

## Staff in Mental Health Crisis Guidance



### Introduction

The University aims to foster a culture where conversations about mental health are the norm and where staff feel confident to seek support for mental ill health including in a mental health crisis.

We recognise that you, as a manager, are well placed to notice and take action when a member of staff is struggling with their mental health. We also recognise that you're likely to be the first-person staff turn to for help and that this can often be a worrying situation for you to deal with.

A key element of our approach to supporting staff mental health is therefore to give you access to the tools and resources you need to support the wellbeing of those you line manage including guidance on what to do to support a member of staff in mental health crisis.

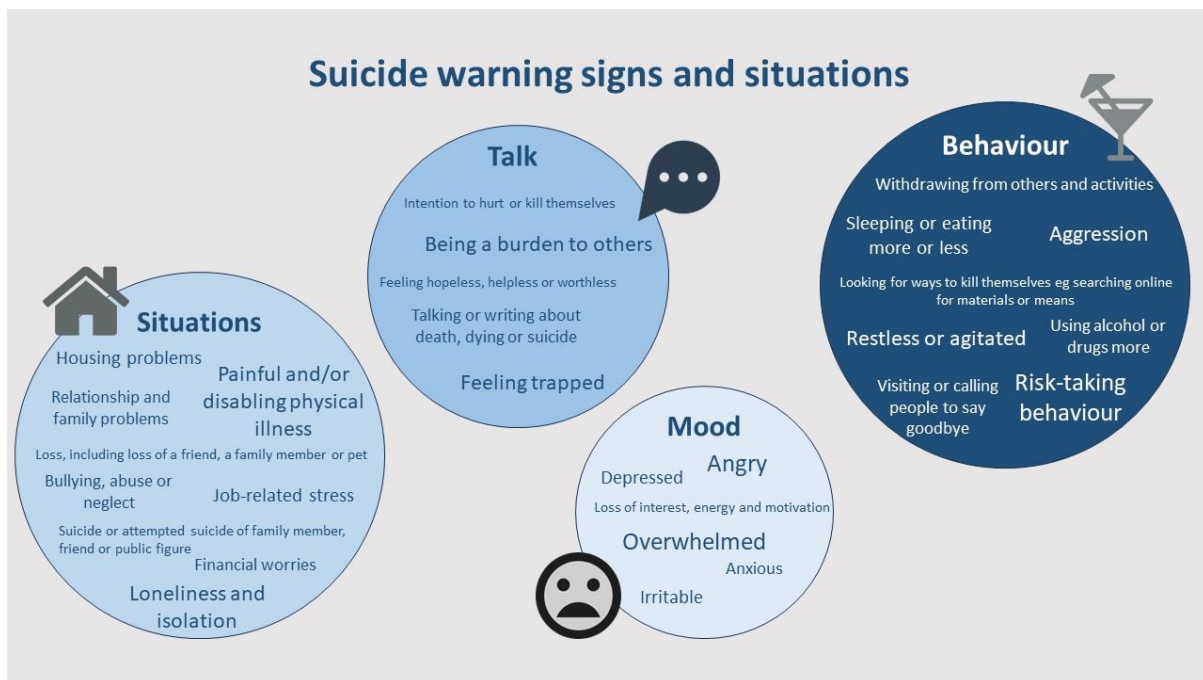
This guidance defines a mental health crisis, helps you to recognise the signs when a member of staff may be experiencing a mental health crisis, and provides a step-by-step guide of how to support a member of staff experiencing a mental health crisis.

### What is Mental Health Crisis?

'Crisis' can describe many different situations. With mental health, it means a time when a person feels at breaking point and is in need of urgent help. They might be extremely anxious and have panic attacks. They could be self-harming or thinking of suicide. They may have felt this way before and know where to get help, or it could be the first time they've felt this way. You can find further information on the [Mental Health Foundation website](#).

### Recognising the Signs and Situations

Not everyone finds it easy to talk about mental health or issues they might be facing. Everyone has different ways of coping with life's ups and downs. However, evidence suggests a person may be experiencing a mental health crisis if they are displaying certain signs through language or body language or if they find themselves in certain situations. The below shows potential warning signs and situations to be aware of.



The [NHS Feelings and Symptoms Checklist](#) can be used to help better understand how a person maybe feeling and whether these feelings could be leading to suicidal thoughts.

### What to do in a Mental Health Crisis

If you become concerned or aware that a member of staff is experiencing a mental health crisis, early intervention is key. It is vital that you react calmly and quickly to provide support by following the three steps outlined below:

- **Listen and Observe**
- **Assess the Risk**
- **Take Action**

If you don't feel comfortable dealing with the situation, an alternative person should be identified to ensure the member of staff receives the immediate support needed. The member of staff should not be left on their own at any point whilst this is determined.

### Listen and Observe

Active listening can help to build trust and connect with the member of staff who may be in crisis. When listening to the individual, you should:

- Allow them to describe how they're feeling and offer reassurance that you will do your best to support them with the distress they're experiencing.
- Be non-judgemental and try not to talk about yourself or your own experiences.
- Be empathetic and show understanding, using phrases such as 'I don't know exactly how you feel, but I understand this must be very difficult for you.'
- Be prepared for some silences and be patient. Allow them time to talk about how they're feeling and try to make sure they don't feel rushed.



- Repeat what they've said back to them to check you've understood what is being said.
- Ask open questions to help explore how they're feeling: How did that make you feel?
- Be clear that any information disclosed may need to be shared with another appropriate party and cannot be kept confidential.
- Reassure them, if they're not ready to talk, that you're there for them and they can speak to you when they're ready.

You can also use your own knowledge and observations of the individual by considering if they've:

- Previously disclosed mental health conditions or problems
- Discussed any personal difficulties they've recently been experiencing.
- Showed changes to their temperament or acting out of character.
- Any other notable changes in behaviour.

### **Assess the Risk**

When dealing with a member of staff in crisis, it's important that you assess the risk of suicide. Many people who have attempted to take their own life or died by suicide have talked about feeling suicidal or hopeless before acting on those thoughts. If a member of staff talks about taking their own life, this should **always** be taken seriously. If you're concerned that a member of staff maybe having suicidal thoughts, you should start a conversation about suicide to explore whether the person has a plan to harm themselves.

It's completely understandable for you to feel anxious about asking someone about suicide. However, there's no evidence to suggest that discussing suicide will encourage individuals to act on their thoughts. Direct questioning shows that you care and provides the person in crisis with an invitation to talk about how they're feeling, which will often be a great relief for them.

To assess the risk of suicide, the following questions can be used:

- How are you coping with what's happening in your life?
- Are you having thoughts of suicide?
- On a scale of 1-10 (0 being not wanting to continue living, 10 being not have had any suicidal thoughts) where are you?
- Do you have a suicide plan? Do you know how and where you would attempt suicide?
- Do you have what you need to carry out your plan? (pills, weapon etc)
- Do you know when you would do it?
- Have you previously attempted to take your own life? What helped to keep you safe at that time?

For further advice please refer to the recommended training at the end of this document.

### **Take Action**

#### **Immediate Risk**

If there's an immediate risk to life or the member of staff in crisis is at risk of seriously harming themselves, you must:



- Call the emergency services immediately by dialling 999 and ask for both the police and an ambulance. Consent to contact the emergency services is not required in these circumstances, but the member of staff should be informed what is happening and why.
- Ensure your own safety and, if needed, observe from a safe distance until help arrives.
- Stay with the person in crisis.
- Notify the Security team on the University Emergency number: 01484 472222, so that they're aware and able to direct the emergency services once they arrive on campus. Security can also be contacted using the red phones found across campus.

Once under the care of a professional, ask the member of staff whether they would like to call a partner, friend or family member. If they don't feel able, you should offer to do this for them.

### **Non-Urgent Risk**

If there's no immediate risk to the member of staff's life or of them seriously harming themselves, you must still give them their immediate attention as below:

- Reassure the member of staff that you will do your best to support them with the distress they're experiencing and that any work responsibilities will be taken care of.
- Signpost the member of staff to the following support services:
  - Their GP
  - National and local crisis team helplines (full contact details at the end of this document)
  - Local Single Point of Access (Crisis Team) (full contact details at the end of this document)
  - The [Staff Wellbeing Confidential Support Service](#) 0330 380 0658 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- Encourage the member of staff to call and speak with either a partner, friend or family member.



### **What to do if a member of staff is absent and non-contactable**

In situations where you have concerns for a member of staff who is not on campus and has become non-contactable, a HR Manager should be contacted to discuss the next appropriate steps.

### **Next Steps**

In order to ensure appropriate ongoing support for both you and the member of staff in crisis, the following steps should be taken:

## **Notify HR**

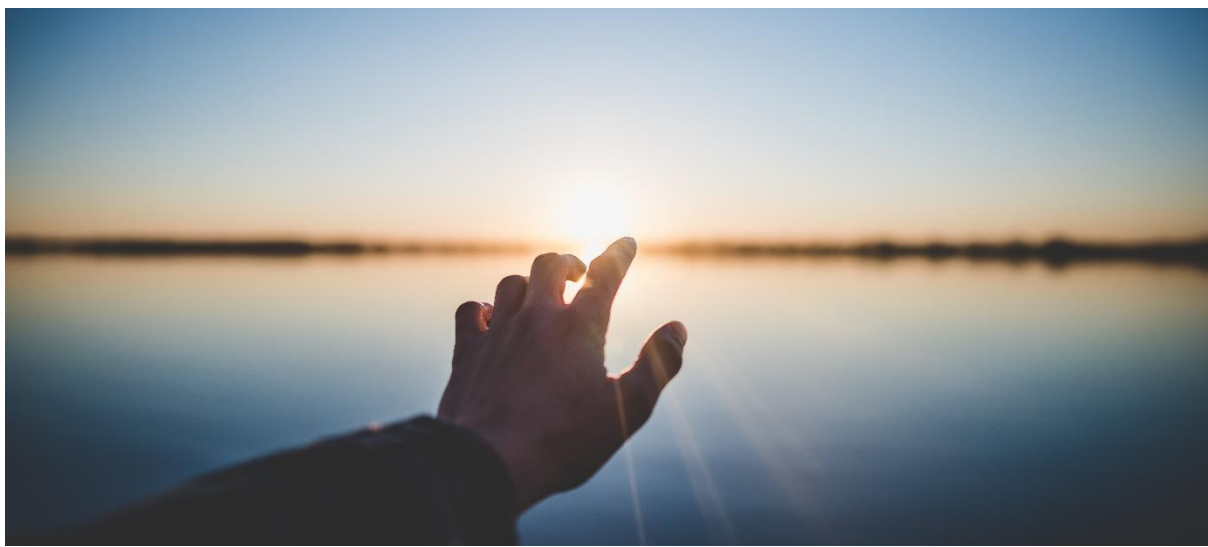
Full details of the mental health crisis should be shared with a HR Manager as soon as it is practical to do so. The HR Manager team can help to ensure a joined-up approach which supports both you and the member of staff. When appropriate to do so, the manager should inform the member of staff of this and explain why.

## **HR Management Contacts**

Head of HR: Ruth Taylor, [r.taylor2@hud.ac.uk](mailto:r.taylor2@hud.ac.uk), 01484 256620

HR Manager: Victoria Robinson, [v.robinson@hud.ac.uk](mailto:v.robinson@hud.ac.uk), 01484 256617

HR Manager: Natalie Plows, [n.g.plows@hud.ac.uk](mailto:n.g.plows@hud.ac.uk), 01484 256624



## **Follow-on Support**

### **Affected Member of Staff**

If the member of staff is to remain in work, you should discuss ongoing support with them. At the absolute minimum this should include regular wellbeing check-ins at mutually agreed intervals. You may also wish to explore a Wellbeing Action Plan with them and a management referral to Occupational Health for further advice on how best to support them. The HR Manager is available to advise where necessary.

If the member of staff needs to take time off from work, you should agree and record how you will keep in touch. Further advice can be found in the [Management of Sickness in the Workplace policy](#) or by speaking with a HR Manager.

### **Manager**

Providing support to someone who is experiencing a mental health crisis can be stressful and exhausting. It's vital that you take care of your own wellbeing and seek support following any incidents that occur, even if you don't think it's necessary at the time.



You should speak to someone about what has happened. This might be your own manager, a Mental Health First Aider, another colleague, HR Manager, one of the national/local helplines, or via your GP.

Further support can also be provided by the University's [Staff Wellbeing Confidential Support Service](#) 0330 380 0658 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

### **Other Colleagues**

You should also check in with any other colleagues who may have either witnessed the incident or work closely with the member of staff. The aim of this conversation should be to check on their wellbeing and signpost to available support should they wish to talk to someone, such as their manager, a HR Manager or Mental Health First Aiders. In addition, they should be made aware that further support can be provided by the [Staff Wellbeing Confidential Support Service](#) 0330 380 0658 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

### **Recommended training**

[Suicide awareness training](#) – provided by Zero Suicide Alliance and endorsed by the Royal College of Nursing, this short (30 minute) course is hosted on our Wellbeing E-learning suite and will provide you with the skills and confidence to help someone who may be considering suicide.

### **National crisis helplines**

**Samaritans** – 24-hour support, 365 days per year

Call: 116 123

Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

Visit: <https://www.samaritans.org/>

**Shout Crisis Line** – 24-hour support, 7 days per week

Text: "SHOUT" to 85258

Visit: <https://giveusashout.org/>

**SOS – Silence of Suicide**

Call: 0300 1020 505 - 4pm to midnight every day

Email: [support@sossilenceofsuicide.org](mailto:support@sossilenceofsuicide.org)

Visit: <https://sossilenceofsuicide.org/>

**Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)**

Call: 0800 585858 (5pm-midnight 365 days a year)

Visit: <https://www.thecalmzone.net/>

**Papyrus** – for people under 35

Call: 0800 068 41 41 – 9am to midnight every day

Text: 07860 039967

Email: [pat@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org)

Visit: <https://www.papyrus-uk.org/>

### **Other national helplines**

**Education Support Helpline** - 24/7 support for teachers and education staff including support staff (between 8pm and 8am you'll receive support from outside the UK)

Call: 08000 562 561

Online chat: <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/get-help/help-for-you/helpline/email-and-live-chat/>

Email: [support@edsupport.org.uk](mailto:support@edsupport.org.uk)

**Andy's Man Club** - groups meet every Monday at 7pm

Website: <http://andysmanclub.co.uk/>

Email: [info@andysmanclub.co.uk](mailto:info@andysmanclub.co.uk)

Click here to find your nearest group: <https://andysmanclub.co.uk/find-your-nearest-group/>

### **Mind Infoline**

Call: 0300 123 3393

Website: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines/>

Email: [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk)

### **NHS Mental Health Helpline**

Find your local helpline by clicking here: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline>

### **Local crisis helpline / Single point of access crisis team**

**West Yorkshire 24-hour mental health helpline** – 24/7 support for anyone registered with a GP in Leeds, Calderdale, Kirklees, Wakefield and Barnsley

Call: 0800 183 0558

### **Useful resources for managers and further reading**

[West Yorkshire Suicide Prevention](#) - Resources, support and training across West Yorkshire

[Pressure and Performance](#) - A simple video guide from Mind about the relationship between pressure, stress and performance

CIPD - [Responding to suicide in the workplace: Guidance for Line Managers](#)

Mind - [Supporting someone who feels suicidal](#)

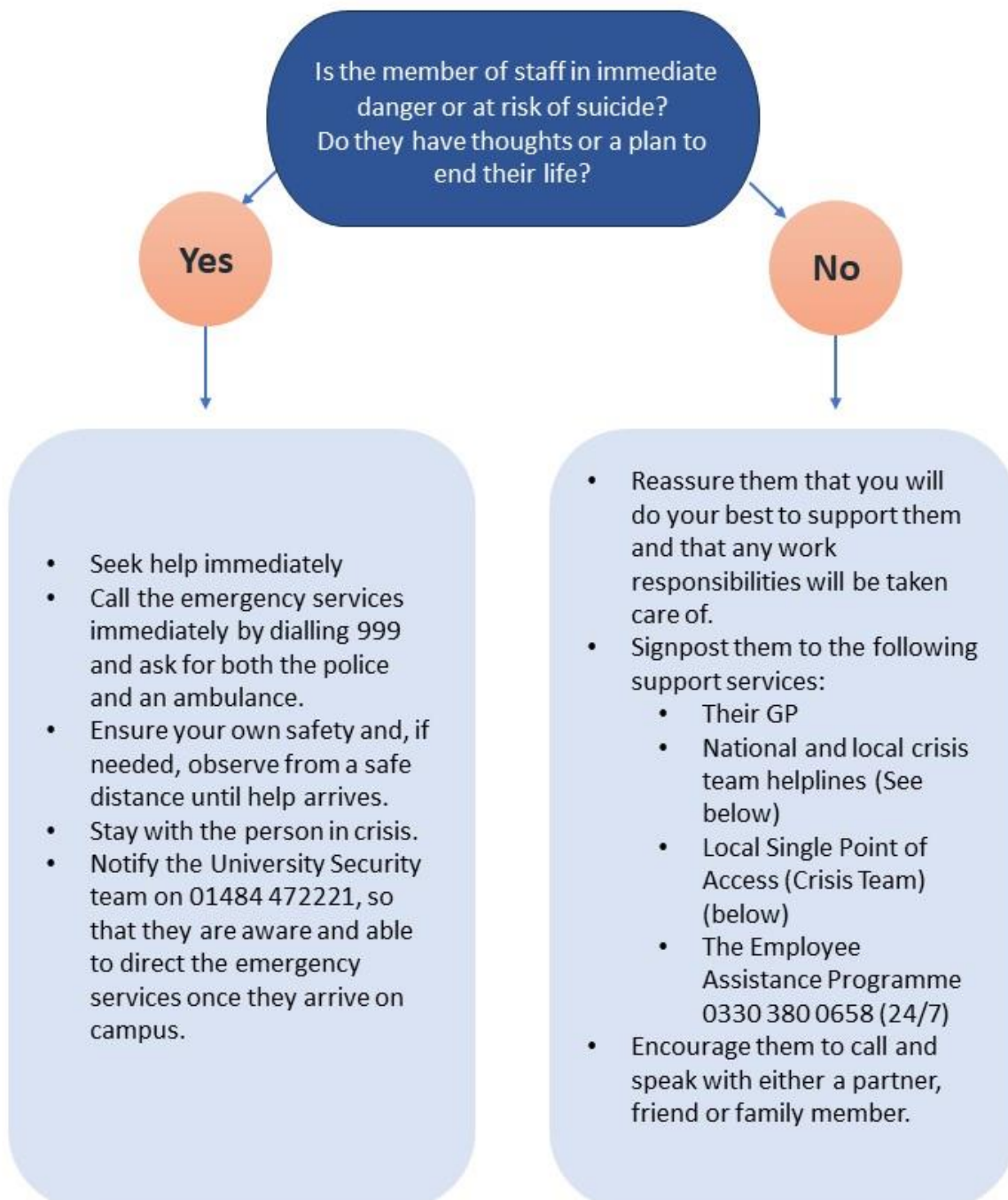
[It's safe to talk about suicide](#) - leaflet

[Reducing the risk of suicide: a toolkit for employers](#) - Business in the Community in association with Public Health England and the Samaritans

[Staff in Mental Health Crisis – Response Guide](#)



## Staff in Mental Health Crisis Guidance



### **Local crisis / Single point of access crisis team**

West Yorkshire 24-hour mental health helpline – 24/7 support for anyone registered with a GP in Leeds, Calderdale, Kirklees, Wakefield and Barnsley

Call: 0800 183 0558

### **National crisis helplines**

**Samaritans** – 24-hour, 365 days per year

Call: 116 123

Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

Visit: <https://www.samaritans.org/>

**Shout Crisis Line** – 24-hour, 7 days per week

Text: "SHOUT" to 85258

Visit: <https://giveusashout.org/>

**SOS – Silence of Suicide**

Call: 0300 1020 505 - 4pm to midnight every day

Email: [support@sossilenceofsuicide.org](mailto:support@sossilenceofsuicide.org)

Visit: <https://sossilenceofsuicide.org/>

**Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)**

Call: 0800 585858 (5pm-midnight 365 days a year)

Visit: <https://www.thecalmzone.net/>

**Papyrus** – for people under 35

Call: 0800 068 41 41 – 9am to midnight every day

Text: 07860 039967

Email: [pat@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org)

Visit: <https://www.papyrus-uk.org/>