UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

Strategy Relating to the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Students – Appendix 1

I. The commitment of the broader University
• To ensure that staff and students are made aware of the terms of the strategy (MHWS) and their responsibilities arising under it
• To ensure the MHWS and information appendix are kept under review on a two yearly cycle and updated as necessary
• To empower students in proactively looking after their own mental health and wellbeing, by providing appropriate guidance and resources (see Section 6.1, below)
• To provide appropriate academic regulatory procedures for schools which take account of students experiencing mental health difficulties in their studies
• To provide training for staff to help recognise where mental health difficulties are contributory to dysfunctionality in the student’s life and to offer guidance about how to offer assistance and refer on appropriately.
• To promote a non-stigmatising University culture in which all students are encouraged to succeed

II. The commitment of individual staff
• To treat each student with a mental health difficulty as an individual, not define them as a problem or a condition
• To recognise the limits to what they can and cannot do. Such limits would include recognising the boundaries or limits to their knowledge, responsibilities and competence
• To seek advice from Student Services if they have concerns regarding a student’s mental health, or regarding the professional management of their own relationship to the student in question
• To refer students declaring mental health difficulties on to appropriate support
• To participate in training related to mental health issues provided by the University
• To adhere to the University Policy on Confidentiality (see Section X, below)

III. The commitment of students
• To treat other students and staff with respect and dignity
• To take personal responsibility for their own mental health and wellbeing
• To access and use as appropriate information on student mental health and wellbeing available via the University website.
• To access, as appropriate, support and advice services when assistance is required
• To inform the University of mental health difficulties in a timely manner in order to enable the University to provide appropriate support. If a student wishes to request that mitigating circumstances be taken into consideration for example, they should, if asked, provide appropriate medical evidence to support their case and any University action sought, e.g. reasonable adjustments to assessments
• To notify their school(s) as soon as possible if they are concerned that mental health difficulties may be negatively impacting their exam performance or their ability to fulfil the course commitments
• To communicate concerns with their academic school or Student Services if another student’s difficulties are impacting their own mental health or student experience

Intranet Information
Information, guidance and advice for students on a range of topics is available and readily accessible and should be accessed by them via the University Website:
http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/advice/#d.en.22834

This includes, but is not limited to: academic advice; accommodation advice; advice on family, health and financial matters; study support; advice for international students; support on legal matters and guidance on student-led support.

A list of self-help books and on-line resources on a variety of health and wellbeing issues is also available for students to access and should be accessed by them via the University Website:
http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/advice/booklist/

Workshops and Support Groups
Each semester the University offers workshops, lectures and groups promoting mental wellbeing. These are usually offered by Student Services and the current programme will be advertised on the Student Services’ website.
http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/studentservices/

Examples include workshops addressing resilience, relaxation techniques, motivation, and perfectionism; weekly groups offering knitting, crafts and gardening therapy; and a student-led peer support programme.

Sport and Exercise assistance
The University recognises the important link between mental health and exercise. Student Services and the University Sports Centre work together to offer various programmes of peer support and developing a healthy lifestyle of exercise.
http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/sport/aboutus/athleticunion/hbhm/

Academic Advice
Students can access academic advice from schools through their Adviser of Studies. The University recognises that mental health difficulties may impact student performance in ongoing coursework or in examinations. Students are advised to contact their School to discuss their options so that this can be taken into account. Only the academic School has the authority to grant dispensations with coursework and/or assessment: see Assessment Policies and Procedures
http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/advice/academic/

General advice regarding academic procedures is accessible and readily available to students and should be accessed by them via the University Website:
http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/advice/academic/

Further information regarding academic regulations can be accessed through the following links:
I. Extensions for coursework/ deadlines
   [Link to Extensions for Coursework Deadlines]

II. Assessment Policies and Procedures
    [Link to Assessment Policies and Procedures]

III. Policy on Student Academic Appeals
     [Link to Policy on Student Academic Appeals]

IV. Leave of Absence (taking time out of study)
    Policy on Leave of Absence
    [Link to Policy on Leave of Absence]

     Procedures on Leave of Absence
    [Link to Procedures on Leave of Absence]

V. Withdrawing or Transferring
    Whilst the University does not wish its students to leave their studies in St Andrews completely, it recognises that there are valid reasons why sometimes people have no option but to transfer or withdraw permanently. Students are required to inform the University if they wish to do so and will be offered support and advice from Student Services to consider further options and to make positive plans before withdrawal.
    [Link to Withdrawing or Transferring]

VI. Fitness to Study
    The University has a responsibility to all members of its community. On occasion, a student’s mental health difficulties instigate a behaviour pattern which impacts negatively on others. The University aims to support students through to successful completion of their studies where possible, through suitable assessment of their needs and provision of appropriate support, but if we cannot meet the support needs of an individual, the Fitness to Study procedure may be initiated.
    [Link to Fitness to Study]

VII. Fitness to Practise Medicine
    As part of their training, medical students have certain privileges and responsibilities which will differ at times from the requirements of other courses. It is recognised that mental health difficulties have the potential to affect a student’s fitness to practise and as such, further guidance is provided. This should be accessed by medical students via the following link to the University Fitness to Practise Medicine Policy: [Link to Fitness to Practise Medicine]

    [Link to Fitness to Practise Medicine Policy]
Individual Advising and Counselling

The University, primarily through Student Services, is committed to enhancing the student experience by offering the following services:

- Support, advice and counselling is available to all students from 9am-7pm, Monday to Friday during semester time and from 9am-5pm at all other times.
- Emergency support and advice is available to all students facing a life threatening challenge from 5pm-9am and during weekends and holiday periods. Students living in Halls of Residence phone their warden and students living in other accommodation phone the main University switchboard number.
- Guidance and assistance is offered to university staff who have concerns relating to a student’s mental health and wellbeing.
- Student services staff will liaise with local healthcare providers and external agencies to develop services suitable to meet student needs, including advocating on behalf of students to NHS providers.
- Provision of all services to professional standards, delivered by staff and (on occasion and only where appropriate) volunteers who are qualified and trained for their role and under the direction of University staff.

Confidentiality

Any initial disclosure of a mental health difficulty to a member of the University Staff will be treated with sensitivity. Student information will be handled with discretion, and will not normally be disclosed to anyone outside the University. However it may require to be shared with appropriate members of University staff.

In certain circumstances, where an individual is deemed to be a risk either to him/herself or to other people, the safety of the individual and/or the safety of other members of the community takes precedence and confidentiality may be breached.

Information regarding Data Protection and confidentiality is as outlined in the University data protection code and should be accessed by students via the following link:


Only in very limited and extreme circumstances, and when other agencies such as the police or NHS have been unable to contact the nominated emergency contact, when it is believed that a student may be in very serious danger, will the University contact a student’s emergency contact. Emergency contacts are nominated by the student at the time of matriculation and students are asked to ensure they be kept up to date. The record can be amended by the student at any time. N.B. Emergency contacts are not always next of kin.

Sources of General Advice and Support

University Services:
The ASC – 01334 462020  
Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm  
The front door of Student Services, and a number of student administration functions, our one stop answer shop will advise you on how to get the best possible support for your concern. Start with them when you’re not sure who the best person to help you is.

Student Services – 01334 462720  
Monday to Friday, 9am-7pm during semester 9am-5pm outside semester  
A wide range of advisers to assist with all aspects of student life:

I. Student Services’ Life and Wellbeing Team  
Life and Wellbeing Advisers will discuss any difficulties, provide appropriate guidance and make referrals within, or out-with Student Services, as appropriate. Additionally, they will provide advice to students about self-management and resilience building, and will signpost appropriate resources.

II. Student Services’ Counselling Team  
The service is staffed by a team of professionally qualified counsellors who will normally offer up to four sessions. Counsellors will work in partnership with students, supporting them in identifying current challenges, and empowering them in developing strategies to overcome problems or for self-management. Students will be encouraged to work outside sessions to develop strategies discussed and this might include engaging with appropriate online resources. Owing to the large number of students seeking counselling, the service does not normally aim to provide long-term support to students.

Further information regarding Life and Wellbeing Advice and Counselling is available on the University website via the following link:  
http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/advice/support/

III. Mental Health  
The Mental Health Coordinator and colleagues will facilitate and coordinate access to appropriate mental health services. Staff will support students on a flexible basis but will not duplicate services offered by the NHS. The Mental Health Coordinator works with staff to monitor and respond to students in crisis and at personal risk.

In responding to distress all three teams listed above will utilize both an asset model which seeks to identify and develop individual strengths and abilities as well as using a deficit model which focusses upon reducing symptoms or problems.

IV. Disabilities Team  
The University provides support for students who register a disability both at entry to their course and whilst on course, putting in a range of reasonable adjustments to study and living and assisting with transition to university. Some mental health difficulties will come under the category of a disability. It is important to realise the definition of disability as deemed appropriate in UK Higher Education Institutions. The legal terminology is as follows: “if that person has a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”
Where you have registered a disability under the law, this information and details of any reasonable adjustments recommended will be made available to appropriate staff in the University to ensure that the recommendations can be implemented.

Further information regarding the Disabilities team and how to register a disability is available on the University website. This should be accessed by students via the following link: http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/advice/disabilities/

Information regarding disabilities and the Equality Act (2010) available on the University website and should be accessed by students via the following link: http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/hr/edi/disability/

V. Student Services’ International Team

The University is a world-wide community and recognises the fact that international students may require additional guidance to support them in their studies. In addition to all other services, advice and support for prospective and current students is available through specialist advisers, based in Student Services. Information for international students is also available on the University website and should be accessed by students via the following link: http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/international/

VI. Money Advice Team

The University recognise that financial concerns can be a source of stress and anxiety for students and have the potential to exacerbate mental health difficulties. In addition to financial information available to students via the University website students can speak with a Money Adviser, based in Student Services for further support and advice. http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/money/financialsupport/

Wardens – see individual residences
http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/accommodation/ug/current/residents/wardens/
Monday to Friday, 7pm-8am, Saturday-Sunday, 2pm-8am
The residential representatives of Student Services, Wardens can provide a first point of contact for any resident experiencing difficulties.

The Chaplaincy Centre – 01334 462866/462492
Monday to Friday, 8.45am-5pm
The Chaplain and his team offer befriending, listening and support. It is another place for students to explore concerns whether they adhere to faith (of whatever kind) or not.

Out of Hours – 01334 476161
Weekends and Nights

External Services:
Breathing Space – 0800 838587
24 Hours at Weekends (Friday 6pm – Monday 6am), Monday to Thursday 6pm – 2am
Breathing Space provides a confidential, phone service for anyone in Scotland experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety. A specialist adviser will listen, offering advice and information.
Samaritans – 08457 909090
24/7, 365 days a year
Samaritans offer confidential listening and advice. They are able to talk through issues, offering directive advice and support.

Student Run Service:
Nightline – 01334 462266
Every night Halls of Residence are open, 8pm – 7am
Nightline is a student-run, confidential, anonymous listening and information service. They aim to provide a non-directive, judgment-free environment for students to express concerns.