. The student could make a case for mitigating circumstances, but this may not be successful. The student's expectations need to be realistic.Q.3 If your advice is ignored, what could the student do that might make the situation worse? This could show a lack of academic resilience.They could miss an exam that is still to take place of they have been given the wrong information and they have not checked. If they have really missed an exam they could give up, not communicate with anyone, not accept responsibility for the mistake.Q.4 Suggest anything the student can do to make it less likely that this problem happens again.The student could double check exam dates and times and add these to a paper or electronic diary, for example in their phone. They could check with other students that they have the same information about the exam timetable. |

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| **Scenario 3**Student C has just received their report mark and has been given a mark that is 15% lower than he expected. This report is worth 40% of the marks in a coursework only module. The second report, which is worth the remaining 60%, is due to be submitted two weeks later.Q.1 Identify who the student should communicate with about this problem.This is an opportunity to discuss support networks and options at your institution. The student needs to carefully consider the feedback that has been provided with the mark or quickly seek feedback from the marker, if it has not yet been provided.Q.2 Advise the student on how this problem could be solved or the outcome be improved.Students should not be encouraged to challenge academic judgement but by carefully considering feedback they can better understand the difference between their expectations and the actual mark. The student’s expectations need to be realistic.Q.3 If your advice is ignored, what could the student do that might make the situation worse? This could show a lack of academic resilience.Assume the marker is wrong or has not been fair. Ignore the difference between their expectations and the mark and continue to write the next report without changing anything in their approach. Give up.Q.4 Suggest anything the student can do to make it less likely that this problem happens again.The student can see this disappointment as an opportunity to learn. This work was only worth 15% of the module. By seeking and using feedback they should be able to improve the result for their next report. |

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| **Scenario 4**Student D has just read an email confirming her end of year results. She has failed two exams by only a few percent and the Assessment Board has decided that she cannot progress into the next year of study with her classmates until she re-sits and passes the two exams.Q.1 Identify who the student should communicate with about this problem.This is an opportunity to discuss support networks and options at your institution. The student should communicate quickly with the module team to get feedback on her failed exams. She may also talk to her year tutor, personal tutor or programme leader for general advice.Q.2 Advise the student on how this problem could be solved or the outcome be improved.The student needs to prepare for the re-sit and start this by reflecting on why they have these results.Q.3 If your advice is ignored, what could the student do that might make the situation worse? This could show a lack of academic resilience.The student could be demotivated and find it difficult to get started on revision making it less likely that they will pass the re-sits. They could fail to work out what has gone wrong or not admit to themselves that they need to work harder. They could give up. They could resent failing by only a few percent.Q.4 Suggest anything the student can do to make it less likely that this problem happens again.The student can be helped to see that this as an opportunity to deepen their knowledge in subject material. If they had just passed rather than just failed they would not have had this opportunity. They need to reflect on the academic year and work out why they have passed some modules and not others. Is there an opportunity to improve study and exam preparation skills? |

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| **Scenario 5**Student E has withdrawn from his programme of study because he was offered a job. The information about the job came from an online source. Later he discovers that the job offer was not genuine.Q.1 Identify who the student should communicate with about this problem.This is an opportunity to discuss support networks and options at your institution. The student should communicate with the programme leader if they want to return to study.Q.2 Advise the student on how this problem could be solved or the outcome be improved.The outcome can be improved if the student successfully returns to study and learns from this unfortunate experience.Q.3 If your advice is ignored, what could the student do that might make the situation worse? This could show a lack of academic resilience.The student could feel very hard done by and could give up and not attempt to return to study. He could not tell anyone because he is embarrassed. The only way he could make the situation worse is if he went along with the deception.Q.4 Suggest anything the student can do to make it less likely that this problem happens again.The student should be praised for spotting the scam but should be encouraged to seek advice from the careers service on searching for future jobs and spotting employment scams of this nature. |

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| **Scenario 6**Student F has suffered a close family bereavement and has stopped attending classes. They are halfway through the academic year but feel unable to cope with the idea of returning to study and has lost contact with their classmates. They know that they have already missed the deadline for submitting a piece of coursework.Q.1 Identify who the student should communicate with about this problem.This is an opportunity to discuss support networks and options at your institution. The student should immediately contact their year tutor, personal tutor or programme leader. It is important that they contact someone that they feel comfortable with. They may directly contact the module leader about the missed coursework or, if preferred, ask if another member of staff can do this on their behalf.Q.2 Advise the student on how this problem could be solved or the outcome be improved.Early communication is the key here. This allows various options such as submitting mitigating circumstances, taking some approved time out from the programme (leave of absence) or seeking additional counselling support.Q.3 If your advice is ignored, what could the student do that might make the situation worse? This could show a lack of academic resilience.The student could not communicate with anyone and be withdrawn through lack of attendance. They could give up.Q.4 Suggest anything the student can do to make it less likely that this problem happens again.Clearly it is not possible to prevent bereavement so it is the response of the student that could be changed in this scenario. |

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| **Scenario 7**Student G has just read an email confirming her end of year results. She is surprised to discover that a ‘no submission’ is recorded against an essay that she knows she submitted. This has resulted in her failing one of her modules.Q.1 Identify who the student should communicate with about this problem.This is an opportunity to discuss support networks and options at your institution. The student needs to communicate immediately with the module leader and/or the marker of the missing essay.Q.2 Advise the student on how this problem could be solved or the outcome be improved.If this is an admin error, then the problem will be solved by communicating. If this is not the case, then the student may need to provide evidence that the essay was submitted and be able to provide a copy which has not been edited after the deadline.Q.3 If your advice is ignored, what could the student do that might make the situation worse? This could show a lack of academic resilience.Ignore the result. Accept the position and submit a re-sit essay feeling that this is unfair. Give up through disappointment.Q.4 Suggest anything the student can do to make it less likely that this problem happens again.This is an opportunity for the student to check what mechanisms they have in place to provide proof of submission. |

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| **Scenario 8**Student H has to submit a report via the virtual learning environment by midnight on Sunday. She has struggled to find time and is late getting the report started but finishes by 11.50 pm. When uploading the report, there seems to be a delay and the upload is completed at 3 minutes after midnight.Q.1 Identify who the student should communicate with about this problemThis is an opportunity to discuss support networks and options at your institution. The student needs to immediately communicate with the module leader and/or the marker of the report.Q.2 Advise the student on how this problem could be solved or the outcome be improved.The marker may not be prepared to allow the missed deadline and may penalise the student or give a 0 mark for non-submission. It is important for the student to have realistic expectations.Q.3 If your advice is ignored, what could the student do that might make the situation worse? This could show a lack of academic resilience.By not communicating they would miss the possibility that the marker may allow a few minutes grace and treat the submission normally. If they do communicate and the marker is not prepared to be flexible the student could blame the marker rather than taking responsibility themselves. They could give up or fail to learn how their actions contributed to this unnecessary problem.Q.4 Suggest anything the student can do to make it less likely that this problem happens again.This is an opportunity for the student to review their entire approach to assessment deadlines and learn how to be better organised and how to better manage their time. They have also learnt that technical issues can slow down upload speeds especially if many students are attempting to submit later. |

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