

FREE YOUR MIND



**Brighter side of life:
how to stay positive**



**UNIVERSITY
OF LODZ**
Poland

➔ www.uni.lodz.pl

The “Brighter side of life: how to stay positive” handbook

has been prepared having you, UL students, in mind. Particularly those of you who are dealing with tough moments resulting from the current limitations imposed on all of us for the sake of our health and safety.

With great care and support, we direct these guidelines especially to the international students of the University of Lodz, who are currently in Poland, away from their families and close ones.

We are there for you!

For your well-being and safety in these unique circumstances, the UL International Relations Office joins the UL Academic Support Centre in addressing your needs.



What will you find **here?**

1. Guidelines on how to deal with your emotions during the pandemics.
2. Practical tips on how to study from home.
3. Links to useful information and contacts (e.g. University helpline for psychological support, The State Sanitary Inspection in Lodz, social media of the University of Lodz).



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Yes, this is true and this time may be a huge challenge for us all. But it can also be the period when we rediscover ourselves and our potential. **It all depends on how we use this time!**

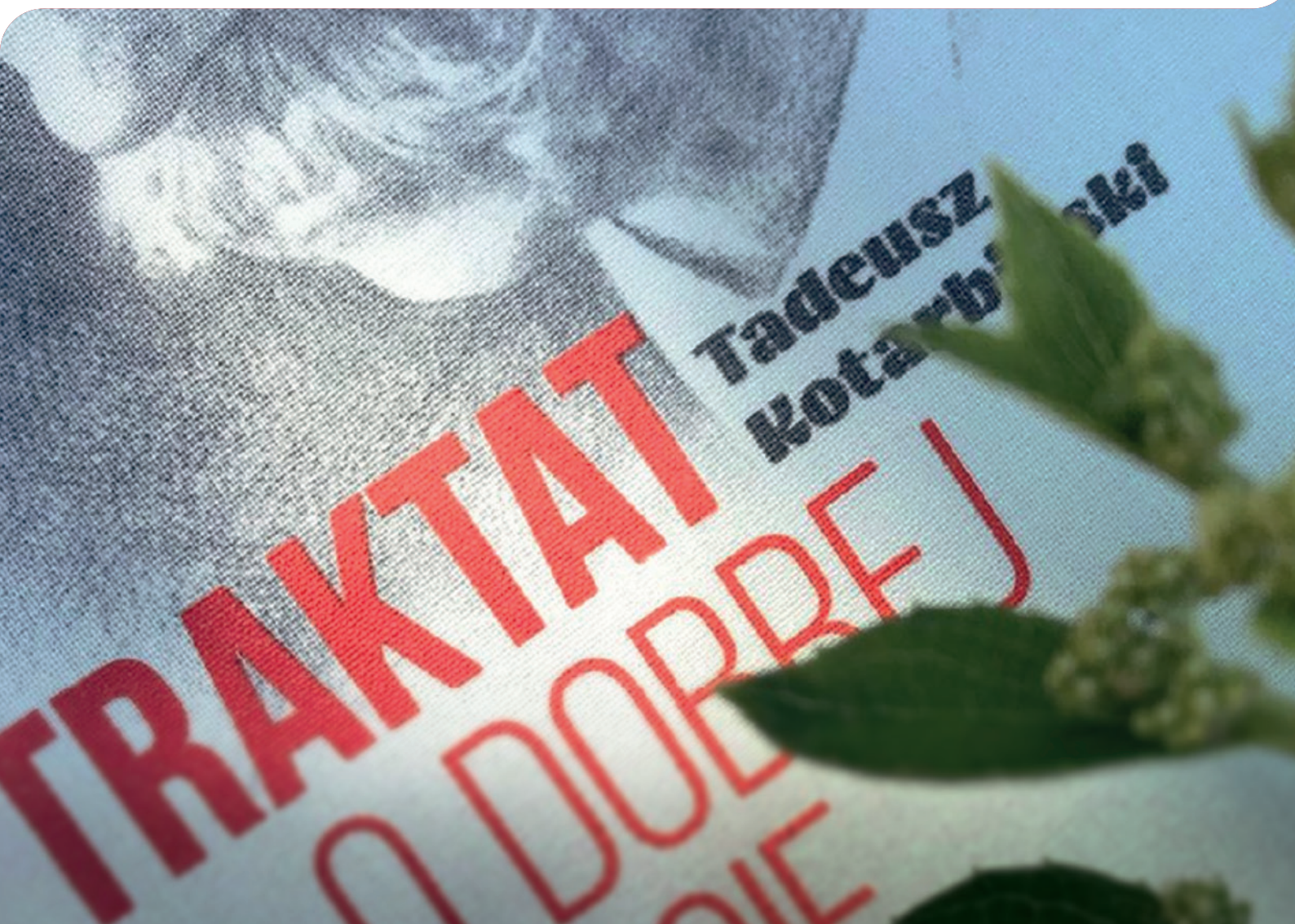
This is the purpose of the handbook.

Recently we have celebrated the birth anniversary of the late Professor Tadeusz Kotarbiński (31 March 1886 – 3 October 1981), who was an eminent philosopher and served as the first Rector of the University of Lodz. He loved writing short poems and proverbs. May his words inspire you to see the positive side of your life:

”

**„When there is happiness at home, be glad; When there is gloom,
Make a spring of joy with your own inner bloom.
Let the gladness push sadness away with its light,
Like the Sun in the day, and a lantern at night.”**

„Wesołe Smutki”
prof. Tadeusz Kotarbiński



First, some advice on your emotions



„Maybe you are not responsible for what happens to you – but you are responsible for how you act to change it.”

M. Durst

Remember – emotions are natural for every human being!

Each and every one of us has the right to feel a number of emotions. It is worth recognizing and naming them to be conscious of what is going on inside us. However, it is not worth classifying them as good or bad. Emotions emerge and disappear, for such is their nature.

Let yourself feel different emotions. Don't suppress or deny them, but learn to manage them properly. It will allow you to live your life in balance.

You are not alone!

There are people around you who, even if they do not live or stay in your house, still need to talk and share what they experience – and a lot of ones who are able to listen to us with empathy. It is important to remember to be kind to yourself and others.

It is easier to handle challenging moments when you are connected (even if just online) and not alone.

Remember that all that is happening now will soon pass by. This is a temporary state that will come to an end. Now focus on what you can do to ensure your safety and peace of mind in the present moment.

What can you do when new and difficult emotions appear, ones that you have never experienced before?

You can be surprised – and this is justified!

Where did they come from? Why do I feel them?

And what can I do to calm them down?

We will share with you what can be helpful in moments like these!





***I have always been an active person
– I hate restrictions.***

This situation is a challenge for a structured person. Try and keep a daily schedule that resembles your old routine. Treat this situation as a life lesson you need for your future. Take the best you can out of it. Notice interesting people around you and dedicate them some of your time **(for instance, call or text someone you haven't seen or contacted for a long time)**.



***I'm bored, I feel tired and unwilling
to take up any action.***

Create your own daily schedule and stick to it. Adapt to the current situation:

- Try to lead a balanced lifestyle.
- Take part in online classes.
- Keep in touch with your family, relatives and friends by phone and social media.
- Watch movies.
- Read books or listen to audiobooks.
- Tell jokes.
- Take a few deep breaths while standing by the open window.
- Go out to the store alone and only if it is necessary.

Perhaps now is the time to play catch-up or try some new activities. Maybe an online dance course, learning a new foreign language or improving your skills, e.g. drawing or singing? Now you have time for all this! Find something for yourself.

„Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can”

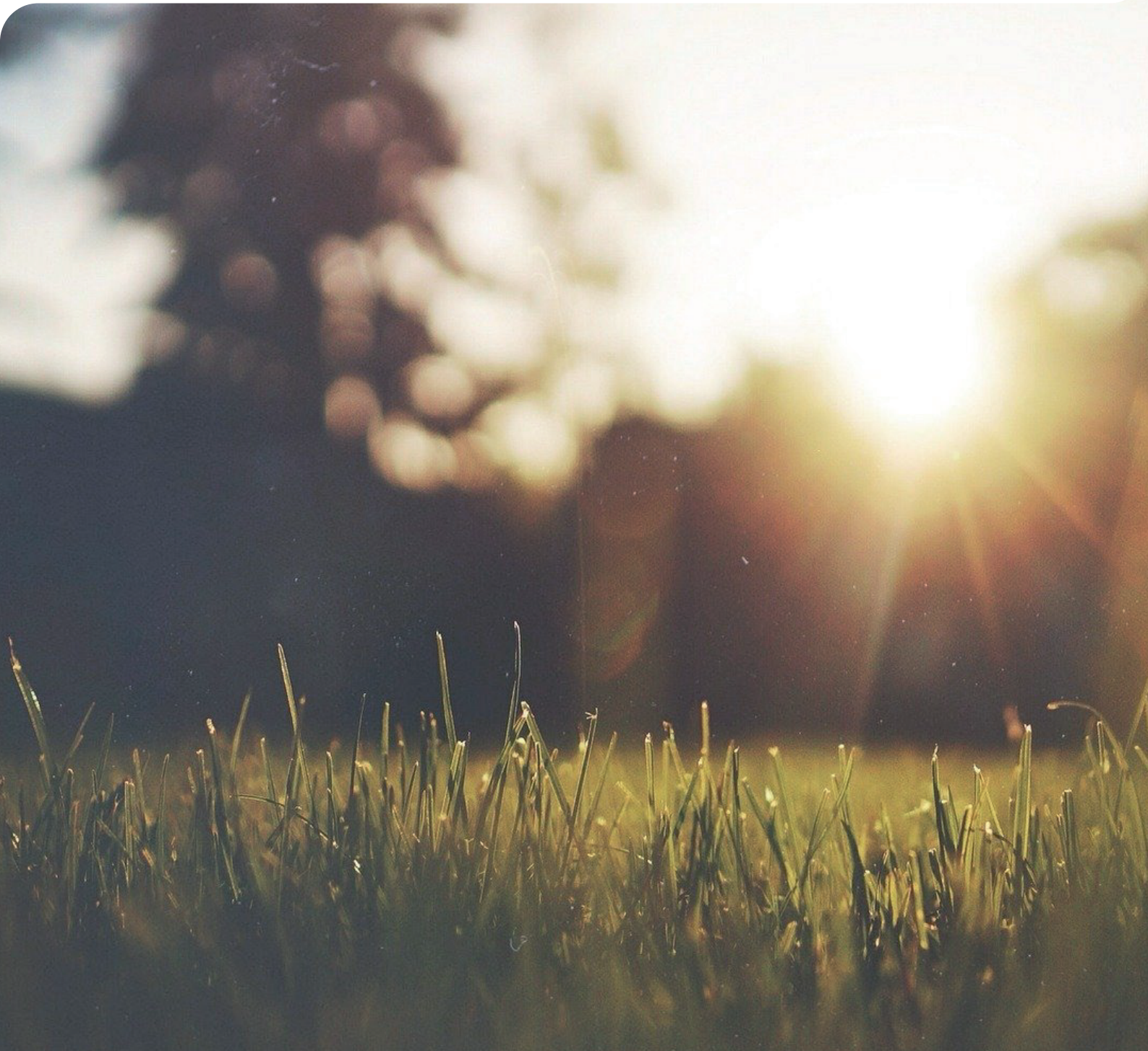
A. Ashe



My anxiety level is rising. How can I cope with that?

The best way to relieve emotional tension is when you spend some time talking to other people in a sincere and kind manner. **Also remember that you have the possibility to get psychological support from the UL Academic Support Centre, e-mail: acw@uni.lodz.pl**

You can also reduce anxiety by yourself, for instance by practicing mindfulness. The main idea behind this is to focus on what is going on in here and now – without daydreaming about the future or dwelling upon the past. The following is a simple exercise:



Straighten your back (you can sit or lie down) and focus on your breath. Do not try to control it – just feel yourself breathing in deeply and breathing out fully. When you notice your concentration lapses then focus on your breath again. **Observe where your attention wanders.**

Maybe there is a thought appearing on your mind? Or maybe there is an emotion? Or maybe it is your body that sends you signals? Realize this and gently return to your breath. Let your breath be your anchor. Focus on it: how long and how deep it is. How much time does it take breathing in? How much time does it take breathing out? How long is the break between the two? Or maybe there is none?

Focus on this and realize this. Do not change anything, just observe. Notice how you start to relax.





I don't want to fall into "a black hole".

- Keep hope alive!
- Be optimistic and have a positive attitude towards life.
- Focus on the daily rhythm of each day.
- Be good to yourself. Allow yourself to have different emotions, but don't hold them inside.
- Talk to other people.
- Listen to your favorite music, dance.
- Keep calm and find balance: you can mediate, do yoga, or pray.

Hard times will soon be over.



I feel lonely and isolated. I am worried about my loved ones.

It is absolutely normal that you miss and worry about your loved ones.

- If you have photos of your loved ones, place them in a visible place in your room.
- Accept your feelings and don't be ashamed of your emotions – by expressing them, you can handle them better.
- Share your feelings with the people you trust.
- Talking helps. Find a friend online, contact your relatives, talk to your lecturer.
- Stay connected with those near you.

Keep your spirits high! Remember that you are not alone!





I miss my loved ones a lot. This feeling of separation is horrible. Can I reduce it?

Yes and no.

Call them and text them. Use words like: I miss you, I love you, you are an important person in my life. Ask if you can do something for them in spite of the distance. Your longing is an expression of love and/or friendship, so it is natural that you feel this way. **Do not spend too much time dwelling upon your uncertainty.** Come back as often as you can to the very feeling of love, openness, and sense of security that you feel when thinking about a loved one.

Under the given circumstances, remember to do something nice and useful for yourself and/or other people.

„The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.“

S. Covey



I would like to do something.

Now is the time to do things for which you didn't have time before!

- Be creative.
- Write poems and songs.
- Dance, sing, exercise.
- Get interested in cooking. Try new recipes.
- Look for new friends online or write to some friends you didn't contact for a long time.

Keep a diary, write down what is important to you – maybe someday you will show it to your family and tell about your experience?



I feel constantly worried and I cannot focus on things. How can I get rid of the thoughts that are behind all this?

You can reduce the flow of intrusive thoughts by writing them down without censoring yourself, in a „diary of thoughts”.

It may also be helpful if you make an agreement with yourself so that you let yourself plenty of worry every day, but just within a specific time frame, for instance between 3:30pm and 4pm. You can also try talking to someone who makes you feel calm and comfortable.



I can't sleep, I find it hard to fall asleep, I have nightmares.

Worries and anxiety may have different causes and may not even be related to the current situation, but could go deeper and relate to some previous experiences.

Contact the Academic Support Center to arrange an online conversation

acw@uni.lodz.pl

phone: +48 690694317 (in English)



I feel anger, I need to cool down.

You are entitled to all your feelings. If you want to deal with them:

- Stop!
- Take a deep breath.
- Breathe out with your mouth – intensively remove the air from the very bottom of the lungs with an audible „uffff”.
- Lower your arms.
- Repeat several times.

This type of exercise will help you reduce emotional tension.



I want to keep balance and not to lose control over my emotions.

Say: „STOP - I WILL NOT ALLOW THIS”.

Take a good, deep breath through your nose (count „in your mind” to five).

Hold the air, count to five.

Breathe out slowly, also count to five.

Repeat several times.





My actions are ineffective, I feel helpless.

It's not true!

Remember that thanks to your actions you protect yourself and others, and for the time being this is the only way to prevent the pandemic.

Ask for help! Let your lecturers know or contact other people who could help you. Remember that the University of Lodz is a very large community, which strives to take care of all its members. Simply say: „I have a problem. Can you help me solve it?“



I am acting nervously under stress.

Physical activity reduces body tension.

Find some free space (room or hallway if possible).

Do 5 jumping jacks, 5 squats, 5 forward bends and 5 arm swings or other exercises.

Additionally: Start shaking off the tension from the palm of your hand, then from your whole arm, from your right and left leg - just wave your body parts actively.





People around me get on my nerves. How can I find a bit of inner peace?

It is natural that everyone feels the need to be alone.

Go to where you can be alone for a while. Find some free space and do a breathing relaxation exercise that will help unwind you and bring you relief. Below is a sample exercise.

Sit down comfortably with a straight back and lower your shoulders.

Do not cross your arms or legs. You can close your eyes.

- Put your hand on your stomach.
- Breathe in through your nose slowly and count to five (counting slowly as you breathe in). Remember to raise your belly while you breathe in.
- Hold your breath and count to five.
- Breathe out slowly through your mouth and slowly count to five.
- Repeat the sequence a few times.

If you start feeling dizzy during the exercise, pause for 30 seconds, then start again. While breathing in and out, your movements should be calm and regular. Avoid forceful or rapid breathing.

Let your body relax as much as possible.





Someone who needs help calls me. What should I do? How to behave?

Show that you listen and do not interrupt.

Remember that not everyone is ready to say what is wrong directly: sometimes someone's general description of the situation or the exchange of more or less sensible advice for „the general population” - are also ways to reduce stress.

Do not exaggerate other person's problems – the difficulty in coordinating tasks, a headache or a single sleepless night are not the reasons for any radical actions, as they are typical reactions to stress.

When giving advice, avoid the language of do's and don'ts – say: „it's a good idea”, „it's important”, „generally it helps”.

Quote similar stories from your own life. Whenever possible, direct the conversation to the topics you like (e.g. sports, music, cooking).





John Green once said:



„Home is Where the Heart is”

So let's stay home!
Let's stay in our hearts!
Let's always be at peace with what we feel.

#beintheheart #beinyourheart #stayinyourheart

How to study online?

Practical tips on how to study from home.

Plan Your Workday in Advance.

- Good organization is the key. Make a list of tasks you need to do (daily schedule).
- Estimate how much time you should spend on each of specific tasks and activities. Try to comply with the agreed working time.
- Set the rules and working hours with roommates / family members. Remember to plan breaks during the work.
- It is a good idea to consult with your roommate / family members in which time slots you will need peace and quiet. It is possible that he/she/they will also ask you the same.



How to study online?

Practical tips on how to study from home.

Prepare your workplace.

- After getting up, make your bed - this is really important if you work in the same room where you sleep.
- Dress comfortably, but properly - as if you were going to work or classes.
- Manage your working space so that the surroundings will not distract you: mute the phone, turn off the TV, keep only the essential things at hand. If necessary, prepare a drink and a snack in advance, so that you don't have to run to the fridge every now and then.

Study in the allotted time.

- Master self-discipline and the rhythm of everyday life, e.g. study during the hours when you should have classes at the university. If you need to study online in a group, use modern electronic communication tools, e.g. MS Teams.
- If you use a laptop, you can change your workplace spot every other day, e.g. a chair, an armchair, a sofa, a floor ... If you sit at a desk, remember taking breaks regularly - it's important to take care of your spine. Stand up, stretch out, make a few bends, look out the window.
- Focus on the tasks to be done, but don't be too hard on yourself and don't blame yourself if you haven't done everything you planned for one day. Remember that tomorrow is another day.

We are all in a new situation: we all learn and work remotely. It is a difficult task, but also a chance to learn something new.

Remember that the results of your work depend not only on the time spent in front of the computer, but also on your well-being, so take care of yourself and stay safe.

Keeping your spirits high – online sources

The Internet is filled with various websites, blogs and recommended applications devoted to well-being, positive thinking, coping with stress and psychological support.

Everyone can find something for themselves!



Keep in touch!

First and foremost, the University of Lodz is a wonderful community – inspiring people, smart students, great lecturers. It's good to be in a virtual contact with one another, especially during the period of isolation. Where can we meet? It's best to check our Facebook (and the group: Dzieje się), but also Instagram, Twitter or SoundCloud. In these places we publish materials that are co-created by UL Staff. Home workouts, chemical kitchen experiments, book recommendations, e-sports tournaments, student radio broadcasts - all this you can find on our social media channels. Some of this material is also translated into English.

PS. Remember to check InstaStories and reports on FB! You can share your life with us as well!



PRESS OFFICE: www.uni.lodz.pl/biuro-prasowe



PODCASTS: www.uni.lodz.pl/soundcloud



www.uni.lodz.pl/twitter



MOVIES: www.uni.lodz.pl/filmy



www.facebook.com/polishuniversity



www.uni.lodz.pl/instagram





**More information on coronavirus can be found at:
www.covid19.uni.lodz.pl/?lang=en**

Information published in Polish and English regarding:

- Current Regulations
- Current Regulations and announcements introduced by the Authorities of the University of Lodz
- FAQ
- Important information concerning current situation in Poland



Important contacts:

In case of illness please contact The State Sanitary Inspection in Lodz (SANEPID):

phone: +42 253 99 00 or 600 241 646

e-mail: psse@psselodz.pl

website: www.psselodz.pl



Important contacts:

**You can also contact the National Health Fund (NFZ) helpline:
800 190 590**

For English-speaking persons: after connecting, select „6” to get information in English.

By calling this number you will receive information on where to report in case you suspect you might have been infected with coronavirus.

Remember! The National Health Fund does not send ambulances and does not provide advice, it is only an information point. Helpline can also provide information about applying for individual insurance.

Treatment for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is free of charge! Regardless of whether you have state insurance or not, whether you are a Polish citizen, or you come from abroad, hold a Polish Card, or have private insurance, the ambulatory treatment is **FREE OF CHARGE ONLY** in case of COVID-19!



Remember that University of Lodz students can get free psychological support from the UL:

Academic Support Centre of UL:

acw@uni.lodz.pl (after email contact you can get more advice via Skype)

phone: +48 690694317 (in English)

Free psychological help outside UL:

Fundacja Vis Salutis:

e-mail: fundacja@vissalutis.pl

phone: 888-960-980 or 888-900-980

(Monday to Friday 10am–6pm)

Crisis Intervention Center:

phone: 42 630 11 02 (for those currently in the city of Łódź)

Counselling Helpline: 19 288



**Remember that you can also contact the UL
International Relations Office**

e-mail: iso@uni.lodz.pl

We are waiting impatiently until we meet again! See you soon!

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