



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- **Change in mood and behaviour:** becoming withdrawn, isolated or despondent.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:

Agoraphobia and Anxiety Society

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

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

Association of Northern Ireland Colleges

Represents all 16 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 9023 8668

Cause

For carers and users in the area of mental health.

Tel: 0845 603 0291

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

Eating Disorders Drop-In Centre

Advice and support for people suffering from eating disorders.

28 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7FE
Tel: 028 9023 5959

HIV Support Centre

Offers support and advice on HIV/AIDS and general sexual health.

Incorporating AIDS Helpline (NI)
7 James Street South
Belfast
BT2 8DN
Tel: 028 9024 9263
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 of Citizens Advice Bureaux

Umbrella body of local citizens advice centres.

Regional Office
Tel: 028 9023 1120

Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health

An umbrella body dealing with mental health problems.

80 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1HE
Tel: 028 9032 8474

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

The Rainbow Project

Support service for lesbian and gay young people.

33 Church Lane
Belfast
BT1 4QN
Tel: 028 9031 9030

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

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: 0845 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 9027 3106

St Mary's University College

Tel: 028 9023 5790

Stranmillis University College

Tel: 028 9038 4324

University of Ulster

Coleraine (and Magee)

Tel: 028 7032 4321

University of Ulster

Jordanstown (and Belfast)

Tel: 028 9036 6055

University counsellors

QUB - Tel: 028 9027 3742

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 37522205

Belfast Institute

Tel: 028 90265000

Castlereagh College

Tel: 028 90797144

Causeway Institute

Tel: 028 70354717

East Antrim Institute

Tel: 028 90855000

East Down Institute

Tel: 028 44615815

East Tyrone College

Tel: 028 87722323

Fermanagh College

Tel: 028 66322431

Limavady College

Tel: 028 77762334

Lisburn Institute

Tel: 028 92677225

Newry & Kilkeel Institute

Tel: 028 30261071

North Down & Ards Institute

Tel: 028 91276600

North East Institute

Tel: 028 25652871

Omagh College

Tel: 028 82245433

North West Institute

Tel: 028 71266711

Upper Bann Institute

Tel: 028 38397777

College of Agriculture, Food
and Rural Enterprise

Tel: 0500 127079

* 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.edrecovery.com

Eating disorder recovery online.

Health

www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk

General health information from the Health Promotion Agency.

Mental wellbeing

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.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.studentcounselling.org

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.

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.anic.org.uk

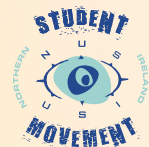
Central contact point for all colleges of Further and Higher Education in Northern Ireland.

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.