Hannah Hoare

**Studies:** Liberal Arts (specialising in Philosophy & Psychology) (3rd Year)

**Roles:** Works part-time at Café on the Square

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**Adjusting to the New Circumstances**

‘Like most of us, when the pandemic first hit the UK, I went into immediate panic mode. I have OCD and I could picture myself going into total mental shutdown in lockdown. I didn’t want to mentally combust in front of my parents, so I decided to go through lockdown alone in Kingswood Halls on campus.’

**Unexpected Positives**

‘Once lockdown was in full swing, I was amazed at how it affected me – and not in the way I expected. Once I realised I couldn’t work, socialise, go to the gym or library, the pressure I put on myself to do those things disappeared. With the pressure gone, my OCD symptoms actually reduced. I think the social aspect was the main thing – frequent social interaction has never come naturally to me, but was a necessary part of my pre-lockdown life. Not having to overthink about how other people perceived me, whether I was being ‘entertaining’, ‘professional’ or even ‘normal’ enough in public, was a huge relief that I didn’t realise I needed pre-lockdown.’
Hobbies & Skills
‘As lockdown continued, there were some things I realised I did crave, and so I had to be creative to get them back. Going to the gym became a combination of YouTube exercise videos and daily walks. Also, instead of relying on lectures for intellectual stimulation, I turned to e-books. I found reading books a much better distraction than browsing online. It requires focus, stops you from obsessively checking the news and gives you a sense of accomplishment as you pass each chapter.’

Maintaining my Wellbeing
‘Communicating with others is really helping me get out of my head and into action. The downside of limiting my social life is that I have created an environment in which my own anxieties seem all important and overwhelming. Talking about my fears for the future with my parents, other students and even counselling services like Nightline, has really helped me to calm down and put things in perspective.’

Advice for others
‘Be kind to yourself, and listen to what your mind and body need – not necessarily what you feel you should be doing. Also, make the effort to talk to another person about your concerns. Chances are, they’ll be just as grateful for the chance to vent their struggles, and you will find comfort and support in each other.’