

Are you worried about the mental health of someone you know?

Here are some ideas on what to do next

This may be a friend, flatmate, someone on your course or someone you have been working with in a performance or project.

- Have they told you they have a problem?
- Has their weight or appearance been changing?
- Are you concerned about their alcohol consumption?
- Are you concerned about their drug use?
- Has their mood been changeable: down, high, unmotivated?
- Have others expressed concern about them?

Some serious signs are:

- Disturbed sleep;
- Loss of appetite, signs of weight loss or bulimia;
- Inability to concentrate;
- Change of appearance;
- Thoughts or intentions to self harm (including suicide).

A combination of just a few negative pressures could begin to lead to high levels of stress.

It is best to start dealing with problems when they are small.

Talk to your friend. Tell them you are concerned and tell them why you are concerned.

Try not to take responsibility for your friend's problem.

If the problems are persisting, or are bigger than you first thought:

You might want to share them with someone who has more experience and might be in a better position to advise you. This might be a member of staff for example your head of year, head of student services or registrar.

In exceptional circumstances, for example if you feel that your friend's mental health problems might threaten their personal safety or that of others, you may need to act without your friend's consent.

Encourage your fellow student to make contact with someone they trust. If they agree, you could make first contact with someone on their behalf.

It can be stressful supporting a friend: make sure that you look after yourself and seek support and help from others for yourself.

