



E-Learning guidance for facilitators

Introduction

The Charlie Waller Memorial Trust's new e-learning package of online training modules is designed to enhance non-specialist mental health staff's skills, knowledge and confidence to offer a first line of support to students who may have mental health issues.

The team behind creating this learning package are all highly experienced university professionals in counselling and mental health. From their collective experience of working in Higher Education, the team acknowledge the huge contribution and input all staff that work and interact with students within the University community make.

Front line staff including librarians, accommodation staff, chaplains, personal tutors, registry, administrators, porters and cleaners often come across students who may have mental health issues. We wanted to offer some robust training and guidance to these staff members so they felt more confident in dealing with students in distress.

Being able to support students at an early stage helps to normalise common feelings of anxiety and worry, before they may escalate to needing more specialist help. For students experiencing depression that first conversation can make all the difference.

The package consists of six easy-to-follow 20-minute sessions, including:

- Signs to look out for
- Key helping skills
- Knowing who else to involve and when

This Guidance gives suggestions for the facilitator on how to maximise the learning potential of this training. Please use the additional resources of the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust's E-Learning Summary Sheets 1 – 6 in conjunction with this Guidance, to get the most out of this training.



Preparation before training starts

If you are the facilitator of the training, here are some key points to think about before you begin:

- What are the key expectations from my audience – what might they need?
- What apprehensions may the team have in relation to the e-Learning?
- Have there been any recent experiences of examples in a work setting that are likely to come up or be raw?
- Am I clear on University structures on pathways to help for students, for example the structure and delivery of services?
- Are there any specific institutional protocols you need to be aware of, for example are there any centralised phone numbers students should ring or out of hours facilities?
- What do you want to teach or refresh the group on? Suggestions could be key definitions, University guidelines, University systems to use, clear directions and signposting etc.

To remember

- It is vital to always be aware that staff participating in training will have their own real life experiences of mental health issues, within their personal and/or professional network. Be sensitive to these experiences and always set initial ground rules of confidentiality and anonymity when talking about personal experience. For example, what is discussed is not repeated outside the training in an identifiable way.
- If the content of training becomes difficult, allow staff the space and ability to leave the sessions and take a break. Talking about mental health can affect people in different ways and it is good to vocalise this at the beginning so staff feel comfortable and prepared. If staff leave the session, make sure you follow up with them afterwards to check they are okay.

Suggested formats

There are many formats and arenas where this training could be used. We have come up with some suggestions of how you may use this training in a manageable way in your busy schedules. They are:

- 1 to 1 sessions, for example in Performance Development Reviews or Appraisals
- Team meetings or Away days where the whole team can go through the modules together
- In a debrief after a critical incident
- As part of inductions for new staff members
- As part of ongoing staff development
- Training for Student Union Officers or SAB Officers

Once you feel comfortable and prepared to deliver the training, make sure you follow these 6 key points to ensure the training goes as well as possible:



1. Introduce yourself

- Explain who you are and what your role is in the training
- Explain what the strategy is and what is the focus of the training. What are you aiming to teach the group and how will this training positively impact their day-to-day work?

2. Recap the last session

- Start each session with a check in of what people thought of the last session and any key points they have used in actual practice. For example, how has the e-learning helped them this week?
- Encourage discussion and thoughts on the homework task.

3. Introduce the new session and hand out CWMT summary sheets

- It is unlikely that people will be able to attend training sequentially e.g., once a week, so please share widely the CWMT Summary Sheets of key points from each session, so no one feels they have missed anything.

4. Encourage discussion

- Allow yourself enough time for peer learning and discussion. It is always the richest source of learning, using real life examples that people are willing to share. Drawing upon participants' own experience to keep focus on their examples, questions and worries.
- Try and include a narrative like a personal story about a situation you have been in or a case example. This will help make your presentation relatable and will offer validation and normalise the participants' own experiences:
"I know someone who..." *"For example I once..."*
- Maybe break off in to small groups to discuss and feedback to the wider group?

5. Encourage feedback

- Encourage feedback on the training and on the style of learning. Involve and adapt the training as you go on to suggestions from your group.

6. Set homework task

- Set the small task provided at the end of the CWMT Summary Sheet as homework for the group to take away and complete. When



having the recap of the previous session group members could present things they have learnt or found out from their homework task.

7. Use online E-Learning training resources

- Encourage participants to prepare for each session by reading through each module beforehand if they have time. This will make the sessions more productive, especially if you have limited time when the whole team is free.
- The E-Learning can also be accessed following training sessions if staff want to check anything or go back and look at points again.

8. Buddy up

- Encourage peer learning and buddying up within the group. Get participants to choose one or two others in the group to contact via email, phone or in person, to see how their homework is coming along during the training. Encourage participants to check in with each other between the sessions, as this helps maintain motivation and multiply the learning across the team.
- As the facilitator, make sure you are available in between staff meetings for any concerns or questions participants have.



Session five: students at risk or in crisis

Module description

This session focuses on how best to respond to students who are experiencing crises, and/or take risks with their, or others, wellbeing. To help students in these situations, without becoming stressed from your own involvement, requires that we are well supported within ourselves and by other colleagues.

A number of terms are used to describe types of services, such as Students' Union and Wellbeing Services, for example. It is important to note that these terms will differ from university to university and that you will need to familiarise yourself with how services are known in your university.

Key points from module:

- Listening attentively has the potential to help students feel calmer and more in control
- Understanding the student's current perception of crisis or risk, from his or her own perspective, is important in helping them to begin to see things differently. Attempting to convince someone out of their perception often invites resistance to change
- It is essential to respond to risk in ways that reduce the potential for harm to occur, and which enable the student to manage and contain their risky impulses
- Risky behaviour is best understood from the perspective that it is a coping strategy that often alleviates or distracts from intolerable stress or emotion
- We cannot offer unlimited confidentiality to any student
- Taking responsibility for the student is generally unhelpful – it often contributes to the student's sense of powerlessness. Giving them responsibility encourages self-belief and resilience
- We cannot give support unless we are supported outside of the helping relationship
- It is essential to track our support of students by keeping factual notes (free of value judgements)

Learning objectives:

- Describe what is meant by crisis and risk
- Outline some practical strategies to support the student
- Recognise how to remain safe while helping a student

Menu structure

Each e-learning session comes with a menu structure so that, as a trainer, you can jump immediately to any part of the session simply by clicking on the title in the menu. **Figure One** details where the menu can be found on the page, and **Figure Two** shows the menu from the session.

Figure One: Location of Menu Option

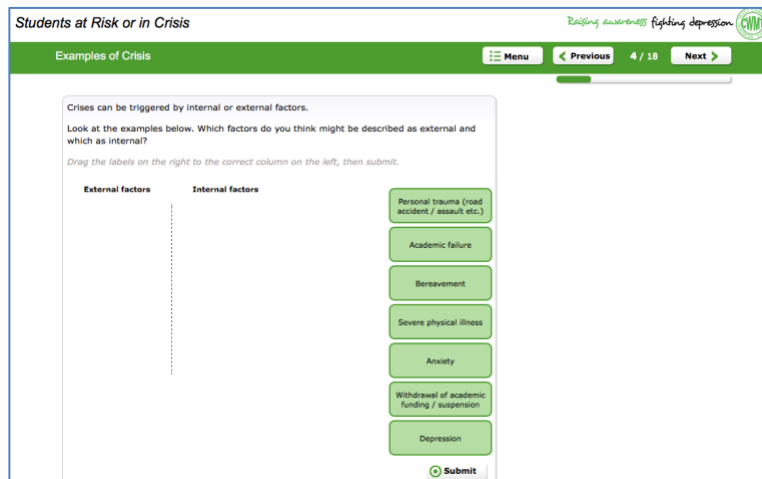


Figure Two: Menu Options in Session Five

Suggested session pages for group

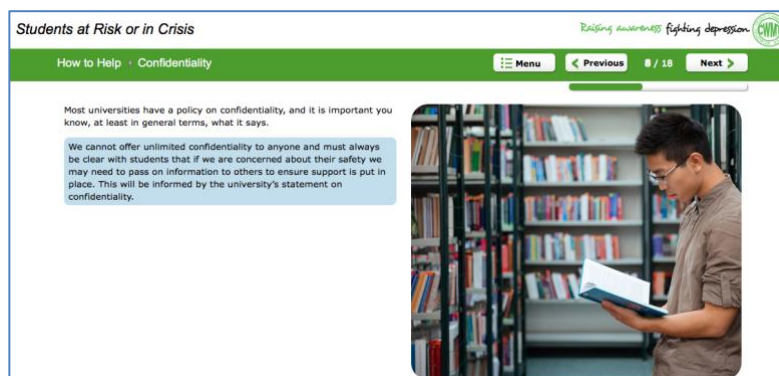
Discussion

Page 4/18: There can be all sorts of triggers for people to experience a crisis. Discuss in the group those factors that might be considered 'internal', and those that might be triggered by 'external' factors.



Page 8/18: "Confidentiality Policy"- Distribute a copy of your Confidentiality Policy to your staff group. Are people aware of this? Have they seen it before? How would you explain this briefly to a student?

Think of a simple sentence "In your own words" that you would feel comfortable using with a student if you were asked about Confidentiality. Share them with whole group.



Page 10/18: In the 7 layers of this triangle, please each choose 3 different ones and give an example of what would fit with each. Share with the group. This helps us to gain a perspective on 'risk'.

Students at Risk or in Crisis Raising awareness fighting depression

Assessing Risk Menu < Previous 10 / 18 Next >

It is very hard to truly know how a person is likely to behave, or whether they are likely to act on their thoughts of suicide.

Asking simple questions and listening carefully to what the student says (and how they appear to be), can help provide information to inform how we think.

The diagram offers a very general understanding of how people can talk about suicide, and the level of risk it can indicate. While it is only general guidance and each situation will differ, it helps illustrate the different ways in which risk presents.

Select each level of the triangle for more information.

Student

Staff

Page 12/18: Are you used to note taking in your role? Where would you note your concerns practically; with whom might you share your concerns with?

Students at Risk or in Crisis Raising awareness fighting depression

Keeping Safe · Record Keeping Menu < Previous 12 / 18 Next >

Select the hyperlinks below.

As university staff with a duty to act professionally, we are required to keep track of student contact. It is good practice to do this so our actions and intentions can be tracked should something happen that requires investigation.

[Notes about note-keeping](#)

Consider records as a simple mechanism to record what has happened, rather than containing any other information.

[What to include](#)

For more information see session 01 - Key Principles in Supporting Students.

Page 13/18: Basic sign posting. Be aware of University systems, Local services, Phone services and on-line resources. It is important that these are up to date!! Distribute and collate services that your students can access, so you are familiar with systems.

Students at Risk or in Crisis Raising awareness fighting depression

Keeping Safe · Signposting Menu < Previous 13 / 18 Next >

Select each of the signs below for more information.

- Internal support
- Internal services
- Counselling services
- External resources
- Limits



Biography of authors



Jackie Williams is the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust's North West trainer and author of the 'Parents' Guide to Depression'. She has worked professionally as a counsellor and trainer for both NHS and University settings since 1987.



Andrew Reeves is the Director of Universities and Further Education for the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust, and Programme Director for the e-learning sessions. He has worked as a counsellor and social worker in a range of settings for 30 years. He is a Senior Lecturer in Counselling, Psychotherapy and Psychological Trauma at the University of Chester.

Further information

If you feel comfortable to use the e-learning session as part of a facilitated session, then the information above should help inform that structure. If you would like more information about the training and support available from the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust, please contact Andrew Reeves (andrew.reeves@cwmt.org), who will be happy to discuss this with you.

The [Charlie Waller Memorial Trust](#) is a charity that provides [fully-funded mental health training](#) talks, and [resources](#) to young people and those who work with or care for them.

Our Waller Trainers are available to deliver bespoke training on request. Please call 01635 869754 or email training@cwmt.org to discuss your requirements.