

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH DIAGNOSES



Student
Wellbeing
Centre



UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

Suggested strategies (general)

- **Mental health difficulties are often hidden.** Speaking to a student you are concerned about or who has come to speak to you, may offer a critical point of contact for them. If you have a feeling something is not quite right, ask them. You will not make things worse by asking.
- **Find out from the student** in a respectful, open-ended way, if anything is troubling them and what support or help they would find most useful. They will know best about what they need.
- **Be as non-judgmental and supportive as possible.** Avoid the temptation to give advice. Your main role is to identify the nature of the problem and signpost appropriately.
- **Explain your boundaries and keep to these.** For example, if a student gets very upset and needs something from you that you can't provide, explain this and direct them to Student Wellbeing. You could wait until they feel calmer and possibly offer to go with them/book the appointment with them/ask if they would like someone else to do this with them.
- **Have an awareness of the way they may present** due to their particular diagnosis including feeling very anxious and having difficulty concentrating in class. Also be aware of the potential effects of their medication e.g. tiredness.
- **If the student makes comments that indicate a potential risk of harm to themselves or others, don't promise to keep this confidential.** Encourage the student to reach out to support services and contact Student Wellbeing to report a concern for welfare if you are worried about the risk of harm.
- **Discuss with the student** any teaching strategies that have proved helpful in past learning situations to ensure support is provided in a way that suits their needs.
- **Use the full accessibility features** of Microsoft where necessary to aid learning.
- **Where possible share files** rather than using the screen sharing function as sharing files is accessible to screen readers

Recognising that students may be struggling

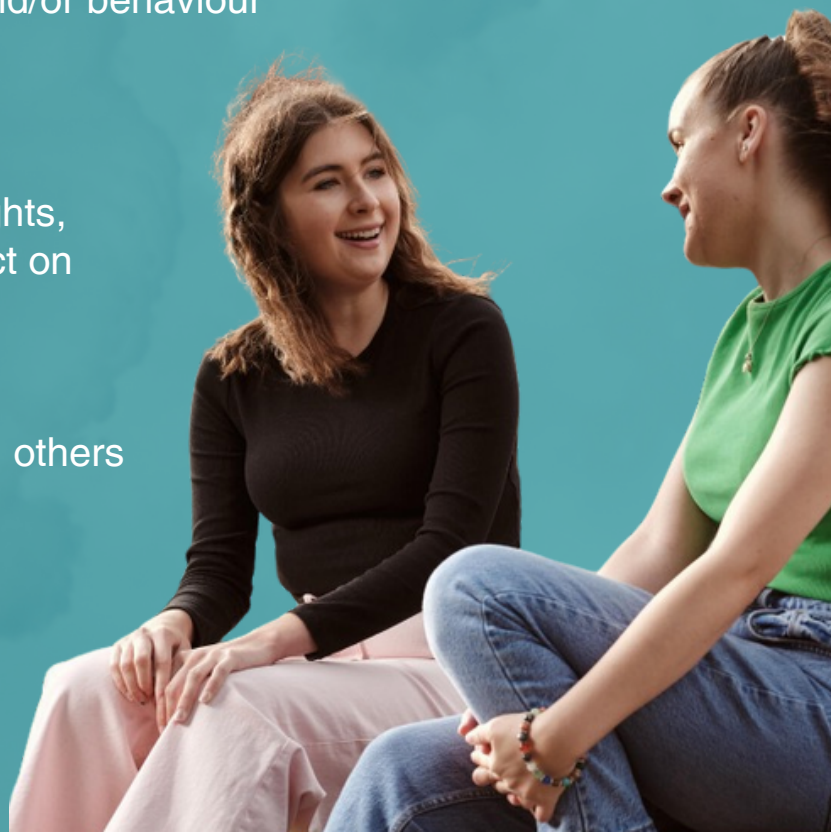
In some cases, you may not notice any signs/symptoms, or you may have not met the student before. However, for students you are familiar with, you may begin to recognise small changes or have a feeling that 'something is not right'.

Some of the common signs a student might mention, suggesting they may be in need of further support, may include:

- Changes in attendance such as increased absences
- Changes in appetite and sleeping patterns
- Uncharacteristic emotional responses e.g. emotional outbursts, mood swings, agitation, withdrawal
- Increased use of drugs and/or alcohol
- Problems with concentration – the student may report staring at a computer screen for hours and not getting anything done, for example
- Reports of feeling depressed, anxious or over stressed
- Changes in physical appearance and/or behaviour

Signs of a potential crisis include:

- A student mentioning suicidal thoughts, along with plans and the means to act on these, or immediate plans to harm themselves
- A student mentioning intent to harm others
- Extreme emotional distress



Assistive technology

Students with a mental health condition may also be able to access assistive technology available on all University networked PC's, such as:

- **TextHelp:** Text to speech software (shows as 'Read and Write 10')
- **Inspiration:** Easy planning software

(These programmes can be found on University computers in: Start > Programmes)

Library disability support

Students with a mental health condition may also be able to access additional support through the library.

Helpful resources

TogetherAll is a brilliant website for you to recommend to students struggling with mental health issues. It is a safe community to support mental health, 24/7.

www.togetherall.com

The Student Wellbeing Centre has created a number of useful resources including workshops, podcasts, and self-help guides. These are an excellent tool to recommend to your students.

[Click here to go to our resources web page](#)

Useful contacts for students

Student Wellbeing Centre

01522 886400

studentwellbeing@lincoln.ac.uk

International College

01522 886102

internationalcollege@lincoln.ac.uk

Student Support and Advice

01522 837080

studentsupport@lincoln.ac.uk

University Library

01522 886222

library@lincoln.ac.uk