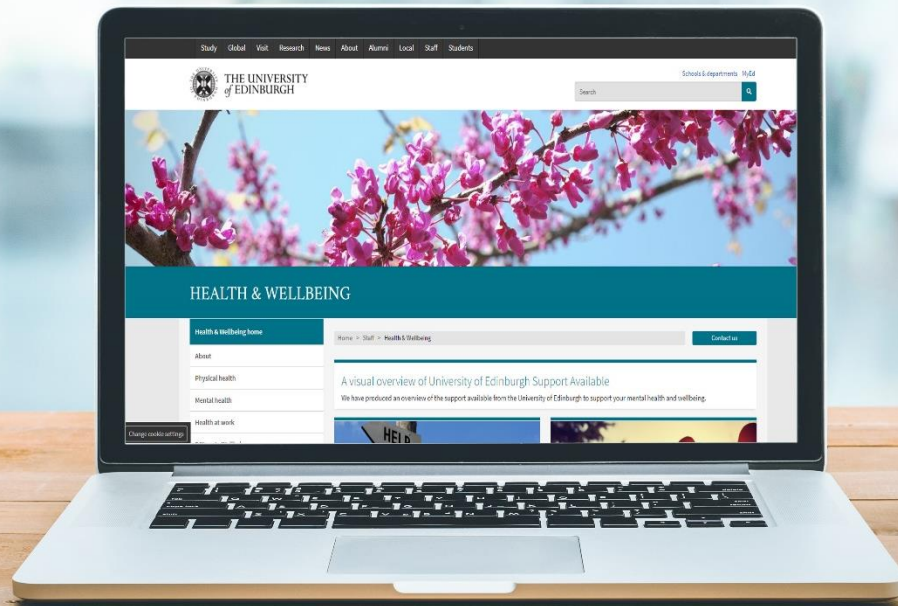




THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Mental Health and Wellbeing Support for Staff

Briefing document and
communications toolkit



Background

- The health and wellbeing of our staff is always a priority. **As a University, we are committed to:**
 - providing mental health and wellbeing services that support staff at work
 - signposting staff to mental health and wellbeing support relevant to their needs
 - promoting a healthy working environment and working practices
 - encouraging staff to look out for each other
 - creating a common language to understand mental health and wellbeing needs
- As part of this, we want to support staff across the University to feel confident in having conversations about mental health and wellbeing, and for everyone to be aware of the services available and where to find them.

Aims of this toolkit

- ▶ To provide colleagues with:
 - An understanding of the mental health and wellbeing resources available, and how to access them
 - Awareness of the University's aims and commitments around staff mental health and wellbeing
 - Information and resources to enable confident discussion about mental health and wellbeing – for line managers, HR colleagues or any member of staff who is looking to support a colleague or friend
 - Resources to support with local communications around staff mental health and wellbeing including newsletters, emails, social media etc.
- ▶ The main audiences for this toolkit are HR or marketing/communications colleagues and line managers, but it could be useful for any member of staff looking for guidance in this area.

Accessing resources and services

- ▶ The Staff Health and Wellbeing Hub brings together the available resources and services for staff in one place. This includes:
 - How to get help in a crisis
 - Internal and external mental health services and self-help resources
 - Information on how you can support others including additional information for managers
 - Mental health awareness courses
 - Physical health and healthy lifestyle initiatives
 - Financial wellbeing

www.ed.ac.uk/staff/health-wellbeing

Key messages and resources

- ▶ As outlined in slide 2, the University is committed to:
 - providing mental health and wellbeing services that support staff at work
 - signposting staff to mental health and wellbeing support relevant to their needs
 - promoting a healthy working environment and working practices
 - encouraging staff to look out for each other
 - creating a common language to understand mental health and wellbeing needs
- ▶ The following table sets out the five commitments and provides an outline of the key messaging, terminology and resources to support each one.
- ▶ This table can be used to support conversations around staff mental health and wellbeing, or used as a basis for local communications.

Our central message/vision:

We all have mental health. Our mental health, just like our physical health, is along a spectrum. Discussions on mental health tend to focus on those experiencing mental illness who need care or support. As a University we have a responsibility to offer support to staff and students as well as an opportunity to identify those at risk and intervene early. But we also have the opportunity to promote good mental wellbeing, helping us to thrive even when times are challenging.

We have developed some key messages to help us as a community to have a common understanding of how we will support each other.

| Aim | Key messages/terminology |
|--|---|
| We will create a common language to understand mental health and wellbeing needs. | <p>Work can be challenging and overwhelming at times and we recognise the impact this can have on our mental health. By talking about it and asking for support, it can really help.</p> <p>Mental wellbeing doesn't have one set meaning. We might use it to talk about how we feel, how well we're coping with daily life or what feels possible at the moment.</p> <p>Understanding stress and how to reduce stressors can positively impact on mental health. Work can bring pressure. Stress is the reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them which are not matched by their ability to cope. Pressure can be positive and motivating in the short term, helping to achieve success. Prolonged stress, however, can leave you physically and mentally unwell.</p> |

| Aim | Key messages/terminology |
|---|---|
| <p>We will provide mental health and wellbeing services that support you at work.</p> | <p>We know that talking about your mental health can be difficult, but when you do, we want you to have access to the advice and guidance that you need to support your mental health and wellbeing at work.</p> <p>We will provide mental health and wellbeing services that relate to work and help you access specialist external services, including your GP, in times of crisis and when you are struggling.</p> <p>We have created a Staff Health and Wellbeing Hub that aims to bring together all available University services into one location.</p> <p>You can self-refer to the Occupational Health Service if you are looking for advice and support about mental and physical health issues.</p> <p>University of Edinburgh staff have access to free and confidential counselling services, whether this is through the University's Staff Counselling Service, or through the Employee Assistance Programme Staff Counselling Service.</p> |
| <p>We will signpost you to mental health and wellbeing support relevant to your needs.</p> | <p>Depending on your needs, we will signpost you to the following support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help In A Crisis. If you are experiencing a mental health crisis now, there are several organisations you can access help from including the NHS and Samaritans. These can be found via our Help in a Crisis webpages. • Struggling. If you are struggling with your mental health we will signpost you to your GP along with University of Edinburgh mental health services where you can speak to someone or access self-help advice and resources. • Stressed. We will provide you with support and advice on how to identify and reduce stressors and how to have confident conversations. You can find out more on the Occupational Health webpages. • Settled. If your mental health needs are being met and you are looking to maintain them, evidence suggests there are 5 steps we can all take to improve our mental wellbeing by encouraging you to stay active, take notice, keep learning, connect and give. See 'Five ways to wellbeing'. |

| Aim | Key messages/terminology |
|--|--|
| <p>We will look out for one another.</p> | <p>Most people experiencing a problem with their mental health will speak to a friend, colleague or family member before they speak to a health professional, so your support can be really valuable.</p> <p>It can be hard to know what to do when supporting someone. By having frequent, repeated, honest and two-way conversations you can ask how they are feeling, what challenges they are dealing with and what support they need at work. We have created guidance on how to support others and how to encourage them to seek support Supporting others</p> <p>We have created a mental health awareness online course to raise awareness of mental health issues and illnesses at work and outside work, and to give some guidance on how to support others: Mental Health Awareness Course</p> <p>If you are a manager we have additional guidance on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to support staff who develop or have pre-existing mental health difficulties • Holding meaningful mental health and wellbeing conversations • You can get advice from, or refer a member of your team to, the Occupational Health Service about any health issue that affects work or where work is affected by health (you don't have to be off work). Guidance includes advice about planning adjustments, or a return to work during sickness absence. |
| <p>We will promote a healthy working environment and working practices.</p> | <p>Promoting healthy working environments and working practices can help prevent stress, reduce the impact on mental ill-health and support us all to thrive in our mental wellbeing. The University has various Health and Wellbeing policies in place to help support and inform staff of their rights and entitlements in relation to achieving a successful work/life balance.</p> <p>On the Staff Health and Wellbeing Hub we highlight other resources that can support you to proactively look after your wellbeing and physical health.</p> |

Mental health and wellbeing key dates

There are various national campaigns that take place throughout the year to raise awareness of different mental health and wellbeing topics. Here is a rundown of the key dates, if you wish to recognise them in your local area. We will also be posting about these the internal staff channels:

| Date in 2022 | Event | Suggested Items To Focus On |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| 3rd February | Time to Talk Day | Support and resources available |
| 3rd March | University Mental Health Day | University commitments/support and resources available |
| April | Stress Awareness Month | Lived experiences and support available |
| 9th to 15th May | Mental Health Awareness Week | Lived experiences and support available |
| 10 th September | World Suicide Prevention Day | Support and resources available |
| 10th October | World Mental Health Day | Support and resources available |

Mental Health and Wellbeing Conversations

Research shows that mental health stigma is prevalent in the workplace. Checking in with individuals may seem insignificant, but small actions can have a meaningful effect on staff wellbeing. These actions alone cannot fix the structural issues with our mental health system, but they are a start.

By having meaningful conversations managers can help staff individually and collectively reflect on what support they need.

How to do this

- ▶ Leaders at all levels can become allies by speaking more publicly about their own experiences and directing people to resources.
- ▶ In 1:1s use simple conversation prompts that go beyond “how are you?” (e.g. How are you coping? What has been the best part of your week so far? What have you been reflecting on since we spoke about this in the team meeting?).
- ▶ In team meetings give each person (including yourself) space to share what’s happening for them and how they are doing. Use the following tool to guide you through:

How To Have Mental Health and Wellbeing Conversations

Communications toolkit

- ▶ The following slides provide example communications content for emails, newsletters and social media.
- ▶ This may be useful for any colleagues who are responsible for communicating to staff via any of these channels.

Example newsletter content

Example 1: Mental health and wellbeing: support available to you

The University is committed to supporting you at work, and ensuring that you know how to access the services available to you.

Whether you find yourself needing help in a crisis, feeling stressed at work, or wanting to make smaller improvements to your mental health and wellbeing, this information can be found on the [Staff Health and Wellbeing Hub](#).

Example 2: Mental health and wellbeing: supporting others

You may find yourself in a situation where a colleague confides in you about problems they may be experiencing, and in these situations your support can be really valuable. We understand that it can be hard to know what to do, but to help you have these conversations we have created guidance on how to support others, and how to encourage them to seek support: [Supporting others](#)

You can also access a mental health awareness online course to raise awareness of mental health issues at work and outside work, as well as giving some guidance on how to support others: [Mental Health Awareness Course](#)

There is also [additional guidance available for managers](#).

Email template: promoting the Staff Health and Wellbeing Hub

To: Local staff

Dear colleagues,

We all have mental health. Our mental health, just like our physical health, is along a spectrum. Discussions on mental health tend to focus on those experiencing mental illness who need care or support.

As a University we have a responsibility to offer support to staff and students, as well as an opportunity to identify those at risk and intervene early. But we also have the opportunity to promote good mental wellbeing, helping us to thrive even when times are challenging.

I want to make you aware of the support and services available to all University staff, which can be found on the [Staff Health and Wellbeing Hub](#). Information on these webpages includes:

- How to get help in a crisis*
- Internal and external mental health services and self-help resources*
- Information on how you can support others including additional information for managers*
- Mental health awareness courses*
- Physical health and healthy lifestyle initiatives*
- Financial wellbeing*

I would encourage you all to take a look at these pages, and if you have any questions then please get in touch with XXXXX.

Many thanks,

Example social media content

| Topic | Content |
|--|--|
| Signposting the Staff Health and Wellbeing Hub | <i>It's important to take the time to check in on your mental health and wellbeing. If you are struggling, there is support available, and there is always someone to talk to. Check out the Staff Health and Wellbeing Hub for more info: https://edin.ac/3nrZRWc</i> |
| Mental health check-in | <i>How is your mental health and wellbeing at the moment? Whether you feel like you need support, or you just want to make small improvements, you can find helpful resources and services on the Staff Health and Wellbeing Hub. Find out more: https://edin.ac/3nrZRWc</i> |
| Supporting others | <i>We understand that sometimes you might find yourself in a position where a colleague or friend looks to you for support when they're struggling. If you're looking to improve your confidence, check out our dedicated resources: https://edin.ac/3olu2HO</i> |
| Five ways to Wellbeing | <i>Small changes can make a big difference to our mental health. The 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' has been proven to have a positive effect, and can be as simple as taking a short course to improve a skill. Find out more: https://edin.ac/2MO1wal</i> |

[Staff News Twitter](#)

Useful links

Internal

- ▶ [Staff Health and Wellbeing Hub](#)
- ▶ [University's Occupational Health Team](#)
- ▶ [University's Staff Counselling Service](#)
- ▶ [Student Health and Wellbeing webpages](#)

External

- ▶ [Mental Health Services and Helplines](#)



Questions or need any support?

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