

Student services



CONCERNS ABOUT A STUDENT'S MENTAL WELLBEING?

A GUIDE FOR STAFF

Everyone has mental health – sometimes good, sometimes not so good. Like physical health, support is available and recovery is possible. Difficulties with mental health are broad and can range from everyday worries to diagnosable illness.

There are resources and services for every student experiencing problems with their mental wellbeing. We want to make sure that you are clear on how much you can help students, and that you always feel supported by providing information to support you in your role and make referrals.



University of Essex

IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT A STUDENT

Talk to the student

The most helpful approach is a collaborative one that involves the student. The first step would usually be to talk to the student to allay your concerns and find out their current situation. You may find on speaking to the student that they are already in touch with the appropriate service, such as SWIS, local mental health service or their GP.

However if they are not yet receiving support, pointing them in the right direction may be all that is needed.

Potential warning signs for mental health difficulties:

Erratic or unpredictable behaviour

Lack of self-care

- Poor personal hygiene
- Unkempt appearance
- Significant weight changes

Under-performance in academia

- Frequent lateness / absence
- Missing deadlines
- Poor concentration

Changes in behaviour

- Very withdrawn
- Unusually quiet in behaviour
- Aggressive/agitated behaviours
- Substance/alcohol misuse
- Changes in eating habits

LIMITS AND BOUNDARIES

There are no Data Protection issues in sharing concerns about a student with appropriate staff within the university. However, there are legal reasons why you cannot discuss concerns with a parent or other students.

Be clear about the boundaries of your role and work within them. You have limits both in terms of the amount of confidentiality you can offer and the amount of time you can spend supporting the student. Be aware of your personal threshold relating to stress and anxiety and do not let care for a student step over that threshold. Please note; staff within SWIS are unable to share information about a student without the student's consent.

Dos

Listen non judgmentally.

Make it clear to students that information they give you is only confidential to an extent. If they give you reason to believe that themselves or anybody else is at danger, you are obliged to notify SWIS or emergency services.

Refer to our flow chart for suggestions of what to do when worried about a student's mental wellbeing.

Seek support from colleagues or your line manager, if supporting a student has affected you in some way.

Make time to take care of yourself.

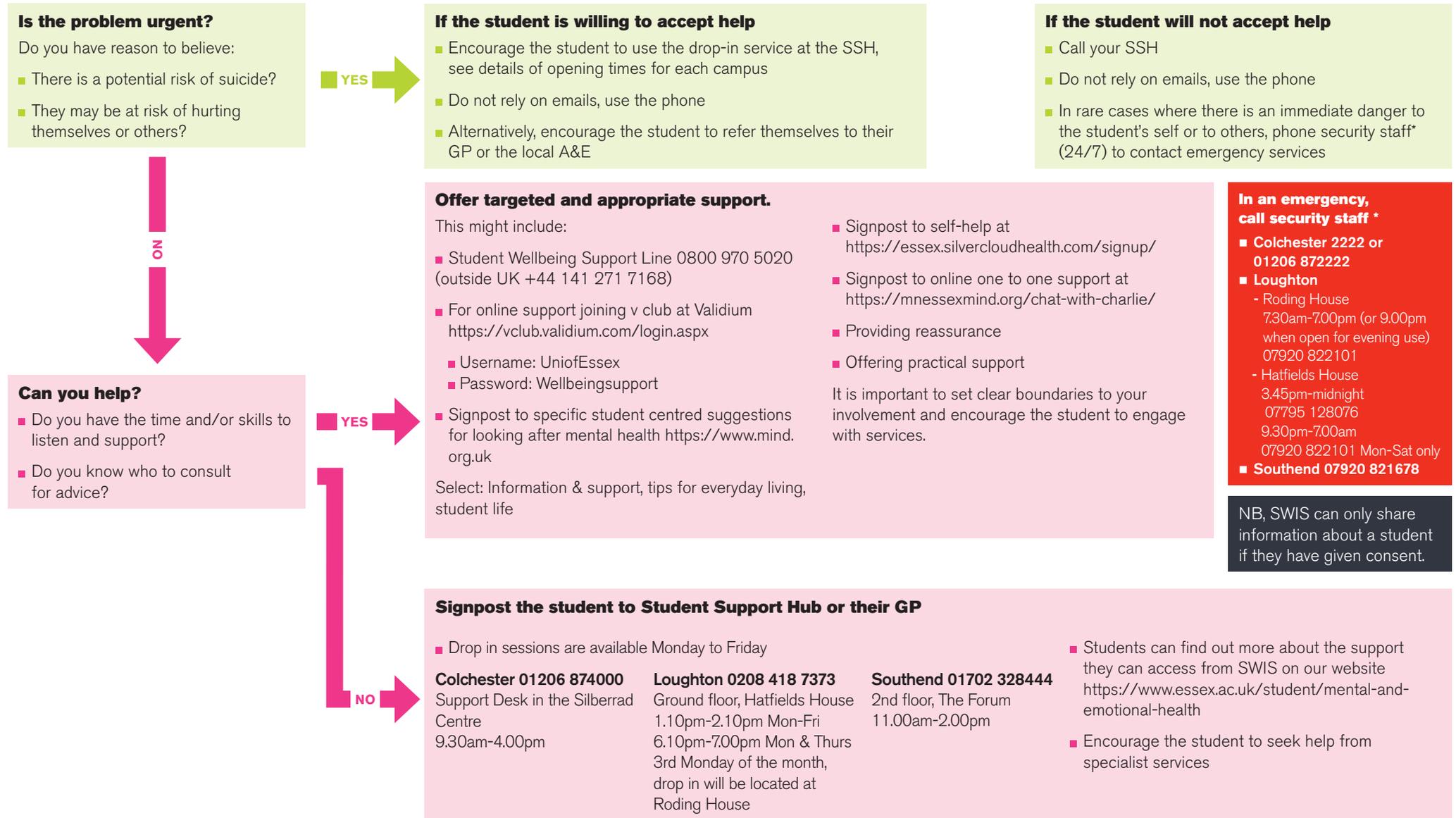
Don'ts

Share your personal information with students; this includes your personal telephone numbers and social media details.

Share information about students with inappropriate members of staff, or your social circle.

Try to tackle a student's wellbeing issues on your own, help and support is available.

CONCERNED ABOUT A STUDENT'S MENTAL WELLBEING?



WHAT IF THE STUDENT WILL NOT ACCEPT HELP?

Most adults with mental health difficulties are able to make informed choices about all aspects of their lives, including accessing health care and support. While it's important that we make students aware of the support the university offers, we also have to accept that they have the right to decline support. For further advice, or to raise any concerns please contact the Student Services Hub on 01206 874000 or email wellbeing@essex.ac.uk.

Staff can access advice from the Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Service (SWIS) on:
01206 874000 (9.00am-5.00pm Mon - Fri) – wellbeing@essex.ac.uk

WHAT IF IT IS URGENT?

See the flowchart for case-by-case advice. Contact the SWIS for advice if needed. If a student appears very unwell, have someone wait with them while you seek immediate support.

CAN I GET SUPPORT TO DEAL WITH NON-URGENT SITUATIONS?

The SWIS can advise staff by supporting students with non-urgent personal difficulties. Contact via the Student Services Hub or via email wellbeing@essex.ac.uk. Issues to discuss may include:

- Is the approach I am taking helpful?
- Have I offered all that I should within the boundaries of my role?
- Is there anything else that I or my department should be doing?

WHERE TO REFER STUDENTS

Student drop in

Drop in sessions are available Monday to Friday.

Colchester

9.30am-4.00pm at the Student Support Desk, 1st floor of the Silberrad Student Centre

Southend

11.00am-2.00pm, 2nd floor of The Forum

Loughton

1.10pm-2.10pm Mon-Fri
6.10pm-7.00pm Mon & Thurs

Drop in will be open these times at Hatfields House except for the third Monday of the month when drop in will be located at Roding House.

Drop in sessions are typically half an hour in duration, and are a convenient opportunity to talk with a staff member of the student support team in a safe space. Students can talk about anything that is troubling them in these sessions, including but not limited to mental health issues. Students do not need to book an appointment, just turn up during drop in hours fill out an enquiry form and are seen almost immediately.

A resolution may be achieved there and then, or a longer appointment may be scheduled, a referral to counselling or liaison with or referral to external specialist services.

Reporting a concern about a student

If you are concerned about the welfare of a student you can report your concerns by completing the form in the link provided

www1.essex.ac.uk/students/contact/report-concern.aspx

This form is not reviewed outside of normal business hours, including bank holidays and closure periods. If you consider the situation to be an emergency, ie. someone is at immediate risk or harm, please contact security on your campus.



Raising awareness fighting depression

Free e-learning package for all university staff

Would you like to feel more confident to support students in distress?

Easy-to-follow 20 minute sessions including:

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

Who is the training for?

All academic and support staff, including

- Personal tutors
- Librarians
- Security staff
- Accommodation staff
- Careers advisors
- Chaplains

To find out more and access the sessions, visit:
www.learning.cwmt.org.uk

USEFUL NUMBERS AND CONTACTS

Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Service (SWIS)

Email: wellbeing@essex.ac.uk

Student Services Hub (SSH)

Colchester: 01206 874000

Southend: 01702 328444

Loughton: 0208 418 7373

Campus security

Colchester: 2222 or
01206 872222

Loughton:

- Roding House 7.30am-7.00pm
(or 9.00pm when open for evening use) 07920 822101
- Hatfields House 3.45pm-midnight 07795 128076
9.30pm-7.00am 07920 822101 Mon-Sat only
- Southend: 07920 821678

Samaritans

Phone: 116 123

Out of hours Colchester North Essex Partnership NHS Helpline

24 hours a day
Phone: 0330 726 1800

Southend Essex Partnership University Trust
Phone: 0300 123 0808

Loughton North Essex Crisis Line
Phone: 0330 726 0110

Chat with Charlie (open 7 days a week between 6pm-10pm)
To log on visit www.mnessexmind.org and click Chat with Charlie in the top right hand corner

Nightline (open 10pm-8am during term time)

Phone: 01206 872020/2022
Freephone: 0800 326 5454

Student Wellbeing Support line
Phone: 0800 970 5020
(outside UK
+44 141 271 7168)

Useful resource from Mental Health UK
<https://truths.mentalhealth-uk.org/depression>