

Mind your head



Adviser's guide to
student mental wellbeing

What is this guide for?

This guide has been developed for student advisers, tutors, parents and others to help recognise and support students under pressure. It has been designed to accompany the Mind Your Head student booklet (produced by the Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland and NUS-USI, the student movement in Northern Ireland). Having helped a student to acknowledge difficulties, it is essential that they are encouraged to seek professional support. Hopefully the following information will be of use.

Why is mental wellbeing important?

- Among the student community there are several factors that can cause stress and mental health problems.
- These can include, for example, the transition to college life, financial worries, relationship issues and academic work.
- Persistent stress and anxiety can lead to depression.

Warning signs

Skipping lectures and staying in bed can often be seen as part of the stereotypical student lifestyle! It can therefore be harder to assess when a person's behaviour might be indicative of a mental health problem. However, there are a few useful warning signs:

- **Change in mood and behaviour:** becoming withdrawn, isolated or despondent.
- **Loss of motivation:** missing classes, failing to hand in work on time, or deterioration in the standard of work.
- **Loss of interest:** losing interest in friends, family and hobbies, or lack of concern about appearance.
- **Negative communication:** having constantly negative attitudes and speech.
- **Substance, alcohol or drug misuse.**

How to respond

- Show you care, offer support by giving your time and a listening ear.
- Reassure them that they are not alone.
- Reassure them that help is available.
- Discuss possible stages of help with them.

- Advice can be useful but listening is often best.
- If you feel someone is suicidal ask the question: **'Do you feel like harming yourself?'** or **'Do you feel like ending your life?'** Talking about the subject does not put it in a person's head. Encourage them to seek professional help from their GP or college/university support services or from one of the organisations listed below.
- If a person expresses suicidal thoughts or has a preoccupation with death, help **must** be sought immediately.
- Know the extent of your professional training.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information and support can be obtained from the following organisations:

Adapt - Eating Distress Support Group

Promotes awareness of eating disorders and provides support for sufferers and carers.

37 High Street
Lurgan
Armagh BT66 8AH
Tel: 028 3834 7535
Helpline: 028 3834 8869
Email: adapt@utvinternet.com

Agoraphobia and Anxiety Society

Offers help with phobias, agoraphobia and high anxiety states in men, women and young children.

29-31 Lisburn Road
Belfast BT9 7AA
Tel: 028 9023 5170

Association of Northern Ireland Colleges

Represents all colleges of Further and Higher Education in Northern Ireland and is the central contact point for all Further and Higher Education related issues.

Unit 3
The Sidings Office Park
Antrim Road
Lisburn BT28 3AJ
Tel: 028 9262 7512

Cara Friend (Gay Information and Befriending)

Gay and lesbian information and support service.

Tel: 028 9027 8636
Men's Line: 028 9032 2023
Lesbian Line: 028 9032 8668

Cause

For carers and users in the area of mental health.

First Floor
Glendenning House
6 Murray Street
Belfast BT1 6DN
Tel: 028 9032 8284
Email: info@cause.org.uk

Cruse - Bereavement Care

Provides support to people who have been bereaved by the death of someone close. Support is provided mainly through counselling and group work.

10 College Green
Belfast BT7 1LN
Tel: 028 9043 4600
Email: crusebel@fish.co.uk

Eating Disorders Drop-In Centre

Advice and support for people suffering from eating disorders.

28 Bedford Street

Belfast BT2 7FE

Tel: 028 9023 5959

Email: mailtoedani@fsmail.net

HIV Support Centre

Offers support and advice on HIV/AIDS and general sexual health. Incorporating AIDS Helpline (NI)

Third Floor, The Warehouse

7 James Street South

Belfast BT2 8DN

Tel: 028 9024 9268

Fax: 028 9032 9845

Helpline: 0800 137437

Email: info@thehivsupportcentre.org.uk

The NEXUS Institute

Responding to the needs of adults who have experienced sexual abuse, through counselling, education and research.

119 University Street

Belfast BT7 1HP

Tel: 028 9032 6803

www.nexusinstitute.org

Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health

An umbrella body dealing with mental health problems.

80 University Street

Belfast BT7 1HE

Tel: 028 9032 8474

Email: info@niamh.co.uk

Northern Ireland Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux

Umbrella body of local citizens advice centres.

Regional Office

Tel: 028 9023 1120

PRAXIS Care Group

Provides services for those with mental health needs including a range of accommodation, support in the individual's own home and a volunteer befriending service.

29-31 Lisburn Road

Belfast BT9 7AA

Tel: 028 9023 4555

Email: admin@praxiscaregroup.org.uk

The Rainbow Project

Support service for lesbian and gay young people.

2-6 Union Street

Belfast BT1 2JF

Tel: 028 9031 9030

Email: manager@rainbowproject.com

Rethink

Offers support for sufferers of severe mental illness, their carers and families.

Wynhurst House

Knockbracken Healthcare Park

Saintfield Road

Belfast BT8 8BH

Tel: 028 9040 2323

Email: info.nireland@rethink.org

Samaritans

Confidential, emotional support 24 hours a day to those in crisis and in danger of taking their own lives.

5 Wellesley Avenue

Belfast BT9 6DG

Tel: 08457 909090

(Check the phone directory for your local branch)

Suicide Awareness Coordinator

Health Promotion Department Westcare Business Services

Lime Villa

12c Gransha Park

Londonderry BT47 6WJ

Tel: 028 7186 5127

STUDENT COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

University students' union welfare officers

Queen's University Belfast

Tel: 028 9097 3106

St Mary's University College

Tel: 028 9023 5790

Stranmillis University College

Tel: 028 9038 4324

University of Ulster

Coleraine

Tel: 028 7032 4321

Email: vp.edwel@uusu.org

Magee

Tel: 028 7137 5348

Email: medwel@uusu.org

Jordanstown (and Belfast)

Tel: 028 9036 6055

Email: su.edwel@uusu.org

University counsellors

QUB - Tel: 028 9027 3742

Email: counsellor@qub.ac.uk

UUB - Tel: 028 9036 6336

UUC - Tel: 028 7032 4105

UUJ - Tel: 028 9036 6336

UUM - Tel: 028 7137 5218

Colleges/Institutes of Further and Higher Education*

Armagh College

Tel: 028 3752 2205

Belfast Institute

Tel: 028 9026 5000

Castlereagh College

Tel: 028 9079 7144

Causeway Institute

Tel: 028 7035 4717

East Antrim Institute

Tel: 028 9085 5000

East Down Institute

Tel: 028 4461 5815

East Tyrone College

Tel: 028 8772 2323

Fermanagh College

Tel: 028 6632 2431

Limavady College

Tel: 028 7776 2334

Lisburn Institute

Tel: 028 9267 7225

Newry & Kilkeel Institute

Tel: 028 3026 1071

North Down & Ards Institute

Tel: 028 9127 6600

North East Institute

Tel: 028 2565 2871

Omagh College

Tel: 028 8224 5433

North West Institute

Tel: 028 7126 6711

Upper Bann Institute

Tel: 028 3839 7777

College of Agriculture, Food
and Rural Enterprise

Tel: 0500 127 079 (24 hrs)

* You may need to ask to be put through to student counselling and support services.

USEFUL WEBSITES

Alcohol

www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

UK national agency on alcohol misuse.

Depression

www.aware-ni.org

Local support group for people suffering from depression.

www.depressionalliance.org

Provides information and support to people who are depressed.

Drugs

www.drugsalcohol.info

www.nistudentsdrugs.info

Two local websites promoting drug education strategies.

Eating disorders

www.adaptni.org.uk

Information and support for eating disorder sufferers and carers.

www.eatingdisordersni.com

Eating disorder recovery online.

Health

www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk

General health information from the Health Promotion Agency.

Mental wellbeing

www.actionmentalhealth.org.uk

Offers rehabilitation and training to those with or recovering from mental illness.

www.counselling.co.uk

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

www.leeds.ac.uk/ahead4health/

Great site produced by Leeds University for students facing common emotional problems.

www.mentalhealthireland.ie

Guide to mental health issues and organisations in Ireland.

www.mentalhealth.org.uk

Provides information and advice on mental health issues in the UK.

www.nexusinstitute.org

Support for adults who have experienced sexual abuse.

www.niamh.co.uk

Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health.

www.psychnet-uk.com

UK mental health directory – major online guide to mental health, psychiatry and counselling in the UK.

www.rethink.org/at-ease

A user-friendly information guide for young people and students under stress.

www.samaritans.org.

Offers confidential support to anyone in crisis.

www.student.counselling.co.uk

Support for students in the UK.

www.studentmentalhealth.org.uk

A great guide to disseminating good practice in supporting students with mental health difficulties.

Relationships

www.relate.org.uk

UK relationship counselling organisation.

www.rainbow-project.com

Support for local gay and lesbian young people.

Sexual health

www.brook.org.uk

www.fpa.org.uk

Advice and information on sexual health and contraception.

www.thehivsupportcentre.org.uk

Information and advice on HIV/AIDS.

Smoking

www.ash.org.uk

Online resources about smoking.

Student welfare

www.femeansbusiness.com

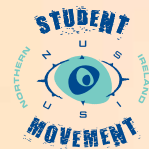
Central contact point for all colleges of Further and Higher Education in Northern Ireland.

www.nistudents.org

NUS-USI, the student movement in Northern Ireland, provides a comprehensive range of services for local students.



**Health
Promotion
Agency**



Produced by the Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland and NUS-USI,
the student movement in Northern Ireland.

For further copies contact NUS-USI, 29 Bedford Street, Belfast BT2 7EJ. Tel: 028 9024 4641.