

Draft Text for Libraries and Archives Marketing Innovation Award 2014

Research at Cardiff University suggests that new students are most likely to drop out from their courses within the first 100 days of starting the course. New students face lots of stresses as they try to adjust to University life, and early November can often be a crunch point for many, as the first essay deadlines start to loom large. With this in mind, Cardiff University Libraries decided to team up with the University Counselling Service and the Students' Union to mark National Stress Awareness Day on 6th November 2013. They joined us in the libraries to promote their services and support, making this a joint event across the University.

This was a marketing event, aimed at raising awareness amongst the student body of the effects of stress and the sources of support available to them through the University to help in coping with stress and anxiety.

We used the tag-line "Feeling worried? Anxious? Need some help? Just ask!" to promote the event, and staff wore badges on the day with the phrase 'Just Ask' in English and Welsh. We also made extensive use of Twitter to raise awareness of services, using the hashtag #CUJustAsk. Examples of typical tweets included:

"Need some hints on essay writing? We've got loads of guides and books to help you
#CUJustAsk"

And

"Under pressure? Pop along to your library for advice and support on managing stress...
#CUjustask"

Throughout the day we ran a range of different activities and workshops, including relaxation workshops, CV and covering letter-writing sessions (for students worrying about job searching, who could bring along their CV and get it checked over) mindfulness and stress management workshops and drop-in meditation sessions.

We also showcased our resources and information about essay writing tips and tricks, referencing and effective information-seeking to find information for essays and projects. We gave out free stress balls, pens and cups and the University Nightline support service also had a presence, with a visit from the Nightline Bear, who gave out free pens and leaflets!

The Students Union also had a stall in one of the Libraries, advertising their Advice Service (ARC), providing advice on financial, housing, social and academic issues. Their stall included a 'biscuit tasting session' to demonstrate to students how they could save money on their shopping by purchasing cheaper supermarket own brands, without a reduction in the quality.

This event was also our first collaboration with the Welsh Government-funded library marketing body in support of their 'Get Reading, Get Better, Get Libraries' campaign; we also gave out some of their stress balls and their 'stress less...use your library' pencils along with tote bags.

On the day we distributed over 700 stress balls and pencils and over 100 tote bags across the Library sites and in the Students Union. Drop-in sessions were attended by both students and University staff.

Feedback from the Students Union and the Counselling Service on the event was extremely positive: “all the members of staff involved thoroughly enjoyed being part of the event, and it was beneficial to run something together”.