

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

2014/15

L&SS V2

Approved by:
Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee

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Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The University has a duty of care towards its students and acknowledges the importance of promoting mental health and wellbeing among students and providing assistance to those who may experience mental health difficulties.
- 1.2 This Policy forms part of the University's commitment to promoting a safe, healthy and supportive environment conducive to teaching, learning, study and research and the enjoyment of positive wider student experience. Awareness of mental health difficulties will be reflected in the University's strategic planning, particularly in relation to teaching and learning, student support services and staff development.
- 1.3 In conjunction with the Student Health and Wellbeing promotion activities, the overarching aim of this policy is to support and educate staff and students at the University.
- 1.4 This Policy, in conjunction with the University's Fitness to Study Policy & Procedure, is intended to guide staff through the steps of how to support a student experiencing mental health difficulties or crisis and to take account of the needs not only of students who experience mental health difficulties but also their fellow students and staff that work, study and live with them.
- 1.5 The University will remain mindful of its legal obligations including its duty of care and its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 (including its duty in appropriate cases to make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities). It will remain mindful of the sensitive nature of information and to its obligations to deal with such information fairly and lawfully in accordance with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.
- 1.6 The underlying principles of this Policy are, therefore, to:
 - recognise the legal responsibility of the University for the health, safety and wellbeing of its students and act in accordance with these guidelines to support this responsibility
 - provide information and implement effective support to staff with responsibilities for teaching and supporting students, to be alert to indicators of mental health difficulties and to take appropriate action where necessary
 - provide guidance to staff to help to develop confidence to know what action to take if they are concerned about a student's conduct or academic progress due to mental health concerns.
- 1.7 Guidance and training will be available to all UCA staff where necessary, with particular regard to ensuring appropriate training is made available to University staff that have named responsibilities within the policy, via the University's Learning and Development Team and Library & Student Services.

- 1.8 General awareness of the content of the Policy and responsibilities will be communicated to all staff on an annual basis through email, myUCA and the Staff Portal.
- 1.9 All new staff will be made aware of the University's Student Mental Health and Wellbeing policy, as part of their induction.
- 1.10 A copy of the policy will be available in the University's Docshare.
- 1.11 This policy was initially developed in consultation with:
- Team Leader, Maidstone, Weald and South West Kent, Early Intervention for Psychosis Society
 - Chair, Wealden Eastbourne and Lewes Mind
 - Training Consultant, Mind.
- 1.12 This policy has also been approved by the University's Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee.

2. Definitions

The World Health Organisation defines mental health as follows:

'Mental health is not just the absence of mental disorder. It is defined as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community'¹.

Our mental wellbeing is an issue for all of us to consider in the same way that we might consider our physical wellbeing. Mental health can be viewed as a continuum of experience, from mental wellbeing through to a severe and enduring mental illness. We all experience changes in our mental health influenced by social, personal, financial and other factors. Major life events such as a close bereavement, or leaving home can impact significantly on how we feel about ourselves and, for some people, may lead to depression and anxiety. Given appropriate and timely support and information, people experiencing mental health difficulties can make positive changes and improvements to their mental wellbeing.

3. Objectives of the Policy

- 3.1. The University is committed to providing clear and comprehensive guidelines to individual members of the Leadership Team, Senior Managers and all UCA staff in responding to student mental health difficulties/crisis. This policy sets out the University's responsibility and duty of care with regard to students requiring support during their studies, as a result of a mental health difficulty:

¹ World Health Organization (2007) What is mental health? At: <http://www.who.int/features/qa/62/en/> (Accessed on 04.07.14)

- To provide an overview of the support that is available for students with mental health difficulties.
- To ensure individual members of UCA staff are aware of their responsibilities and appropriate procedures when dealing with students with mental health difficulties.

4. Guidance - Promoting Student Mental Wellbeing

The University is committed to promoting mental wellbeing and resilience among its student population; see [Appendix 1 - Five Ways to Wellbeing Framework](#).

4.1. The University provides a number of services to assist students in maintaining their mental health:

- Student Counsellors – who work with students to enable them to address emotional and psychological issues;
- Referral to Doctors (including links with local practices and local mental health teams);
- Student Health and Wellbeing promotional events, facilitated through Library & Student Services, to raise awareness of the importance of maintaining a healthy mind and body;
- Specialist Advisers - who can assist students with issues of a more general concern.

4.2. The Disability team are able to offer individual support to students with diagnosed mental health difficulties. Support is provided based on individual needs and may include support from one or more of the following support mechanisms:

- Learning Mentor
- Learning Support Assistant
- Facilitated access to a University Counsellor
- Help with co-ordinating support through external agencies.

4.3. Library & Student Services staff work to promote student mental wellbeing through an on-going programme of awareness activities. These activities include campaigns to challenge myths and the stigma often associated with mental ill-health and to provide students with the information and skills to manage their own wellbeing.

4.4. Library & Student Services also arrange and facilitate staff awareness training sessions on student mental health and University Policy.

4.5. In addition, a wide range of information leaflets are available in the University Libraries and on myUCA / myStudent Support for both staff and students.

5. Guidance for Supporting Students with Mental Health Difficulties

5.1. ***Recognising Signs of Mental Health Difficulties***

5.1.1. Whilst it is for specialists, such as GPs or psychiatrists, to form a diagnosis, it may be helpful for University staff to be aware of some of the signs associated with mental health difficulties. The following, whilst not comprehensive, provides some guidance as to behaviours which may indicate a student is having difficulties:

- Has the student's standard of academic work dropped dramatically?
- Does the student seem to be working hard but with no tangible result?
- Are there notable changes in mood, when compared to your previous experience and knowledge of the student, e.g. becoming much quieter or much more outgoing than before?
- Have there been significant changes in the student's appearance, e.g. significant weight loss, weight gain?
- Is there evidence of excessive alcohol abuse or use of drugs?
- Have the student's friends or flatmates expressed concern?

5.2. ***How to Assist Students***

5.2.1. If a student has been identified as having mental health difficulties and concerns have been raised about the student's wellbeing and / or their ability to engage in their studies then the University's Fitness to Study Policy & Procedure should be followed which can be found on DocShare or on MyUCA (A-Z>Student Regulations).

5.2.2. The Fitness to Study Policy & Procedure is intended as a supportive procedure which can be initiated by any member of staff if there is a genuine concern that a student's health, wellbeing and / or behaviour is having a detrimental impact on their ability to progress academically and engage with activities associated with or organised by the University.

5.3. ***Students in crisis*** ([See also Appendix 3](#))

5.3.1. Very occasionally, a student may behave in an extremely agitated or aggressive way. In these situations staff must assess whether there is an immediate risk to the health and safety of the student or others.

5.3.2. Where a student's behaviour is assessed as presenting an immediate danger to themselves or to others, the police or an ambulance should be contacted as an emergency. In this case, the member of staff should immediately inform their Line Manager of the situation so appropriate action can be taken.

5.3.3. When contacting the emergency services, UCA staff will be asked for key details about the student and their condition. Where possible, it is advisable that the following information is obtained prior to the call, in order

to minimise any risk to the student, other students and staff and to ensure the situation is reported as accurately and succinctly as possible:

- the address where you are, including the postcode
- the phone number you are calling from
- details of the incident, what has happened
- the patient's age, sex and medical history
- whether the student is conscious/unconscious, breathing etc.

5.3.4. However, where there does not appear to be an immediate risk of harm to the student or others, the following procedures should be followed:

5.3.5. If alone with a student in extreme distress, staff should alert a colleague that they are dealing with a student in an exceptionally distressed state. In some cases where the student is experiencing physical symptoms of distress, such as hyperventilating, assistance should be requested from a University First Aider.

5.3.6. Staff will need to assess whether they are able to respond to the student's immediate needs themselves, or if support from another member of staff or an external person / agency is required.

5.3.7. In assessing what help can be given or offered to a student, it is imperative that staff should take care not to act or to seek to provide advice beyond their skills and training.

5.3.8. Staff who are uncertain as to how to proceed with a student should contact a member of Library & Student Services staff on the campus in question ([See Appendix 4](#)).

5.3.9. Staff can also suggest that the student goes to Library & Student Services and may accompany the student there. During opening hours there are members of staff available to speak with a student who is distressed, although this may not be a University Counsellor.

5.3.10. As far as is possible, the member of Library & Student Services staff seeing the student will try to assess the nature and severity of the student's distress. Where appropriate, the student may be referred to another member of support staff, such as a Counsellor or Learning Support Manager, for further discussion or evaluation.

5.3.11. If it appears to the member of Library & Student Services staff that the student is unable to contain their distress, even with the support of the relevant members of staff, then medical assistance must be called upon. The student will normally be informed of this intention and encouraged to make contact with their GP.

5.3.12. In the event that a student refuses to accept a recommendation for medical intervention and there continue to be immediate concerns, a member of Library & Students Services Senior Management team may, in consultation with the member of staff involved with the student, agree that the University should break confidentiality and agree that the student's GP is contacted

directly. Reasonable attempts should be made to request consent from the student, but if consent is not forthcoming due to capacity issues or because the University is concerned about serious risk of harm to the student or other persons.

- 5.3.13. Whilst Library & Student Services staff will liaise with the appropriate medical personnel regarding the concerns held about a student, the decision about enforcing hospital treatment rests solely with these professionals.
- 5.3.14. If the student refuses to engage with the support which can be offered by the Library & Student Services team, they can be given information about external agencies and services. ([See Appendix 4](#)).
- 5.3.15. Students should also be offered access to a telephone to contact a friend, a family member or a helpline, which they feel may be useful.
- 5.3.16. It should be borne in mind that University staff cannot restrain a distressed student and, if they seek to leave, staff have no powers to stop them. Where a student leaves the campus in a distressed state, a member of Library & Student Services campus or Senior Management Team should be informed immediately and a joint decision taken as to whether the nature of the student's distress is sufficient to notify the police, or whether attempts to contact the student should be made by University staff. For young people, under the age of eighteen, their parent or guardian should also be informed of the situation. In all cases, when the student returns to the University, the Fitness to Study Policy & Procedure should be followed.

5.4. ***Students in distress whilst in UCA accommodation***

- 5.4.1. If a student's behaviour in UCA accommodation is giving cause for concern and Library & Student Services staff are not available, i.e. evenings, weekends and public holidays, the Wardens or Security should be called or, in extreme circumstances, the emergency services.
- 5.4.2. Where there is concern for the student's wellbeing, Accommodation Services out-of-hours procedures will be followed and the appropriate member of staff will contact the Campus Health and Safety Responsible Person.
- 5.4.3. If the student is assessed as presenting an immediate risk of harm to themselves or others, the police should be called. It is important that UCA staff then follow the University Emergency Response and Incident Management Procedure (UERIMP).
- 5.4.4. If an assessment is made that the student can wait until the next available working day to seek support, then the student should be encouraged to seek appropriate support from Library & Student Services.

Appendix 1 - Five ways to wellbeing

Building the following five actions into our day-to-day lives is important to ensure wellbeing:

Connect...

With the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.

Be active...

Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of mobility and fitness.

Take notice...

Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.

Keep learning...

Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.

Give...

Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.

From the Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project (2008) Final Project report. The Government Office for Science, London. www.foresight.gov.uk

Appendix 2 - Guidance for Students Supporting Others with Mental Health Difficulties

Mental Health difficulties are not unusual. Currently it is estimated that one in four people will experience some mental health difficulties at some time in their life. It can be worrying to friends when someone begins to show signs of mental ill health. There will often be changes in the person's behaviour and mood and they may say or do things that are upsetting or disturbing. You may feel that you want to help a friend, but may be at a loss as to what to do, or afraid that you may do the wrong thing. The following guidance may help you:

- Try not to ignore the situation, make excuses for their behaviour or pretend nothing is wrong. Try to talk to your friend and express your concern.
- Be prepared to listen. This alone can sometimes help; your friend may be able to take action having heard that someone is concerned and having spoken about their issues.
- Try not to give advice - it is better to explore the options and possible outcomes with your friend and let him/her make up their own mind.
- Be honest and clear about what support you can offer to your friend. You should not be ashamed to admit when a request is more than you can cope with. If your own health or academic work is neglected, you will soon be even less able to help.
- You should not feel that you must help your friend on your own. The Students' Union, Library & Student Services, Tutors and Programme Leaders have information about professional services both within the University and externally which can provide support. Help your friend to identify suitable professional support and encourage them to access it.
- You may feel upset or distressed by the knowledge of your friend's problem. You can seek support for yourself if you feel overwhelmed. The Counsellors and Specialist Advisors based in Library & Student Services can offer a safe place for you to discuss your concerns. Keep in mind that you can always discuss the situation in general terms; you don't have to give your friend's name.
- In some exceptional circumstances you may feel that your friend's mental health has deteriorated to such an extent that you are afraid for their safety or that of others. In these circumstances, you will need to notify Library & Student Services, or a residence hall Warden. If your friend is in immediate danger of hurting themselves or others, notify the emergency services.
- Remember that you are not a therapist yourself - express your concern and your support but do not feel that you are responsible for solving the problem. You have not let your friend down if you are unable to resolve the situation yourself.

Appendix 3 - Mental Health Crisis Guide

UCA Library & Student Services

When confronted with a student needing immediate support

1. Make sure at least two staff members are around.
2. Offer the student a private space to speak.
3. If the student is behaving in a way that is a cause for concern, inform Library & Student Services on the campus in question and call on medical assistance, or the emergency services, if you assess this is necessary. **Do not try to explore with the student how they are feeling.**
4. Be clear with the student about the level of your concerns, then make contact, **with their consent where possible**, with the appropriate member of staff or external agency; see below.
5. Where the student's safety or that of someone else is at risk, emergency services should be contacted - including the police - even without their consent. This should ideally be done by, or in liaison with, your Line Manager or a member of the Library & Student Services campus or Senior Management Team.
6. Keep a record of your actions and those of any other staff throughout, following the University Emergency Response and Incident Management Procedure (UERIMP), where the emergency services are called upon.
7. Contact the student's Course Leader to let them know that the student is unwell and what action you have taken.
8. Consider if you want to explore your own responses to the emergency by speaking with your Line Manager or a member of the Counselling team.

Appendix 4 – Useful Contacts

Canterbury contact numbers

UCA Library & Student Services:

University Library Main number	01227 817314
Nick Ross - Gateway Services Manager	01227 817405
John Sutter – Learning Enhancement & Support Manager	01227 817991

GP:

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services:	01227 597055
The Health Centre:	01227 597000
Canterbury Mental Health Team:	
Kent and Canterbury Hospital:	01227 766877

Emergency Services:	999
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Non-emergency services:	101
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Epsom contact numbers

UCA Library & Student Services:

University Library Main number	01372 202461
Hilary Wicks - Gateway Services Manager	01372 202428
Paula Clark – Learning Enhancement & Support Manager	01372 202562

GP:

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services:	01372 204120
Derby Medical Centre :	01372 726361
The Community Assessment & Treatment Team, Mid Surrey	01372 206300
Epsom General Hospital:	01372 735735

Emergency Services:	999
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Non-emergency services:	101
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Farnham contact numbers

UCA Library & Student Services:

University Library Main number	01252 892709
Simon Harper – Gateway Services Manager	01252 892950
Richard Swales – Learning Enhancement & Support	01252 892459

GP:

The Ferns Medical Practice:	01252 723122
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services:	01483 443777
The Community Mental Health Team:	01483 782000
Guildford Crisis Response Team:	01483 571122
Frimley Park Hospital - Casualty:	01276 604604

Emergency Services: 999

Non-emergency services: 101

Maidstone contact numbers

UCA Library & Student Services:

University Library Main number (Rochester)	01634 888734
Louise Jennings, Gateway Services Manager	01634 888729 / 07769 890332
Learning Enhancement and Support Manager	01634 888762 / 07769878744

GP: The Vines	01622 754898
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services:	01622 723600
The Crisis Intake Mental Health Team:	01622 725000

Maidstone District General Hospital: **01622 729000**

Emergency Services: 999

Non-emergency services: 101

Rochester contact numbers

UCA Library & Student Services:

University Library main number **01634 888734**
Louise Jennings, Gateway Services Manager **01634 888729 / 07769 890332**
01634 888762 / 07769 878744
Learning Enhancement and Support Manager

GP: St Mary's Island Doctor Surgery **01634 334203**
Dr T Colbert **01634 843351**
Thorndike Healthcare **01634 817217**

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services: **01634 583000**
Medway/Swale Crisis Resolution Home Treatment Team **01634 830000**
Early Intervention for Psychosis Service (EIS) **01634 854547**
Mental Health Matters – Out of Hours service **0800 107 0160**

Medway Maritime Hospital: **01634 830000**

Emergency Services: **999**

Non-emergency services: **101**

Library and Student Services Senior Management Team:

Director of Library and Student Services, Jan Conway 01252 892703

Head of Gateway Services, Christina Lewis 01372 202458

Head of Learning Enhancement and Support, Kristy Widdicombe 01372 812555

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

Acorn: **01276 670883**
(alcohol & drug support)

Alcoholics Anonymous: **0845 7697555**

CRUSE: **0870 1671677**
(bereavement support)

Eating Disorders Association: **0845 634 1414**

Mind Info Line: **0845 766 0163**
(Mental health information)

NHS Direct: **111**
(24 hour medical queries)

Police: (Surrey)
Police: (Kent)

0845 125 2222
01622 690690

Rape Crisis Helpline:
Farnham
Epsom
East Kent Rape Crisis

01483 546 400
0808 802 9999
01227 450 400

Samaritans:
(24 hour helpline)

0845 790 9090
jo@samaritans.org

Victim Support Helpline:

0845 3030 900

Senior Managers and other key UCA contacts –

Deputy Vice-Chancellor	Alan Cooke	acooke@ucreative.ac.uk Ext 2647
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Head of School, Three Dimensional Design (3DD)	Bob Pulley	bpulley@ucreative.ac.uk Ext 1483
Head of Estate Services	Peter Rhodes	prhodes@ucreative.ac.uk Ext 7436
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