

Student Mental Health: Policy for Staff

September 2019

Glossary of Terms and Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy, the following capitalised terms (which are used throughout this Policy) shall have the following meanings in the context of this Policy:

Term	Definition
Policy	This Student Mental Health: Policy for Staff Policy
Staff	All full-time and part-time employees of the University, including research Staff funded externally
Student	A Student, either full-time, part-time or online, registered with UCC.
University or UCC	University College Cork – National University of Ireland, Cork
Mental Health	Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community ¹
Mental Distress	The state of having troubling, unpleasant and distressing emotional experiences, but not persisting and enduring to the extent and for the duration experienced by a person with a Mental Illness
Mental Illness	A state of mind of a person which affects the person's thinking, perceiving, emotion or judgment and which may impair the mental function of the person to the extent that he or she requires care or medical treatment in his or her own interest or in the interest of other persons
Mental Health Difficulty	An umbrella term that includes Mental Distress and Mental Illness
Fitness to Practise	To describe a student as 'Fit to Practise' in the context of certain programmes is to say he or she possesses the attributes considered necessary in an individual to allow that individual to practise as an independent practitioner in their relevant profession
Fitness to Continue in Study	To describe a student as "Fit to Continue in Study", is to judge them to be physically, mentally and emotionally well enough that, with any necessary and reasonable support and adjustments in place (a) They are able to engage with and benefit from their academic studies with a reasonable chance of obtaining the qualification they have registered for; (b) Their behaviour does not unreasonably disrupt any other members of the University community or visitors in their University business; and (c) They do not put their own, or others', health and safety at risk whilst on university activity.
Student Rules	The standards of conduct expected from UCC students as well as the disciplinary and appeal procedures applicable to breaches of these rules.

1. Reference: https://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/

Student Mental Health: Policy for Staff

University College Cork

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1. Aims, Objectives, Ownership, and Scope of this Policy

1.1 Aim of this Mental Health Policy

The aim of this Mental Health Policy is to ensure that University College Cork is responsive to the mental health needs of all its students, and in particular to those students experiencing a period of mental distress or a mental illness.

1.2 Objectives of this Mental Health Policy

The objectives of this Mental Health Policy are to:

1. Clearly state the aims, objectives, ownership and scope of this policy
2. Confirm the University's commitment in the area of mental health
3. Describe the sources of help and support available to students
4. Provide guidance to staff as to how to respond to students in distress
5. Summarise how admissions policies and Disability Support Services respond to the educational support needs of students with mental illness
6. Describe how other UCC policies may apply to students with mental health difficulties
7. Outline Data Protection, GDPR, Information Sharing and Communication requirements

1.3 Ownership of this Mental Health Policy

The owner of this Student Mental Health Policy is the Director of the Student Experience, who is responsible for the implementation of the aims and objectives outlined at 1.2 above, the evaluation of the operation of the policy, and for conducting a formal review of the policy every 5 years.

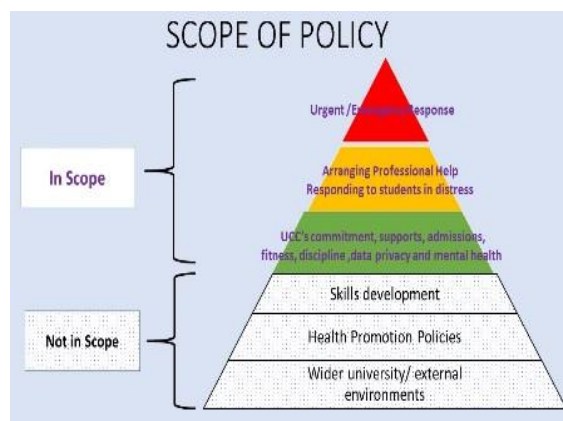
1.4 Scope of this Mental Health Policy

The policy is intended for the benefit of registered students of University College Cork and provides guidance to staff as to how UCC is responsive to the needs of students in mental distress or experiencing a mental illness in the University.

Outside Scope:

This policy is **not** intended to cover other related areas

- 1) Skills development for students to help build resilience
- 2) Policies and practices which promote health and wellbeing
- 3) Psychosocial/physical/virtual environments to promote wellbeing



2. UCC's commitment in the area of mental health

University College Cork acknowledges its responsibility to ensure its policies and procedures are responsive to the needs of students in mental distress or experiencing a mental illness. The primary responsibility for the provision of community mental health services lies with the Health Service Executive (HSE).

University College Cork commits to provide a supportive environment and to develop services complementary to the services provided in the community.

UCC therefore commits to:

- a. Encourage students with mental health difficulties to actively seek support. This includes without limitation students of all ethnic, socio-economic, age, disability, gender, religious and sexual identities/statuses
- b. Provide accessible information about the resources and support available to registered students and those intending to study at UCC
- c. Provide a range of support services, including Student Counselling and Development, Student Health, Disability Support Service, Student's Union, Peer Support, International Students' Support Officer, First Year Experience Co-ordinator, Niteline and Chaplaincy
- d. Maintain appropriate contact between the University and relevant external agencies that support individuals with mental health difficulties
- e. Provide referral to relevant external agencies where appropriate
- f. Provide education and training for staff as to how to respond to students in distress
- g. Consider the potential impact of its academic and non-academic policies and procedures on the mental health of its students
- h. Promote an environment in which mental health difficulties are openly acknowledged and not stigmatised
- i. Challenge any discrimination directed at students who may be experiencing mental health difficulties.
- j. Promote a healthy lifestyle and raise awareness of the harmful consequences of drug and alcohol use and misuse, Internet and social media use and misuse.

3. Supports available for students

The supports and support networks available to a student vary from individual to individual, and according to whether they are still residing at home with family, or living away from home, and whether or not they have previously had access to or have been supported by their GP or Community Mental Health Services. Students can build on existing supports, whilst accessing additional sources of help when they are necessary. The level of support or expertise required may vary according to the level of distress being experienced by the student.

3.1 Non-urgent situations

In a non-urgent situation, where a student is considered to be in some distress in need of extra support, students should be made aware of the following possible sources of support available to them:

- Family
- Peers, class-mates and friends
- University Academic Departments
- University Services
 - Student Counselling and Development Department
 - Student Health Department
 - Peer Support Service
 - Student's Union/Student's Union Welfare Officer
 - Niteline
 - Chaplaincy
 - Disability Support Service
 - International Office
 - First Year Experience Co-ordinator
- Community Services
 - Family Doctor/General Practitioner
 - Mental Health Services; Public Sector or Private Sector
 - Voluntary Agencies including Mental Health Charities

3.2 Urgent situations

In an urgent situation, where a student is distressed to the point of needing urgent same-day or next-day support or help outside their usual support network of family and friends, each of the University services listed above, as well as the Student's own family doctor or other mental health professionals involved in their care, should be considered as possible sources of help. University staff who feel that expert help is needed should consider advising and assisting the student to attend the Student Counselling and Development or Student Health Departments.

3.3 Emergency situations

See Section 4. Guidance for staff on responding to a student in distress, for guidance on what actions to consider in an emergency situation.

4. Guidance for staff on responding to a student in distress

In responding to a student in distress, staff should act to the limit of their competence, and consider consulting a colleague for advice.

The course of action undertaken by a staff member who is concerned about the wellbeing of a student depends on how urgent they judge the situation to be.

For the purposes of considering which actions should be considered, a situation can be described as a **non-urgent situation** or an **urgent/emergency situation**.

Any chosen course of action may need to be reviewed and changed if and when a situation alters.

4.1 Non-urgent situations

Members of staff may become concerned about a student because of a change they themselves have noted in the student, or because of concern expressed to them by the student themselves, by another student or by another staff member.

The student, (in the absence of features considered urgent/emergency (4.2 below))

- a. may themselves approach a staff member seeking help
- b. may appear withdrawn
- c. may be low in mood, tearful or unduly anxious
- d. may have a deterioration in attendance at class or in academic performance, with repeated failure to meet deadlines for submission of assignments

In non-urgent situations, staff should consider responding as follows:

1. Make the student aware of your concern and the basis for that concern
2. Advise and encourage the student to consider obtaining support as per section 3 above
3. Offer to communicate your concern to their family, GP, Student Counselling and Development, or the Student Health Department
4. Arrange to meet the student at a later date to review their progress
5. If a student does not wish to avail of support services, or does not wish to follow your advice, their wishes should be respected. You may wish to discuss your concerns further at this stage, on a no-name basis, with Student Counselling and Development or the Student Health Department
6. If staff consider that the situation or condition deteriorates to become an urgent/emergency situation, proceed as per 4.2 below.
7. Keep a record of the incident(s) and response(s). Inform the student you are doing so, unless you judge that this will inflame the situation
8. Whilst the welfare of the student is your first consideration, you should also consider if the student may have breached Student Rules, and/or if Fitness to Continue in Study, or Fitness to Practise Policies need to be invoked, and contact relevant personnel to report or discuss. See Section 6.

4.2 Urgent/ Emergency situations

Members of staff may become concerned about a student because of a change they themselves have noted in the student, or because of concern expressed to them by the student themselves, by another student or by another staff member. They may judge that the situation has become urgent or is an emergency because they consider the student to be at an imminent risk of harm to self or of harming others, as the student:

- a. is expressing suicidal thoughts, such as that they wished they were dead
- b. is reporting or threatening self-harm, or threatening harm to others
- c. is expressing bizarre thoughts or ideas which are out of touch with reality
- d. appears unduly agitated or aggressive, or is exhibiting bizarre behaviour

In urgent or emergency situations, staff should try not to act alone. If possible, seek the help/advice from and be accompanied by another colleague. Staff should consider responding as follows:

1. If the student is armed/very aggressive/very threatening, seek help from Security (ext. 3111) and Gardaí on (0)999 or (0)112.
2. If the student is suspected of having taken or is known to have taken an overdose, telephone (0)999 or (0)112 for an emergency ambulance and inform the University Security (ext. 3111).
3. If neither of 1-2 above applies, make the student aware of your concern and the basis for that concern
4. Ask the student if they are already attending University Student Counselling or Student Health Departments or their GP or a Psychiatrist. Get details and with the student's consent contact one of these services, explain your concerns, requesting their immediate help/intervention and confirm an appointment.
5. Accompany the student to the appointment if possible.
6. If the student refuses consent to disclose information or refuses to avail of an appointment with any of these services, and you judge that the student or others to be in danger, you should still consider contacting one of the services above. It is best to explain to the student that you are going to do this, unless you judge that this will inflame the situation.
7. Keep a record of the incident(s) and response(s). Inform the student you are doing so, unless you judge that this will inflame the situation
8. If the incident occurs outside the operating hours of any of the above services, consider contacting the emergency department of either Cork University Hospital (CUH 24Hrs) or the Mercy Hospital or SouthDoc, Evenings/Nights and Weekends, or An Garda Síochána (24 Hrs)
9. If the incident occurs whilst off-campus on a field trip for instance, or overseas, consider contacting local university/institution supports or local health services, an Garda Síochána or the local Police for assistance. Ensure you have the contact details of nearest A+E service and Out of Hour's GP service before departing on a field trip
10. In exceptional circumstances the provisions of the Mental Health Act may need to apply
11. Whilst the welfare of the student is your first consideration, you should also consider if the student may have breached Student Rules, and/or if Fitness to Continue in Study, or Fitness to Practise Policies need to be invoked, and contact relevant personnel to report or discuss. See Section 6

Contact Details

UCC General Services Security	(021) 4903111
An Garda Síochána Anglesea Street HQ	(021) 4313031
A+E Cork University Hospital	(021) 4920230
South Doc	1850 335 999
Student Counselling and Development	(021) 4903565
Student Health Department	(021) 4902311

4.4 Critical Incidents

A Critical incident is the term used to describe an event which can cause extreme stress, fear or injury. It is an event that causes individuals to experience a strong emotional reaction that interferes with their usual coping skills. The event has a level of trauma that is beyond the normal living experiences of those affected. The resulting stress reaction may include emotional, physical, behavioural and cognitive changes evident either at the time of the incident or later. The impact of a critical incident may affect any member of the University, not only those most directly involved. Examples of such a critical incident in the University setting include, the death of a student(s) or staff member(s), accidents involving significant trauma or with a number of casualties involved, or when a student is reported as missing and cannot be found.

Staff are advised to consult existing university policies to ensure they are familiar with the procedures that are put in place including responses to support students, according to the nature of the incident involved.

See:

- [UCC Emergency Management Plan](#) (Appendix 5a: Student Welfare Plan)
- [UCC Protocol for responding to death of a student](#)
- [UCC Protocol for responding to the report of a missing student](#)
- [UCC Student Placement Policy](#)

4.5 Students concerned about other students

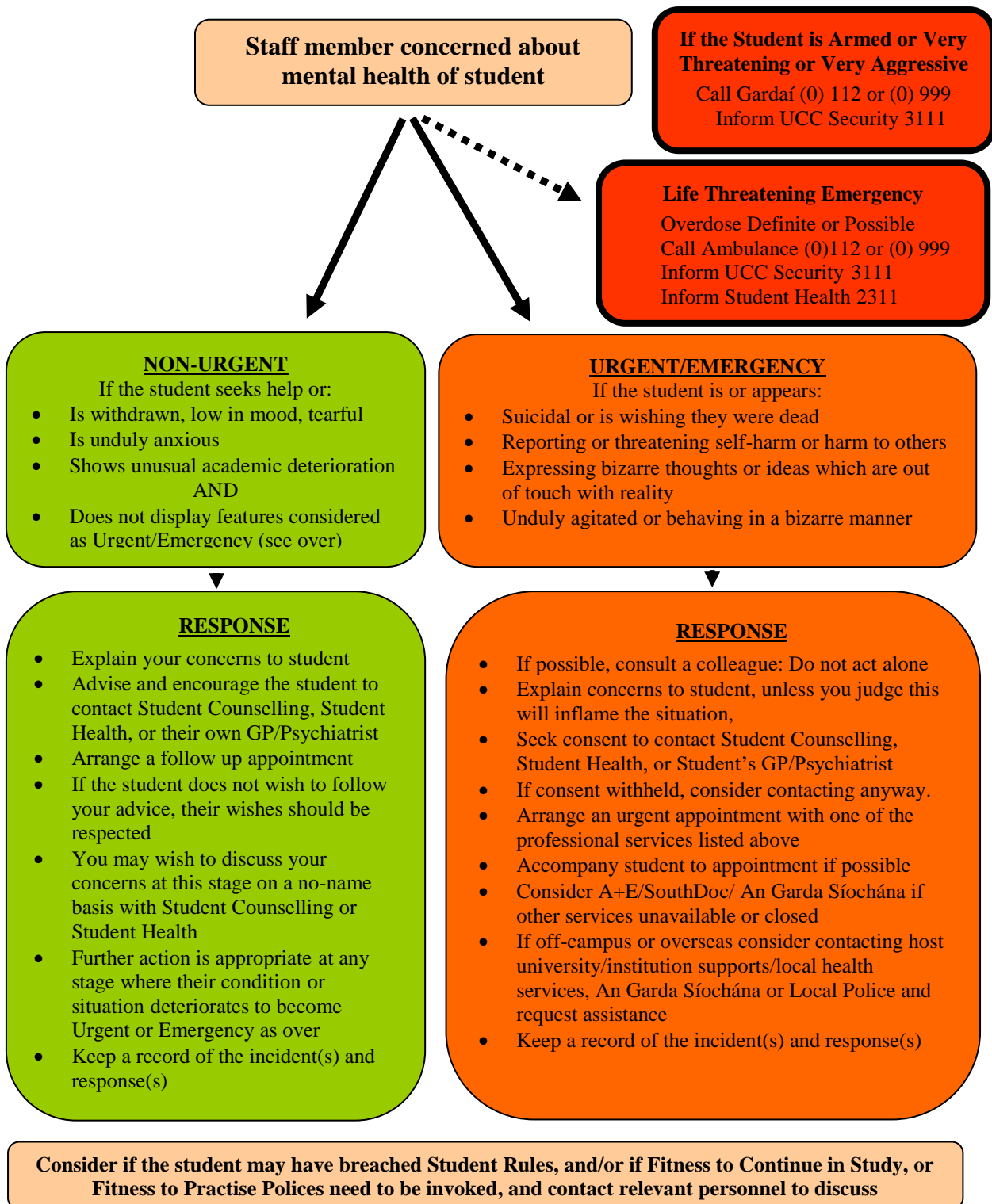
Students in mental distress or experiencing a mental illness very often turn to their friends and fellow-students for support. This friendship and support are invaluable in helping students who are in distress or ill deal with the challenges of University life and helps build individual and community resilience. These informal supports are often enough to sustain a student and may prevent deterioration and aid recovery. However, occasionally these supports are not enough. In that event, a student in distress or ill may be a cause for real concern for their fellow students. The Peer Support service provides guidance to students as to how best to support their fellow students including how to signpost them to specialist services on campus, and how they might deal with any distress they themselves experience in supporting the student. See www.ucc.ie/en/peersupport/concernedaboutafriend/

When students raise concerns about a fellow-student directly with a University staff member, one option is to direct the students to the guidance above provided by the Peer Support service.

The act of raising concerns directly with a University staff member suggests that the students feel their own inputs have not resolved or are unlikely to resolve the situation and they are looking to University staff to intervene directly with the affected student. The second option therefore is for the staff member to consider intervening directly with the affected student.

Should a student raise a concern directly with a staff member or should a staff member observe and judge that a student is a source of real concern to their fellow students, the staff member should consider intervening directly with the affected student as described in Section 4.1 and 4.2 above, and Flowchart. The staff member should consider advising the other students that a response is being put in place, whilst being careful to respect the affected student's right to privacy. See Section 7.

4.6 Actions Advised in Responding to a Student in Distress



UCC General Services Security
An Garda Síochána Anglesea Street HQ
A+E Cork University Hospital
South Doc
Student Counselling and Development
Student Health Department

(021) 4903111
(021) 4313031
(021) 4920230
1850 335 999
(021) 4903565
(021) 4902311

5. Admission to UCC and DSS Post-Entry Educational Supports

University College Cork is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and welcomes applications from students with disabilities including those with mental health difficulties.

5.1 Admissions to UCC for students with mental illness

Students with mental illness may gain entry to UCC through usual admission routes or through the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE). DARE is a third level alternative admissions scheme for school leavers whose disabilities have had a negative impact on their second level education. Information on how to apply to DARE and the criteria can be found here: www.accesscollege.ie/dare/

5.2 Registration with DSS for students with mental illness

Students are entitled to register with the Disability Support Service (DSS) once the student presents medical evidence of the impact of the disability. This medical evidence must be from a Consultant Psychiatrist. Students with mental illness may register with the Disability Support Service at any time during the academic year. Students may begin the process of registering with DSS to avail of supports via the DSS website www.ucc.ie/en/dss/current/registeringwiththedss/

5.3 Reasonable accommodations for students with mental illness

The Disability Support Service plays an important role in minimising the possible adverse educational impacts experienced by students with a mental illness. Upon registration with DSS, students will be offered an appointment to meet with a Disability Advisor to determine if there are any appropriate reasonable accommodations required to support them in UCC.

The granting of reasonable accommodations to students with mental illnesses is consistent with the academic rigor of programmes to maintain academic standards and ensure fairness for all. Reasonable accommodations in the learning environment include accommodations such as Alternative Examination Arrangements, Lecture Capture and Deferring or Splitting Examinations.

6. Student Rules, Fitness Policies and the Mental Health Policy

6.1 Mental Health and other UCC Policies

Students of the University are subject to UCC's Student Rules and according to which programme of study they are pursuing, to one of two Fitness Policies; the [Fitness to Continue in Study Policy](#) or the [Fitness to Practise Policy](#). These policies and the Student Rules ensure that the rights of any individual, including those with a mental health difficulty or mental illness, are balanced with the right of all members of the University to study and work in a safe and productive environment.

6.2 Disciplinary Process and Students with Mental Health Difficulties

Any student who behaves inappropriately may be in breach of the Student Rules. This may include students with mental health difficulties. The Student Rules and Disciplinary process describes what is to occur when a student with a mental health difficulty is being considered as being in breach of the Student Rules.

For further detail on the Student Rules and Discipline and Mental Health consult <https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/currentstudents/documents/StudentRules-UCC-Jan2018.pdf> pp 18-19, points 26-29 inclusive

6.3 Fitness Policies and Students with Mental Health Difficulties

Depending on their programme of study, students registered in UCC are subject to either the [Fitness to Practise Policy](#) or the [Fitness to Continue in Study Policy](#). Students may occasionally give rise to a cause for concern as to their Fitness to Practise or their Fitness to Continue in Study.

With Fitness to Continue in Study, concerns as to a student's fitness may relate to the impact of the programme on their health, **or** the impact of their health on their:

- capacity to fulfil all requirements of their academic programme
- interactions with other students, staff and the wider University community

With Fitness to Practise, concerns as to a student's fitness may relate to the impact of the programme on their health, **or** the impact of their health on their:

- capacity to fulfil all requirements of their academic programme
- interactions with other students, staff and the wider University community
- interactions with others in their training or placement setting
- interactions with their service users

6.4 Raising concerns re a Student's fitness due to Mental Health Difficulties

Section 4. above gives guidance for staff who have become concerned about a student's mental health as to how they may respond to that student. In addition to responding as described, occasionally staff may be so concerned about a student, as to also have concerns about a student's Fitness to Practise or Fitness to Continue in Study. Whilst the welfare of the individual student is the first consideration, in these circumstances staff should consider raising their concerns as to the student's fitness with the individual responsible for invoking these policies: Fitness to Practise (Head of School, Academic Unit) or Fitness to Continue in Study (Director of Student Experience). See [Fitness to Practise Policy](#) or [Fitness to Continue in Study Policy](#). Staff should be mindful of Section 2.i of this policy, namely the need to challenge discrimination regarding those experiencing mental health difficulty

7. Data Privacy, Information Sharing and Communication

7.1 Data Privacy

In all matters relating to student data, staff are required to comply with the University [Data Protection Policy](#). The University respects a student's right to privacy and actively seeks to preserve the privacy rights of those who share personal information (also known as personal data) with the University. It is important therefore to assure students that any personal information they give a staff member will be treated in accordance with the UCC [Data Protection Policy](#). Staff are required to comply with General Data Protection Regulations and be aware of [rights](#) conferred on individuals with regard to the holding and processing of their personal data. Under GDPR Health Data qualifies as one of the Special Categories of Personal Data. The rules that apply to processing Health Data are therefore stricter. See University [GDPR](#) website

7.2 Information Sharing

1. Staff to whom a student has disclosed information regarding their mental health, may judge it in the student's interests, or in the interests of others, to share that information with other staff or other 3rd parties, either to seek advice, arrange supports or report concerns. In such circumstances:

Obtain the student's explicit consent to share information by explaining:

- i. the reasoning behind the decision to share the information
 - ii. the identity and role of person(s) with whom the information will be shared
 - iii. an outline of the information that is to be disclosed
2. Should the student withhold consent to the sharing of information:
 - i. consider sharing the information or seeking advice on a no-name/no ID. details basis
 - ii. consider sharing the information without the student's explicit consent if you judge the situation may be urgent/emergency where the student may be a risk to self or a risk to others as per Section 4.2
 - iii. If you judge that there may be concerns as to a student's Fitness to Practise or Fitness to Continue in Study, consider sharing information that solely relates to the actions and/or incapacity that is causing concern, whilst not sharing any of the student's Health Data
 3. Where the student has withheld consent to the sharing of information and you have decided to share the information without their consent as in 7.2.2ii and 7.2.2iii above, you should inform the student of your intention to do so and explain your reasoning, unless you judge that this would inflame the situation.
 4. Healthcare professionals employed in a therapeutic role with students on behalf of the University are obliged to maintain levels of confidentiality consistent with their own professional codes of practice. These professionals include Student Health Doctors, Nurses, Physiotherapists, Psychiatrists, Occupational Therapists, Sexual Health Advisors and Student Counsellors.

7.3 Communication

Discussions relating to a student's mental health should be conducted discreetly and in private, whether in person or by telephone. Fax communication and electronic communication via internet, social-media platforms, e-mail or SMS and Instant Messaging may lead to unintended accidental distribution to person(s) other than the intended recipient(s) and caution is advised in their use.

It is good practice to keep brief notes of any interactions with students where there has been guidance or decisions in relation to personal issues, and to inform the student that you are making a record of the encounter.

The record should be dated and written as soon as possible after the interaction with the student. It should state the nature of the interaction and any action taken or advice given. If appropriate, it should also state whether or not the student gave consent for further action.

Records should be kept securely in departments in accordance with the [UCC Records Management Policy](#) and retained for the duration in the applicable record retention schedule, and then destroyed. The security of notes should be maintained in accordance with the [principles](#) of the Data Protection Act and GDPR.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Recognising when a Student is in distress

Everyone experiences symptoms of distress at one time or another. However, if symptoms persist over time and/or increase in severity, there may be a need for intervention: The following may indicate that a student is in mental distress:

- Dramatic drop in grades / academic performance
- Failure to attend classes, complete assignments or sit examinations
- Perfectionism and excessive anxiety about academic work
- Strong reactions to class material
- Exaggerated need to oppose the teaching or discussions
- Inability to communicate clearly
- Non-participation in class
- Exaggerated emotional responses that are inappropriate to the situation
- Depressed or lethargic mood
- Apathy or “in a daze”
- Anxious / avoidant behaviour
- Oversleeping or not sleeping enough
- Disruptive behaviour
- Marked increase or decrease in energy level
- Marked increase in irritability
- Low tolerance for frustration
- Unusual or changed pattern of interaction with others
- Social withdrawal
- Poor personal hygiene
- Consistently avoiding eating with others
- Dramatic weight loss or gain
- Swollen or red eyes
- Substance abuse

Recognising a Serious Mental Health Crisis/Urgent or Emergency Situations

A crisis is a situation where a student’s usual coping style becomes severely overwhelmed and emotional and behavioural responses may escalate. The person may become incoherent, disorientated, or attempt self-harm:

The following may indicate that a student is experiencing a Mental Health Crisis or that the situation is urgent or an emergency:

- Highly disruptive, erratic or unpredictable behaviour
- Behaviour inappropriate to the social context
- Extreme agitation or severely marked anxiety
- Euphoria
- Physical and / or verbal aggression
- Overt suicidal threats (written or verbal)
- Threatening the safety of others either written or verbally.
- Incoherent speech
- Loss of contact with reality (seeing/hearing things that are not there)
- Paranoia
- Disinhibited behaviour
- Extreme social withdrawal / avoidance of social interaction or contact

- Unexplained or prolonged crying
- Marked unresponsiveness to normally upsetting events
- Change or disturbance in eating / sleeping patterns
- Marked deterioration in personal hygiene, unkempt / unwashed

Staff members who have become concerned about a student who is displaying some of the features above should consider proceeding as outlined in Section 4.

Appendix 2: Directory of University Support Services

The following are the contact details and brief descriptions of UCC services which may be of assistance to students and staff in responding to students in distress.

Student Counselling and Development

Student Counselling & Development (SCD) provides confidential support to students who are dealing with mental health and personal issues which are impacting on their personal, social and academic progress. Issues students present with include: anxiety, academic stress, depression, self, identity & transgender, relationship, bereavement, risk / self-harm, abuse, physical health, addictive behaviours, other mental health issues, eating disorders, transitions, sexual issues and welfare issues.

In addition to individual counselling sessions, SCD provides consultation, support and training to UCC staff and students who encounter vulnerable and distressed students, facilitating early intervention. SCD also provides critical incident support in the University.

Services provided by SCD vary in response to the emerging needs of students. Student workshops are designed to equip students with skills to proactively cope with life's challenges and include: stress, anxiety and time management, assertiveness, cyberbullying, coping with transition to third level and study abroad and brief intervention training around the use of alcohol.

The SCD website www.ucc.ie/studentcounselling has a range of CBT programmes, e.g.: Anxiety, Depression, Self-esteem, Procrastination, Assertiveness, Panic Attack, Perfectionism, Sleep, Participate (Social Anxiety Programme), Mindfulness, Self-help information, Well-being Pod-Casts and Resources for Staff dealing with vulnerable students.

Location: Ardpatrik, College Road
 Phone: (021) 4903565 Mobile: 0872152505
 Email: counselling@ucc.ie
 Website: www.ucc.ie/studentcounselling
 Hours: 9.30 -10.30am :11am -1pm: :2.15-4.15 pm

Peer Support

Many students feel more comfortable reaching out to a peer when in distress, particularly as their first point of contact. Working on that basis the university runs a Peer Support programme in which trained students link in with all 1st year and newly arrived international students to provide them with guidance, advice & support. These Peer Support Leaders may act to signpost students to professional services See www.ucc.ie/en/peersupport/concernedaboutafriend/.

For more information on the programme you can contact the Peer Support Coordinator on 021-420 5188 or pass@ucc.ie

Niteline

Niteline is a student run confidential phone and instant-messaging listening service. Calls and messages are answered by a group of students trained by the Cork Samaritans and will be handled in a non-judgemental, non-directive and confidential manner. It is a useful out of hours support for students in distress. Niteline can be called on 1800-32 32 42 or instant-messaged at <https://www.ucc.ie/en/pass/niteline>

Student Health Department

The Student Health Department provides a wide range of Primary Care Health Services including services to support a student's mental health whilst attending the university. The service does not replace but is complementary to the existing primary care services and other Mental Health Services in the community, including the student's own General Practitioner and HSE and Private Psychiatry Services. Our Doctors have considerable experience in diagnosing and treating a wide range of mental health issues, and our clinicians can liaise with their Student Counselling colleagues and other services with a student's consent. A limited Consultant Psychiatry service is available at the Student Health Centre, on two days per week in Term Time only. If it is deemed required by a Student Health Doctor and with the student's agreement, a referral to the Student Health Consultant Psychiatrist will be arranged by the Student Health Doctor. The Consultant Psychiatry Service is not open or available for direct referrals from a Student's own GP or HSE or Private Psychiatrist.

Location: Ardpatrick, College Road
Phone: (021) 4902311
Website: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/studenthealth/>
Hours: 9.15am-12:15pm; 2.15pm-4:15pm

Disability Support Services

The DSS supports the academic needs of students who experience mental health difficulties by offering a range of supports which enable the student to pursue their studies effectively.

To register with the DSS a student with a mental health illness must submit medical evidence from a Consultant Psychiatrist.

Students with a mental health illness can access further information and organise an appointment with a Disability Advisor by calling in person or via telephone.

Location: South Lodge College Road Cork
Phone: (021) 490 2985
Email: dssinfo@ucc.ie
Website: www.ucc.ie/dss/
Hours: See Website for details

International Office

The International Office is a "one-stop-shop" responsible for the admission of international (non-EU) full degree students and all visiting and Erasmus+ students. In addition, the office supports outward mobility for UCC degree students. The staff also provide ongoing pastoral care and advocate on behalf of international students studying at UCC.

Location: "Roseleigh" Western Road
Phone: (021) 4904725
Email:
Website: www.ucc.ie/international
Hours: 9:15-1pm; 2:10-5pm Mon-Fri

Students' Union Welfare Officer

UCC Students' Union provide a full-time Student Officer to care for the welfare of UCC's students. The Welfare Officer provides a listening ear and a referral service to students. This is an open, caring, impartial and non-judgmental service with information on issues relating to Student Accommodation Rights, Mental/Physical/Sexual Health issues, Finance and Budgeting, Employment Rights and Parenting & Crisis Pregnancy. The Welfare Officer organises health promotion events and welfare campaigns for issues locally and nationally. The Welfare Officer interacts with the local authorities and national bodies on a wide range of issues, and is trained by groups such as the USI, UCC Counselling and Development, RCC, SafeTALK, Mental Health First Aid and so on. The Welfare Officer is always available to chat and listen no matter how big or small the issue. The Welfare Officer can be contacted between the hours of 9.30am-5pm by phone/email/text to schedule an appointment, or by calling in person to the office below.

Location: 54 College Road, Cork (Next to the UCCSU Common Room)
Phone: (021) 490 2181
Mobile: 086 184 2697
Email: welfare@uccsu.ie
Website: www.uccsu.ie

Chaplaincy

The Chaplaincy in UCC is a service that offers support and friendship to all within the University community. The Chaplaincy team personnel have a wide range of experience in pastoral care and personal support and provide a range of services appropriate for resolving practical and academic problems which may give rise to anxiety and/or stress. The Chaplaincy provides individual and group support to students of all faiths and none and can act as an 'early intervention' support that identifies students in need of professional assistance.

The support services offered by the Chaplaincy to students include:

Bereavement Support to students and staff

Crisis intervention

The provision of a safe and comfortable environment for students

Facilitation of Self-help groups, including AA, Al-Anon, NA (Groups meet each week in Hillside House on O'Donovan's Road)

Provision of self-development programmes for students and staff in crisis

Spiritual mentoring when needed (residential and non-residential)

Dedicated Student Team support group.

'Iona', the primary Chaplaincy centre is located on College Road (next door to Student Health Centre). An additional Chaplaincy resource is located at Hillside House on Donovan's Road (Opposite Honan Chapel). Iona is open/available to students from 9.30 am till late (Mon. – Fri.). The Chaplaincy website contains the full listings for each of the Chaplains, including individual email address and phone number. You can also make contact on (021) 490 2459 (Mon-Fri.).

Student Advisor and Ombudsman

The purpose of the post of Student Advisor and Ombudsman is to advise and assist students with the resolution of difficulties, complaints or grievances involving staff or services of the University in an informal manner. All enquiries to the Student Advisor and Ombudsman will remain confidential, except in cases of serious threat to life or property.

The services provided for by this post are complementary to a range of existing student services and the Student Advisor and Ombudsman may refer relevant student issues for resolution by those services as appropriate.

The current Student Advisor and Ombudsman is Professor Fred Powell who welcomes enquiries from students by email at studentombudsman@ucc.ie, or phone on [021-4902593](tel:021-4902593).

Location: School of Applied Social Studies, Ashford (Room 2.01), Donovan's Rd.

Staff Support

The Staff Wellbeing and Development Advisor, Sylvia Curran, is available to provide wellbeing support on ext. 1814 or via email at s.curran@ucc.ie. Sylvia is available by appointment to meet with staff members on a strictly confidential basis to discuss any concerns or to discuss the support options available in more detail.

The UCC Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a free and confidential service for UCC employees and their household family members (counselling is only available to those aged 18 and above). To ensure the confidentiality of the service, the Programme has been outsourced to Inspire Workplaces.

Unlimited telephone counselling and short-term face-to-face counselling (up to 6 sessions per year) with qualified counsellors is available FREE OF CHARGE.

Bookings can be made on freephone number **1800-817-435**

To access the EAP support hub visit: <https://www.inspiresupporthub.org/> (UCC Company Pin: UCC12019)

This Support Hub provides instant access to a range of information, guidance, screening and intervention tools, tailored specifically to help care for your individual wellbeing needs. The hub will guide you through evidence-based self-assessment to your own wellbeing reports and plan, and the appropriate support and intervention. It includes bespoke, innovative tools and resources such as: Guided Self-assessment; Self-help courses and digital intervention tools; '5 Ways to Wellbeing' Database; Wellbeing information library and Bibliotherapy; Mood Tracker

For more information on staff wellbeing supports visit:

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/hr/wellbeingdevelopment/wellbeing/>

Staff should consider availing of the bespoke training course provided by the Student Counselling and Development Department, entitled "Responding to Students in Distress". Contact Student Counselling and Development on 3565

First Year Experience Coordinator

The First Year Experience Coordinator supports all first-year students. Individual facilitation is provided to discuss any issues or concerns that may arise in the students' transition to university.

Contact: Nóirín Deady

Email: n.deady@ucc.ie

Tel: 021- 4902780

Hours: Monday – Friday 9:15 – 1.00; 2:10 – 5:00

Location: Admissions Office, West Wing, Main Quad.

Mature Student Office

The Mature Student Office is committed to supporting the wellbeing of each mature undergraduate student. The mature student team have a wide range of expertise and knowledge and actively provide care and support as follows:

- To create a sense of belonging through transition programmes
- To facilitate Peer Support
- To track student progress and offer tutorial support, if necessary
- To provide guidance about pathways to education, mitigation, leave of absence, deferrals etc.
- To provide a listening ear when students face challenges such as anxiety, loss and disappointment
- To enable students to develop their potential during their time in UCC
- To sign post a range of services appropriate for resolving practical academic problems which often give rise to anxiety and stress.

The services provided by the Mature Student Office are complementary to a wide range of existing professional student support services.

Location: 1 – 2 Bloomfield Terrace, Western Road, Cork.

Email: mso@ucc.ie

Tel: 021 490 1873 / 2141 / 3671

UCC PLUS+

The UCC PLUS+ Programme is a core element of the Access Programme in UCC. It aims to increase the number of young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds accessing and succeeding in University. UCC PLUS+ provides academic, personal, financial and social supports to students who have entered UCC via the HEAR scheme. Each student is assigned a UCC PLUS+ Students Support officer who supports their retention and progression

Email: uccplus@ucc.ie

Tel: 021 4903678

Hours: Monday – Friday 9.00-13.00 & 14.00-17.00
(Open Tuesday and Wednesday lunchtime during term)

Student Budgeting Advice Service

The Student Budgeting Advice Service provides budgetary and financial planning advice to UCC undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Email: studentbudgetingadvice@ucc.ie

Tel: 021 4901861

Hours: Mon. & Tues. 9.00 –13:00 & 14.00-17.00; Wednesday 9.00–12.30.

Appendix 3: Directory of External Support Agencies and Resources

The following are the details of external support agencies, which may be of assistance to students with mental health difficulties.

Mental Health Advocacy

- **Irish Advocacy Network:**
C/O Health Care Unit Rooskey, Monaghan Tel: 018728684
Provides support information and advocacy to people who have or have had a mental health problem
- **Recovery Inc.**
PO Box 2210, Dublin 13. Tel 01 6260775
E-mail : info@recovery-inc-ireland.ie

Offers a self-help mental health programme for people experiencing anxiety, phobia, depression and nervous symptoms. Recovery is also an aftercare programme for those who have been hospitalised, helping to prevent relapses.
- **Grow**
11 Liberty Street Cork. Tel Callsave:1890 474 474, email: info@grow.ie
Worldwide community mental health movement. Weekly meetings emphasise a self-help/mutual help approach to mental health and the development of personal resources.
- **Mental Health Ireland**
#: 012841166, email: info@mentalhealthireland.ie
Support for people with a mental illness, their families and carers.
- **Samaritans:**
Coach St., Cork. Tel: 116123 (26x7 text/ call line)
www.samaritans.org, email: jo@samaritans.ie
Confidential emotional support for those who are despairing or suicidal, 24 hours a day by telephone, email, letter or face to face.

Eating Disorders

- **Bodywhys:**
Provides confidential, non-judgemental support for people affected by eating disorders. Lo call helpline, e mail support, support groups, online support group. No meetings in Cork at present.
www.bodywhys.ie, Tel: 012834963, helpline: 189020044
- **Overeaters Anonymous (Cork):**
Tel: 086 352 64 67, email: corkoa@yahoo.ie
Support for people with eating disorders

Addiction

- **Al-Anon & Al-Ateen:**
email: info@alanon.ie, website: www.alanon.ie
Tel: 018732699 (10am-10pm everyday), centre office #: 018783624
Support groups for family and friends of problem drinkers.
- **Alcoholics Anonymous:**
Unit 2, Block C, Santry Business Park, Swords Rd, Dublin
Tel: 018420700, email: gso@alcoholicsanonymous.ie
- **Arbour House:**
St. Finbarr's Hospital, Douglas Rd., Cork.
Tel: 496 8933, email: david.wyse@hse.ie
Specialist unit for alcohol & drug abuse, prevention and treatment. Ring for appointment
- **Counselling and Advisory Service (Drug and alcohol):**
HSE South, 10 Church St. (Off Shandon St.), Cork.
Tel: 421 2382
A free service for those with drug/alcohol problems, their families and concerned persons.
- **Gamblers Anonymous:**
Tel: (087) 285 9552
Fellowship of people who help each other recover from gambling addiction
- **NAR-ANON:**
Tel: 0861755122
If someone close to you has a drug problem, NAR-ANON can help.
Meetings Monday (8.30-9.30/10.30pm) and Saturday (11.30am-12.30pm) at Dominican Centre, Popes Quay, Cork.
- **Tabor Lodge:**
Grattan Street, Cork
Tel: 488 7110
Residential Treatment Centre, caring for adults with addictions.

Counselling & Support

- **Aware:**
Local support group meetings for those affected by depression.
Helpline 1800804848 (Seven days 10am-10pm. Mon to Sun, the helpline also operates after 10pm), Tel: 016617211, email: supportmail@aware.ie
www.aware.ie
- **Pieta House Cork**
Shanakiel,
Sunday's Well
Cork
Pieta House is a non-profit organisation providing a specialised treatment programme for people who have suicidal ideation or who participate in self-harming. Tel: 021 4395333

- **Jigsaw**
Unit 8
South Bank,
Crosses Green
Wandesford Quay
Cork
T12 P982 Tel: 021 245 2500
e-mail: cork@jigsaw.ie
Jigsaw Cork is a free, non-judgemental and confidential mental health support service for young people aged 12 - 25 living, working or studying in Cork.
- **National Office for Suicide Prevention**
www.nosp.ie,
Email: info@nosp.ie, #: 016201670

Links to various s agencies dealing with suicide including links to support agencies for those bereaved by suicide
- **One in Four**
www.oneinfour.ie, email: info@oneinfour.ie,
Supports men and women who have experienced sexual abuse and/or sexual violence
Tel: 01 662 4070
- **Sexual Violence Centre Cork**
www.sexualviolence.ie, email: info@sexualviolence.ie
5 Camden Place, Cork
Tel: 0871533393 or Free phone 1800 496496
(Formerly Cork Rape Crisis Service)
Counselling service for survivors of rape, sexual abuse & child abuse.
- **Coiscéim**
Tel: 0214666180/ 0877998602
- **Dominican Centre**
Pope's Quay Tel: 0214502267
- **Harbour Counselling Service (SHB):**
Penrose Wharf, Cork
Tel: 486 1360 or 1800 234 116, email: harbour@hse.ie
Support for adults who as children experienced abuse or neglect.
- **Amen**
www.amen.ie, email: crisissupport@amen.ie / info@amen.ie
Provides a confidential helpline, information and a support service for male victims of domestic abuse
Tel: 046 902 3718 0469009109
- **Seedlings:**
Family Ministry, 34 Paul St., Cork.
Tel: 427 5136 (Monday - Friday 10am - 4pm).

Support programme for young people (11 - 18 years) dealing with grief through death, separation, divorce or any other significant loss.

- **Victim Support:**

4 Anglesea Villas, Anglesea St., Cork

Tel: 432 2333 or 1850 661 771.

Emotional and practical support to those affected by crime.

- **Youth Counselling Service (SHB):**

YMCA, 11/12Marlboro St., Cork.

Tel: 427 01 87.

Counselling service for young people between 15 and 28 years.

HSE Information Services

- HSE Drugs Information www.drugs.ie
- HSE Alcohol Information
[Alcohol](#) information Hotline 1850 241850
- HSE Suicide Support
HSE Suicide Bereavement Support Service (Cork & Kerry)
0214274218, email: info@console.ie

Pregnancy/Parenting

- **Positive Options**
Crisis pregnancy services
www.positiveoptions.ie, toll free: 1800828010
- **Youth Health Service:**
General health support service for under 25s offering information and clinics on topics such as crisis pregnancy, parenting, adoption, abortion and STDs.
Tel: 0761084150, email: yhs@hse.ie

Online Resources/Links:

<https://spunout.ie/>

<https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>

<https://ie.reachout.com/>

<https://www.studentminds.org.uk/resources.html>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

<https://www.acamh.org/learning/>

<https://childmind.org/audience/for-educators/>

<https://www.jigsaw.ie/need-help/find-a-jigsaw>

Appendix 4: Application of the Mental Health Act 2001

Where a student develops a Mental Disorder (as defined in Section 3 of the Mental Health Act 2001), and is deemed to require in-patient treatment, they will be encouraged to receive treatment in a Psychiatric Unit or Hospital. The Universities' professional staff involved with the student will facilitate a voluntary admission for such treatment.

Where a student develops a Mental Disorder (as defined in Section 3 of the Mental Health Act 2001) and where the student is deemed by a Registered Medical Practitioner/Doctor to require treatment for this disorder but is unable or unwilling to accept voluntary hospitalisation, the procedures of the [Mental Health Act 2001](#) will be followed. The Act sets out regulations for the involuntary detention of persons to psychiatric hospitals.

Before an adult 18 years and over may be involuntarily detained, the Mental Health Act (2001) requires that:

- They are suffering from a “mental disorder” within the meaning of the Act.
- In addition, one of the following two conditions must also be met, as set out in section 3(1) of the Act, as follows:

a) because of the illness there is a serious likelihood of the person concerned causing immediate and serious harm to their self or to other persons; or

b) (i) because of the severity of the illness the judgement of the person concerned is so impaired that failure to admit the person to an approved centre would be likely to lead to a serious deterioration in his or her condition or would prevent the administration of appropriate treatment that could be given only by such admission, and

b) (ii) the reception, detention and treatment of the person concerned in an approved centre would be likely to benefit or alleviate the condition of that person to a material extent.

The following are the steps undertaken under the Mental Health Act 2001 to detain a person aged 18 years and over. Any student less than 18 years of age and who is not, and has never been married, is treated as a child under the Mental Health Act 2001, and a different procedure applies- see at [Mental Health Act 2001](#)

Step 1: An Application is made on one of the statutory forms 1 or 4 (available from the Student Health Department). The application will be made* either by a spouse/relative, an HSE Authorised Officer, a member of An Garda Síochána, or a member of the Public.

Step 2: A Registered Medical Practitioner will assess the person within 24 hours of the receipt of the Application. This may be Student Health Doctor, a GP or their locum tenens.

Step 3: If the Registered Medical Practitioner makes a recommendation that the person should be admitted to a Psychiatric Unit/Hospital under the Mental Health Act, 2001, arrangements will be made to transfer the person to an appropriate Hospital.

*Note the applicant is almost always a member of the student's family. The involvement of another category of applicant may be needed in the event of unavailability of a family member, or when a family member does not agree to or wish to be an applicant.

Appendix 5: Description of Common Mental Illnesses

Diagnosis of mental illness is a challenging and complex task and is the responsibility of a trained medical professional. The following descriptions of common mental illnesses are included for information purposes only.

Anxiety Disorder

This describes a condition where there is a continuous and constant background feeling of worry, unease, fear and distresses, exacerbated by episodes of increased stress, but often present even in the absence of any obvious external stressor (sometimes described as “free-floating anxiety”). Occasionally the anxiety may be exacerbated by a particular stressor, and those affected may adapt strategies to avoid such stressors, such as avoiding social situations or crowded rooms. They may be aware of the nature of the problem and may have good insight into trigger factors, but have difficulty controlling the anxiety.

Panic Disorder/Panic Attacks

Panic disorder is recognised as a separate entity from anxiety disorder, although people with anxiety disorder may occasionally also experience panic disorder/panic attacks. Panic disorder describes the situation where persons experience intermittent, often very short lived (minutes) episodes of profound anxiety and fear, often to the extent of a paralysing fear of impending doom, (feeling as if they are going to die immediately) and a sense that they cannot breathe. These episodes often feature marked physical symptoms of palpitations (increased awareness of heart beating very fast), rapid breathing/hyperventilation, sweating and feeling faint. Persons with isolated panic disorder do not necessarily have background free-floating anxiety or anxiety disorder and may feel and function very well between “panic attacks”, although continual fear of another panic attack may lead to anxiety disorder.

Depression

Depression describes an illness which features a persisting and continuous feeling of all-pervasive low mood, of at least 3 weeks’ duration, with a lack of enjoyment even from things that previously gave enjoyment. Those experiencing depression often describe feeling tired all the time, with no energy and no feeling of refreshment even after sleep. They may feel “flat” and can describe feeling hopeless about the future. In moderate and severe depression there may be accompanying “biological” symptoms of loss of appetite for food, loss or absence of libido/sex drive, sleep disturbance, typically wakening in the early hours of the morning 3am-4am, and inability to get back to sleep. Note Anxiety Disorder may lead to or be accompanied by Depression and not infrequently the two may co-exist in the one individual.

Alcohol and drug misuse

Alcohol and drug use and misuse are common and increasing problems in University students. Recreational use of alcohol and other drugs can accelerate to regular problem use, resulting in considerable psychological social and physical consequences for the individual affected. Alcohol continues to be the commonest drug abused in Ireland and Irish Universities.

Bipolar illness

Bipolar illness describes a condition where an individual can have episodes of depression, often moderate to severe, interspersed with episodes of hypomania,

where they feel irrationally elated, occasionally featuring delusions of being possessed of extra-ordinary abilities or gifts and manifesting itself in bizarre behaviour, sometimes dis-inhibited and appearing over talkative and loquacious, with an over-abundance of energy. Previously referred to as “Manic-Depression”, it is one of the illnesses described as Psychoses, one of the characteristic features of which is the loss of touch with reality and the lack of insight into the illness on the part the individual, particularly during a hypomanic phase.

Schizophrenia and Psychoses

Schizophrenia is one of the major mental illnesses with profound effects on the individual if untreated, leading eventually to the “dis-integration of the personality” It has been described as being characterised by two sets of symptoms, the so called “positive” symptoms manifested by the presence of hallucinations, either visual or more commonly auditory, where an individual sees things or hears voices when there are none present in reality, or delusions similar to those seen in Bipolar illness described above, but can also feature a strong element of paranoid delusions. These “positive” symptoms are in contrast to the “negative” symptoms where the individual affected becomes increasingly withdrawn into themselves, often appearing to take very little care of their physical appearance, becoming socially isolated and not interacting with others. Those affected may have a complete lack of insight into the illness and often do not believe themselves to be ill at all, making engaging with treatment a challenge.

Personality Disorder

The term personality disorder raises a number of controversies in the field of mental health, with many describing it almost as a pejorative term, some psychiatrists refusing to accept it as a psychiatric condition at all, and therefore not coming under their remit for treatment. It has been described as an enduring pattern of inner experience and behaviour that differs markedly from the expectations of the individual's culture. This pattern of behaviour is often pervasive and inflexible, and leads to distress or impairment for the individual, and some say, for society as well. Personality disorders are a long-standing and maladaptive pattern of perceiving and responding to other people and to stressful circumstances. There are a number of different types of personality disorder described depending on the features that predominate, e.g. narcissistic personality disorder or sociopathic personality disorder.

Eating Disorders

Eating disorders are characterised by a distorted approach to food/body image. Bulimia nervosa is characterised by frequent episodes of binge eating associated with emotional distress and a sense of loss of control accompanied by compensatory behavioural patterns aimed at preventing weight gain. Compensatory behaviours used by individuals with bulimia nervosa include excessive exercise, episodes of fasting or strict dieting, self-induced vomiting, diuretic abuse, laxative abuse, use of appetite suppressants, People with bulimia nervosa are also dissatisfied with their body shape, weight, or both. Anorexia Nervosa is said to have most of the features of Bulimia, without the tendency to binge eating.