

# Mental health

**We encourage mentors to promote good mental health practices; you will find relevant session ideas on the volunteer resources page of our website.**

- If your mentee discloses a concern, listen to them without passing judgement.
- If you are concerned after speaking to your mentee, please contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer and record your discussion in your mentor report or in a concerns form: [www.arts-emergency.org/safeguarding](http://www.arts-emergency.org/safeguarding)
- Check whether your mentee's school or college are aware that they are struggling. Schools and colleges often have support available. Arts Emergency can advocate on their behalf to the school if helpful.

**If your mentee is struggling with their mental health, encourage them to speak to their GP or find relevant support:**

**The Mix** - essential support for under 25s  
[www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

**Childline** - support online or on the phone  
[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

**Young Minds** - advice and support for young people  
[youngminds.org.uk](http://youngminds.org.uk)

**Kooth** - free, safe and anonymous online support for young people  
[www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

**You can discover other helpful organisations on the volunteer resources page on our website.**

## **If you have concerns for your mentee relating to suicide**

If your mentee appears to have already attempted suicide or you are concerned they may be at the point of an attempt, please contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer and/or the emergency services if appropriate.

## Start the conversation

Be relaxed, friendly and concerned in your approach.

- Help them open up by asking 'How have you been recently?' or 'What's been happening?'
- Mention specific things that have made you concerned, like 'You seem less chatty than usual. How are things?'

## If they push back or don't want to talk

- If they don't want to talk, don't criticise them.
- You could say, 'Let me know if you do want to talk about this in another session' or 'Is there someone else you'd rather talk to?'

## Listen without judgement

- Take what they say seriously, don't interrupt or rush the conversation.
- Acknowledge that things seem tough for them.
- If they need time, sit with the silence.
- Encourage them to explain: 'How are you feeling about that?' or 'How long have you felt that way?'
- Show that you've listened by repeating back what you've heard and ask if you've understood them properly.

## Encourage action

- Ask 'What have you done in the past to manage similar situations?'
- Ask 'What's something you can do for yourself right now? Something that's enjoyable or relaxing?'
- If they've been feeling really down for more than two weeks encourage them to see a GP or health professional. You could say 'It might be useful to get in touch with someone who can support you' Be positive about the role of professionals.

**If you are unsure what to do or need support,  
please contact our team!**