



Queen Mary
University of London



A Guide for Staff

**Supporting Students in
Urgent Situations**

About this Guide

This guide will help you to respond to students who:

- Are thinking about suicide or acting on suicidal thoughts
- Are experiencing psychosis (experiencing / believing things that others do not)
- Are at immediate risk of serious harm (e.g. overdose, self-harm, risk of harm from someone else)
- Tell you about someone else who is at immediate risk of serious harm
- Have recently experienced sexual violence
- Have recently experienced other types of violence

This guide will also help you **signpost students** to specialist support **in less immediately urgent** situations e.g.

- They have no money



- They have nowhere to live
- They are anxious, distressed or upset
- They need emotional, psychological or mental health support
- They (or others e.g. younger siblings) are at risk of harm from someone else e.g. family
- They have pressing welfare, practical and personal issues

What to do - Immediately Urgent Situations

It is urgent if:

- They need urgent medical attention
- They are actively /immediately at risk of suicide / serious self-harm
- They seem so acutely unwell that they are at serious risk of harm to themselves or someone else - including situations where they appear to perceive things differently from those around them e.g. delusions, hallucinations

Action:

- Take them to a quiet and safe place if possible
- Get help from someone else – it is safer not to manage this situation alone. QMUL Mental Health First Aiders can help: <https://bit.ly/2N1wy9r>
- Make a note of the student's name, mobile number and student number if possible

Call 999 for an ambulance (with or without the student's consent) and contact QMUL Security on 3333 – they will coordinate ambulance access onto campus.

The emergency services will advise you if they feel the Police should attend rather than an ambulance.

In some situations, you can call the Tower Hamlets 24 hour mental health crisis line instead – see Support and Resources

Someone else is at immediate risk of serious harm e.g. a friend or family member of the person telling you

The person telling you should call 999 and explain the situation, as they know the most about it.

You can help by finding them a safe space to make the call, and offering them support during and after the call.

Follow Up - Immediately Urgent Situations

How you follow up is almost as important as how you manage the crisis. It is important that students get appropriate support in the aftermath of a crisis.

- Email dds@qmul.ac.uk a record of: what happened, who else was involved and the student's name and contact details as soon as possible. The DDS mental health advisers will liaise with emergency services, A and E and other relevant agencies, and will contact the student to offer support
- Talk to your line manager and relevant colleagues about what happened and any necessary further actions
- Liaise with the DDS mental health advisers for advice and support about any next steps your School or department might need to take



What to do - Less Immediately Urgent Situations

Examples:

- Nowhere to live
- Pressing financial, welfare, practical and personal issues
- Experiencing Domestic Violence
- At risk of forced marriage
- Anxious, distressed or upset
- Needs emotional, psychological or mental health support

What to do

- Find somewhere discreet to talk
- Reassure them that you are here to listen, and to help them get support
- Follow the 'tips for listening' in this guide
- Explain their options for getting support (see 'Support and Resources' in this guide)



- Avoid being directive or advising on a specific course of action - provide them with the information and options
- Help them to form (and ideally write down) a plan for getting support, so that they have a reminder about what you have talked about later on. Give them written information about the services they can contact – they are unlikely to remember otherwise
- Consider whether you are going to have contact with them again – this will depend on your role. Agree how / when you will next have contact, as appropriate.

Other Urgent Situations

Sexual violence

- Listen, and show that you are listening, even if it is difficult for you to hear
- Don't ask questions about what has happened
- Believe them
- Enable them to stay in control about what happens next - resist any temptation to take over e.g. by arranging and doing things you think are best
- www.qmul.ac.uk/zerotolerance has detailed information about support and options – go through this together so that they can decide what they want to do
- Give them the information in writing, as they are unlikely to remember otherwise

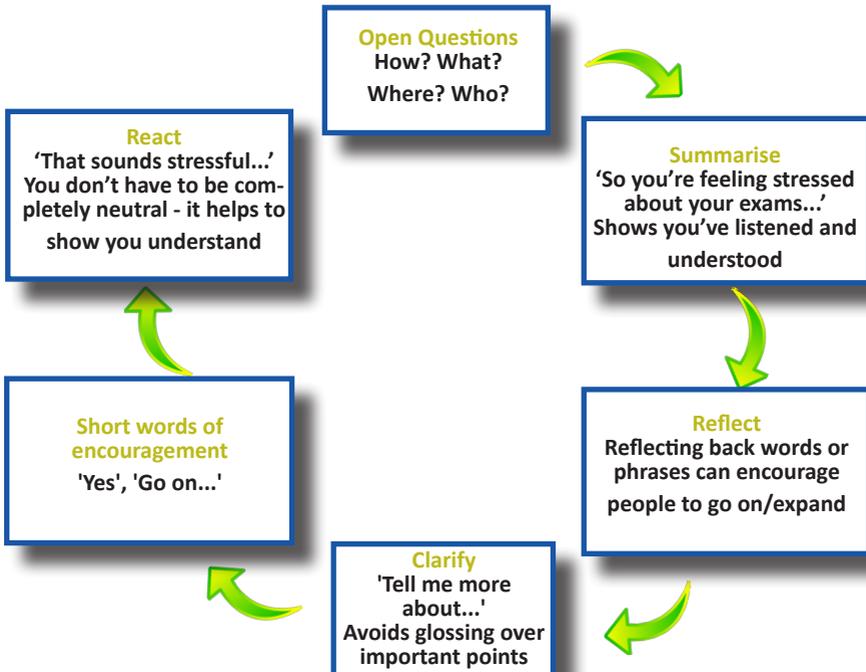
A child under 18, or a vulnerable adult, is at risk of harm

A student may tell you about a harmful situation at home, where there is a child under 18 e.g. their sibling. Alternatively, someone might tell you about a vulnerable adult (e.g. a disabled student) who is at risk of serious harm (e.g., there is domestic violence at home).

QMUL has a duty to act on safeguarding issues like these. There are designated staff at QMUL for you to tell, who will decide what to do next. See: www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/policy/safeguarding/



Tips for Listening



Tips:

- Be clear that you are here to help – students often assume staff are acting in a disciplinary role
- This guide helps you to manage an initial crisis or urgent situation safely so that students can get professional help – you are not expected to be a counsellor
- Look after yourself - QMUL has training and support available: <http://connected.qmul.ac.uk/our-students/student-support>
- Staff counselling: 0800 243458 (24hrs, 365 days) www.workplaceoptions.co.uk

Support and Resources

Advice and Counselling Service

Specialist and confidential advice and support for welfare, financial, emotional and psychological issues
www.welfare.qmul.ac.uk / 020 7882 8717
welfare@qmul.ac.uk

Disability and Dyslexia Service

Confidential advice, guidance and support for students with diagnosed mental health conditions and those who have experienced a mental health crisis, disabled students and students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
www.dds.qmul.ac.uk / 020 7882 2756
dds@qmul.ac.uk

Security Service QMUL (24 hours)

020 7882 3333 (Emergency)
020 7882 5000 (non-emergency)

Residential Support

Support for the well-being of students living in halls
residential-support@qmul.ac.uk
020 7882 5064

Samaritans (24 hours)

Confidential, impartial emotional support for those who are experiencing distress or despair, including suicidal thoughts.
116 123 / jo@samaritans.org

Tower Hamlets 24 hour Mental Health Crisis Line

Supports people living and working in Tower Hamlets and is staffed by mental health professionals. It is for anyone experiencing a mental health crisis and can be used in the first instance as an alternative to visiting A&E.
0207 771 5807
bit.ly/2OZF1jj

The Havens – Sexual Assault Centres (24 hours)

Sexual assault referral centres where specially trained, experienced professionals can give you; medical help and advice, counselling, practical and emotional support.

The Haven – Whitechapel

020 7247 4787 / www.thehavens.org.uk

Resources

The Advice and Counselling Service has detailed info about support for different issues: <https://bit.ly/2ADdLjN> and <https://bit.ly/2vepPTo>

MIND – Information about mental ill-health: <https://www.mind.org.uk/>

Sexual Violence: <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/zerotolerance/>

Domestic Violence: <https://bit.ly/2AJVJNO>

Forced Marriage: <https://bit.ly/2ADZCTs>

CONTACT US:

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