



Worried about someone

Advice if you are worried about a fellow student

When might I be concerned?

- The person tells you they have a problem that's getting them down
- There's a sudden change in their appearance, especially weight loss or hygiene
- You're aware that they regularly make themselves vomit after eating
- They've threatened or attempted suicide or have threatened or been violent to someone else
- They've told you or you've noticed that they're self harming - e.g. cutting their arms or other parts of their body
- They've been excessively or increasingly using alcohol and/or drugs
- Their mood has changed recently - they seem particularly unhappy or withdrawn, or racing and excited the whole time
- They're behaving in bizarre ways, for example being overly paranoid.
- Other people are also concerned about them
- They have gone missing

How do I talk to someone about their problems?

- Be willing to listen and offer supportive understanding. This is often as helpful as any direct advice that you can give. Your friend may have been waiting for an opportunity to talk to someone, and sometimes this is enough for people to then start to feel better.
- There's no need to avoid talking about the situation. It's OK to talk to your friend and tell them you are concerned, but at the same time, you don't want to make them talk about the situation the whole time.
- Don't forget about your own well being when trying to support someone else. You need to make sure you can look after your own emotions, and you're not expected to give up all your time and energy to help another person.
- Don't take responsibility for your friend's problems. It's not up to you to solve their difficulties.

What else should I do?

- Try to point your friend in the direction of various support within the University, such as wardens, academic advisers and other departmental staff,
- Realise the limits of what you can do, especially if things are getting much worse.
- If you are concerned about someone taking their own life, or seriously harming someone else, seek urgent advice from someone in the University (for example any of those listed above), even on a confidential basis. If you are unable to do this or the situation becomes very urgent contact the person's GP, if known, or take them to the nearest Accident and Emergency centre or NHS walk-in centre.

The Counselling Service offers Support Sessions on each working day usually at 3.00pm and 3:30pm. The Disability and Mental Health Advisers can often offer urgent appointments.

When should I refer to the mental health and wellbeing adviser?

- In an emergency situation or if there is a need to refer to a psychiatrist.
 - When someone needs to be pro-active and contact a disturbed student.
 - Where the University can make Reasonable Adjustments or Special Exam Arrangements.
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