

Practical Guidelines for Staff Supporting Students with Possible Mental Health Problems

How do you know there is a problem?

- The student told you?
- Other students, or staff, have voiced their concerns?
- You've noticed significant changes in a student's appearance - weight loss or gain?
- decline in personal hygiene?
- You've smelt alcohol or cannabis on the student on a regular basis?
- You've noticed changes in the mood of the student? – withdrawn, miserable, hyperactive, sad.
- You've noticed recent changes in the student's behaviour?
- The student's academic performance has changed dramatically?
- The student has been experiencing these problems for a significant amount of time?

YES to any of the above

Don't avoid the situation

"Be proactive not reactive, don't wait for the situation to get worse"

Approach the student, try to talk to them.

"Remember time constraints – be honest with the student and yourself about how much time you have,"

Be prepared to listen

"The situation may only require listening."

AFTER approaching the student, you feel there is a problem

The student will not accept help

The student does want to talk about their problems

Respect the right of the student if they do not want to discuss their problems or seek help.

You are still concerned about the student

Offer an open invitation
To come back and talk to you.

Speak to your head of department or a colleague or a specialist support service and ask for advice.

"You do not need to solve the problem. Try not to take responsibility for a student's problem."

Try not to give the student advice that isn't part of your role/job.

Refer to Student Services:
- Counselling Service
- International office
- Occupational Health
Refer to Student's Union:
- Finance officer
- Education/Welfare Officer

Listen & try to help the student identify what sort of help they need, eg.
- study
- finances
- sexual health
- drugs
- depression
- exam failure

Sometimes it is difficult to identify a source of help, in Such cases refer the student to somewhere that is acceptable to them.

It can be stressful helping a student remember to look after yourself & seek

support and help from others.

SIX POINT PLAN FOR RESPONDING TO STUDENTS IN DIFFICULTY

- Stay calm
- Consider safety: yours, others, the student's.
- Engage with the student (if appropriate).
- Be direct and clear
- Take threats of self harm and attempted suicide seriously.
- When in doubt consult with others.

IF IN DOUBT CONTACT:

The University Counselling Service for Students, delivered in partnership with Carecall Wellbeing.

TEL: 0808 800 0016

E-mail: gubstudents@carecallwellbeing.com

This is a free & confidential, professional service for students.

Confidentiality & the Counselling Service

Staff working for the Student Counselling Service will not pass on personal information about clients to anyone outside the Service subject to the following exceptions:

- Where the member of staff has the express consent of the client to disclose the information.
- Where the member of staff would be liable to civil or criminal court procedure if the information was not disclosed.
- Where the member of staff believes the client or third party is in serious danger.

In any of these circumstances the counsellor will normally encourage the client to pass on information to the relevant person/agency. If there is no indication that this has happened, or is likely to happen, or if the crisis or danger is sufficiently acute, the counsellor may pass on the information directly.

Students may make counselling appointments by phoning the Counselling Service at 0808 800 0016 (24 hr freephone) or emailing gubstudents@carecallwellbeing.com.