

# Student Guide to Mental Health and Wellbeing

BLOMSBURY  
INSTITUTE  
LONDON



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# Introduction

Mental health and wellbeing provide us with the emotional strength that enables us to enjoy life and to survive pain, disappointment and sadness. It also helps develop an underlying belief in our own, and others' dignity and worth.

This Student Guide will give you information and advice on not only mental health and wellbeing, but also the sources and possible types of support available to you at Bloomsbury Institute and beyond.

This Student Guide accompanies our Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy which can be found at [bil.ac.uk/qem/policies](http://bil.ac.uk/qem/policies)



## How is my mental health and wellbeing?

It can be difficult to decide how we feel because if we don't feel our "normal selves", we tend to think we are just "a bit down" or "a bit stressed". If you are not sure how you feel, you can take a self-assessment produced by the NHS:

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mood-self-assessment/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mood-self-assessment/)

However, if you have any concerns about your mental health, you should make an appointment to see your doctor.



# Mental health conditions

We've included some of the most common mental health conditions on the next page. For further information on these conditions and other mental health conditions, you can head to Mind, a UK mental health charity: [www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems](http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems)

- ✓ **Anxiety and panic attacks** – Anxiety is an emotion that everyone experiences, but if it occurs too often or prevents someone from functioning healthily, it becomes an issue. It can show itself in extreme stress or worry and could also develop into panic attacks with symptoms including shortness of breath, increased heart rate, sweating and blurry vision.
- ✓ **Bipolar disorder** – This is a condition that affects your mood and can cause it to swing from one extreme to another, from feeling very low and lethargic to feeling elated and overactive.
- ✓ **Clinical depression** – Symptoms of clinical depression include having lasting feelings of unhappiness or despair for long periods of time, rather than just a few days, as well as often feeling on the brink of tears and having difficulty sleeping and completing basic daily tasks.
- ✓ **Eating disorders** – These are experienced by people who have unhealthy thoughts, habits or behaviours surrounding their diet and body.
- ✓ **Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)** – This is a condition that leads someone to have obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviours. An obsession is an unwelcome thought, image, urge, worry or doubt that repeatedly appears in your mind. It can make you feel very anxious. A compulsion is a repetitive activity that you do to reduce the anxiety caused by the obsession. It could be something like repeatedly checking a door is locked, repeating a specific phrase in your head or checking how your body feels.
- ✓ **Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** – This is an anxiety disorder caused by very stressful or frightening events (e.g. abuse, physical or sexual assault, natural disasters, acts of terrorism) which the person often relives through nightmares and/or flashbacks and severely impacts daily life.
- ✓ **Psychosis and schizophrenia** – This is a diagnosis that is given to someone who suffers hallucinations, delusions and paranoia, which can lead to further negative symptoms such as withdrawal.
- ✓ **Self-harm** – This is when you hurt yourself as a way of dealing with very difficult feelings, painful memories or overwhelming situations and experiences.

# How can I stay healthy?

Looking after your physical health can also help your mental health and wellbeing. You should therefore try to sleep well and maintain a balanced lifestyle by keeping active and eating well. This will help to improve your mood, give you more energy and help you think more clearly.

When it comes to food, it is important to eat regularly and well. Avoid foods which make your blood sugar rise and fall rapidly, such as sweets, biscuits, sugary drinks, and alcohol. Instead, turn to slow-release energy foods such as pasta, rice, oats, wholegrain bread and cereals, nuts and seeds. Also, try to drink plenty of fluids (5-6 glasses a day). Water is a cheap and healthy option.

For more information and advice about food and mood, visit [www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/food-and-mood/about-food-and-mood](http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/food-and-mood/about-food-and-mood)

In addition to the above, Mind has highlighted "Five Ways to Wellbeing" which focus on connecting, being active, taking notice, learning and giving.

## Connect

Social relationships are critical for promoting wellbeing and for acting as a buffer against mental ill health. You could do this by:

- Joining one of the Student Guild Societies.
- Having lunch with a fellow student.
- Sharing mealtimes with your family.
- Talking to someone instead of sending an email.
- Speaking to someone new.
- Asking how someone's weekend was and really listen when they tell you.
- Putting five minutes aside to find out how someone really is.

## Be active

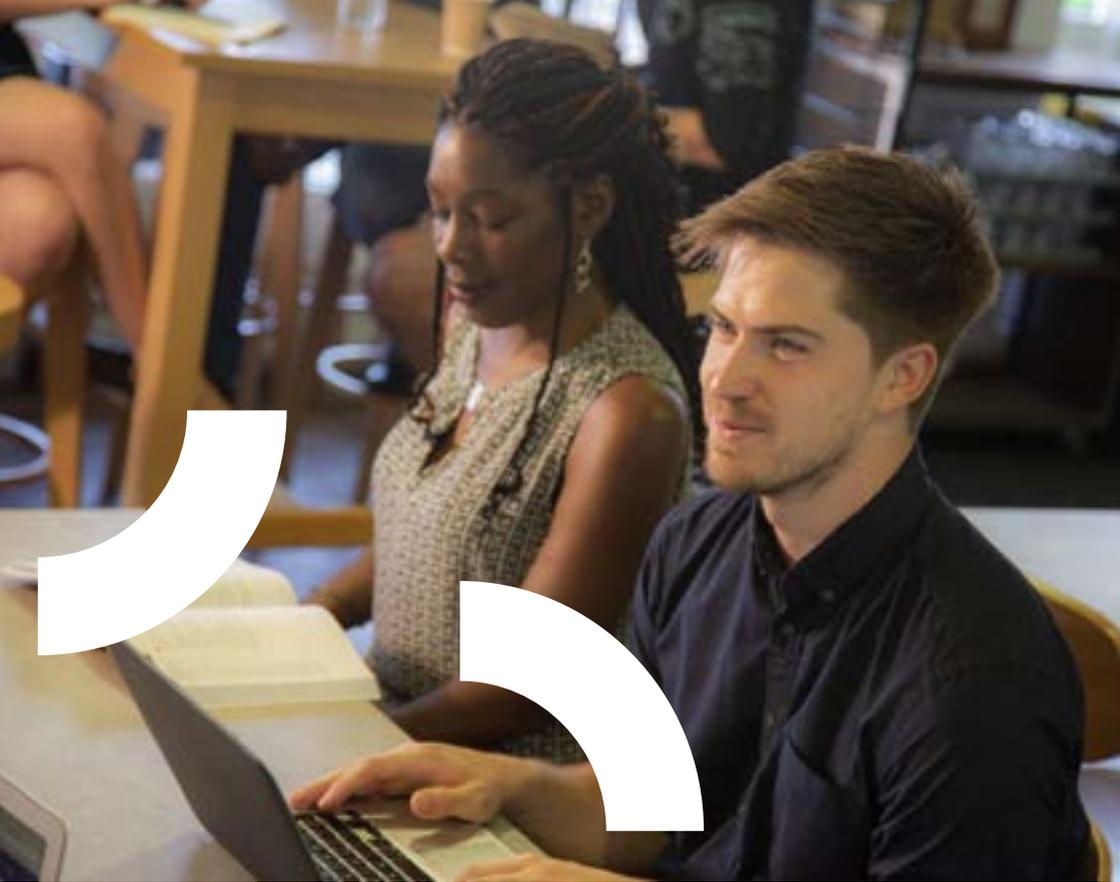
Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety. Why not try taking a break from social media, for example, and try and be more active? If you have a disability or long-term health condition, the NHS provides advice on physical activity that is suitable for you:

[www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/get-active-with-a-disability/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/get-active-with-a-disability/)

Even if it is hard for you to find time to be active, you could try doing one or more of the following (where possible):

- Taking the stairs not the lift.
- Walking wherever you can - preferably with a family member or friend so that you can 'connect' at the same time as well.
- Going for a walk in between classes - Gordon Square and Russell Square are not far from us.
- Getting off the bus or tube one stop earlier than usual and walking the final part of your journey.
- Doing some stretching each day.





## Take notice

Take some time to enjoy the moment and the environment around you. This will not only enhance your wellbeing, but also help to reaffirm your life priorities to enable you to make positive choices in life. You can do this in small ways.

- Get a plant for your home.
- Have a 'clear the clutter' day.
- Take notice of how your family and friends are feeling or acting.
- Take a different route on your journey to or from college.
- Visit a new place for lunch.

## Learn

By being at Bloomsbury Institute, you already have this one nailed, which is great because learning enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life. The practice of setting yourself goals and working to deadlines is also strongly associated with higher levels of wellbeing.

If you have time, you can supplement your own personal growth and learning by also taking up a hobby, learning a new skill or developing an existing skill e.g. learning a new language or experimenting in the kitchen with new recipes.

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## Give

There is a proven link between committing acts of kindness and an increase in wellbeing. How about considering one or more of the following:

- Volunteer to be a Peer Advisor in the Student Guild or a Peer Assisted Learning Leader.
- Undertake voluntary work beyond your studies.
- Take an interest in the people around you especially those that may appear in need of some support.
- Check in on an elderly neighbour.
- Phone the family member or friend you never get around to calling.

# Who can I talk to?

If you are experiencing any difficulties, please come and talk to any member of staff here at Bloomsbury Institute. We are here to support you.

If you are unsure of who to turn to, a good place to start would be our Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success.

SEWS: [sews@bil.ac.uk](mailto:sews@bil.ac.uk)

Alternatively, you might prefer to talk to our Disability and Wellbeing Advisor who is also our First Aid Mental Health Champion.

Disability and Wellbeing Advisor: [disability@bil.ac.uk](mailto:disability@bil.ac.uk)

# What we can and can't do

## We can

- ✓ Provide confidential support and advice from our Disability and Wellbeing Advisor especially in terms of referrals to external specialist support.
- ✓ Help you to develop appropriate study support arrangements.
- ✓ Provide advice on our policies and procedures and those of the University of Northampton which may be relevant for your particular circumstances.
- ✓ Offer a Wellbeing Programme through our Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success.

## We can't

- ✗ Provide in-house specialist advice and counselling.
- ✗ Compromise our academic standards when trying to meet your needs.
- ✗ Adjust the requirements and competency standards in respect of any of our degrees that are regulated by a professional body e.g. ACCA, CIMA, CILEx.

# Support mechanisms

## Reasonable adjustments

If you have a disability, long-term health condition or specific learning difficulty, we will ensure that wherever possible reasonable adjustments are put in place to support you to ensure you are not being disadvantaged.

These adjustments might be in relation to activities such as teaching (including lectures, seminars, and workshops) and examinations and assessments. You will find full details of these in our Disability Policy and in Appendix A in particular.

To discuss and agree or review any appropriate reasonable adjustments, please speak to our Disability and Wellbeing Advisor who can be contacted at [disability@bil.ac.uk](mailto:disability@bil.ac.uk)

## Extension requests

If you are unable to submit your work on time due to circumstances beyond your control, it is possible for you to request an extension to a deadline of up to 2 weeks.

Whether or not you will be granted the extension will depend upon the nature of the difficulty you are experiencing, whether you could and should have anticipated it, and the extent to which the circumstances were outside of your control.

For example, we would look favourably on an extension request from you if you were to be prevented, due to serious health difficulties, from studying during a period when you would be expected to be working on an assignment. We would not look favourably on a request prompted by a computer crashing.

If you want further information on extension requests, you can find it in your Student Handbook. You can also ask for advice from our Academic Administrators at [academic.admin@bil.ac.uk](mailto:academic.admin@bil.ac.uk)

Alternatively, you can simply submit a request through the Student Self-service Portal (SSP) using the Extension Request Form that is available from the Student Portal:

[bil.ac.uk/student-portal/student-forms/](https://bil.ac.uk/student-portal/student-forms/)

## Mitigating circumstances

If you experience a serious or acute problem, or an event beyond your control or ability to foresee (e.g. serious illness or severe disruption of your personal life) which are likely to prevent completion of an assignment or attendance at an examination, you may be able to claim mitigating circumstances.

If you are granted mitigating circumstances, you would be allowed to complete your assessment for the first time at a later date (which ordinarily would be the next opportunity to submit) and receive an uncapped mark for it.

If you want further information on mitigating circumstances, you can find it in the University of Northampton's Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure found at [bil.ac.uk/qem/policies](http://bil.ac.uk/qem/policies). You can also ask for advice from our Academic Administrators at [academic.admin@bil.ac.uk](mailto:academic.admin@bil.ac.uk)

Alternatively, you can simply submit a request through the Student Self-service Portal (SSP) using the Mitigating Circumstances Form that is available from the Student Portal:

[bil.ac.uk/student-portal/student-forms/](http://bil.ac.uk/student-portal/student-forms/)

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## Withdrawal, study break and deferral

If you feel unable to continue with your studies as a result of your disability or long-term health condition, there are a number of options that may be available to you. These options include the following:

- Withdrawal – this is where you decide to stop your studies completely.
- Study break – this is where you decide to stop your studies temporarily. A study break normally must be either for one semester (minimum) or one academic year (maximum).
- Deferral – this is where you decide to postpone your studies, but temporarily only. A deferral is when your start date is postponed (up to a maximum of 12 months).

You can find information on the above (including processes and deadlines) in our Withdrawal, Study Break and Deferral Policy found at:

[bil.ac.uk/qem/policies](http://bil.ac.uk/qem/policies)

Please note that if you are considering either a withdrawal, study break or deferral, there may be broader implications of which you may not be aware. We strongly advise you to contact a Wellbeing Advisor in our Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success to be sure that you are making as informed a decision as possible.

## Fitness to study

In some cases, it may be necessary for us to consider whether you are well or fit enough to study. In such cases, we would be guided by the University of Northampton's Health, Wellbeing and Fitness to Study Policy ([www.northampton.ac.uk/more/governance-and-management/university-policies-procedures-and-regulations](http://www.northampton.ac.uk/more/governance-and-management/university-policies-procedures-and-regulations)). Examples of where we might need to apply the above policy include where:

- a student's behaviour, resulting from an illness or disability, is negatively affecting the experience of other students and/or staff and/or presents a risk to self and/or others and this is not being addressed through academic assessment;
  - an existing declared condition may substantially change;
  - a student may develop a condition during the period of their registration;
  - a student may declare a previously undeclared condition, or an undeclared condition may manifest itself.
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## Wellbeing programme

Our Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success runs a wellbeing programme for all students. The programme offers you the opportunity to take time out and reflect on how your life could be enhanced by finding that sense of calm and centredness which lies at the heart of a balanced, fulfilling life.

For more advice on wellbeing, email [sews@bil.ac.uk](mailto:sews@bil.ac.uk)

# Useful contacts and resources

**NOTE:** In cases of immediate danger, call 999 or go to the Accident & Emergency Department at your nearest hospital. If there is no immediate danger, contact your GP for an appointment as soon as possible.

<b>Age</b>	<p><b>Age UK</b>  <a href="http://www.ageuk.org.uk">www.ageuk.org.uk</a>            National Helpline: 0800 678 1602            (Free call service available 8 am until 7 pm, 365 days a year)</p>
<b>Aids</b>	<p><b>National Aids Trust Helpline</b>  <a href="http://www.nat.org.uk">www.nat.org.uk</a>            Tel: 020 7814 6767            Email: <a href="mailto:info@nat.org.uk">info@nat.org.uk</a>            National Sexual Health Helpline: 0800 567 123 (Freephone)</p> <p><b>Terence Higgins Trust</b>  <a href="http://www.tht.org.uk">www.tht.org.uk</a>            Tel: 0808 802 1221 for an adviser            020 7812 1600 for switchboard</p>
<b>Alcohol</b>	<p><b>Alcoholics Anonymous</b>  <a href="http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk">www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk</a>            Email: <a href="mailto:help@aamail.org">help@aamail.org</a>            National Helpline: 0800 9177650 (Freephone)</p> <p><b>Recovery</b>  <a href="http://www.recovery.org.uk">www.recovery.org.uk</a>            Helpline: 0203 553 0324 (24-hour free call back help service)</p> <p><b>We are with You</b>  <a href="http://www.wearewithyou.org.uk">www.wearewithyou.org.uk</a>            An online chat service is available.</p>
<b>Bereavement</b>	<p><b>Cruse Bereavement Care National</b>  <a href="http://www.cruse.org.uk">www.cruse.org.uk</a>            Email: <a href="mailto:helpline@cruse.org.uk">helpline@cruse.org.uk</a>            National Helpline: 0808 808 1677</p>
<b>Citizen's Advice</b>	<p><b>Citizen's Advice</b>  <a href="http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk">www.citizensadvice.org.uk</a>            Adviceline: 03444 111 444</p>

<p><b>Contraception &amp; Sexual Health</b></p>	<p><b>British Pregnancy Advisory Service</b> (Abortion and emergency contraception services) <a href="http://www.bpas.org">www.bpas.org</a> Tel: 08457 304030</p> <p><b>NHS</b> <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/sexual-health">www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/sexual-health</a> <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sexual-health">www.nhs.uk/live-well/sexual-health</a> <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/sexual-health-services">www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/sexual-health-services</a> NHS Direct Helpline: 111 (Free call service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)</p> <p><b>Terence Higgins Trust</b> <a href="http://www.tht.org.uk">www.tht.org.uk</a> Tel: 0808 802 1221 for an adviser 020 7812 1600 for switchboard</p>
<p><b>Domestic Abuse/ Violence</b></p>	<p><b>Refuge</b> [Support for female victims of domestic abuse] <a href="http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk">www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk</a> Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 2000247 (24-hour Freephone)</p> <p><b>Women's Aid</b> [Support for female victims of domestic abuse] <a href="http://www.womensaid.org.uk">www.womensaid.org.uk</a> Email: <a href="mailto:helpline@womensaid.org.uk">helpline@womensaid.org.uk</a> Live chat service available.</p> <p><b>ManKind</b> [Confidential helpline for male victims of domestic abuse and domestic violence] <a href="http://www.mankind.org.uk">www.mankind.org.uk</a> Helpline: 01823 334244 (Weekdays 10am to 4pm)</p>

<p><b>Drugs</b></p>	<p><b>We are with You</b> <a href="http://www.wearewithyou.org.uk">www.wearewithyou.org.uk</a> An online chat service is available.</p> <p><b>Talktofrank</b> <a href="http://www.talktofrank.com">www.talktofrank.com</a> Helpline Tel: 0300 123 6600 (available 24 hours, 7 days per week) Text: 82111 Live online chat available 2 pm until 6 pm, 7 days per week)</p> <p><b>Recovery</b> <a href="http://www.recovery.org.uk">www.recovery.org.uk</a> Helpline: 0203 553 0324 (24-hour free call back help service)</p>
<p><b>Eating Disorders</b></p>	<p><b>Beat</b> <a href="http://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk">www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk</a> Email: <a href="mailto:help@b-eat.co.uk">help@b-eat.co.uk</a> Helpline: 0808 801 0677 One-to-One webchat available.</p> <p><b>Recovery</b> <a href="http://www.recovery.org.uk">www.recovery.org.uk</a> Helpline: 0203 553 0324 (24-hour free call back help service)</p>
<p><b>Mental Health</b></p>	<p><b>Campaign Against Living Miserably</b> [Specifically for men] <a href="http://www.thecalmzone.net">www.thecalmzone.net</a> Webchat: <a href="http://www.thecalmzone.net/help/webchat">www.thecalmzone.net/help/webchat</a> (5pm – Midnight every day) Nationwide Helpline Tel: 0800 58 58 58 (outside London) 0808 802 58 58 (London) (5pm–midnight every day)</p> <p><b>Mental Health First Aid</b> <a href="http://www.mhfaengland.org">www.mhfaengland.org</a></p> <p><b>continued on next page...</b></p>

<b>Mental Health</b>	<p><b>Mind</b>  <a href="http://www.mind.org.uk">www.mind.org.uk</a>            Tel: 0300 123 3393            Email: info@mind.org.uk</p>
	<p><b>NHS</b>            NHS Direct Helpline: 111            [Free call service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week]  <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mood-self-assessment">www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mood-self-assessment</a>  <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/student-mental-health">www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/student-mental-health</a></p>
	<p><b>Papyrus</b>            [Work with people under 35 who are having suicidal feelings, and with people who are worried about someone under 35.]  <a href="http://www.papyrus-uk.org">www.papyrus-uk.org</a>            Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org            Helpline:            Tel: 0800 068 41 41            Text: 07786 209697            (Their helpline is open 10am – 10pm in the week, and between 2pm and 10pm at weekends and bank holidays.)</p>
	<p><b>ReThink Mental Illness</b>  <a href="http://www.rethink.org">www.rethink.org</a></p>
	<p><b>Sane Line</b>            [Sane work with anyone affected by mental illness including family, friends and carers.]  <a href="http://www.sane.org.uk">www.sane.org.uk</a>            Support Forum:  <a href="http://www.sane.org.uk/what_we_do/support/supportforum">www.sane.org.uk/what_we_do/support/supportforum</a>            Tel: 0300 304 7000 (4:30pm – 10:30pm every evening)            Textcare: <a href="http://www.sane.org.uk/what_we_do/support/textcare">www.sane.org.uk/what_we_do/support/textcare</a></p>
	<p><b>Silverline</b>            [Aimed at people over 55]  <a href="http://www.thesilverline.org.uk">www.thesilverline.org.uk</a>            Helpline: 0800 4 70 80 90            (Freefone service available 24 hours a day, every day of the year)</p>

<b>Mental Health</b>	<p><b>Students against Depression:</b>  <a href="http://www.studentsagainstdepression.org">www.studentsagainstdepression.org</a></p> <p><b>Student Minds</b>  <a href="http://www.studentminds.org.uk">www.studentminds.org.uk</a></p> <p><b>The Samaritans</b>  <a href="http://www.samaritans.org/">www.samaritans.org/</a>            Helpline: 116 123 (Freephone)            (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)            Email: jo@samaritans.org</p>
<b>Rape and sexual support</b>	<p><b>Rape Crisis</b>  <a href="http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk">www.rapecrisis.org.uk</a>            National Helpline: 0808 802 9999            (Available every day of the year between 12.00 – 14.30 and 19.00 – 21.30)            Live online chat service also available.</p>
<b>Samaritans</b>	<p><b>The Samaritans</b>  <a href="http://www.samaritans.org">www.samaritans.org</a>            National Helpline: 116 123 (Freephone)            (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)            Email: jo@samaritans.org</p>
<b>Self-harm</b>	<p><b>Harmless</b>  <a href="http://www.harmless.org.uk">www.harmless.org.uk</a>            Email: info@harmless.org.uk</p> <p><b>National Self Harm Network</b>  <a href="http://www.nshn.co.uk">www.nshn.co.uk</a></p>
<b>Victims of Crime</b>	<p><b>Victim Support</b>  <a href="http://www.victimsupport.org.uk">www.victimsupport.org.uk</a>            Helpline Line: 08 08 16 89 111 (Free calls)</p>



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