

start to   
**SUCCESS**

# Our mental health campaign

**ISOLATION**



**SELF HELP**



**REDUCING STIGMA**



[WWW.STARTTOSUCCESS.CO.UK](http://WWW.STARTTOSUCCESS.CO.UK)

# ISOLATION

We all feel lonely and isolated from time to time, and because this is such a personal feeling, everyone's experiences of feeling isolated will be different. Feelings of loneliness and isolation may also be emphasised in the current climate as people are distancing themselves from others to help prevent the spread of Covid-19.

## Ending feelings off isolation by:



Helping you step  
out



Thinking about  
who isn't there

# Helping you step out

**Whilst feelings of isolation itself isn't a mental health problem, the two are strongly linked. Isolation has a significant impact on health, contributing to conditions such as depression, anxiety, and dementia. Furthermore, having a mental health problem can increase your chance of feeling lonely.**

**We know that at the best of times, transitioning into or through university is a challenging time, and isolation will be an even bigger challenge during the pandemic, but know that there are many ways you can make connections with people like you whilst studying and there is always support available if you need it.**

**Our 'Staying Well in Isolation' resource has been created, with the help of our Student Advisory Panel, for students who may be feeling isolated, or are physically isolating because of the virus. [Click here](#)**

## **A few things you could do if you are feeling isolated:**

- Try out some of the ideas on the ['20 Things for the New Normal'](#) document.
- Speak to a trained Wellbeing peer mentor at your University. Email [wellbeingpeermentors@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:wellbeingpeermentors@staffs.ac.uk)
- Join a club or society at university to meet like-minded people. Find out more at [Staffs Union](#)
- Get in touch with the universities support services, or access a support hotline or online supportive community such as Togetherall. Find out more at [Staffs Student Hub](#)
- For information regarding how to stay well during COVID-19 visit [student space](#)

# Think about who isn't there

## Have you noticed ...

One of your mates isn't themselves or they have become more withdrawn?

or Someone on your course hasn't been attending lectures or workshops for a while?

**Its important to check in with them!**

## Start the conversation

Choose a quiet place without interruptions when you have plenty of free time to listen.

## Keep up the fun stuff

Supporting a friend isn't just about sharing worries and concerns – it's also about keeping up with the things you enjoy and spending time together as friends.

## Know when to get help

It's useful to know what support is out there so that you can signpost your friends and develop an understanding of the sort of support they might receive.

For more information check out the ['Look after your mate' Guide](#) By Student Minds

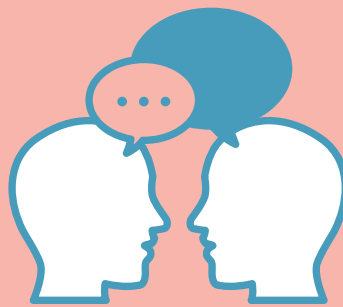
# REDUCING STIGMA

Unfortunately, not everyone understands mental health problems. Some people may have misconceptions about what mental health issues are or how they can make someone feel or act. They may also use language you find dismissive, offensive or hurtful. This can be very upsetting - especially if someone who feels this way is a family member or a friend.

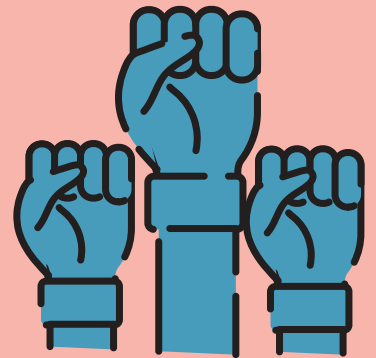
## 3 ways to end mental health stigma



**Educate yourself**



**Talk openly**



**Take Action**



# SAYING WHAT NEEDS TO BE SAID



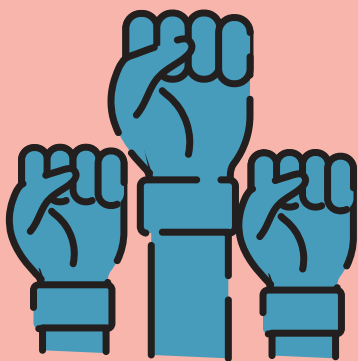
## Educate yourself

Educate yourself and others by sharing reliable information to help them understand more about mental health challenges. A good source of information is the Mind website where you can find specific information on Mental Health Stigma.

Talk openly about your experiences. Sharing your story can help improve people's understanding and change their attitudes. Why not write a blog or an article for your university, Student Minds or Mind? Take a look at the 'Our Stories' book, a compilation of mental health experiences from staff and students across Keele and Staffordshire.



## Talk openly



## Take Action

Get involved in a campaign. The Start to Success mental health campaign would welcome student champions to get involved and help us to destigmatise mental health in the community.

# WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT IT

# SELF HELP

There are many ways that someone may act if they are struggling with their mental health. Everyone may act in different ways and this can make its difficult to know if there is an issue.

To maintain good mental health:



Identify when to  
take action



Help yourself



# Helping you identify when to take action

These 9 signs are not to help you diagnose a mental health issue, but instead to reassure you that there might be good reason to seek more information about your concerns.

## 1. Feeling Anxious or worried

We all get worried or stressed from time to time. But anxiety could be the sign of a mental health issue if it's constant and interferes all the time.

## 2. Feeling depressed or unhappy

Have you noticed that you have lost interest in a hobby you used to do? Been sad or irritable for the last few weeks or more? Are you lacking in motivation and energy or are teary all the time?. You might be dealing with depression.

## 3. Emotional Outburst

Sudden and dramatic changes in mood, such as extreme distress or anger, can be a symptom of mental illness.

## 4. Sleep Problems

Persisting changes to your sleep patterns could be a symptom of a mental illness.

## 5. Weight or appetite changes

Fluctuating weight or rapid weight loss could be one of the warning signs of a mental illness, such as depression or an eating disorder. Other mental health issues can impact appetite and weight too.

## 6. Quiet or withdrawn

We all need quiet time occasionally, but withdrawing from life, especially if this is a major change, could indicate a mental health issue. If you are isolating yourself, you may be struggling with your mental health.

## 7. Substance use

Using substances, such as alcohol or drugs, to cope can be a sign of, and a contributor to, mental health issues.

## 8. Feeling guilty or worthless

Thoughts like 'I'm a failure', 'It's my fault' or 'I'm worthless' are all possible signs of a mental health issue, such as depression. You may need help if you're frequently criticising or blaming yourself.

## 9. Changes in behaviour or feelings

A mental illness may start out as subtle changes to a person's feelings, thinking and behaviour. Ongoing and significant changes could be a sign that you have or are developing a mental health issue.



# Noticed any of these symptoms?

It might be time to make a change

Self-help isn't all face masks and bubble baths. Whilst these may work for some people, it won't be effective for all. Self-care techniques and general lifestyle changes can help manage the symptoms of many mental health problems. They may also help prevent some problems from developing or getting worse. Here are some tips for looking after yourself that you might find helpful.

## 5 ways to wellbeing

Evidence suggests there are 5 steps you can take to improve your mental health and wellbeing. Trying these things could help you feel more positive and able to get the most out of life.



Find out more tips on how to look after your wellbeing at  
[www.starttosuccess.co.uk](http://www.starttosuccess.co.uk)

**Find out more:**  
**[WWW.STARTTOSUCCESS.CO.UK](http://WWW.STARTTOSUCCESS.CO.UK)**

