



# All of Us

## Top Tips for Summer– Real Advice from Real CE+E Students

This blog outlines advice on how to survive the summer as an estranged and/or care-experienced student. You are so strong and resilient that I am sure, although it may be tough, you will be fine :)

I have separated this blog into three sections: Navigating Loneliness and Otherness; Financial Hardship and Advice; and Mental Health. Feel free to read whichever applies to you (or the whole thing!)

By Ria, with contributions from other estranged and care experienced students from the All of Us Community.

### Navigating Loneliness and Otherness

- **Set up an All of Us meetup in your city.** These are fully funded events where you and other care-experienced and/or estranged students can meet and enjoy a fun experience. An example of such events could be ice skating or pottery painting! This enables you to meet others who live close to you in your area, possibly leading to great friendships! And you get to participate in fun and FREE hangouts! I'm in the process of setting one up for pottery painting in August for Notts :) You can find out more about how to set up an event [here](#) and apply for support and funding [here](#).
- Many Universities have **Summer Events** where you can meet other students staying during the holidays! However, it can feel othering when these students aren't CE/E, for example, many students' experiences going to these events are having mainly international students there and thus feeling othered or finding that these events hosted might be for international students only.

In this case, do look at the free events your residential life teams may be hosting. I'd encourage you to email the University to ask for CE/E exclusive events or to make their events open to all students. However, as someone who has personally done this, I understand this won't always work, but you miss 100% of the shots you don't take.

- **Research CE/E support** your institution offers. I signed up to be a peer mentor for CE/E students; now my mentee and I are great friends! A lot of these schemes are a great way to meet people who have been through similar experiences. You regret the things you didn't do less than the things you did do.



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- **Reach out to your friends** online, travel to meet them in person, or ask them to travel to you. You can also send each other letters in the post! You can also use the All of Us community to make some new friends or use the [EaCES](#) Pen Pal Exchange, which they have been running since 2021. (Sign up at <https://forms.gle/TQ7WVsngpxXMMk7S8>)
- Some CE/E students experience judgment from others as you're staying during the holidays. **Have strong boundaries.** You are not entitled to explain yourself to anyone and deserve privacy. Only share as much as YOU want to share. You might also find [Tina Bhartwas' Guide for Our Loved Ones](#) helpful for talking about your experience.

## Financial Hardship and Advice

- Check what you are entitled to. A lot of universities provide **discounted summer accommodation and bursaries**. If your university/college doesn't provide a summer accommodation discount, email them asking for one and explain the unseen costs of being an CE/E student.  
  
If you are entitled to a discount or bursary but don't receive it make sure to stand on business. In my own experience, my university refused to give me the free accommodation bursary despite my eligibility. After six months of fighting and complaining, I have finally received free accommodation! Let this be a sign to never give up and always advocate for yourself.
- Visit **food banks** in your area for free food to support yourself during this cost-of-living crisis. Volunteering at a food bank is also a great idea! You can also use the [Turn2us Grants Search](#) to find additional financial support.
- **Get a job or internship.** This will increase your employment prospects and thus raises your chances for financial stability and freedom. Since you may not have a safety net to fall on, unlike students who aren't E/CE, it's important to be thinking about the future. Jobs are also a great way to earn money. There's also a student-run LinkedIn group for care experienced and estranged students: [All of Us employment group](#).
- If you are graduating this year, there is a student-made [All of Us Guide to Graduation](#), by Jax, Kiah-Rose, Lewis, Lewis, Peter, Sam and Tina. This is full of tips and solidarity!



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## Mental Health

- **Go outside** and be active. Even if you go on a ten-minute walk – anything helps! Try this and see your wellbeing improve! Make sure you do these things consistently in order to see the most change in your well-being.
- You likely survived the Christmas Holidays, so this will probably be easier since you've handled this before. **You're so resilient** and you have dealt with so much worse and have still come out on top.
- Basically: check your university's **mental wellbeing services**; do all of the typical stuff: drink water, take a shower, eat healthily. This sounds basic, but it will make such a difference if you implement it!

I hope this helped you survive and thrive this summer – from Ria :)



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