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 four: transitions

Module description

This session will introduce you to the ways in which some students are affected emotionally when they leave home to come to university. You will also find out about some of the difficulties that students face when they start university. You will be given suggestions about when it is important to direct students to other people who may be able to help.

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:

- 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 resolve with the right support
- Students can struggle with self-management and self - regulation and should be signposted to people who can help if this continues

Learning objectives:

- Recognise the ways in which some students are affected emotionally when they leave home to come to university
- Identify some of the difficulties that students face when they start university
- Recognise when it is important to direct students to other people who may be able to help

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.
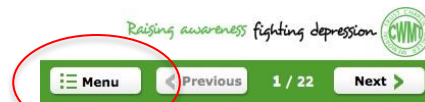
Figure One: Location of Menu Option

Figure Two: Menu Options in Session Four

Suggested session pages for group
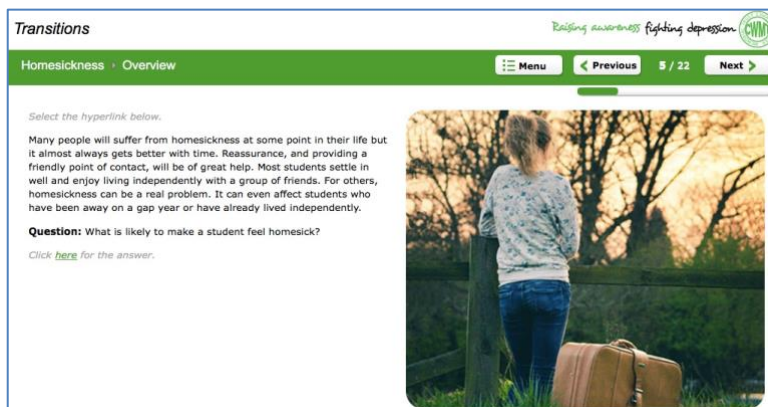
Discussion

Page 5/22: A change in lifestyle:

Can you think of a change in lifestyle which has affected you at some point? Think about what it was and how it affected you at the time?

Then consider what helped you deal with this situation and what didn't help?

How can we translate that to our dealings with students?
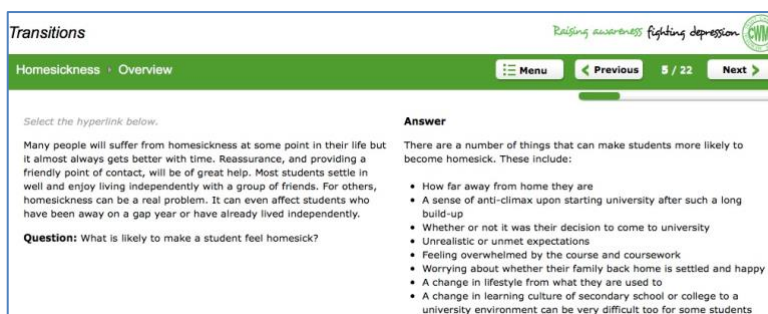
Page 5/22: Unrealistic/Unmet expectations:

We all can have unrealistic/or un met expectations which impact upon us. Can you think of an example when you were disappointed or felt let down when something didn't go as planned/hoped for?

Key message to convey to students = Improve reality or Lower expectations.

Page 13/22: Becoming Independent:

There is not a sudden change to being Independent, it is a gradual process across our lives.

- Think of a few milestones you have experienced in 'coming Independent' yourself; or those you have seen your children have.
- What helped ensure a smooth transition in these cases/ and what may have made it difficult?

Page 14/22: Other common difficulties:

This is a long list of common difficulties we all can struggle with. Look at the list and choose 2 that you know you may struggle with or get stuck with.

The point of this is to acknowledge that worrying about some things is normal. However, students often feel they are alone with their concerns so conveying that these are normal and OK to think about can help lessen concern in the individual student.

Page 16/22: Signposting:

Make sure you know who does what and where in your institution. Have a chat as to the different services available and where/how they operate. Are there any specific protocols you need to know about in terms of signposting?

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), 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 to discuss your requirements.