

University Counselling Service

Christmas/Winter break

The UCS will be closed between noon on the 24/12/21 and the 03/01/22 (inclusive).

Section A: Self-help for students

If you are a student at the University of Cambridge, and you are struggling to manage your own mental health over the holiday period, there are a number of resources available to you dependent on your need.

When might I be struggling with my mental health?

You might be struggling with your mental health if you notice that you are withdrawing from others, this could be not staying in touch with friends, keeping to yourself in your bedroom, not responding to text messages, or avoiding situations where you might come into contact with others e.g. mealtimes, going to the shops. You might also notice that you have less energy or feel less motivated. You might find it hard to complete normal everyday tasks and responsibilities like cooking, cleaning, self-care, and you might be struggling to keep up with your studies. You might start to feel hopeless and as if things will never change or get better.

You can go on to www.studentsagainstd Depression.org for more detailed information on the types of warning signs that you might notice if you start to struggle with your mental health.

When you are struggling with your mental health it can be difficult to carry on as normal, and you might find it hard to keep doing the things that normally keep you well, or you might struggle to think of what you can do or who you can call for help and support.

In order to make accessing help for your mental health easier over the holiday period, the University Counselling Service has created a guide of the support available for you to access, both in Cambridge or nationally. These resources have been divided up into the following categories:

1. Who can I call for support?
2. Where can I go for support?
3. What can I do to help myself?

In each of these categories there is information about resources available both locally to Cambridge, and nationally across the UK. There is also information about services for crisis support, and those that you can access if you are not yet at the crisis point but are struggling to manage.

If you are not sure which services or resources will be helpful for you, there is a flow diagram to help guide you to the most helpful services for your needs.

Who can I call for support, and what help can they offer?

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| Crisis support | Local to Cambridge | <p>GP If you have registered at a GP in Cambridge and it is within operating hours, you can contact your GP surgery for help, support and advice.</p> <p>If it is out of hours, you can contact the out of hours GP service through NHS 111.</p> |
| | | <p>FRS The First Response Service, or FRS, is a mental health crisis line available in Cambridgeshire. To access this, you can contact the service on NHS 111, option 2. The service is 24/7, and you will be put through to a mental health professional who can talk to you about your current situation and what your needs are. Following a conversation about your needs, the professional and yourself will work together to develop a plan moving forward, this may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a phone conversation, where you can discuss what it is distressing you and get advice and support about how to use coping strategies to make you feel better. - Referral on to secondary mental health services if needed. - Referral to the Sanctuary, a safe space run by the mental health charity MIND which is accessible through FRS from 6pm to 1am. - In some cases, the professional may wish to arrange check in with you at a later time. |
| | Available Nationally | <p>Samaritans Samaritans is a listening and support service run by volunteers. When you call Samaritans, you can share your thoughts and feelings with the volunteer and talk through anything that is worrying, concerning or distressing you. Samaritans is not an advice service, but they will give you the space to talk about what is going on for you.</p> <p>You can contact Samaritans by calling 116 123, or email them at jo@samaritans.org</p> |

Shout

Shout is a confidential mental health text support line run by volunteers that is available 24/7. You can text Shout if you are struggling with low mood, anxiety, relationship difficulties, issues with bullying, are feeling suicidal, or if you just feel overwhelmed and are struggling to cope.

You can text Shout at 85258.

YoungMinds

YoungMinds is a confidential text-based crisis line available to young people up to the age of 25 years of age. The service is available 24/7, and is run by volunteers.

If you need urgent support, you can text YM to 85258.

Childline

If you are under the age of 19 years you can contact Childline on their 24/7 helpline at 0800 1111.

The Mix

The Mix offers online support and counselling services to individuals under the age of 25 years. You can contact The Mix via telephone, e-mail, text, or online messaging.

The Mix helpline, available from 3pm to 12 am 7 days a week on 0808 808 4994.

For 24/7 text support you can text the phrase THEMIX to 85258.

You can access one-to-one online messaging support via the mix website at <https://www.themix.org.uk/get-support/speak-to-our-team>. Messaging support is available 7 days a week from 3pm to 12 am.

HopeLine

Hopeline is a phone line service offering support for individuals under the age of 35 years who are experiencing suicidal thoughts. You can access Hopeline between 9am and 12am, 7 days a week.

You can contact Hopeline at 0800 068 4141 or you can text 07860039967.

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| | | <p>CALM CALM has a national helpline that is available to contact 7 days a week from 5pm to 12am. CALM offer confidential and anonymous support, information and signposting to people struggling to manage their mental health.</p> <p>You can call CALM on 0800 58 58 58</p> |
| | | <p>A&E If you are feeling distressed and don't feel able to keep yourself safe or have done something to hurt yourself that might need professional attention, you can attend your local A&E department.</p> |
| | | <p>999 If you are feeling distressed and don't feel able to keep yourself safe or have done something to hurt yourself that might need professional attention, if you are not able to attend hospital yourself, you can call 999.</p> |
| Mental Health support, not yet at crisis point | Local to Cambridge | <p>College support If you are in college accommodation over the holiday period and find that you are struggling to manage your mental health, you can go to your porters to get some more information about wellbeing support available in your college. You may wish to contact your college Chaplain.</p> |
| | | <p>Qwell Mind's Good Life Service, running in Cambridgeshire, provide access to Qwell. Qwell is a free online support and wellbeing community where you have access to counselling via instant messaging, online peer support and self-help resources.</p> <p>You can access Qwell via the Mind website at www.cpslmind.org.uk/qwell</p> |
| | Available Nationally | <p>TogetherAll TogetherAll is an online subscription service that has been commissioned by the University of Cambridge to provide mental health and wellbeing support. TogetherAll is available 24/7 and is a monitored peer support community where students and staff are able to share concerns and advice. Posts on TogetherAll are anonymised.</p> <p>You can access TogetherAll online through the University Counselling Service web page www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/togetherall</p> |

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| | <p>Family If you are struggling and feel that you need someone to talk to, you could get in touch with some trusted family members, either on the phone or in person and talk to them about what is going on.</p> |
| | <p>Friends If you are struggling and feel that you need someone to talk to, you could get in touch with some trusted friends, either on the phone or in person and talk to them about what is going on.</p> |
| | <p>GP If it is within operating hours, you can contact your GP surgery for help, support and advice. If it is out of hours, you can contact the out of hours GP service through NHS 111.</p> |
| | <p>Crisis support lines You don't have to be in a mental health crisis to speak to someone working at one of the crisis support lines (e.g. Samaritans, YoungMinds, Shout, etc.). If you are struggling to manage your mental health and don't feel able to talk to anyone close to you, call one of the crisis support lines.</p> |

Where can I go for support, and how will they help me?

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| Crisis support | Local to Cambridge | <p>Addenbrookes A&E If you feel that you need medical attention or think that you are unable to keep yourself safe, then you can attend Addenbrookes A&E department.</p> |
| | | <p>GP If you have registered at a GP in Cambridge and it is within operating hours, you can contact your GP surgery for an urgent appointment. If it is out of hours, you can contact the out of hours GP service through NHS 111.</p> |
| | | <p>The Sanctuary You can contact the First Response Service on 111, option 2 and request a referral to attend the Sanctuary.</p> |
| | Available Nationally | <p>Local GP If it is within operating hours, you can contact your GP surgery for help, support and advice. If it is out of hours, you can contact the out of hours GP service through NHS 111.</p> |
| | | <p>Local A&E If you feel that you need medical attention or think that you are unable to keep yourself safe, then you can attend your local A&E department.</p> |
| | | <p>Local crisis support services You can check the NHS website to find your local crisis support services https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline</p> |

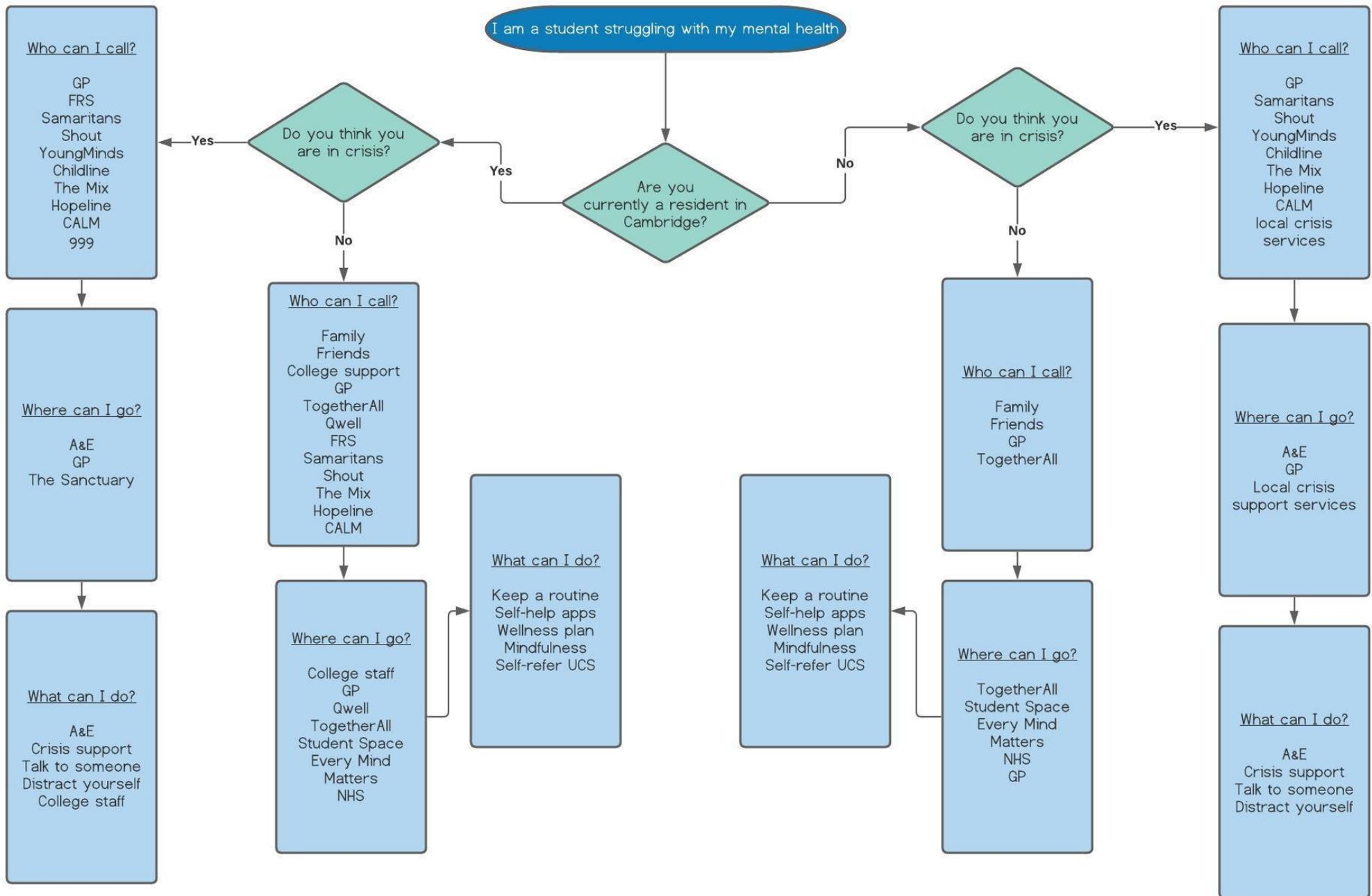
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| Mental Health support, not yet at crisis point | Local to Cambridge | <p>College staff</p> <p>If you are in college accommodation over the holiday period and find that you are struggling to manage your mental health you can go to your porters to get some more information about wellbeing support available in your college. You may wish to contact your college Chaplain.</p> |
| | | <p>Qwell</p> <p>Mind's Good Life Service, running in Cambridgeshire, provide access to Qwell. Qwell is a free online support and wellbeing community where you have access to counselling via instant messaging, online peer support and self-help resources.</p> <p>You can access Qwell via the Mind website at www.cpslmind.org.uk/qwell</p> |
| | Available Nationally | <p>GP</p> <p>If it is within operating hours, you can contact your GP surgery for help, support and advice.</p> <p>If it is out of hours, you can contact the out of hours GP service through NHS 111.</p> |
| | | <p>TogetherAll</p> <p>TogetherAll is an online subscription service that has been commissioned by the University of Cambridge to provide mental health and wellbeing support. TogetherAll is available 24/7 and is a monitored peer support community where students and staff are able to share concerns and advice. Posts on TogetherAll are anonymised.</p> <p>You can access TogetherAll online through the University Counselling Service web page www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/togetherall</p> |
| | | <p>Student Space</p> <p>Student Space is a service to support students through the coronavirus pandemic. There are a range of services available including phone, e-mail, text and webchat support. You can also search the Student Space website to find what support is available at your university.</p> <p>You can find more information at https://studentspace.org.uk</p> |

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| | <p>Every Mind Matters You can access Every Mind Matters through the NHS website. This is a website with practical tips to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing. You can also create a personalised 'mind plan'.</p> <p>You can access Every Mind Matters here https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/</p> |
| | <p>NHS website Check what local support is available to you on the NHS website https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline</p> |

What can I do to help myself?

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| Crisis support | Local to Cambridge | <p>Addenbrookes A&E If you feel that you need medical attention or think that you are unable to keep yourself safe, then you can attend Addenbrookes A&E department.</p> |
| | | <p>Crisis support Access the crisis support services above.</p> |
| | | <p>College staff If you are in college accommodation over the holiday period and find that you are struggling to manage your mental health, you can go to your porters to get some more information about wellbeing support available in your college.</p> |
| | Available Nationally | <p>Local A&E If you feel that you need medical attention or think that you are unable to keep yourself safe, then you can attend your local A&E department.</p> |
| | | <p>National crisis support Contact some of the crisis support services listed above.</p> |
| | | <p>Talk to someone Make sure you talk to someone and tell them how you are feeling. It might be helpful just to have someone listen to what's going on, but they also might be able to help you with ideas about what you can do to improve the situation or help to distract you from what's going on. Make sure people are aware of what's going on for you and how it is making you feel.</p> |
| <p>Distract yourself Distraction is all about giving yourself something else to focus on when you are feeling distressed, overwhelmed, or anxious. There a lot of different ways that you can try to distract yourself including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading a book - Watching TV or a movie - Listening to music - Painting, colouring, arts and crafts, knitting, crochet | | |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Playing video games - Practicing mindfulness techniques - Cleaning and tidying - Baking or cooking |
| | Available Nationally | <p>Keep a routine Some of the first things you notice when you are struggling with mental health is a lack of motivation. Make sure you keep doing daily tasks like washing, dressing, cleaning and eating. If you are finding these too overwhelming, then create a plan or schedule for the week. You don't have to achieve everything every day, but make sure you keep doing something.</p> |
| | | <p>Self-help apps Check the NHS app library for some helpful apps to support your mental health and wellbeing https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/</p> |
| | | <p>Wellness plan Mental health is individual, and everyone responds differently to different situations and techniques. Create a wellness plan to help you identify what it looks like for you when you are struggling with your mental health, and the things that do and do not help to make you feel better.</p> |
| | | <p>Mindfulness Practice mindfulness regularly to improve your skills. You can do this by learning a few mindfulness activities or going onto YouTube to find guided mindfulness practices. You can also look at the NHS app library to find mobile mindfulness apps https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/</p> |
| | | <p>Self-refer to UCS If you are struggling to manage your mental health, and think that you might need some more help and support to manage this when you return to University, or when term starts, you can make a self-referral to the University Counselling Service for counselling or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy www.counselling.cam.ac.uk</p> |



University Counselling Service

Christmas break

The UCS will be closed between the 24/12/20 and the 03/01/21 (inclusive).

Section B: How can I support a student I am worried about?

This section is for people looking to support others who are struggling with their mental health. You might find this section helpful if you are a student at the University and you would like to support a friend who is struggling with their mental health.

How will I know if someone is struggling with their mental health?

There are a few key things that you might have noticed about a student's behaviours that might suggest that they are struggling with their mental health. Indicators include:

- Low mood, tearful, anxious or paranoid
- Expressing hopelessness, or the experience of emotional pain
- Anger or extremes of mood
- Changes in behaviour or mood
- Falling behind with studies or academic commitments
- Withdrawing socially, perhaps they stopped attending lectures last term or are not keeping in touch over the phone or text as normal
- Disengaged from student support services (i.e. DRC mentors, wellbeing support)
- Behaving unusually, which might seem self-destructive (i.e. excessive drinking)
- Poor sleeping, eating or general lack of self-care
- Is expressing negative views (i.e. "I don't want to carry on like this" or "Things won't get better")

If you come into contact with someone who is struggling with their mental health, it is important to consider the potential impact that this may have on you and your own wellbeing. Encourage the person to seek appropriate support and find a safe place to share their own mental health needs. You can direct the person to [Section A of this document](#) which will provide them with more information about the support services available to them, and how these can be accessed.

The mental health charity Mind have provided a useful resource about how to support someone to seek help for their mental health, and within this Mind identify the types of actions that you can take to offer support. You can access this resource here:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/seeking-help-for-a-mental-health-problem/helping-someone-else-seek-help/>

If you still feel that the student you are worried about needs further help and support, there are a number of resources below that you may wish to access in order to facilitate this.

Who can I contact if I think someone else needs mental health support?

| Who is looking to support someone else? | What help is available? |
|---|--|
| Student | <p>Contact your personal tutor If your personal tutor is available over the holiday period, then it may be worth sharing your concerns.</p> <p>If your personal tutor is on leave at this time, check if they signpost to other staff in their out-of-office response, or approach residential staff.</p> |
| Student | <p>Residential staff You may wish to approach the porters in your accommodation or approach your college Chaplain. You can share your concerns and get more information about the support available at your college over the holiday period.</p> |
| Student | <p>TogetherAll TogetherAll is an online subscription service that has been commissioned by the University of Cambridge to provide mental health and wellbeing support. TogetherAll is available 24/7 and is a monitored peer support community where students and staff are able to share concerns and advice. Posts on TogetherAll are anonymised.</p> <p>You can access TogetherAll online through the University Counselling Service web page www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/togetherall</p> |
| Staff | <p>The student's personal tutor You may want to get in touch with a student's own personal tutor in order to raise any concerns that you might have. Check the student's records (for example Camsis) to identify a named staff member.</p> <p>In the event that the tutor is on leave over the holiday period, they may identify other support staff in their out-of-office email response.</p> |
| Staff | <p>Make a referral to UCS Although UCS is closed over the holiday period, if you have concerns about a student's mental health and feel that they need professional support to manage this, you can make a referral to the UCS and this can be reviewed when the service re-opens in the new year.</p> |

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| Staff | <p>Contact the college nurses</p> <p>If there is provision over the holiday period, you may be able to contact the college nurses for further help and advice about supporting a student struggling with their mental health.</p> <p>In the event that college nurses are not available, check their out-of-office responses to see if they signpost to any other appropriate professionals.</p> |
| Student/Staff | <p>FRS</p> <p>The First Response Service, or FRS, is a mental health crisis line available in Cambridgeshire. To access this, you can contact the service on NHS 111, option 2. The service is 24/7, and you will be put through to a mental health professional who can talk to you about your concerns. The First Response Service will likely want to speak to the individual experiencing mental health difficulties but may be able to offer advice and support to a worried second party with how to manage a mental health crisis.</p> |
| Student/Staff | <p>NHS website</p> <p>You can check the NHS website to find additional mental health support services, both local to Cambridgeshire and nationally: https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline</p> |
| Student/Staff | <p>111</p> <p>You can contact the NHS non-emergency support line for additional advice or information about how to support someone who is distressed. This service is available 24/7 and can be accessed by dialling 111.</p> |
| Student/Staff | <p>999</p> <p>If you are concerned that there is a threat to the student or another individual's safety, then contact emergency services on 999.</p> |

What can I do to help support someone else?

There are some practical things that you can do yourself to support someone who is struggling with their mental health. Below are a few ideas about how you can support a student if you notice that they might be experiencing difficulties.

1. **Discuss your concerns sensitively.** Let the student know that you are worried about them and why. Sensitively explain what you have noticed or observed but be sure that the way you phrase this does not seem to be placing blame on the other person.
2. **Listen carefully.** Allow the student to share with you what is going on, listen and respond, but avoid linking their experiences to your own, try not to say phrases like “I know how you feel” or “That happened to me”, instead consider phrases like “That sounds really difficult”.
3. **Offer practical support.** If the student asks you, offer to help with practical tasks. Try to avoid making decisions for the other person and encourage them to do as much of tasks as they can.
4. **Make a plan to check in again.** Discuss with the student when you will check-in with them in the future.
5. **You may need to prompt the student.** People struggling with low mood might lack motivation to do normal daily tasks like cooking, cleaning or self-care. At times you might need to prompt the student to do these things.
6. **Prompt the student to book an appointment with their GP.** The GP is often the first port of call for getting the right kind of help for mental health difficulties, so encourage the student to book an appointment with their GP to talk about what’s going on as soon as possible.
7. **Remind the student of the professional support available to them.** Support could be on or off campus. Encourage the student to check [Section A of this document](#) for more information about what support is available and how they might access this.
8. **Encourage the student to self-refer to the UCS.** Although the UCS is closed during the holiday period, students are still able to complete a self-referral form for counselling via the online form. This will be actioned when the service is back in the new year.
9. **Set your own limits and look after yourself.** Remember that you are not responsible for the other student, and make sure you look after your own mental health. One way you can do this is to set limits about the type of support you are able to offer e.g. I won’t answer my phone between 11pm and 7am.
10. **Call 999** If you have concerns about the immediate safety of the student or other individuals, contact emergency services on 999.