

## Fitness To Study Policy (additional information)

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## **Mental Health Conditions**

Students who experience a mental health difficulty will broadly fall into three categories:

- Individuals who enter the college with long term and enduring difficulties with their mental health
- Individuals with emerging mental health difficulties
- Individuals with temporary but debilitating conditions or reactions

The term mental health difficulty encompasses a range of conditions.

The more common conditions are outlined below:

**Anxiety:** Agitation, disturbed sleep pattern, physical symptoms, including panic attacks. Anxiety can vary in how long it lasts, from a few moments to many years. An anxiety disorder differs from normal anxiety in the following ways:

- It is more severe
- It is long lasting
- It interferes with the person's life

**Depression:** low mood, lack of motivation, withdrawal, sense of emptiness, suicidal thoughts. Clinical depression is a common but serious illness and is often recurrent. Around 1 in 4 young people will have had clinical depression by the end of adolescence.

**Symptoms of depression in young people:** If people are clinically depressed, they will have, for at least two weeks, five or more of the symptoms listed below, including at least one of the first two.

- An unusually sad or irritable mood that does not go away
- Loss of enjoyment and interest in activities that used to be enjoyable
- Lack of energy and tiredness
- Feeling worthless or feeling guilty when they are not really at fault
- Thinking about death a lot or wishing they were dead
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Moving more slowly or, sometimes, becoming agitated and unable to settle
- Having sleeping difficulties or, sometimes sleeping too much
- Loss of interest in food, or sometimes, eating too much

**Bi-polar disorder:** Depression plus episodes of mania, ie elated mood, reckless behaviour, restlessness and high energy. Unstable behaviour patterns. During periods of depression, the person has some or many of the symptoms listed above for depression.

### **Common symptoms for mania include:**

- Increased energy and over activity
- Elated mood
- Needing less sleep than normal (can go days with very little sleep)
- Irritability

- Grandiose delusions

Bipolar affects 1-2% of people, with males and females being equally affected.

**Psychosis:** A broad term used when a person loses contact with reality. Schizophrenia is the most common 'psychotic' condition. The main psychotic illnesses are schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, psychotic depression and drug induced psychosis. Psychotic illnesses are not among the most common mental health problems. Over a lifetime, the risk of developing schizophrenia is 1% and bipolar disorder 1-2%.

**Anorexia Nervosa:** An eating disorder characterised by distorted body image and extremely low dietary intake. Anorexia occurs in young people who over evaluate their body shape and weight. The young person may be seriously underweight; however, the young person would see this as a success as opposed to a problem and would have little motivation to change.

**Symptoms of Anorexia are:**

- Over evaluation of body weight or shape, so self-worth is valued in these terms
- Loss of menstrual periods in females who have reached puberty
- Obsessive concern about body weight, shape and dieting
- Unrealistic belief about being fat
- Cutting out foods that were once enjoyed
- Excessive exercising
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Anorexia is not common, affecting less than 1% of teenage girls

**Bulimia:** An eating disorder characterised by binge eating and induced vomiting/diarrhoea

**The main characteristics of bulimia nervosa are:**

- Over evaluation of body weight, shape
- Repeated episodes of overeating
- Frequent use of vomiting or laxatives to control weight or excessive use of exercise

**Recreational drug and alcohol use** often has a significant role to play in the cause or presentation of a mental health issue.

People with substance use disorders also tend to have other mental health problems. These are commonly anxiety, depressive or psychotic disorders.

Alcohol is the substance of abuse, most commonly used, by young people and use has been increasing over the past decade.

**In young people who binge drink, intoxication can bring problems in the short term such as:**

- Physical injuries and risk taking
- Sexual risk taking
- Suicide and self-injury

Only a small minority of young people will meet the criteria for substance use disorders, because they have not used a substance long enough to develop the problems of dependence.

## **Emergency Procedures**

### **Psychotic behaviour**

A very small percentage of people with psychotic disorders actually display this behaviour as threatening. Research clearly shows that that violence and threatening behaviour is more common when there is alcohol and drugs involved

Where a student presents as having a mental health condition and displays behaviour that:

- Demonstrates they are at an imminent risk of harm to self and/or others
- Demonstrates high levels of distress and high risk behaviour due to compromised thinking and/or judgement, accompanied by a lack of response to social controls

They should be considered an emergency situation, which requires immediate intervention.

### **Guidance to follow should a student display threatening behaviour.**

- Do not try to restrain a violent person, do not block their escape and make sure you are positioned for an easy exit
- Call the police, inform the police that the person has a mental health illness and requires medical help
- Create where possible a calm atmosphere which is non-threatening – call for the Safeguarding Team to support
- Comply with reasonable requests and listen in a non-judgemental way
- Provide reassurance to the student and wait for professional assistance.

## **Internal Support Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Head of Student Services**

Julie Atkins 07841 986 008 [jatkins@craven-college.ac.uk](mailto:jatkins@craven-college.ac.uk)

### **Student Services Manager**

Rosemary Simpson 07921214155 [rsimpson@craven-college.ac.uk](mailto:rsimpson@craven-college.ac.uk)

### **Safeguarding and Wellbeing Lead**

Annette Campbell 07919285244 [acampbell@craven-college.ac.uk](mailto:acampbell@craven-college.ac.uk)

### **RIPON EVOLVE Centre Manager**

Bev Skaife 01765 608999 [bskaife@craven-college.ac.uk](mailto:bskaife@craven-college.ac.uk)

### **Mentor Team**

Mentors will support students with any issues that may be impacting on their ability to achieve and enjoy their time at college. Mentors will offer support and can liaise on a student's behalf, if required, with tutors and external agencies. They can also refer students for specialised support in or out of college where needed.

Amanda Beck 07769165523



Mandy Taylor	07921743 706
Katie Fox	07921214113
Katie Bentley	07584212918

[staysafe@craven-college.ac.uk](mailto:staysafe@craven-college.ac.uk)

### **Counselling Service**

The College Counselling service provides a safe and confidential space for students to explore personal and emotional issues about any aspect of their lives. Counsellors can support students to gain a better understanding of what is going on for them and look at ways forward.

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