



## E-Learning guidance for facilitators

### Introduction

The Charlie Waller Memorial Trust's new e-learning package of online training modules is designed to enhance non-specialist mental health staff's skills, knowledge and confidence to offer a first line of support to students who may have mental health issues.

The team behind creating this learning package are all highly experienced university professionals in counselling and mental health. From their collective experience of working in Higher Education, the team acknowledge the huge contribution and input all staff that work and interact with students within the University community make.

Front line staff including librarians, accommodation staff, chaplains, personal tutors, registry, administrators, porters and cleaners often come across students who may have mental health issues. We wanted to offer some robust training and guidance to these staff members so they felt more confident in dealing with students in distress.

Being able to support students at an early stage helps to normalise common feelings of anxiety and worry, before they may escalate to needing more specialist help. For students experiencing depression that first conversation can make all the difference.

The package consists of six easy-to-follow 20-minute sessions, including:

- Signs to look out for
- Key helping skills
- Knowing who else to involve and when

This Guidance gives suggestions for the facilitator on how to maximise the learning potential of this training. Please use the additional resources of the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust's E-Learning Summary Sheets 1 – 6 in conjunction with this Guidance, to get the most out of this training.



## Preparation before training starts

If you are the facilitator of the training, here are some key points to think about before you begin:

- What are the key expectations from my audience – what might they need?
- What apprehensions may the team have in relation to the e-Learning?
- Have there been any recent experiences of examples in a work setting that are likely to come up or be raw?
- Am I clear on University structures on pathways to help for students, for example the structure and delivery of services?
- Are there any specific institutional protocols you need to be aware of, for example are there any centralised phone numbers students should ring or out of hours facilities?
- What do you want to teach or refresh the group on? Suggestions could be key definitions, University guidelines, University systems to use, clear directions and signposting etc.

## To remember

- It is vital to always be aware that staff participating in training will have their own real life experiences of mental health issues, within their personal and/or professional network. Be sensitive to these experiences and always set initial ground rules of confidentiality and anonymity when talking about personal experience. For example, what is discussed is not repeated outside the training in an identifiable way.
- If the content of training becomes difficult, allow staff the space and ability to leave the sessions and take a break. Talking about mental health can affect people in different ways and it is good to vocalise this at the beginning so staff feel comfortable and prepared. If staff leave the session, make sure you follow up with them afterwards to check they are okay.

## Suggested formats

There are many formats and arenas where this training could be used. We have come up with some suggestions of how you may use this training in a manageable way in your busy schedules. They are:

- 1 to 1 sessions, for example in Performance Development Reviews or Appraisals
- Team meetings or Away days where the whole team can go through the modules together
- In a debrief after a critical incident
- As part of inductions for new staff members
- As part of ongoing staff development
- Training for Student Union Officers or SAB Officers

Once you feel comfortable and prepared to deliver the training, make sure you follow these 6 key points to ensure the training goes as well as possible:



## 1. Introduce yourself

- Explain who you are and what your role is in the training
- Explain what the strategy is and what is the focus of the training. What are you aiming to teach the group and how will this training positively impact their day-to-day work?

## 2. Recap the last session

- Start each session with a check in of what people thought of the last session and any key points they have used in actual practice. For example, how has the e-learning helped them this week?
- Encourage discussion and thoughts on the homework task.

## 3. Introduce the new session and hand out CWMT summary sheets

- It is unlikely that people will be able to attend training sequentially e.g., once a week, so please share widely the CWMT Summary Sheets of key points from each session, so no one feels they have missed anything.

## 4. Encourage discussion

- Allow yourself enough time for peer learning and discussion. It is always the richest source of learning, using real life examples that people are willing to share. Drawing upon participants' own experience to keep focus on their examples, questions and worries.
- Try and include a narrative like a personal story about a situation you have been in or a case example. This will help make your presentation relatable and will offer validation and normalise the participants' own experiences:  
*"I know someone who..."*      *"For example I once..."*
- Maybe break off in to small groups to discuss and feedback to the wider group?

## 5. Encourage feedback

- Encourage feedback on the training and on the style of learning. Involve and adapt the training as you go on to suggestions from your group.

## 6. Set homework task

- Set the small task provided at the end of the CWMT Summary Sheet as homework for the group to take away and complete. When



having the recap of the previous session group members could present things they have learnt or found out from their homework task.

## 7. Use online E-Learning training resources

- Encourage participants to prepare for each session by reading through each module beforehand if they have time. This will make the sessions more productive, especially if you have limited time when the whole team is free.
- The E-Learning can also be accessed following training sessions if staff want to check anything or go back and look at points again.

## 8. Buddy up

- Encourage peer learning and buddying up within the group. Get participants to choose one or two others in the group to contact via email, phone or in person, to see how their homework is coming along during the training. Encourage participants to check in with each other between the sessions, as this helps maintain motivation and multiply the learning across the team.
- As the facilitator, make sure you are available in between staff meetings for any concerns or questions participants have.



## Session six: case study

### Module description

The aim of this session is to recap and bring together skills from the other sessions to provide you with a key summary of how to help students, as well as showing good practice in action through a case study. You will be presented with options to think about what you would do if you came across a student in a similar predicament.

A number of terms are used to describe types of services, such as Students' Union and Wellbeing Services, for example. It is important to note that these terms will differ from university to university and that you will need to familiarise yourself with how services are known in your university.

### Key points from module:

- It is important to be aware of signs that might indicate a student is struggling and know how to respond appropriately if you are concerned
- Supporting distressed people can be challenging as well as rewarding. It is important to pay attention to your own needs and ensure you are supported
- Our ability to listen improves with practice
- It is important not to express strong emotional responses to what someone is saying as this may well silence them
- Some students experience emotional difficulties in making the transition to university
- There are a range of services that can help students to settle into university and prevent them from remaining distressed for too long
- Students face numerous challenges when they start university which can be resolved with the right support
- We cannot offer unlimited confidentiality to any student; applying the limits of privacy ensures safety for all
- Recording our work correctly facilitates ongoing student wellbeing. It is essential to track our support of students by keeping factual notes (free of value judgements)

## Learning objectives:

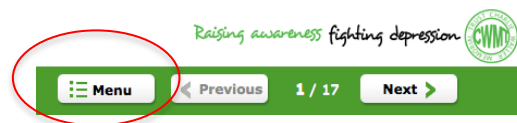
- Create your own responses so you feel more confident to act
- Recognise what level of intervention you need to choose when dealing with each individual student
- Describe the traffic light response 'stop-consider-respond'

## Menu structure

Each e-learning session comes with a menu structure so that, as a trainer, you can jump immediately to any part of the session simply by clicking on the title in the menu. **Figure One** details where the menu can be found on the page, and **Figure Two** shows the menu from the session.

**Figure One:** Location of Menu Option

● Session Overview
○ Session Introduction
○ Introduction
○ Traffic Light Approach
○ Triangle of Action
○ Activity
○ Scenario: Breaking the Ice
▶ Case Study
○ Session Key Points
○ Session Summary



**Figure Two:** Menu Options in Session Six

## Suggested session pages for group

### Discussion

**Page 3/17:** Can you think of a real-life example where you were “flustered” on the inside and “calm on the outside”. Share examples with the group for discussion and support.

**Case Study** Raising awareness fighting depression

**Introduction** Menu < Previous 3 / 17 Next >

Select the hyperlinks below.

There are a number of different ways of responding to students, as each situation is unique and individual to the setting, the student and the helper.


We learn from each interaction we have with students and this helps us to build up a range of experiences and responses. However, the hope is that this information will enable you to feel more confident and calm about what to do, as well as where to direct or get help for students and yourself in these situations.

**What you should aim to do**

The aim is for you to keep as neutral and calm on the outside, even if flustered or worried inside. We need to be able to support the student while, at the same time, supporting ourselves with what we may be feeling inside. By doing this we will allow their experiences to be acknowledged and dealt with in an 'alongside approach', rather than us grasp at straws and give a panicky, reactive response.

**Further guidance**

Being well prepared and having thought things through in advance will equip you to feel more at ease and available to students who are distressed. Common sense and a kind approach go a very long way to help them not to let their worries multiply and snowball out of control. Allowing students to be heard and acknowledged without judgement is key to this process. Also keeping the 'door open' for them to return and feel valued is encouraging and validating for you both.



**Page 5/17:** Where do YOU feel most comfortable on this triangle? Break the group into 4 (one for each layer) and give 2 examples for each layer. What is an example of just 'being supportive', or 'giving information' etc.


**Case Study** Raising awareness fighting depression

**Triangle of Action** Menu < Previous 5 / 17 Next >

The triangle of action, below, shows a range of interventions you can make that vary from being directive to non-directive in how you respond to a student. It is based on the ideas of John Heron; details of his work can be found in the Resources section.

Depending on the situation, you will need to decide where on this triangle you need to intervene. At the directive end, you will be required to do something. The bottom half is more supportive and aims to allow the student to help themselves. You may move around the triangle, especially if the student is one with whom you are in contact regularly. The important thing to remember is that you have a range of responses and to keep the student alongside you in the process.

Select the pink markers on the image below.



**Page 7/17:** “Breaking the ice” – Think up two phrases that suit your own style. One phrase for approaching a student you are worried about, and one phrase for if a student approaches you. Having these ready helps us feel more confident and calm.

**Case Study** Raising awareness fighting depression

Scenario: Breaking the Ice Menu Previous 7 / 17 Next

It is week five of the new term and the 'hubhub' of Fresher's Week has subsided. A porter, Jack, notices a first year who is always on his own, and who is often outside, late at night, smoking. Jack has often noticed the same student going to the library during the evening. He seems to be a 'night owl' and is seldom around during 'normal' hours. Every time Jack has seen him, he is always on his own.

There is something about him that worries Jack slightly. He decides to approach the student, but feels unsure of what to say.

Select the thumbnails to see a series of possible conversation starters. Then use the final image, the triangle of action, to think of your own ideas for ice breakers for this situation.

Hello I'm Jack, one of the porters; how are things going?

**Page 8/17:** At the beginning of this case study it mentions that “The parents” know what is happening. Does that make a difference to your response? What are the implications of Parent's 'knowing' and 'not knowing'.

**Case Study** Raising awareness fighting depression

Case Study · Question 1 Menu Previous 8 / 17 Next

Over the following slides, we will set out a case study to work through from initial contact with the student to a resolution. Read the case study and then answer the question below.

Which of the following would it be appropriate to say to Catherine and Aisha?

Select one or more options from the answers below, then submit.

**A.** Thanks for letting me know.

**B.** It sounds stressful for you all.

**C.** OK, let's try to make a plan.

**D.** Have you spoken to Donna about this?

**E.** I'd ask Donna to find somewhere else to live ASAP.

**Donna's flatmates**

Catherine and Aisha are second year flatmates who have come to see you as they are worried about Donna, who lives with them. She replaced a friend of theirs who dropped out of the flat-share, and they don't know her very well.

Donna seems to have changed a lot since the beginning of term. She recently split up with her boyfriend and seems to have taken it badly. They don't know what to do but feel her behaviour has become a bit reckless. She has been drunk to the point of sickness on several occasions, and she has also been bringing random men back to the flat to stay. They are concerned about this, for a number of reasons.

Their parents have told them to mention it to a staff member so they have come to you. They don't want Donna to know they have raised concerns.





## Biography of authors



Jackie Williams is the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust's North West trainer and author of the 'Parents' Guide to Depression'. She has worked professionally as a counsellor and trainer for both NHS and University settings since 1987.



Andrew Reeves is the Director of Universities and Further Education for the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust, and Programme Director for the e-learning sessions. He has worked as a counsellor and social worker in a range of settings for 30 years. He is a Senior Lecturer in Counselling, Psychotherapy and Psychological Trauma at the University of Chester.

## Further information

If you feel comfortable to use the e-learning session as part of a facilitated session, then the information above should help inform that structure. If you would like more information about the training and support available from the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust, please contact Andrew Reeves ([andrew.reeves@cwmt.org](mailto:andrew.reeves@cwmt.org)), who will be happy to discuss this with you.

The [Charlie Waller Memorial Trust](#) is a charity that provides [fully-funded mental health training](#) talks, and [resources](#) to young people and those who work with or care for them.

Our Waller Trainers are available to deliver bespoke training on request. Please call 01635 869754 or email [training@cwmt.org](mailto:training@cwmt.org) to discuss your requirements.