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HELPING DISTRESSED STUDENTS

A Guide for Staff

Many people experience emotional and psychological difficulties at some point in their lives. Usually these can be resolved by talking them through with family and friends. Sometimes professional help is needed. Most students will cope well with the stresses of academic life given reasonable support from their friends, family and academic departments. Sometimes they need more than this. If you feel you need to, or are requested to give a student extra assistance, it is important to help within the boundaries of your role and what you are competent to offer.

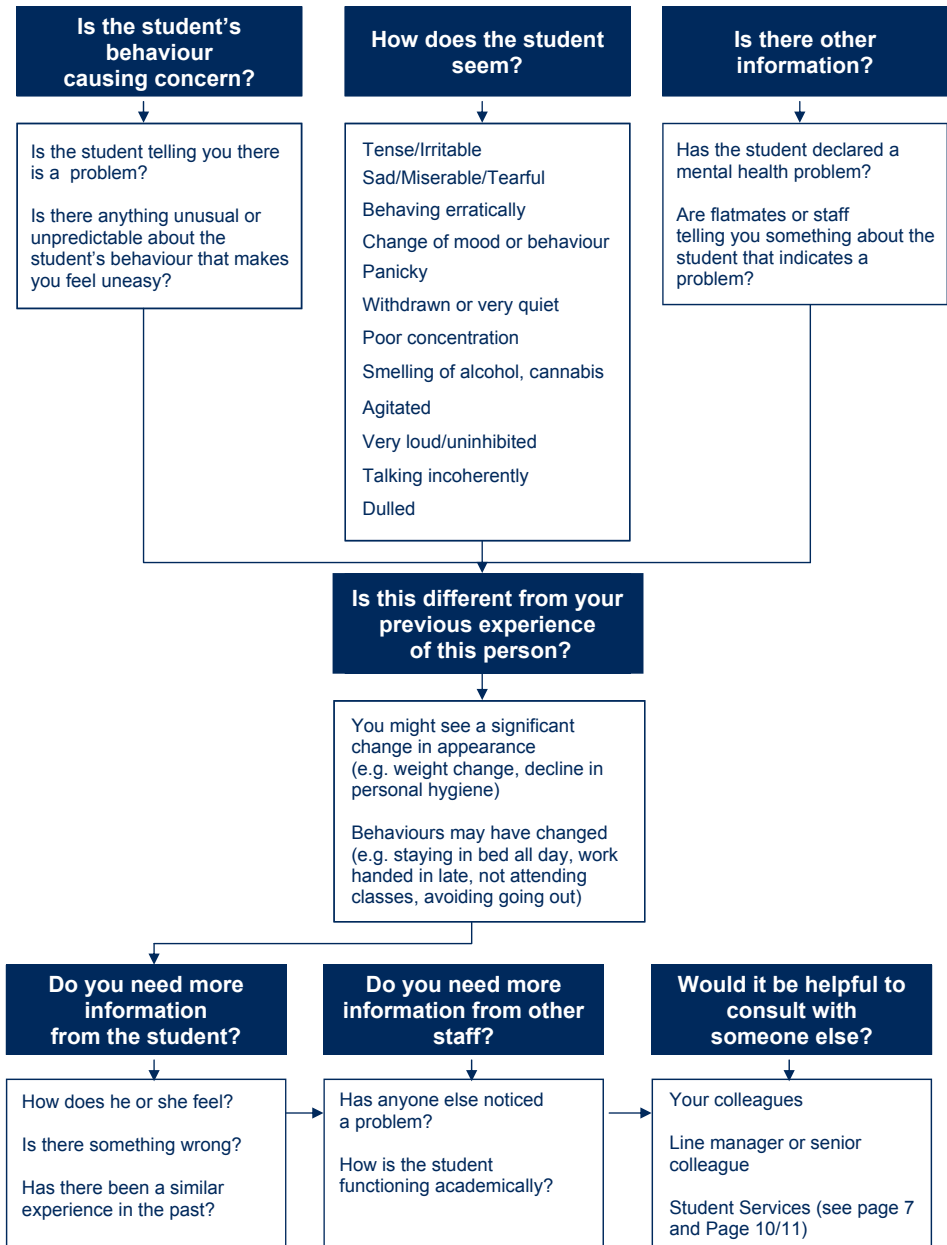
The health and welfare of members of the University is everyone’s concern. This guide gives you advice on dealing with both crises and more everyday situations. It is important to be prepared for emergencies, but also be aware they occur rarely and that expert help is available.

Helping Distressed Students: A Guide for Staff

This guide has been produced to:	What you can do	What you can't do
Help you to recognise when a student may be in difficulty	Listen and give the student your full attention	Solve all the student's problems
	Give the student time to talk	
Help you respond / refer appropriately and effectively	Understand the situation from his or her point of view	Take responsibility for his or her emotional state or actions
Remind you of the sources of support within the University	Be sympathetic and not dismissive	
Raise awareness of issues relating to student mental health	Make appropriate referrals	

How do you know there is a problem?

Trusting your own judgement - check the following



What to do if the situation does NOT require immediate action

It is NOT urgent if there is no immediate risk to the student, or others, although the student may be:

- * Depressed, anxious generally stressed
- * Homesick, lonely and isolated
- * Having problems with relationships
- * Suffering from low self-esteem
- * Bereaved
- * Having health issues
- * Having unexplained study or money problems

If the student will accept help

Decide with the student who is the best person to help

If you feel you could help the student you must ensure that:

You have the time/and/or skill
It does not conflict with your role

You are able to:

Listen to the student's Concerns
Offer practical advice
Provide reassurance
Show your concern by following up your conversation at another time

If you agree someone else could help the student

Are you and the student clear what the student needs? (see page 7 and back cover)

If so, refer directly

If you are unsure then seek further advice from a colleague or speak to one of the University services listed on pages 10 and 11

If the student will not accept help

You can make it clear that you will help if the student changes his or her mind

Seek advice from Student Support and Wellbeing and/or other services (see page 7 and Pages 10/11)

You can monitor the situation

You can alert the student's PDA or other relevant person, about continuing concerns

In all situations

* Make sure that you get support by talking the situation through with a colleague or one of the services on pages 10 and 11.

* Make a record of the conversation and your concerns and inform your line manager/ HOD.

What to do if the situation IS urgent

It is URGENT if:

You believe the student may be at risk of harm to him or herself, or others.

You are concerned for one or more of the following reasons. The student:

- * May be at risk of serious self-harm
- * Has completely stopped functioning
- * Is violent or threatening violence to people or property
- * Seems very disorientated and out of touch with reality
- * Expresses suicidal thoughts / plans

If the student will accept help

In office hours

Make an active referral by helping the student to contact his or her GP, or Student Counselling (page 10), or Student Health (page 10)

If possible, arrange for the student to be accompanied.

Out of hours

Call Security / first aiders on 2222. For help in contacting emergency services Call NHS 24 on 111 or accompany student to A&E.

If the student will not accept help

In office hours

Call Security /first aiders on 2222 for help in contacting the student's GP or emergency services. Inform your line manager or HOD

Out of hours

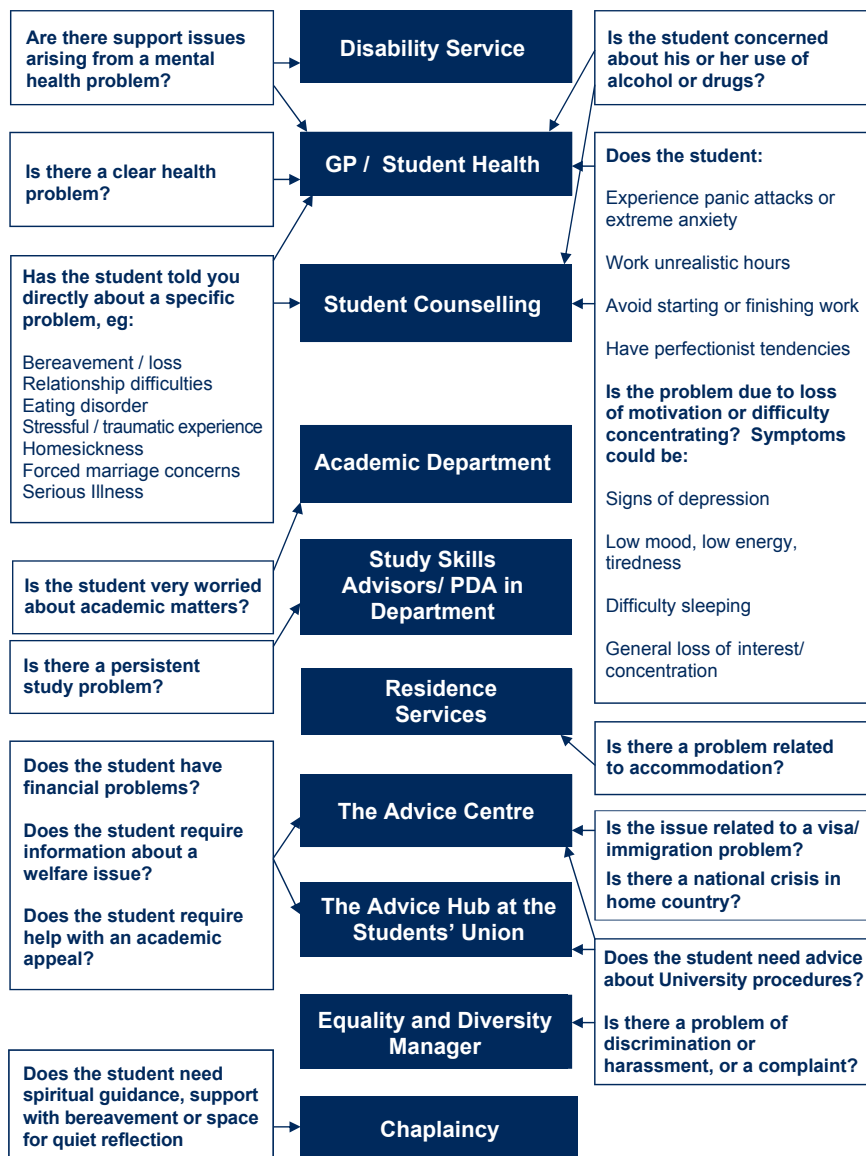
Call Security / first aiders on 2222. For help in contacting emergency services, or call NHS 24 on 111.

Next day, inform the students GP if known, the Student Support and Wellbeing manager, your line manager or HOD.

In all situations

- * Try to stay calm
- * Prioritise your own safety and that of others at the scene
- * Make sure that you get support by talking situation through with a colleague or Student Counselling (page 10)
- * Engage with the student if possible, but put safety first
- * Whenever possible, make sure that you have back-up available
- * Keep a written record

What sort of support does the student need?



See the contact list on pages 10-11 for details of sources of support in the University and externally
 Remember—friends and family are a source of support



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Roles and responsibilities

Identifying Sources of Support

It is not always possible to know what the best source of support might be. The student may have more than one problem, or the initial problem may not be the most central.

What is important in the first instance is to refer the student to somewhere **that is acceptable to him or her**.

A further referral can be made later, if appropriate.

Offering Support Directly

If you offer support yourself, you must ensure that:

You have sufficient time within the context of your other commitments to do this

It does not conflict with other aspects of your role

You have access to appropriate advice and support

You seek advice from colleagues or Student Support and Wellbeing services if you have persistent concerns.

Remember—You are not solely responsible for a student's emotional state.

Confidentiality

Do not disclose personal information about students to anyone outside the University, including parents, without the student's explicit consent.

Do not promise absolute confidentiality and advise the student that you may have to consult a colleague.

If parents wish to contact a student, you can offer to forward a communication or tell the student they have been in touch.

Treat personal information about students with discretion.

Student Counselling offers a confidential consultation service to all staff who may wish to discuss their concerns about students in difficulty or distress.

The University of Strathclyde would like to acknowledge Queen Margaret University and the University of Edinburgh for their contribution to this document.

University Resources

Security (First Aiders)	0141 548 3333	Emergency 0141 548 2222
National Emergency services (ambulance, police, fire brigade)	999	Please note that Security Services staff have responsibility for contacting emergency services on campus.
NHS 24	111	NHS 24 offers out of hours medical advice, including mental health advice, and can make emergency referrals
<u>Support and Wellbeing Team</u>		
Support and Wellbeing Manager	0141 548 4162	
Student Counselling	0141 548 3510 student-counselling@strath.ac.uk	Counselling can help with most personal and relationship problems, including anxiety, stress and depression. A student may feel lonely, homesick or that a situation is causing them to feel unhappy, stuck or upset. They can make an appointment to speak to a counsellor in a confidential accepting environment, to work through their difficulties, understand themselves better and find ways to manage their situation. Personal development workshops around common issues which get in the way of studying effectively are offered during the academic year. There is also a wealth of self-help material available on the website. www.strath.ac.uk/studentcounselling
Student Health	0141 548 3916 studenthealth@strath.ac.uk	The Student Health Nurse can provide advice and information on a range of health issues, minor illness and common ailments. This service also works to enable students to access appropriate NHS services. www.strath.ac.uk/studenthealth
Advice Centre		
Information and Advice Team	0141 548 4104 infoandadvice@strath.ac.uk	Advice, guidance and information on a range of issues including: academic and other University procedures, immigration and personal problems for home, EU and International students. www.strath.ac.uk/sees/infoint/
Student Financial Support Team	0141 548 2753 s.finance@strath.ac.uk	Advice on funding and money matters, hardship funds, emergency loans, bursaries. www.strath.ac.uk/studentfinancialsupport/studentfunding
Study Skills Advisers	0141 548 4064 studyskills@strath.ac.uk	The Advisers offer support to enhance academic skills of all students, for those seeking to improve their performance as well as those in need of additional support and guidance. They will work with individuals on a one to one basis and with groups of students through workshops www.strath.ac.uk/studyskills/
<u>USSA</u>		
The Advice Hub (USSA)	0141 567 5040 ussa.advice@strath.ac.uk	The Advice Hub is the Union's free independent Advice and Support Centre. The advisers will help with almost any problem from welfare rights to academic issues, including appeals. Students can drop in between 10-4pm or make an appointment between 9-5pm. They have a lot of extra information on their website and you can also Skype to speak to one of the advisers. www.strathstudents.com/advicehub
Nightline (Helpline)	0141 55 22 55	Nightline is a confidential telephone listening and information service run by students for students (Monday—Friday 7pm—7am during term time)

Disability Service	0141 548 3402 disabilityservice@strath.ac.uk	If a student has a disability or thinks they might, the Disability Service will provide them with all the information, advice and assistance they need to make sure they don't face any barriers in their learning. They will also help with applying for Disabled Students Allowance and can help decide the best way to use it. www.strath.ac.uk/disabilityservice
Equality and Diversity	0141 548 2811 equalopportunities@strath.ac.uk	If the student is experiencing discrimination or alleges harassment refer to or seek advice from the Equality and Diversity Manager. http://www.strath.ac.uk/equalitydiversity/
Chaplaincy	0141 548 4144 chaplaincy@strath.ac.uk	The Chaplaincy welcomes everyone; those of all faiths, those who don't subscribe to any faith and those who have questions about their beliefs. There are areas for prayer but also spaces to study, eat and even a café. The full time and part-time Chaplains can offer support to anyone who needs it whether on religious, spiritual concerns or simply to discuss problems. www.strath.ac.uk/chaplaincy
Student Business	0141 548 3165 studentbusiness-engineering@strath.ac.uk studentbusiness-science@strath.ac.uk studentbusiness-business@strath.ac.uk studentbusiness-HASS@strath.ac.uk	If a student needs a student status letter for council tax, has lost a student card, needs to change the details the University has for them, or is sick and going to miss a class - these are just a few things this team details with. A lot of these things are done online so check out their webpage www.strath.ac.uk/studentlifecycle
Student Residences	0141 548 3561 student.accommodation@strath.ac.uk	If students are living in University accommodation the Village Office and Residence Assistants are there to offer practical support and guidance. If a student is having problems in Halls they can go and see them, or speak to a member of the Hall Committee. www.strath.ac.uk/accommodation
Maths Skills Support Centre	mathsskills@strath.ac.uk	MSSC can help all students who are studying maths, their main focus being supporting 1 st & 2 nd years. There are drop in sessions where students can ask for help or can arrange an appointment. There are also a wealth of resources online www.strath.ac.uk/mathsskills
Law Clinic	0141 548 3738 enquire@lawclinic.org.uk	A collaboration between Law students and the staff who support them the Law Clinic offers legal advice to anyone who doesn't qualify for legal aid but can't afford their own professional legal fees. They can also give you advice if there is a matter of concern which has a legal aspect. www.lawclinic.org.uk
Centre for Sport and Recreation	0141 548 2446 sport@strath.ac.uk	The place to go for an endorphin boost! Whether it's a gym session, a relaxing swim or having a laugh in one of the many classes students will leave feeling better than when they arrived. Students can also speak to CSR staff if they have any fitness concerns or want advice on how to get into exercise. www.strath.ac.uk/sport
Careers	0141 548 4320	The Careers Service can help planning for future careers whether it is advice on a CV, interview and assessment centre tips, or helping find an internship or part-time work. Also remember career planning isn't just for final year students, encourage students to plan in a timely way for the career they want. www.strath.ac.uk/careers

Data protection Policy

http://www.strath.ac.uk/media/ps/cs/copyrightanddataprotection/Data_Protection_Policy_2012.pdf

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy and Guidelines

http://www.strath.ac.uk/media/ps/cs/gmap/academicaffairs/policies/student_mental_health_and_wellbeing.pdf

Student Support Services and Resources

Support and Wellbeing Team

Student Counselling _____	0141 548 3510
Student Health _____	0141 548 3916
Study Skills Advisers _____	0141 548 4064
Support and Wellbeing Manager _____	0141 548 4162
Advice Centre:	
Student Financial Support _____	0141 548 2753
Information and Advice _____	0141 548 4273

Other Resources

Security (first aiders) _____	X 3333
Emergency _____	X 2222
The Advice Hub (USSA) _____	0141 567 5040
Disability Service _____	0141 548 3402
Chaplaincy _____	0141 548 4144

Useful Numbers

NHS 24 _____	111
Breathing Space _____ (Helpline for low mood, anxiety and depression)	0800838587
Samaritans (Helpline) _____	0141 248 4488
Royal Infirmary A&E _____	0141 211 4484/ 4314
Nightline (Helpline) _____	0141 55 22 555

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University of Strathclyde Glasgow G1 1XQ

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