

Student Development and Well-being



Student Mental Well-being A Guide for Staff



LIVERPOOL
HOPE
UNIVERSITY



Liverpool Hope University
Student Support
& Well-being

Mental Health and Well-being

National research suggests that an increasing number of students at university are experiencing mental health difficulties that impact not only on their academic work, but also on other aspects of their university life. Mental health problems have implications not just for the student involved, but often also for those around them; staff, fellow students and family.

To enable effective support for those affected by mental health challenges, the University provides confidential, professional support and advisory services to students who are concerned about their own, or another student's mental health. The Counselling and Mental Health Services are situated within Student Development and Well-being.

Working with or supporting someone who is experiencing mental health difficulties can often be difficult and challenging and staff should never feel alone or unsupported in such situations. Student Development and Well-being (SDW) can provide advice to staff who may be working with or supporting a student who is experiencing mental health difficulty. For assistance, simply contact SDW on sdw@hope.ac.uk or **0151 291 3427**.

In addition to the help and advice available from SDW support services, there is a staff counselling service available to staff who are struggling to manage their own mental well-being.

Signs and Symptoms: Recognising Mental Health Distress

It is important to understand that mental health difficulties can present in a wide variety of ways, depending upon the individual and their personal circumstances. What is important to consider is how a person seems in relation to how they usually are as sudden or gradual changes in a person's presentation, manner, and/or behaviour can provide important indicators as to how they may be feeling. Here are some signs and indicators to be aware of:

Academic

- Formal notification that a student has a mental health disability (through a Learning Support Plan)
- Absence from classes or persistent failure to attend scheduled meetings
- A sudden or significant drop in academic performance and/or assessment grades
- Repeated requests for extensions
- Failure to respond to academic communications i.e. emails/texts/letters/calls.

Emotional/behavioural

Student appears:

- Anxious, tense, tearful, angry or agitated
- Lethargic, low in mood or lacking in motivation
- Socially withdrawn or spending a considerable amount of time alone, when this is not their usual behaviour
- Distracted, preoccupied or excessively suspicious
- Any other behaviour that seems out of character for that person or something not normally expected.

Physical

- Deterioration in personal appearance and/or personal hygiene
- The student themselves approaching you, or friends of the student/other staff sharing their concern
- Significant weight loss/gain.

What you can do to help

Do's:

- Empathise and try to convey that you both hear and understand what the student is saying and feeling by:
 - Accepting that their feelings, experiences and values may be different to yours
 - Listen without interrupting
 - Ask questions so that you are clear on what is being said
 - Summarise facts and feelings
 - Sitting quietly but attentively through periods of silence
- Understand the boundaries of your role and the limits of your capacity to help – always seek advice from a mental health professional as necessary
- Provide positive feedback – let the student know that you are glad they have approached you, affirming that they have done the right thing
- Inform the student about the support available within Student Development & Well-being and advise them to attend a well-being drop-in session (12 - 2pm, Mon – Fri during term time)

- Contact Student Development & Well-being at the earliest opportunity to discuss any serious concerns you have regarding the immediate safety or well-being of a student
- Talk to a representative from Personnel or the Staff Counselling Service if your own personal/mental well-being starts to become affected as a result of assisting a student experiencing mental health difficulties.

Don'ts:

- Make any dismissive statements or imply that their concerns are insignificant in any way
- Make any promises that you cannot keep
- Don't Panic! Try to remain as calm as possible throughout. Remember that most situations will not be urgent and that there is professional mental health support available for students within the University
- Try to provide ongoing support for a student yourself - always seek advice from a professional within SDW.

What if the student declines support?

- Make it clear to the student that help is available within the University should they change their mind
- Seek advice from Student Development and Well-being on **0151 291 3427** if required.

Responding to a mental health emergency

Although mental health emergencies happen infrequently, it is important for staff to be aware of how to respond should such a situation occur.

An urgent situation may arise when, for example:

- The student has self-harmed or expresses immediate plans to harm themselves
- The student has attempted suicide or expresses immediate plans to end their life
- The student exhibits rapid, extreme changes in behaviour which cause significant concern
- The student expresses ideas not based on reality
- The student becomes a serious threat to other students and staff

These situations always require the involvement of specialist staff such as a Mental Health & Well-being Adviser, or in some cases it may be necessary to contact the emergency services. Never compromise your own personal safety or that of other students/staff when dealing with a mental health emergency situation.

If you feel a student is at immediate risk of serious harm to themselves or others, take the following steps:

During normal working hours:

- **If you are on campus with the student:** keep them with you and contact Student Development and Well-being (SDW) for further advice and support on **0151 291 3427/291 3000** or, accompany the student to SDW in the Gateway Building for help
- If the student is in a heightened state of distress and/or is reluctant to receive your help/stay with you, seek the assistance of a staff colleague where possible and try to keep the student with you, if it is safe to do so. Contact the relevant Security Lodge immediately for assistance; then contact SDW for further advice on **0151 291 3427/291 3000**.

Security Lodge Tel. No's Hope Park: **0151 291 3800**

 Creative: **0151 291 3700**

 Aigburth: **0151 727 7262** or **07736 106 185**

- If you are not with the student: ascertain their exact location, ask the student to remain where they are and contact SDW on **291 3427/291 3000**. If on a Zoom call, ideally, stay on with the student until further advice is received; if on a telephone call, tell the student that you, or someone from SDW will ring them back, then contact SDW immediately for assistance. In the unlikely event that you are unable to make contact with SDW, contact the emergency services for assistance.

Outside of hours:

- **For students residing in halls of residence:** contact the relevant Security Lodge for assistance. They will contact the relevant designated manager and, where necessary, the emergency services
- **For students living off-campus:** ascertain the exact location of the student and contact 999 emergency services. Inform Student Development and Well-being about the incident at the earliest opportunity.

Avoid

- Delaying your response to any serious concerns
- Using your own car to transport a student to hospital
- Trying to deal with the situation on your own without seeking advice and support.

Confidentiality

Although everyone has the legal right to privacy and confidentiality, when supporting a student who is experiencing mental health problems, there are situations where it may be necessary to share limited personal or sensitive information about that person with others. These include:

- Where there are serious grounds for concern regarding the student's mental well-being
- When the student's immediate health or safety is at risk (or somebody linked to that student)
- When the student (or someone linked to that student) is at risk of serious abuse or exploitation
- When the student's behaviour is adversely affecting the rights and safety of others, especially university staff and students
- When you become aware of an unlawful act about to be or having been committed
- When the student is infringing university regulations
- When the student's current or predicted behaviour, or health needs compromise the University's responsibilities to outside agencies, including practice placements, and partner institutions

The normal boundaries around levels of confidentiality between you and a student may need to be compromised in such circumstances. You are advised, therefore, not to promise to keep information completely confidential. Instead discuss the need to involve others to help the student and try to gain their consent to do so. Where the student is unwilling to give consent, information can still be shared where it is deemed in the public interest to do so.

Any information you do share should be limited, proportional and justifiable in relation to the incident/issue you are dealing with. Decide who needs to know and share the information with them only, unless advised otherwise.

Staff are advised to always seek advice before taking any action to disclose personal or sensitive information on any of the grounds listed above, as full consideration

of all the issues is required and senior members of university staff may need to be involved in making such decisions.

Support for university staff

Supporting someone who is experiencing mental health difficulties can often be difficult and challenging, staff should never feel alone or unsupported in such situations.

If you experience difficulties with your mental health, or become personally affected when helping a student, it is important to be aware that support is also available for you as a university employee.

You can contact the staff counselling service on **0151 285 3777** to refer yourself and make an appointment or ask your line manager or HR Manager to make one for you.

The staff counselling service is provided by Counselling Solutions North West. Your appointments will take place at their offices based at: Fifth Floor, Hanover House, 85 Hanover Street, Liverpool, L1 3DZ or via remote communication methods where deemed necessary.

The Education Support partnership also provides a 24-hour free and confidential helpline for everyone working in education. Call: **08000 562 561** or text: **07909 341 229** (texts are answered within 24 hours)
www.educationsupport.org.uk/

Useful contacts

Senior Mental Health Adviser

Josie Davies t: 0151 291 3427 e: Daviesj2@hope.ac.uk

Student Counselling Service t: 0151 291 3427

Drop-in sessions Hope Park Monday - Friday 12 - 2pm
 Creative Campus Tuesday & Thursday 12 - 1pm

Campus Security

Hope Park t: 291 3800
Creative Campus t: 3700
Aigburth Park t: 727 7262

Staff Counselling Service t: 0151 285 3777

Fifth Floor, Hanover House, 85 Hanover Street,
Liverpool, L1 3DZ.

Staff Counselling Leaflet www.hope.ac.uk/media/gateway/staffgateway/personneldocuments/Staff_Counselling_Leaflet_160120.pdf

Further information

Visit Student Support and Well-being information webpages at:

www.hope.ac.uk/gateway/staff/studentssupportandwell-being/

Fitness to study process:

www.hope.ac.uk/media/gateway/studentgateway/supportandwellbeing/studentadministrationdocuments/Fitness%20to%20Study%20Policy%20v10Jun19.pdf

Student mental health concern escalation process:

www.hope.ac.uk/gateway/staff/studentssupportandwell-being/howtoraiseastudentwell-beingconcern/



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