

# **Mental Health Awareness Training Resource**

## **Case Scenarios for Careers Service Staff Training**

This resource is one of the outcomes of a HEFCE funded Student Psychological Health Project, based in the Educational Development and Support Centre at the University of Leicester. It was produced collaboratively with the University's Careers Service.

Further information about the project can be obtained by viewing the web-site:

[www.le.ac.uk/edsc/sphp](http://www.le.ac.uk/edsc/sphp)

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# Students with Mental Health Difficulties: Issues for Careers Services

## Case Scenarios for Staff Training

### Background

The following scenarios are based on real situations encountered within higher education Careers Services. The scenarios aim to explore specific issues that may arise when working with students who have mental health difficulties, and to broaden discussions to include responding to clients experiencing acute distress and dealing with inappropriate behaviour (see also *staff training resources* section for more training resources).

### Facilitators

When using these case scenarios it is recommended that one of the facilitators should be someone with a background in mental health work or counselling and also familiar with student issues and the range of University and local generic services in the area (e.g. Counsellor in the University's service).

**Instructions for use:** Divide the participants into groups of four or five and invite them to consider their response to a particular scenario and discuss it with the rest of their group. Perhaps suggest that the group write down a summary of their discussion on flip chart paper to be shared with the rest of the group.

### Scenario 1

You sit down with a female final year student for a short careers consultation in the careers library and ask how you can be of help. She makes several attempts to start a discussion along the following lines:

"I'm not sure what to do after I graduate; it seems such a big decision... maybe I should do a post-grad course and think about it more....my friends are applying for jobs but I am not sure how to go about it..."

As you begin your attempt to deal with some of the issues, she keeps interrupting you with questions. She appears anxious and doesn't seem to be taking in any of what you are saying. After a few moments, it all seems to be getting a bit too much for her and she starts to cry.

1. What do you think might be going on here?
2. How would you respond to this situation?

### Scenario 2

You see a business studies graduate who has had difficulty finding a job since leaving university six months ago. He has moved back home to live with his parents and tells you that most of his friends now live elsewhere. He says that he is depressed at not being able to find a job and has come to see you because he is confused about where else to turn for help.

1. What do you think might be going on here?
2. How would you respond to this situation?

### Scenario 3

You are running a working entitled "Making Effective Applications". There are eight students in the group from different degree backgrounds and the session is designed to be participative with plenty of discussion. One of the students does not contribute to the plenary discussion but appears agitated and makes angry and derogatory comments about employers and applications forms. Your polite attempts to silence him are having no effect and you fear that he is distracting the rest of the group.

1. What do you think might be going on here?
2. How would you respond to this situation?

### Scenario 4

A final year student asks you to look at his CV and give him some feedback. The overall document is well presented and the content appropriately tailored to the type of work he is seeking. You notice, however, the he has an extra year over his degree course and that no explanation has been given for this. When you point this out to him, he reveals that he has a history of depression and that this affected his work badly in the second year. He was advised to take time out for medical reasons and to repeat the whole year. He then asks you for your advice as to whether or not he should reveal this episode to employers and, if he does, how he should approach it.

1. What do you think might be going on here?
2. How would you respond to this situation?

### Scenario 5

You have seen a student several times over a period of about a year. She is now in her final year and is applying for jobs. Previous sessions seem to have gone well and together you had made good progress. However, more recently you have become uneasy about your relationship and suspect that she is becoming dependent upon the contact between you and likes "meeting with you" rather than "working with you". When she brings yet another application form for comment, you decide to raise this issue with her. She is visibly upset by this saying she could not manage without your support and accuses you of not caring.

1. What do you think might be going on here?
2. How would you respond to this situation?
3. How could you prevent this situation from arising?

### Scenario 6

An inexperienced colleague comes to you and says that, in a recent interview, a student disclosed to her that she had been diagnosed with manic depression. Your colleague's immediate reaction is to find out as much as possible about manic depression and how this might affect someone's career prospects as she is concerned to be armed with all the facts first. She asks for your advice about how she might deal with the situation.

1. What do you think might be going on here?
2. How would you respond to this situation?