



My Mental Health Matters Booklet

Purpose: To alter the attitude of both the students and staff of UCC with regards to mental health. UCC Health Matters are looking for students and staff who are willing to make a contribution to a booklet with personal stories of how they have dealt and continue to deal with their mental health issues. The aim of this project is to show the community of UCC that there are many steps involved in the improvement of your mental health. In doing this we hope to raise the awareness of the many people in our university community currently living with mental health concerns and also of those who have faced them in the past. We then want to show how they came to deal with them and continue to lead a full life.

We hope to reduce the stigma behind discussing mental health and to encourage people of all ages to talk about their health and wellbeing. Taking this step and sharing your story will hopefully encourage others who have not yet been able to talk out about their problems to do so. This in turn will help to break down the barrier of stigma in the UCC community. The piece that you write will be put into a booklet along with the stories of your class mates/colleagues and distributed throughout the University for others to read and seek help due to your example.

Procedure: Once you have submitted your piece it will be read, reviewed and edited, if necessary, by the Health Matters team. Our team will be going through all of the submissions before getting back to you to ensure you are happy with your piece. Our main aim is to make sure that the writer is happy with what they put in the booklet and the reader gets good advice and hope from reading it. Editing will only take place if absolutely necessary, e.g. if your submission is too long or you have included a way in which you found helpful which does not correlate with what is best practice from medical professionals.

All submissions will be viewed confidentially.

What you should include?

Attached to your piece will be your age, gender, department and whether you are a student or a member of staff. Your name will not be included.

- Include a title to your piece.
- Maximum of 1000 words (Don't let this put you off, shorter pieces will be accepted)
- Only include information that you wish to share with the public.
- You should not include names of other people.
- Don't mention names of prescribed medication that you are currently taking or have taken in the past.
- Your piece can be made up of written text, pictures (no pictures of people should be included), poetry, song lyrics, quotes and illustrations.

What should your text be comprised of?

Below are some guidelines of what you could include in your submission. If there is extra information that you wish to include please feel free to do so.

- An overview of your personality, how there is much more to you than your illness and that it doesn't define you, it is simply a small part of your personality.
- How you came to realise that you had a mental illness, your feelings, what triggered your understanding that there was a problem.
- What you did to deal with your illness, the steps you took to recovery. What worked for you could possibly work for someone else.
- What works? How your illness has been treatable. Include the positive side of your illness, how talking to others made things easier, how it was a difficult time but you have come through it and have learned a lot about yourself and the many ways of keeping yourself well.

If you have any questions or queries don't be afraid to get in touch.

Email your contribution to Fiona on hpesw@ucc.ie by Monday April 20th.