



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 two: signs to look out for

Module description

This session will introduce you to signs of deteriorating mental health and how to proceed if you spot these symptoms in students you support.

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:

- University is often a time of change and challenge for students
- Many students feel unsettled at times but most cope successfully
- It is important to be aware of signs that might indicate a student is struggling and know how to respond appropriately if you are concerned

Learning objectives:

- Identify characteristics associated with good mental health
- Recognise behaviours likely to be within the 'normal' range of university students at certain times
- Identify behaviours that may be signs of deteriorating mental health
- Recognise conditions which suggest a swift response is required
- State where to find further information

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.

Session Overview
○ Session Introduction
○ Introduction
○ What is Mental Health?
○ The Mental Health of University Students
○ Effects of Major Life Transitions
○ Points of Heightened Emotion in the Academic Year
○ Signs which Could Indicate Deteriorating Mental Health
○ Differentiating between a Temporary Upset and Something More Serious
○ Signs which Could Indicate Deteriorating Mental Health (...continued)
○ Engaging in Conversation
○ Signs through Conversation
○ Disclosure
○ Signs which Suggest a Swift Response is Appropriate
○ Taking the Best Course of Action
▸ Self Assessment
○ Session Key Points
○ Session Summary

Figure One: Location of Menu Option

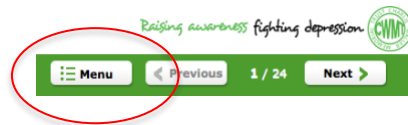


Figure Two: Menu Options in Session Two

Suggested session pages for group

Discussion

Page 7/24: An opportunity for group to discuss what have you noticed is a particularly challenging time in the university year for the students you see?

Signs to Look Out For Raising awareness fighting depression CWMT

Points of Heightened Emotion in the Academic Year Menu Previous 7 / 24 Next

Certain points in the academic year often generate heightened emotion, for example:

- Stress during exam periods or when completing a dissertation
- Conflict about choosing flatmates
- Establishing routines in shared housing
- Applying for work placements, jobs or advanced courses of study
- Vacations can be lonely for students who are unable to return home if most of their peers do and activities on campus are limited

Select [here](#) for what to do if students confide in you about such situations, or you notice they seem to be struggling.

Page 9/24: What has alerted you previously to something more serious with a student, when initially it seemed straightforward? How did it develop? Think of your own example and share in group.

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Differentiating between a Temporary Upset and Something More Serious Menu Previous 9 / 24 Next

Question: How do you differentiate between a temporary upset and something more serious?

Answer: If you have known the student for some time, you may have a sense of what is usual behaviour for that person. Changes in behaviour lasting more than a few days or a couple of weeks may indicate they are experiencing something more significant than a temporary upset.

Example

There may be cause for concern if a student who is normally conscientious and sociable retreats to their room, abandons study routines, and avoids mixing with others. Such students may stop meeting academic deadlines and resist attempts by university staff to contact them by ignoring emails.

If you don't know the student well, try to explore how long they have been feeling/behaving like this and whether they have experienced similar episodes in the past. This may help you to gauge how entrenched their current symptoms might be.

Page 11/24: Think of an “opening phrase” that you would feel comfortable using with a student. Collate from group members to share.

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Engaging in Conversation Menu Previous 11 / 24 Next

If you have concerns about a student's mental health, try gently to engage them in conversation. Below are statements you could use. Review them and consider which one is best.

Select one option from the answers below.

Page 13/24: How do you feel about disclosing and sharing something a student tells you? Who could you talk to if you were wondering how to proceed with some action.

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Disclosure Menu < Previous 13 / 24 Next >


If your attempts to engage a student in conversation fails the first time, keep an eye out for them and keep trying.

Occasionally students may reveal they self harm, or have suicidal thoughts. It is important not to panic if students talk about self-harm or suicide. For more information about this see session 05 - Students at Risk or in Crisis.

However, it is always okay to ask a student if they feel safe, or if they have thoughts about ending their own life.

If students disclose they are experiencing some of the symptoms in this section, it would be appropriate to encourage them to visit their GP and to signpost them to relevant support services in the university, such as the Counselling/Wellbeing Service, or the mental health adviser.

Links to support services where you can find more information about mental health and emotional well-being are available in Resources - Links.



Page 15/24: Use this slide to help the group consider different referral routes, and when a situation might need a more urgent response.

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Taking the Best Course of Action Menu < Previous 15 / 24 Next >

Select the links below.

Establishing whether a student has made previous suicide attempts or experienced previous episodes of mental distress can help you to decide on the best course of action if you think they might need a swift intervention.

The course of action can be determined by whether:

- [Someone is in immediate danger](#)
- [There is no immediate threat to life, but someone is displaying the signs of disturbance and disorientation](#)





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.