



University  
of Glasgow



# HELPING DISTRESSED STUDENTS

A GUIDE FOR UNIVERSITY STAFF

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*The health and welfare of all members of the University is everyone's concern. This guide gives you advice on dealing with both crises and more everyday situations.*

*It is important to be prepared for emergencies, but be aware they occur very rarely and that expert help is available.*

### YOU CAN:

- Listen
- Give the student time to talk
- Be sympathetic and not dismissive
- Understand the situation from his/her point of view
- Make appropriate referrals
- Help the student to feel contained

### YOU CAN'T:

- Solve all the students' problems
- Take responsibility for his/her emotional state or actions

### THIS GUIDE WILL:

**1**

Help you to recognise when a student may be in difficulty.

**2**

Provide advice to help you respond/refer appropriately and efficiently.

**3**

Remind you of the sources of support within the University.

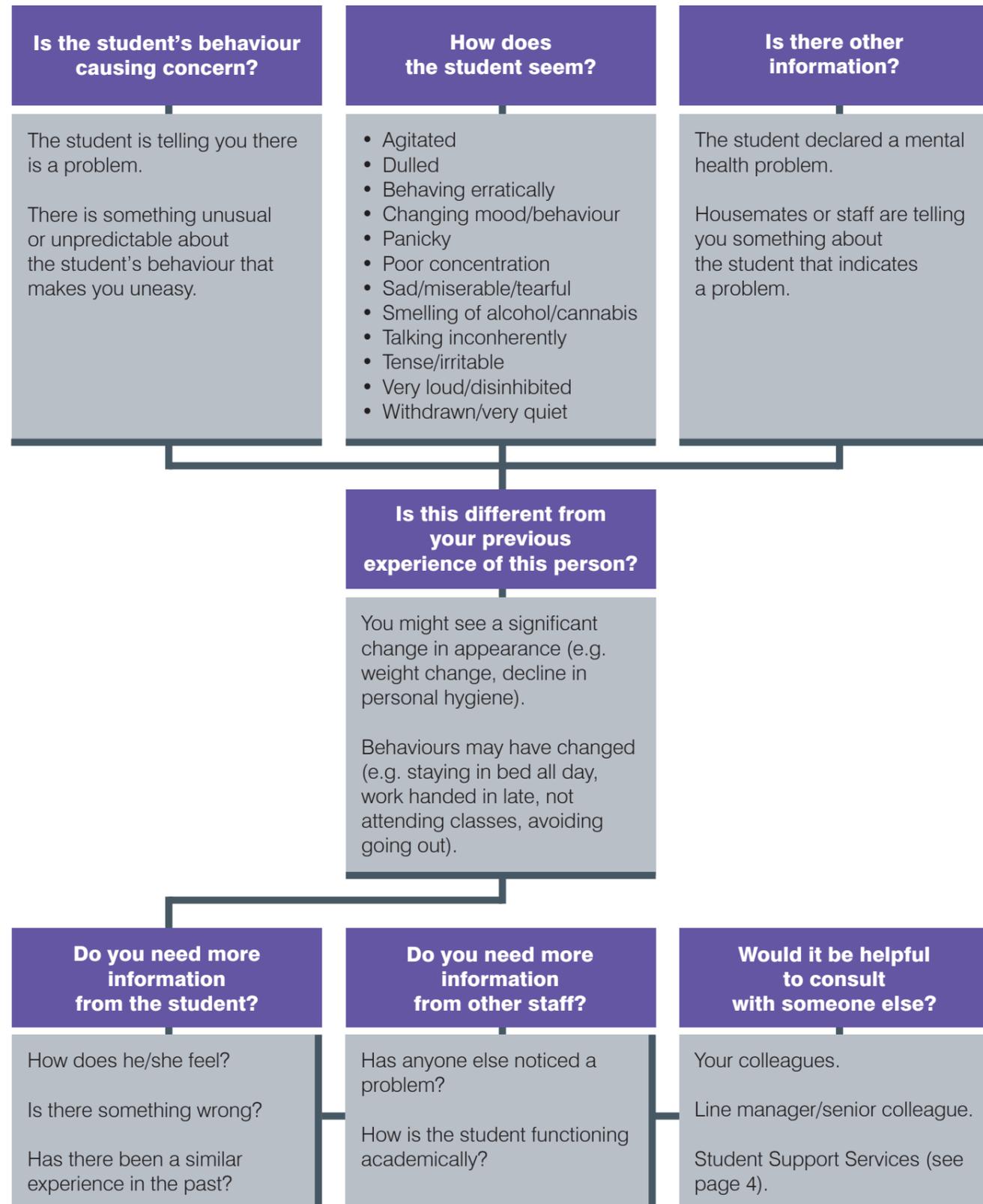
**4**

Raise awareness of issues relating to student mental health.

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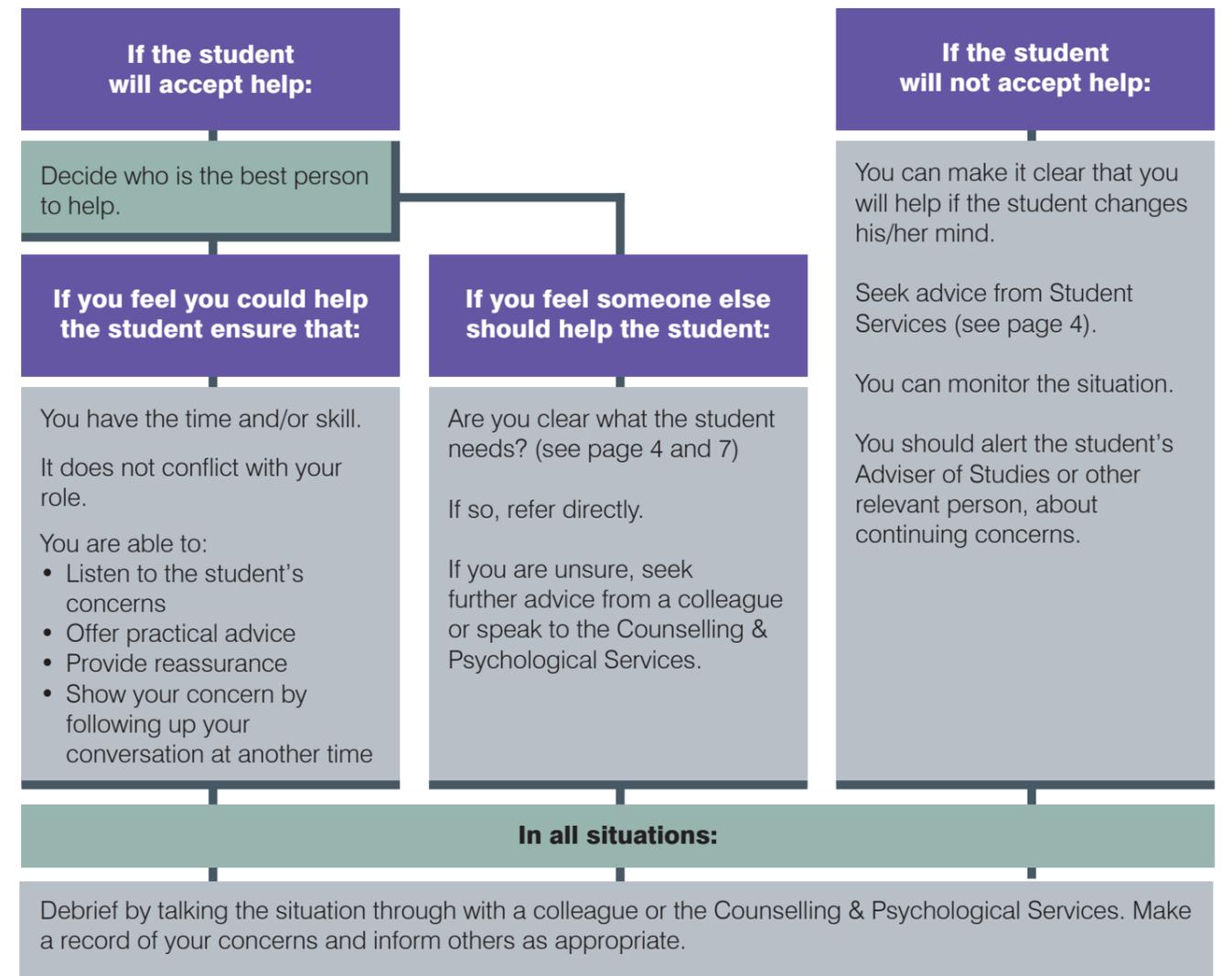
## IS THERE A PROBLEM? TRUSTING YOUR JUDGEMENT



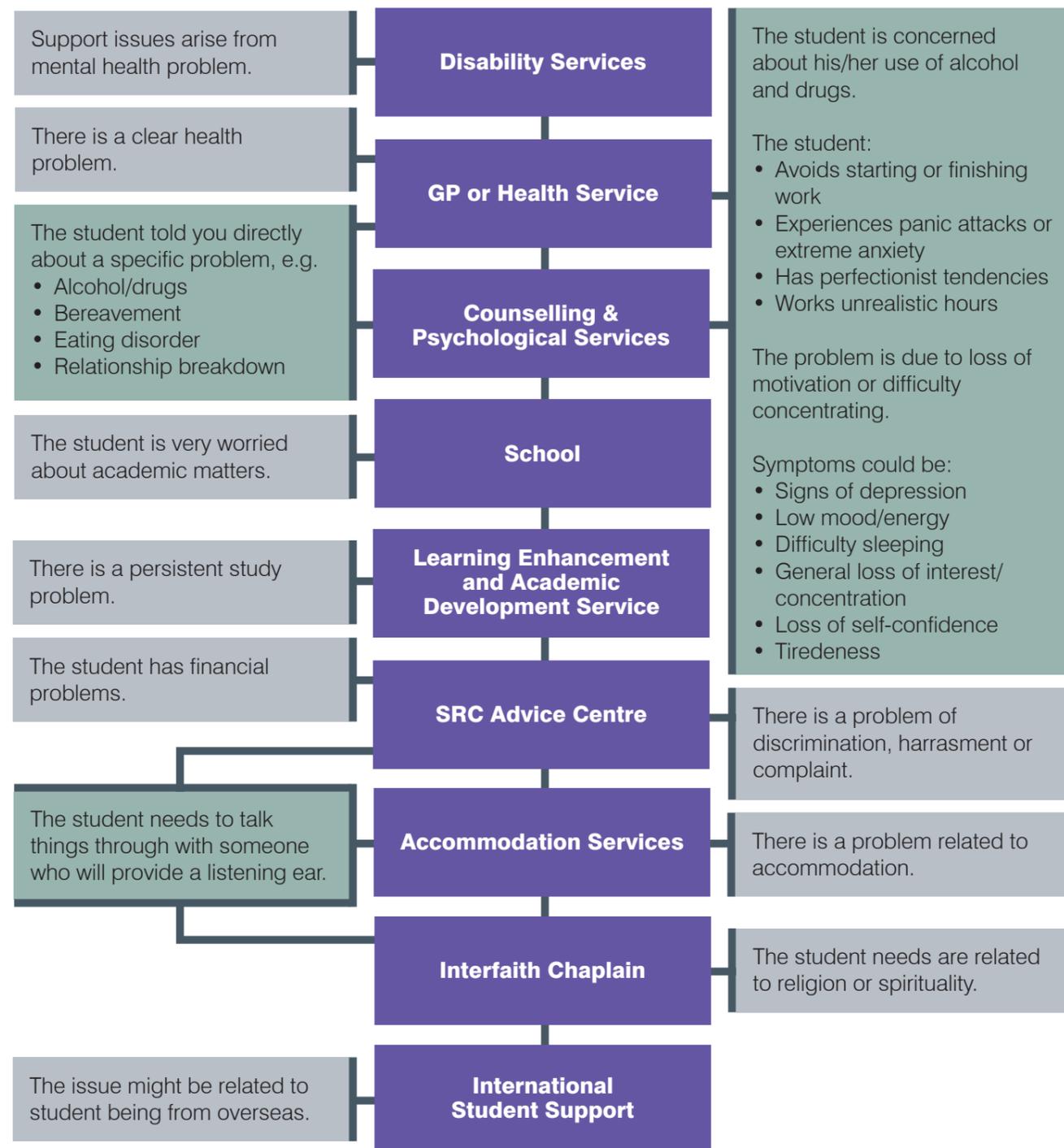
## WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IN NON-URGENT SITUATIONS

The situation is not urgent if there is no immediate risk to the student, or others, although the student may be:

- Bereaved
- Depressed, anxious, generally
- Having unexplained study or money problems
- Homesick, lonely and isolated
- Having problems with relationships
- Suffering from low self-esteem



## WHAT SORT OF SUPPORT DOES THE STUDENT NEED?



### MORE INFORMATION:

- See the MyGlasgow Students site: [www.glasgow.ac.uk/students](http://www.glasgow.ac.uk/students)
- Contact the Student Services Enquiry Team (SSET) on +44 (0) 141 330 7000

**REMEMBER:** Friends and family can be a source of support!

## WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IN URGENT SITUATIONS

The situation is urgent if you believe or are given information that the student may be at risk of harm to him/herself or others. You are concerned for one or more of the following reasons. The student:

- May be at risk of serious self-harm
- Is violent or threatening violence to people or property
- Has completely stopped functioning
- Seems very disorientated and out of touch with reality

In these circumstances the University Crisis Team helps provide central support for these situations.

### ACCESSING CRISIS TEAM:

**Phone Security:** +44 (0) 141 330 4444 (during and out of office hours).

Have as much information to hand about the situation as possible. If the situation is immediately life threatening, call the emergency services.

### IMMEDIATE DANGER: 999

### BENEFICIAL INFORMATION TO COLLECT:

- Name and registration number of student
- Where do they stay – address and phone details
- Contact details of any family or friends to help support
- GP's name and practice
- Details of the incident and any other relevant information: Has it happened before? Are they on any medication? Have they registered with the Counselling or Disability Services?

### ALSO, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- Try to stay calm
- Whenever possible make sure you have back-up available
- Engage with the student if possible
- Always note the incident and details of action taken in Support Works
- Ensure to debrief by talking the situation through with a colleague or with someone in the Counselling & Psychological Services



## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: IDENTIFYING AND OFFERING SUPPORT

### Identifying sources of support:

It is not always possible to know what the best source of support might be. The student may have more than one problem, or the initial problem may not be the most central.

If in doubt about the available or most suitable services, contact the Student Services Enquiry Team.

It is important in the first instance to refer the student to somewhere that is acceptable to him/her.

A further referral can be made later, if appropriate.

**If you think the student is in crisis, phone: +44 (0) 141 330 4444**

### If you offer support yourself, you must ensure that:

You have sufficient within the context of your other commitments to do this.

It does not conflict with other aspects of your role.

You have access to colleague support.

You seek advice from colleagues or Student Services if you have persistent concerns.

**Remember: you are not solely responsible for the student's emotional state**

### Confidentiality:

Do not disclose personal information about students to anyone outside the University, including parents, without the student's explicit consent.

If parents wish to contact the student, you can offer to forward a communication or tell the student they have been in touch.

Treat personal information about students with discretion.

Do not promise absolute confidentiality and advise the student that you may have to consult a colleague.

**The Counselling & Psychological Services offer a confidential consultation service to all staff who may wish to discuss their concerns about a student in difficulty.**

## KEY CONTACTS: INTERNAL

### STUDENT SERVICES ENQUIRY TEAM (SSET)

If in doubt contact the Student Services Enquiry Team (SSET) in non-urgent situations.

Monday to Tuesday, 0900 - 1700  
Wednesday, 0930 - 1700  
Thursday to Friday, 0900 - 1700

Level 2, The Fraser Building  
University Avenue  
Glasgow G12 8QQ

**Telephone:** +44 (0) 141 330 7000  
**Email:** [studentservices@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:studentservices@glasgow.ac.uk)  
**Web:** [www.glasgow.ac.uk/ssset](http://www.glasgow.ac.uk/ssset)

### COUNSELLING & PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

During office hours this Service will provide a priority response if a student is in a mental health crisis and/or staff need advice.

Monday to Friday, 0900 - 1700

67 South Park Avenue  
Glasgow G12 8LE

**Telephone:** + 44 (0) 141 330 4528  
**Email:** [studentcounselling@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:studentcounselling@glasgow.ac.uk)  
**Web:** [www.glasgow.ac.uk/counselling](http://www.glasgow.ac.uk/counselling)

### CRISIS TEAM

Contact the Team if you think a student is in crisis and are unsure what to do.

**Phone Security:** +44 (0) 141 330 4444 (24 hours)

Have as much information to hand about the situation as possible.  
If the situation is immediately life threatening, call the emergency services.



