

### Procedure on Learner Mental Health and Wellbeing

Policy       Procedure       Protocol       Guideline

Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director (ONMSD): Consortium of Centres of Nursing and Midwifery Education (CCNME)

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## 1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to promote mental health and wellbeing for all learners and to ensure a consistent staff approach to support learners who are experiencing mental health difficulties.

## 2.0 Procedure

### 2.1 Policies and practices that support mental health and wellbeing for learners

- 2.1.1 All applicants are assessed on their academic merit/selection criteria with no discrimination on the grounds of mental health.
- 2.1.2 Application process encourages applicants to disclose mental health difficulties, to promote early discussion on support requirements and inform them of the support and services available.
- 2.1.3 On commencement of a programme, signpost learners to academic skills resources and supports to promote and support the learners' positive mental health and wellbeing.
- 2.1.4 Programme Co-ordinators are the primary contact for all learners regarding any general or subject specific academic challenges they may experience during their studies.
- 2.1.5 The Programme Co-ordinator advises learners of the available resources and mental health supports during induction and at regular intervals throughout the programme.
- 2.1.6 Monitoring and recording of attendance enables commencement of supportive conversations with learners who may be having difficulty engaging with their programme.
- 2.1.7 Appropriate individual examination arrangements for learners who have a mental health difficulty will be put in place, to ensure that learners are not disadvantaged from their fellow learners.
- 2.1.8 Extensions and mitigating circumstances procedures afford learners the opportunity to notify the Programme Co-ordinator of circumstances that are impacting on their ability to engage with their programme and complete assessments.
- 2.1.9 Promote strategies for learners to seek early help such as awareness of available services, relevant policies, self-help strategies, online resources/use of media to increase accessibility and reduce stigma.
- 2.1.10 Communication relating to a learner's mental health should be conducted privately and in a safe environment.
- 2.1.11 There is an appendix of resources available to signpost learners to mental health services and supports that are available to them.
- 2.1.12 Promote mental health awareness among staff to appropriately recognise and respond to learners with mental health difficulties.

### 2.2 Responding to a learner in distress

- 2.2.1 Mental health difficulties affect each individual differently and a wide range of signs and symptoms can indicate that a learner has mental health difficulties. It is important that staff are aware of the possible indicators that might indicate a learner is in distress. Indicators that a learner may have a mental health difficulty can include:

Behaviour	Statements	Appearance	Performance	Additional Information
Behaving in an unusual or unpredictable manner that is causing concern, which might include changes in patterns of attendance or their academic performance might alter dramatically	Content of the learner's conversations might seem erratic or out of character, or the learner might express suicidal thoughts or ideas	May seem tense, irritable, sad, or withdrawn, or the learner's appearance might have changed, for instance they might become unkempt	May have a deterioration in attendance at class or in academic performance, with repeated failure to meet deadlines for submission of assignments	The learner might have declared a mental health problem or other people might be expressing concerns for the individual

Adapted with permission from University College Dublin (UCD), (UCD Student Health and Wellbeing Policy, pg. 10, available: <https://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/UCD-Student-Mental-Health-Policy1.pdf> )

- 2.2.2 In cases of emergency and responding to distressed learners, a guide for staff is to be applied (Appendix 1) and resources listed (Appendix 2) should also be used.
- 2.2.3 If staff become concerned about a learner's mental health there are two pathways that can be taken:
- 2.2.3.1 If it is an emergency: In these situations staff are asked to follow the actions detailed in the emergency section of the 'Staff Concerned about a Learner in Distress' flowchart (Appendix 1) and to inform the Director of the Centre.
- 2.2.3.2 If it is not an emergency: staff are asked to refer to the non-emergency section of the 'Staff Concerned about a Learner in Distress' flowchart (Appendix 1).
- 2.2.3.3 Staff will offer the learner the opportunity to identify a named person to be contacted on their behalf to provide further support.

### 3.0 Document Control

Document Title	<b>Procedure on Learners Mental Health and Wellbeing</b>	
Author	Consortium of Centres of Nursing and Midwifery Education (CCNME)	
Version Control	Version	Date of Approval
	V.1.0	04/11/2022
Policy Review	November 2025	
Supporting Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Association for Higher Education Access &amp; Disability (AHEAD. (2013). <i>A Guide to Disclosure</i> [online]. Available from: <a href="https://www.ahead.ie/userfiles/files/shop/free/A%20guide%20to%20Disclosure%202013.pdf">https://www.ahead.ie/userfiles/files/shop/free/A%20guide%20to%20Disclosure%202013.pdf</a> [accessed 20 June 2022].</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association for Higher Education Access &amp; Disability (AHEAD). (2020). <i>Charter for Inclusive Teaching and Learning</i> [online]. Available from: <a href="https://www.ahead.ie/userfiles/files/shop/free/Charter4InclusiveTeachingAndLearning.pdf">https://www.ahead.ie/userfiles/files/shop/free/Charter4InclusiveTeachingAndLearning.pdf</a> [accessed 20 June 2022].</li> <li>• Association for Higher Education Access &amp; Disability (AHEAD). (2008). <i>Good practice guidelines for the providers of supports and services for students with disabilities in higher education</i> [online]. Dublin: AHEAD. Available from: <a href="https://www.ncad.ie/files/download/AHEAD_Good_Practice_Guidelines.pdf">https://www.ncad.ie/files/download/AHEAD_Good_Practice_Guidelines.pdf</a> [accessed 20 June 2022].</li> <li>• Central Statistics Office. (2018). <i>The Wellbeing of the Nation: Societal Wellbeing in Ireland 2017</i> [online]. Available from: <a href="https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/health/Wellbeing_of_the_Nation_FINAL_OFT_-_web.pdf">https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/health/Wellbeing_of_the_Nation_FINAL_OFT_-_web.pdf</a> [accessed 23 January 2022].</li> <li>• <i>Data Protection Act 2018</i>. No. 7/2018 [online]. Available from: <a href="https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2018/act/7/enacted/en/html">https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2018/act/7/enacted/en/html</a> [accessed 31 January 2022].</li> <li>• Deasy, C., Coughlan, B., Pironom, J., Jourdan, D. and Mannix-McNamara, P. (2014). Psychological Distress and Coping amongst Higher Education Students: A Mixed Method Enquiry. <i>PLOS ONE</i>, 9(12), p.e115193.</li> <li>• European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). (2015). <i>Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)</i> [online]. Available from: <a href="https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf">https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf</a> [accessed 23 January 2022].</li> <li>• Higher Education Authority. (2020). <i>National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework</i> [online]. Available from: <a href="https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2020/10/HEA-NSMHS-Framework.pdf">https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2020/10/HEA-NSMHS-Framework.pdf</a> [accessed 23 January 2022].</li> <li>• Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). (2015). <i>Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners</i> [online]. Available from: <a href="https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/Code%20of%20Practice.pdf">https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/Code%20of%20Practice.pdf</a> [accessed 30 January 2022].</li> <li>• Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). (2016). <i>Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers</i> [online]. Available from: <a href="https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/Core%20Statutory%20Quality%20Assurance%20Guidelines.pdf">https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/Core%20Statutory%20Quality%20Assurance%20Guidelines.pdf</a> [accessed 30 January 2022].</li> <li>• Rowling, L. (2002). <i>Mental health promotion and young people: concepts and practice</i>. Sydney: McGraw-Hill.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University College Dublin. (2015). <i>UCD Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy</i> [online]. Available from: <a href="https://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/UCD-Student-Mental-Health-Policy1.pdf">https://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/UCD-Student-Mental-Health-Policy1.pdf</a> [accessed 23 January 2022].</li> <li>• University of West London. (2017). <i>Cause for Concern Policy: Policy for staff working with students in difficulties</i> [online]. Available from: <a href="https://www.uwl.ac.uk/sites/uwl/files/2021-10/Cause%20for%20Concern%20Policy%20-%20May%202021.docx?_ga=2.191756131.833120002.1632730974-1930149641.1631196488">https://www.uwl.ac.uk/sites/uwl/files/2021-10/Cause%20for%20Concern%20Policy%20-%20May%202021.docx?_ga=2.191756131.833120002.1632730974-1930149641.1631196488</a> [accessed 20 June 2022].</li> <li>• World Health Organization (WHO). (2022). <i>Mental health: strengthening our response</i> [online]. Available from: <a href="https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response">https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response</a> [accessed 23 January 2022].</li> </ul>
<p>Related Policies &amp; Procedures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Policy on Programme Development</a> [PDF, 6 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Policy and Procedure on Learner Admission</a>[PDF, 4 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Policy on Learner Withdrawal from Studies/Early Exit</a> [PDF, 5 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Procedure on Learner Withdrawal from Studies/Early Exit</a> [PDF, 4 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Policy on Learner Attendance and Absenteeism</a> [PDF, 4 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Procedure for Managing Learner Attendance and Absenteeism</a> [PDF, 4 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Policy on Teaching and Learning Strategies</a> [PDF, 5 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Procedure on Teaching and Learning Strategies</a> [PDF, 4 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Policy on Learning Environment: Classroom</a> [PDF, 5 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Policy and Procedure on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion of Learners</a> [PDF, 4 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Policy on Workplace Learning Environment</a> [PDF, 5 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Policy on Learner Complaints</a> [PDF, 4 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Procedure on Management of Learner Complaints</a> [PDF, 5 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Policy on Assessment of Learners</a> [PDF, 8 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Procedure on Assessment of Learners</a> [PDF, 7 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Policy on Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment</a> [PDF, 5 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Procedure on Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment</a> [PDF, 5 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Policy on Submission of Assessments</a> [PDF, 4 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Procedure on Submission of Assessments</a> [PDF, 4 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Policy on Assessment Appeals</a> [PDF, 8 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Procedure on Review, Recheck and Appeals of Learner Assessment Decisions</a> [PDF, 6 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Policy on Support for Learners</a> [PDF, 4 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Procedure on Support for Learners</a> [PDF, 6 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Policy on Data Protection, Usage &amp; Management</a> [PDF, 7 Pages]</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Procedure on Information and Data Protection, Usage and Management</a> [PDF, 7 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Policy on Programme Monitoring and Review</a> [PDF, 7 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Procedure on Programme Monitoring and Review</a> [PDF, 7 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Policy on Promoting and Maintaining Academic Integrity</a> [PDF, 8 Pages]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Procedure on Promotion of Academic Integrity among Learners</a> [PDF, 5 Pages]</li> </ul>
Related Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ireland East Hospital Group. (2022). <i>Healthy Ireland</i> [online]. Available from: <a href="https://www.iehg.ie/healthy-ireland">https://www.iehg.ie/healthy-ireland</a> [accessed 21 June 2022].</li> <li>• Mental Health Ireland. (2022). <i>Mental Health Ireland</i> [online]. Available from: <a href="https://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/resources/">https://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/resources/</a> [accessed 21 June 2022].</li> <li>• World Health Organization (WHO). (2019). <i>Mental Health</i> [online]. Available from: <a href="https://www.who.int/news-room/facts-in-pictures/detail/mental-health">https://www.who.int/news-room/facts-in-pictures/detail/mental-health</a> [accessed 21 June 2022].</li> </ul>

**Staff concerned about a Learner in Distress**

**Non Urgent**

If the learner is or appears withdrawn, low in mood, tearful, unduly anxious or has a sudden deterioration in academic performance

&

Does not display behaviours considered as Urgent/Emergency



**ACTIONS**



**Talk with the learner and explain your concerns.**

**Clarify why the learner is distressed and identify what existing supports are in place for the individual.**

**Explore if the learner is willing to seek additional support.**

**Advise the learner of the services available and signpost the learner to additional supports and provide them with the contact details.**

**If the learner does not wish to seek additional support, this should be respected. No further action is required at this stage unless the learner's condition deteriorates to become urgent/emergency.**

**Urgent/Emergency**

If a learner presents with behaviours that are of urgent concern including:

- Aggressive/threatening behaviour towards staff/others
  - Actively talking about suicide or expressing suicidal thoughts
  - Presenting as a risk to themselves or others
- Seek help from security and/or Garda Síochána 999/112)



**ACTIONS**



**Where possible, try not to act alone, consult with a colleague and consider everyone's safety.**

**Talk with the learner and explain your concern unless you have right to believe this may exacerbate the situation further.**

**If it is a life threatening emergency contact the ambulance service at 999/112.**

**Inform the Director of the Centre.**

**If the learner is violent contact security and or Garda Síochána (999/112)**

Adapted with permission from University of West London (UWL), 2021. Cause for Concern Policy: Policy for staff working with students in difficulties, pg 13, [online] Available at [https://www.uwl.ac.uk/sites/uwl/files/202110/Cause%20for%20Concern%20Policy%20-%20May%202021.docx?\\_ga=2.191756131.833120002.1632730974-1930149641.1631196488](https://www.uwl.ac.uk/sites/uwl/files/202110/Cause%20for%20Concern%20Policy%20-%20May%202021.docx?_ga=2.191756131.833120002.1632730974-1930149641.1631196488) [Accessed 16 November 2022]

## Appendix 2 Resources

Resource	Contact Details
<p><b>AHEAD</b> Is an independent non-profit organisation working to create inclusive environments in education and employment for people with disabilities. The main focus is further education and training, higher education and graduate employment.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.ahead.ie/">https://www.ahead.ie/</a> Tel: 01 7164396</p>
<p><b>Alcoholics Anonymous</b> Is a Fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from Alcoholism.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie/">https://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie/</a> Tel: 01 8420700</p>
<p><b>Aware</b> Is the national organisation providing free support, education and information services to those impacted by anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder and related mood conditions.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.aware.ie/contact/">https://www.aware.ie/contact/</a> Freephone 1800 80 48 48</p>
<p><b>Body Whys</b> Provide support for people affected by eating disorders</p>	<p>Office: 01-2834963 / Helpline: 01-2107906 Office: <a href="mailto:info@bodywhys.ie">info@bodywhys.ie</a></p>
<p><b>Drugs.ie</b> Is managed by the HSE National Social Inclusion Office and are responsible for providing services connected to a range of issues and vulnerable groups.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.drugs.ie/">https://www.drugs.ie/</a></p>
<p><b>HSE's Employee Assistance Programme</b> Is a free, confidential counselling service, here to help you. EAP also offers support following a critical incident affecting you or your team.</p>	<p>Tel: 0818 327 327</p>
<p><b>Gamblers Anonymous (GA)</b> Is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from a gambling problem.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.gamblersanonymous.ie/">https://www.gamblersanonymous.ie/</a> Tel: 01 872 1133</p>
<p><b>GROW</b> Is a Mental Health Organisation which helps people who have suffered, or are suffering, from mental health problems. Members are helped to recover from all forms of mental breakdown, or indeed, to prevent such happening.</p>	<p><a href="https://grow.ie/">https://grow.ie/</a> Tel: 1890 474 474</p>
<p><b>Healthy Ireland</b> Is a Government-led initiative which aims to create an Irish society where everyone can</p>	



enjoy physical and mental health, and where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society.	<a href="https://www.hse.ie/healthandwellbeing/">https://www.hse.ie/healthandwellbeing/</a>
<b>Jigsaw</b> Believe every young person must have the support that's right for them, whatever they are going through. Both online and in our services around the country, advice and support is made available to young people aged 12–25 years-old.	<a href="https://www.jigsaw.ie/">https://www.jigsaw.ie/</a>
<b>LGBT Ireland</b> Is a national organisation underpinned by localised knowledge and responses. Together with our network members, we provide support, training, and advocacy which aims to improve the lives of LGBT+ people across Ireland.	<a href="https://www.lgbt.ie/">https://www.lgbt.ie/</a> Tel: 01 6859280
<b>Men's Aid</b> Specialise in supporting men experiencing domestic violence, whether this is ongoing or in a past relationship. They provide specialist counselling, practical information and legal options, while respecting and supporting you in all your decisions should you decide to leave or stay in the relationship.	<a href="https://www.mensaid.ie/">https://www.mensaid.ie/</a> National helpline: 01-5543811
<b>Mental Health Ireland</b> Has a suite of high-quality, evidence-based booklets, videos, resources, webinars, and podcasts on mental health topics available for your information	<a href="https://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/resources/">https://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/resources/</a>
<b>Healthy You</b> Brought to you by HSE Health and Wellbeing, this evidence-based programme provides a unique opportunity for people to learn more about mindfulness, gratitude, self-care and resilience.	<a href="https://www2.hse.ie/healthy-you/minding-your-wellbeing-programme.html">https://www2.hse.ie/healthy-you/minding-your-wellbeing-programme.html</a>
<b>Pieta</b> Provide a professional one-to-one therapeutic service to people who are in suicidal distress, those who engage in self-harm, and those bereaved by suicide. All of their services are provided free of charge and no referral is needed.	Freephone 1800 247247 <a href="https://www.pieta.ie">https://www.pieta.ie</a>
<b>Dublin Rape Crisis Centre</b> Is a national organisation offering a wide range of services to any person affected by rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment or childhood sexual abuse.	<a href="https://www.drcc.ie/">https://www.drcc.ie/</a> National 24-hour Helpline: 1 800 77 8888

<p><b>Samaritans</b> Provides emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope or at risk of suicide</p>	<p>Tel: 116 123 to speak to a Samaritan <a href="https://www.samaritans.org/ireland/samaritans-ireland/">https://www.samaritans.org/ireland/samaritans-ireland/</a></p>
<p><b>Shine</b> Provides information and support for people affected by mental health difficulties, supporting individuals and family members .</p>	<p><a href="https://shine.ie/#">https://shine.ie/#</a> Tel: 1890 621 631</p>
<p><b>Irish Advocacy Network Ltd</b> Is an island-wide, independent, mental health organisation led by people with personal experience of mental health difficulties</p>	<p><a href="https://www.irishadvocacynetwork.com/wp/">https://www.irishadvocacynetwork.com/wp/</a> Tel: 01 -5470510</p>
<p><b>turn2me</b> Offers adult counselling and peer support services to adults and young people aged 12 plus.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.turn2me.ie/">https://www.turn2me.ie/</a></p>
<p><b>Women's Aid</b> Is a domestic violence service for women and children in Ireland.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.womensaid.ie/">https://www.womensaid.ie/</a> 24/7 Freephone helpline, call 1800 341 900</p>