



MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

1. Policy Statement

Truro and Penwith College is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all who learn and work here. We believe that all forms of prejudice and discrimination are unacceptable and will strive vigorously to tackle these. Truro and Penwith College will offer advice and support for students with mental health difficulties and signpost to external agencies for continued support. Under the policy students will be encouraged to disclose any mental health difficulties in order that the correct level of support may be given.

- 1.1 The College's Mission is to "provide the best possible learning experience, leading to the highest possible level of achievements by our students". We are committed to providing an inclusive learning environment, in which diversity is welcomed, valued and celebrated, so that all our students fulfil their potential. We will continue to promote equality in all our activities, tackle discrimination, widen participation and increase social inclusion.

2. Scope and Purpose

Why do we need a specific mental health policy?

- 2.1 For regulatory and legal reasons to comply with the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.2 To ensure equal access to education at College and to appropriate support for all with the goal of retention and achievement of students.
- 2.3 To comply with recommendations regarding the "duty of care" responsibilities of The College.
- 2.4 To establish procedures that safeguard The College community, give guidance regarding appropriate action and ensure accurate written records are kept.
- 2.5 Because it is recognised that students can be vulnerable as they are in a period of transition and therefore may experience stress or other mental health difficulties during their time with The College. We therefore have a duty of care to respond appropriately to situations where concerns are raised about a learner. We will intervene if a learner's state of health presents a risk, either to themselves or to others, or where this results in unreasonable demands being placed on staff, or that the teaching and learning environment is compromised so that we cannot ensure the health and safety of both the learner concerned and those affected by the learner. We may require a learner who is on course to interrupt their studies, this would always be at the discretion of a member of SMT. Examples include, when a learner's conduct is presenting risks in how they behave and treat other people, how they function in managing their own health and safety and where this impacts on other learners, staff or members of the public. We do this in recognition that there may be underlying physical or mental health issues or substance misuse problems or difficult personal circumstances giving rise to or contributing to unacceptable conduct.

3. Common Mental Health Disorders

Common mental health issues may include:

- Anxiety disorders including:
 - PTSD- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

- OCD- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
 - Panic attacks
- Depression
- Stress
- Eating Disorders
- Disorders of personality and identity
- Psychosis- including Schizophrenia
- Bi-Polar
- Self-Harm
- Suicidal thoughts/ attempts

The needs and experiences of people with mental difficulties are individual to them. As a college we will endeavour to make it possible for people who experience mental difficulties to complete their education, and play their full part in society whilst they are initially supported through College and then signposted or referred to external agencies.

4. Support provisions within the College

The College aims to provide support for students with mental health difficulties through our tutorial and Student Services provision. We will gain support from outside agencies where necessary, using the lead professional for guidance and support for the student which may be the GP or a specialised service such as CAMHS, counselling services etc.

4.1 Reasonable adjustment

In line with the DDA 1995 the college must make 'reasonable adjustments' to support students with a disability, these will be made with the support of the relevant external agencies and key professionals.

Any assessment of the individual's needs will ensure that any provision or adjustment made will be beneficial for the student and possible for The College to deliver.

4.2 Pre-entry; Access and Admissions

The College encourages applications from any learner who is able to benefit from our courses and who meets the entry requirements. We aim to ensure that an individual is able to meet the demands of the course and has the potential to succeed and achieve.

Information about a mental health difficulty may be made on the application form and/or may be discussed at interview. At all times it will be made clear that any information imparted will only be used in the student's interests and with her or his full knowledge and permission. The CAMF form must be completed and signed by the student. The Learning Support team will follow this up in liaison with the Team Leader for Student Services. Information will be shared with the Team Leader for Student Services so that support can be offered two/three weeks into the start of the course.

4.3 Identification of mental health difficulties after admission to College

Mental health awareness training is to be delivered to staff on training days.

Not all students with mental health difficulties will disclose their condition on their application form and their mental health condition may become apparent during the course of their studies.

Any member of staff who is made aware that a student has a mental health difficulty may refer them for additional support to the Learning Support Team and/or Student Services Team. An assessment of their learning support and other needs will then be undertaken and if appropriate referral to an outside agencies for further guidance and support.

The needs of a student with mental health difficulties may be complex and diverse and liaison between College staff and other agencies will enable the best integrated support.

However, if the student declines support or does not wish their mental health difficulty to be disclosed, in line with Data Protection Act the information should not be shared, unless it is considered that the student is likely to harm themselves or another person as a result of maintaining confidentiality.

4.4 Assessment

The Learning Support Team will undertake an assessment of support needs and plan any reasonable adjustments to be made. This may include:

- Examination concessions
- Guidelines on time management and classroom behaviour
- Additional educational resources
- Student Services support

Once the learning support needs of the student have been assessed, the College will put in place other necessary measures, which could include:

- Access to Student Services support e.g. Personal Support Adviser, Mental Health Adviser, Safeguarding Officer, Counselling
- Coordination with external agencies

5. External Liaison

Liaison with local statutory and voluntary organisations is essential in both providing individually tailored support for specific individuals and to the College's role in the community at large.

6. Education

In addition, the College is committed to raising awareness of mental health issues and challenging negative stereotypes also combating stigma and discrimination throughout the College, both for staff and students. This will include the provision of staff development as appropriate.

NB: At Penwith College substitute 'Team Leader for Student Services' with 'Student Services Assistant in liaison with Team Leader for Student Services at Truro'.