



STUDENT SERVICES
WORKING TO SUPPORT STUDENTS
WITH MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES



STUDENT SERVICES:

Money Advice, Funding, Accommodation, Jobs, Careers, Personal Matters, Learner Support, Volunteering

MAKE YOUR FUTURE BRIGHTER



INTRODUCTION

At Edinburgh's Telford College, we aim to support the wellbeing of all our students. With one in four people affected by mental health difficulties at some time in their lives, we have a range of ways we can support you if you find yourself in this position whilst at College. The following information takes you through the ways in which you can tell us if you need support and the sort of support you can expect to receive.

The transition to College

The transition to College poses new challenges for everyone. In addition to the pressures of course work, you are faced with a new environment, new situations, new people and a different way of life than you may have been used to. For many people there will be added pressures such as how to support yourself financially and a move to a more independent way of living. It can be difficult to adjust. For students with the added pressure of a mental health difficulty, you may find you need some extra support to help you adjust to these changes.



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DISCLOSING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES

I'm worried about what people will think

Because of the stigma attached to mental ill health, many people are reluctant to disclose their mental health difficulties for fear of discrimination. At Edinburgh's Telford College, we have policies to ensure that disclosing will not in any way affect your application or the way you are treated by any member of staff. In May 2009 Student Services signed the 'See Me' pledge. This formalises our commitment to tackling discrimination and stigma associated with mental health problems.

Student Services is there to be accessed for a wide range of services, not just for Learner Support. In fact, nearly every student in College will visit Student Services at some point. This means that there is no stigma attached to visiting us and no-one will know why you are accessing the service.

What will happen if I disclose my mental health difficulties?

If you indicate an additional support need on your application form, this is what will happen:

- A Student Services Officer will contact you by telephone for an informal chat.
- They will ask you to tell them a bit about your difficulties, such as what they mean to you and how it affects you on a daily basis.
- They may ask you what support you have received in the past and what has worked in the management of your difficulties.
- Together we can discuss how we can best support you at College.

It is important to remember that you can disclose mental health difficulties at any point during your course.

We acknowledge that anyone can be affected by mental ill health at any point in your College career.

Throughout the course, if you feel that you would benefit from some support at College, please make contact with a member of the Student Services team.

Location: **Student Services area, next to the Hub on the ground floor**
Phone: **Ask for Student Services (Guidance and Learner Support) via 0131 559 4000**
E-mail: **LearnerSupport@ed-coll.ac.uk**

If you would feel more comfortable speaking with your tutor or a member of teaching staff, then please do so. They can also help you access Student Services.

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Who will be told about my mental health difficulties?

All information that you provide us with will be treated confidentially*.

Sometimes, in order to put support in place, it is useful if we share information with members of staff (such as your tutor) who would be involved in supporting you. We would ask you if you were comfortable with information being passed on before doing so. The focus of information that we share would always be on how best to support you in your learning.

* If you would like to see a copy of our confidentiality statement, please ask.

HOW WE CAN HELP

I'm worried about starting College, can you help?

Nearly everyone will have some anxieties about starting College, so you are not alone. If you are anxious about starting College, you can contact us in Student Services and a member of the Support team can arrange to meet with you before College starts.

This might help in familiarising you with the building, the support on offer and what to expect from College during your studies.

Upon starting College, you can expect to receive an induction from your teaching staff which will give you another opportunity to ask questions about the course.

In addition to this there will be a Student Services induction for all students at the start of term where you can find out about the range of services we offer. For International students there are specific inductions tailored to help you adapt to learning in a new culture.

Remember - if you have forgotten to ask anything in the first few weeks, don't worry. Student Services staff will also be happy to help to point you in the right direction or to answer questions.

LEARNER SUPPORT DROP-INS

There are learner support drop-ins on every day in Student Services, which is located on the ground floor, just off The Hub. This is a time when a Student Services Officer will be available for you to speak to, without an appointment.

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What will happen during the drop-in?

Student Services has a relaxed, informal atmosphere, and all the staff are friendly and approachable. The drop-ins take place in private rooms within Student Services. Drop-ins are an opportunity for you to speak about any difficulties you are experiencing in College. The Student Services Officer will go through the options available to you.

What sort of support can you offer me?

We understand that everyone's experience of mental health difficulties is unique. This is why every student who discloses mental health difficulties will have a personal learning and support plan drawn up which is tailored specifically to your individual needs. Your Student Services Officer will help you to think about your aims in College.

This may allow you to work out effective strategies that will enable you to cope and reach your full potential. We acknowledge that everyone's mental health changes and so we aim to change the level of support as appropriate.

Some of the ways your Student Services Officer can support you in your studying are:

- Loan of a laptop
- Use of enabling technology
- Arranging for support provision in the classroom such as note-taking (where possible and appropriate)
- Negotiating arrangements in the classroom, for example sitting near the door
- Help with organising and managing your work
- Help with structuring your time
- Help with accessing other facilities and resources in College, such as the Learning Resource Centre
- Where necessary and appropriate, requesting Exam concessions such as extra time, the option of a reader and scribe, or sitting the exam in a small, quiet room
- Advice on relaxation
- Refer you to other internal/external services.

PERSONAL MATTERS: ADVICE AND REFERRAL

The College also offers a Personal Matters, Advice and Referral Drop-In service, which offers a safe holding environment to anyone who would like someone to talk to about any concerns they have.

If you are not sure, where to get the support you need, or in fact what support you need, this service may be able help you. Help, support and guidance will be provided to anyone wishing to contact external organisations offering counselling and other such support.

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The drop-in times for this service are displayed on the door of Student Services.

Alternatively you can contact Puja Parbhaker (Student Services Officer) on 0131 559 4098 or email puja.parbhaker@ed-coll.ac.uk so she can arrange to meet you at a time outwith the specified drop-in times.

In addition, you may also wish to talk with a member of the Spiritual Care Team. All students (of faith or of no faith) are welcome to use this service.

The Spiritual Care Team aims to:

- Provide guidance, encouragement and support to students and staff attending Edinburgh's Telford College
- Provide a safe space for discussion on any issue
- Provide direction to other sources of support, where appropriate
- Consider and express the diversity existing within our College community
- Celebrate events in the multi-faith calendar, including "one world" events

OTHER SUPPORT ON OFFER

External Support

In Student Services we have information on and can provide signposting to a wide range of external organisations. We have close contact with various organisations who may be able to help you. For example in February 2009, Depression Alliance Scotland ran their 'Living Life to the Full Course' for a group of Telford students.

INTERNAL SUPPORT

We also have a range of other specialist services that can help you with the various challenges of student life:

- We can offer you advice on managing your finances and have hardship grants available where applicable.
- We have our own JobZone where you can receive advice and guidance on applying for part-time work as well as receiving information on current job opportunities in and around Edinburgh.
- We offer course guidance both before you have applied for a course and whilst you are currently enrolled. The Course Guidance Team can help you choose the right course for you as well as helping you overcome any difficulties you might experience along the way.
- Similarly, we also have a Careers Advisor who can help you during all stages of your College education, including preparing for leaving College, whether you plan to go on to further education or into the workplace.
- We can help you with childcare provision if required

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

Student Services are committed to providing a service that is driven by what our students need. There are many ways that you can let us know what you think of the services we provide. Fill out a postcard in Student Services or speak to a member of the team if there is anything you would like to see that we don't currently offer. We welcome all feedback that we receive.

Would you like to see a peer support group where you can chat with other students who have experience of mental distress? You could be the one to set this up and help others! Why not speak to a member of Student Services or the Student Union who could help you with this?

AND FINALLY...

Mental health difficulties don't have to be an obstacle to your capacity to study and learn. In fact, many students with mental health difficulties find that College can have a really positive effect on their mental health and helps to develop their life skills, both on a social and a personal level. College can be an exciting and rewarding experience, whatever the nature or severity of your mental health difficulties. We hope you enjoy your time at Edinburgh's Telford College and we are here to help you all the way!



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ONE COLLEGE

Edinburgh's Telford College strives to be an inclusive College that welcomes and supports learners from all age and ethnic groups, genders, abilities, sexual orientations, cultural and religious backgrounds.

The College has developed policies to ensure that unfair discrimination does not occur and is ethically and legally committed to equal opportunity in all institutional areas of activity. Appropriate remedial and, if necessary, disciplinary action will be taken in order to eliminate discrimination wherever it occurs. Telford is founded on the principles of creating an inclusive College, one College for all.

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