

New Essential Online Module: Mental Health Awareness - for me, and for our community

At Leeds Beckett University we want all colleagues to feel able to talk about their mental health, and be met with understanding, compassion and support. Every one of us contributes something unique to our University community, including our experiences - personally and professionally - of mental health. Some of us will have supported loved ones with their mental health problems, some will bring professional knowledge or clinical expertise, and many of us will live with our own mental health challenges. [This course](#) has been created to provide a foundation of understanding and awareness about mental health for all colleagues.

As a manager, you will play a key role in supporting the roll out of this development. This is an essential course, but due to the nature of the content - and the wide range of personal circumstances individuals face - we have extended the period for completion from the usual three months to six months. This will allow colleagues to do the course at a time that feels right for them, and for the team, within a six-month time frame.

What does the course cover?

The course has been developed to meet the following learning outcomes:

- What is meant by 'mental health' and 'wellbeing'
- How to take care of your own mental health and maintain positive wellbeing
- Signs and symptoms of some common mental health problems
- Confidence to have supportive, bounded conversations about mental health
- Knowledge of services available to support colleagues and how to signpost, including suicide prevention

The module includes some content which might provoke an emotional response, including a video which references suicide. There are content warnings in relevant sections, and colleagues are free to skip over content which feels difficult for them.

Why are we doing it?

We want all colleagues at LBU to be equipped with, as a minimum, a basic understanding and awareness of mental health, to help create an environment where we feel able to have open conversations with colleagues, take care of our own mental health and wellbeing, and signpost to support. This will not only create a more mentally healthy culture at Leeds Beckett, it will also contribute to our long term sustainability. This course has been created to help us move towards this goal.

How can I help prepare my team to do the course?

We are asking anyone with line management responsibilities to complete the module before asking their team members to do so, to facilitate effective and supportive conversations with colleagues.

Mental health is a personal topic, and may trigger a range of emotions, so be prepared to anticipate that some colleagues may need support or signposting. There is signposting guidance at the end of this document. We suggest that people schedule this development for a time that allows them the space to reflect afterwards, take a break, chat with a colleague, do something they enjoy, or whatever feels right for them. Everyone is different, with a unique set of experiences and circumstances which may impact how they feel about conversations around mental health.

How long does it take?

The course will take around an hour to complete. We recommend setting an hour aside to complete it in one go, but individuals can choose to do it in smaller chunks of time if they prefer.

When should I do the course?

[The course](#) is now live so it can be accessed at any time. Managers should complete as soon as possible to support the roll out to teams. Like for members of your team, we suggest that you schedule this development for a time that allows you the space to reflect afterwards, take a break, chat with a colleague, do something you enjoy, or whatever feels right for you.

When should my team do the course?

All colleagues – including part-time and hourly paid staff - should have completed the module by the end of May 2025. You will be sent a reminder to update your training again in three years' time.

What is my role in this, as a manager or leader?

You play a key part in the roll out of this development. We are asking you to complete the module first, so that you know what it covers, you can help to prepare your team, and - if you're not already doing so - you can begin to role-model some of the strategies within it. By completing the module before your team, you will be better equipped to promote it in conversations with individuals and at team meetings.

This is a whole University approach, and everyone needs to play their part to create an inclusive environment where conversations about mental health are supportive and underpinned by awareness and understanding. To support conversations with individuals, you may want to ask questions such as:

'How did you find completing the module?'

'Was there anything that you were surprised to learn?'

'I've tried xxx of the self-care tips, do you use any already or have you tried one since?'

'What do you think we could do to improve wellbeing across the team?'

What next?

We're considering what additional development and guidance colleagues in student-facing roles and with line management responsibilities may need as we look to better coordinate mental health development across the University, linked to the University Mental Health Charter.

During [Wellbeing Assessment](#) conversations could be a good time and space to reflect on the learning. What was surprising? What are you doing to support your mental health at work? What are team members doing? What could the team commit to in order to improve everyone's wellbeing?

What support is available for managers and leaders?

There is guidance for managers on [having a wellbeing conversation](#) and taking care of your own wellbeing, as well as signposting and referrals on our [Wellbeing for Managers](#) pages.

For 'in the moment' support or a debrief following a difficult conversation, you can contact Spectrum, your [Employee Assistance Programme](#). As a manager supporting others, remember that this service is for you as well as your team. There is no limit to how many times you can access this 'in the moment' support- just call 0808 196 2016. If you have any questions, contact the People and Organisational Development team at pod@leedsbeckett.ac.uk.