



**PBSA**

# **MENTAL HEALTH READINESS TOOLKIT**

**-BUILDING SAFER, STRONGER TEAMS**



**Garrett Learning**  
FACILITATE. COACH. INSPIRE.

# INTRO

## HELPING MANAGERS RESPOND CONFIDENTLY AND DEMONSTRATE GOOD PRACTICE

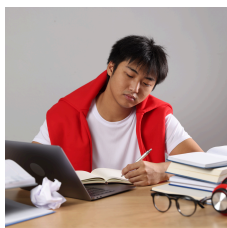


Student wellbeing is a top priority in the PBSA sector. Managers are often the first point of contact for residents experiencing mental health difficulties.

This toolkit gives your managers practical tools, a simple framework for conversations and guidance to escalate appropriately - supporting staff, residents and your organisation in line with ANUK expectations.



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Early warning signs



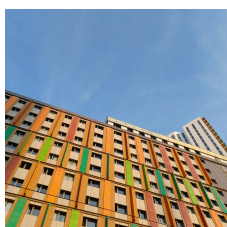
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Conversation framework



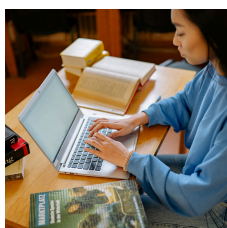
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What NOT to say /  
Acceptable phrases



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Signposting options



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Manager confidence  
self-assessment

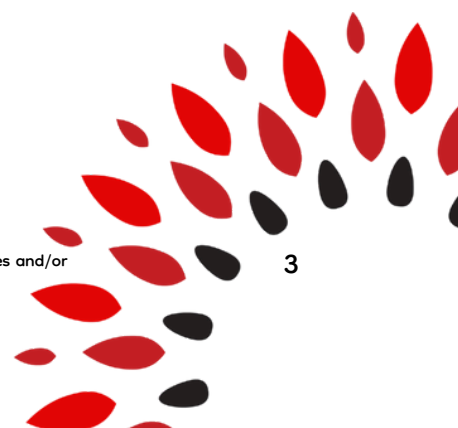


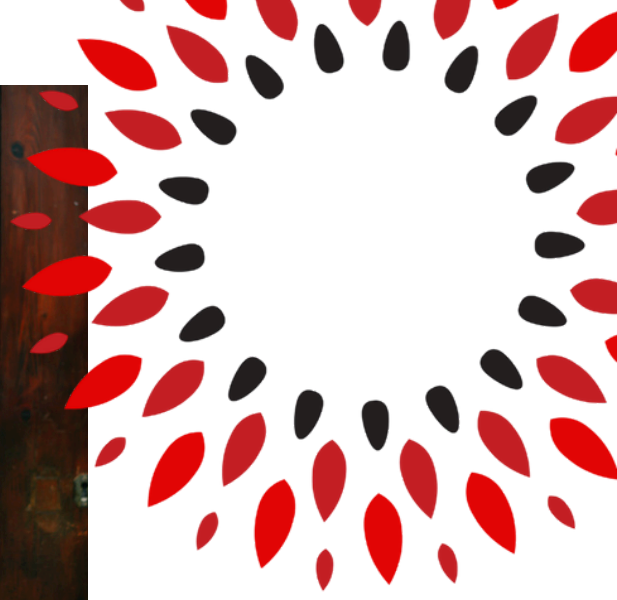
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Next steps

Please note: The information shared in this guide is intended for general guidance and awareness purposes only. It does not replace professional medical, clinical, legal or organisational advice.

Any actions taken should be in line with your organisation's internal policies, safeguarding procedures and risk management frameworks. Where there is an immediate risk of harm to an individual or others, emergency services and/or appropriate professional support should be contacted.





# WENDY GARRETT

founder of Garrett Learning is an accredited MHFA training provider to the HE and PBSA sector, trained over 1,200 people in mental health skills to help build confidence and create safer, more supportive communities.



From Jackie Hudson:

“We have continued to work with Wendy to deliver Mental Health First Aid training within the PBSA sector, both at Now Student Living and across other PBSA clients. Wendy consistently delivers professional, engaging, practical and thought-provoking training that equips managers with the confidence and skills to support their teams effectively”



# EARLY WARNING SIGNS

## Signs to watch for:

- Sudden changes in behaviour (withdrawn, anxious, angry)
- Changes in academic performance or attendance
- Signs of distress in communication (emails, social media, in-person)
- Emotional outbursts, tearfulness or irritability
- Self-neglect or hygiene changes
- Disclosures of stress, anxiety or thoughts of self-harm

**Tip for managers:** Document observations and escalate if any signs persist or intensify.

# CONVERSATION FRAMEWORK



## Step 1: Create a safe space

- Private, quiet location
- Give your full attention by being open and non-judgemental

## Step 2: Listen and acknowledge

- Ask open questions: “How have you been feeling recently?”
- Avoid assumptions or minimising
- Reflect and summarise what’s been said

## Step 3: Clarify and support

- Don’t try to fix the situation - ask what support they feel would help
- Offer practical options (university support, counselling, wellbeing services)

## Step 4: Escalate appropriately

- Know your organisation’s escalation pathway
- Conversations are confidential unless there is risk of harm to self or others, call emergency services and follow safeguarding procedures immediately

# WHAT NOT TO SAY:



**"DON'T WORRY,  
IT'S NOTHING"**

**"I CAN KEEP THIS SECRET"**

**"JUST CHEER UP"**

**"OTHER STUDENTS  
HAVE IT WORSE"**



# ACCEPTABLE PHRASES:



**"TELL ME MORE ABOUT HOW  
YOU'RE FEELING"**

**"WE ARE HERE TO LISTEN TO  
YOU, YOU'RE NOT ALONE"**

**"HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN  
FEELING LIKE THIS?"**

**"DO YOU HAVE SOMEONE YOU  
CAN TALK TO ABOUT THIS?"**

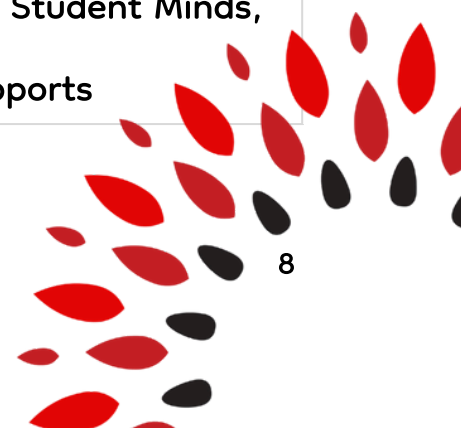


# SIGNPOSTING OPTIONS



Please note, respect confidentiality unless a crisis situation.

Who to contact?	What for?
Emergency services - 999, A&E, GP or 111, option 2	For emergency crisis situations
Mental Health First Aider / Wellbeing Officer	Share concerns, ask for guidance
Safeguarding Lead / HR / Line Manager	Follow formal reporting for serious concerns
External support	NHS mental health services, crisis helplines, University counselling services / wellbeing teams, Local crisis lines, National support: Samaritans, Mind, Rethink Mental Illness. Student support apps or online platforms, Student Minds, Hub of Hope for local supports



# MANAGER CONFIDENCE SELF-ASSESSMENT

Rating 1 = low confidence , 5 = high/competent

	1	2	3	4	5
1: I can recognise early signs of resident distress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2: I feel confident starting conversations about mental health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3: I know when and where to signpost for different scenarios	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4: I can set boundaries while supporting a resident.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5: My line manager understands my wellbeing role and impact it has on others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your next steps:

Anything scored 1-3 is an area where training or coaching may help.





# NEXT STEPS

For PBSA organisations looking to strengthen manager confidence and team capability, Garrett Learning offer a PBSA Mental Health Readiness Review:

- A 20-minute organisational conversation [book here](#)
- to review current MHFA provision, manager confidence and escalation pathways
- Suggest a tailored PBSA Mental Health Support Package to support your team and demonstrate good practice under the ANUK code



Scan the QR code to book your Readiness Review.

I look forward to speaking with you.

*Wendy*

Together we can make a difference

