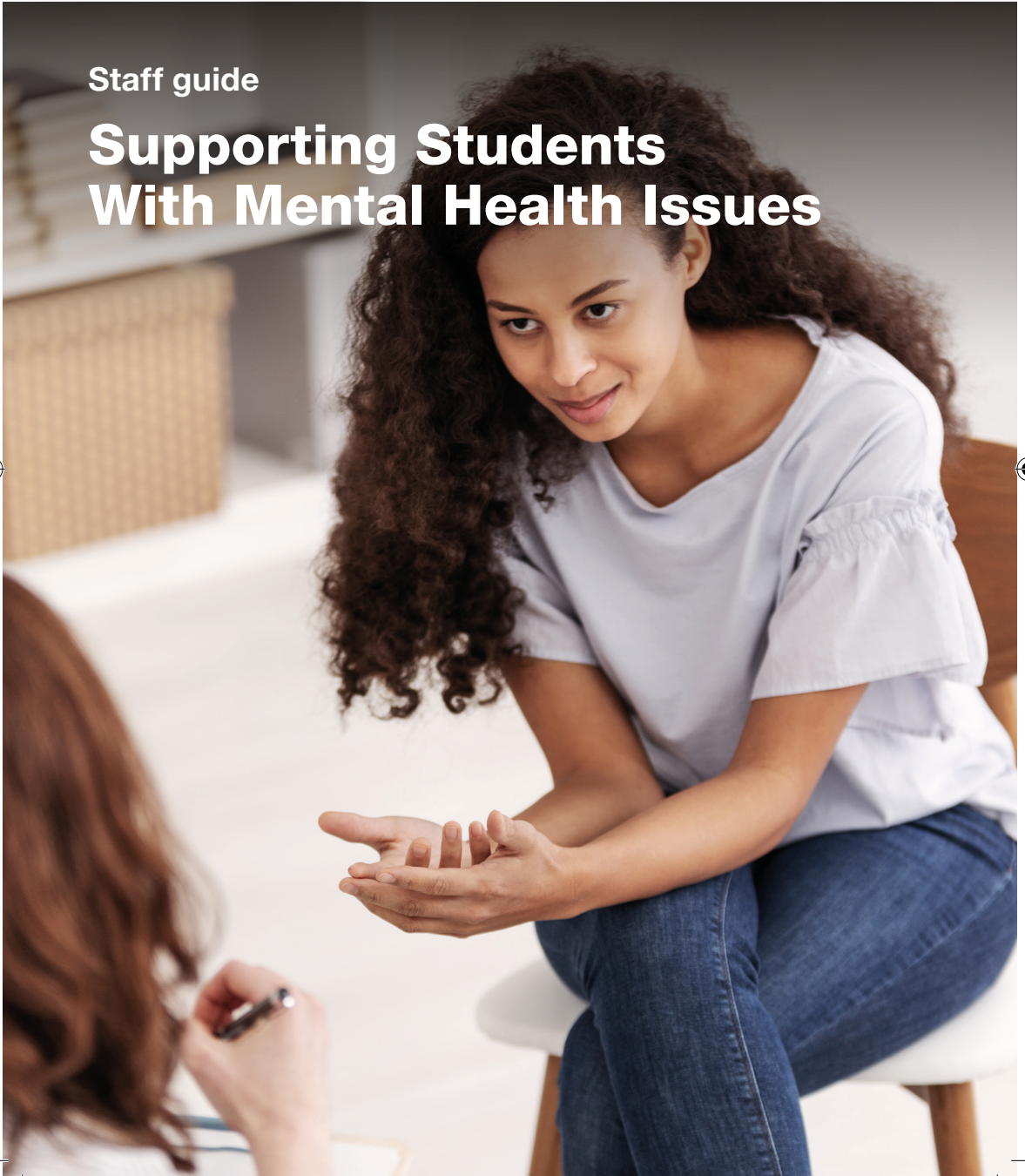


Staff guide

Supporting Students With Mental Health Issues



Introduction

This document has been produced to help staff who, in the course of their work, may come into contact with students who are experiencing mental health issues.

The document aims to:

- Raise awareness about the types of behaviour that may indicate that a student is suffering serious mental distress.
- Provide guidance about how to respond to such situations.
- Signpost staff to other sources of information and advice.

Defining mental health

It is estimated that one in every four adults will experience some type of mental health issue during their life.

Mental health problems can emerge for many reasons and may be exacerbated by stressful situations such as leaving home and coping with the pressures of academic study. Many students experiencing mental health issues will manage effectively with very little support. However, for others the impact of the problem may require more specialist help.

It is helpful to consider mental health in terms of a continuum, with mild anxieties and the frustrations of everyday living at one end of the spectrum and more severe problems at the other end. For the purposes of this document, we are concentrating on students who have more serious mental health difficulties which could affect their ability to function and make it difficult for them to reach their academic potential.





Identifying students with mental health difficulties

Staff such as personal tutors, course tutors and halls officers who work closely with students are more likely to notice if there are changes in a student's behaviour.

If a student is experiencing mental health difficulties, there are sometimes warning signs such as:

- a deterioration in their academic performance;
- being very withdrawn or unusually quiet;
- a marked decline in their personal hygiene or significant weight changes;
- displaying loud or agitated behaviour;
- erratic or unpredictable behaviour;
- making comments or threats of self harm; and
- becoming more paranoid or suspicious.

Sometimes the signs are not obvious and you will only know there are difficulties if the student tells you.

If you are worried about a student, you should contact the university's Counselling and Mental Health Service on **(024 7765 8029)** or by email **counsell.ss@coventry.ac.uk** to seek some advice on how best to proceed. You can ask for advice without identifying the student.

However, usually the first step would be to talk to the student. Ask the student if something is wrong and explain why you are concerned. Try and find out more about their situation. It could be that the student is already accessing support from their GP, counsellor or mental health worker.

If the student is not willing to talk to you and you are still concerned about their wellbeing, the most appropriate course of action is to discuss the situation with the clinical lead of the counselling and mental health service who will advise you on the appropriate course of action. You can also advise the student to contact either their GP or the Counselling and Mental Health Service.

The student should be encouraged to make the referral themselves via the registration form on the Student Portal. However, you can make the initial referral if the student feels unable to this and requests you to do it.



Confidentiality

In general, staff should not disclose information about a student's mental health to other staff or third parties (including parents) unless they have the student's consent.

However, in exceptional circumstances where there may be an immediate risk of harm to themselves or others, it could be necessary to pass information on to other professionals on a need-to-know basis without the student's consent. Confidentiality and information sharing will be discussed with each student when they meet with the counsellor or mental health adviser.

Dealing with urgent situations

On very rare occasions, students may display behaviour that causes serious concern. There may be evidence of:

- lack of ability to function academically or socially;
- suicidal tendencies;
- hearing voices or holding irrational beliefs;
- no sense of reality or insight into their own behaviour; and
- acute alcohol or substance abuse or addiction.

In such cases, during opening hours (see next page) staff should contact the university's Counselling and Mental Health Service. Outside of opening hours, staff should contact the university's Protection Service (internal extension **65 5555**) or external number (**024 7765 5555**). Protection staff are responsible for contacting the emergency services as appropriate.

When a student will not accept help

There may be times when you are concerned about a student but he/she is not willing to accept any help.

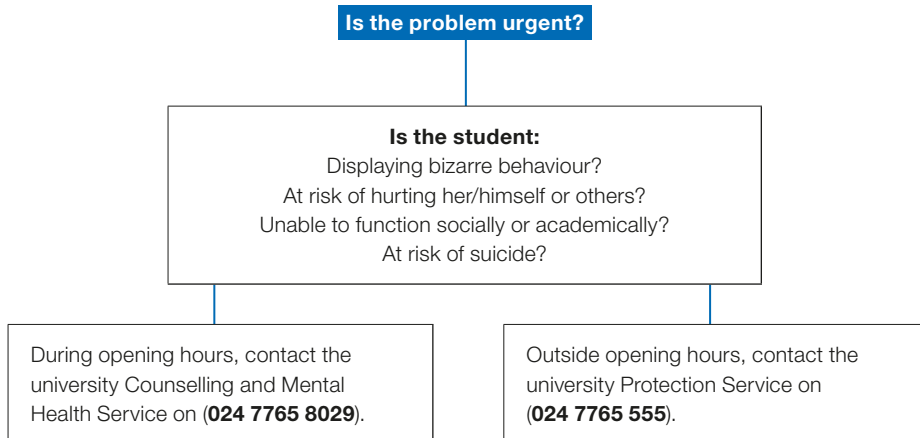
In such cases there is very little you can do other than make sure that the student has the relevant information to access the appropriate sources of support.

However, if a student is suffering from serious mental health difficulties and is not willing or able to access medical help and support, it is possible to request that the student is withdrawn from the course under the university's General Regulations (appendix 12). In the first instance, you should discuss the student's situation with the director of Student Services on (**024 7765 2039**) or by email tracy.cullis@coventry.ac.uk.

If a decision is made to use appendix 12 from the university's General Regulations, the case is then referred to the Vice Chancellor for consideration. If a student is required to withdraw under this procedure he/she must provide evidence from their GP or psychiatrist that they are well enough to return to study.

After receiving the report from the GP or psychiatrist, the director of Student Services will convene an assessment panel to decide if the student is well enough to return and to consider whether the university can provide the appropriate support.

How can you respond to a student experiencing mental health difficulties?



Coventry University support services

University Medical Centre

2nd Floor
TheHub
4 Jordan Well Road
Coventry
CV1 5QT

T: **024 7655 1725** During term time
T: **024 7659 2012** Outside of term time
E: **engleton.house@nhs.uk**

Surgery opening hours during term time:

Monday - Friday mornings

8.30am-12.30pm

Monday and Tuesday afternoons

3-5.30pm

Thursday afternoons

2.30-5pm

Friday afternoons

3-5.30pm

Wednesday afternoons

Closed

When the Medical Centre in TheHub is closed, please telephone the Engleton House Surgery on **024 7659 2012**.
The surgery is open to take calls between 8am-6.30pm.

Protection Service

Alma Building
Alma Street
Coventry
CV1 5QR

T: **024 7688 7363** General enquiries
T: **024 7765 5555** Emergencies

Counselling and mental health service

2nd Floor
TheHub
4 Jordan Well Road
Coventry
CV1 5QT

T: **024 7765 8029**
E: **counsell.ss@coventry.ac.uk**

Opening hours:

Reception

8.30am-5pm

Counselling

9am-5.30pm

Mental health

9am-5.30pm

Student Union Advice Centre

1st Floor
TheHub
4 Jordan Well Road
Coventry
CV1 5QT

T: **024 7765 5200**
E: **suadvice@coventry.ac.uk**

Opening hours:

Monday - Friday

9am-5pm

Accident and emergency

University Hospital Walsgrave
Clifford Bridge Road
Coventry
CV2 2DX

T: **024 7696 4000**

**City of Coventry NHS Walk-in
and Healthcare Centre**

Stoney Stanton Road
Coventry
CV1 4FS

T: **0300 2000 060** during opening hours of
8am-10pm Monday - Sunday
T: **0192 6888 026** outside opening hours

Samaritans

57 Moor Street
Earlsdon
Coventry
CV5 6ER

T: **08457 90 90 90**
E: **jo@samaritans.co.uk**
SMS: **07725 90 90 90**

FRANK

Confidential drugs advice

T: **0800 776 600**
SMS: **82111**
www.talktofrank.com

Useful places

Coventry University Counselling and Mental Health Service

Counsell.ss@coventry.ac.uk

024 7765 8029

www.facebook.com/CUwellbeing

Follow Health and Wellbeing on Twitter for updates.

Big White Wall is free to Coventry University students:

www.bigwhitewall.com

Find your local **IAPT** service:

www.iapt.nhs.uk/iapt

Book an appointment:

<https://healthandwellbeingbookings.coventry.ac.uk>

Check out Health and Wellbeing's self-help guides and download our app.

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org

08457 90 90 90

24 hours a day, whatever you are going through, they will help.

Mind – Coventry and Warwickshire

www.cwmind.org.uk