

Look After Your Mate: Changing the Conversation on Mental Health

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Overview

- Why Aberdeen and PGRs?
- Introduction to Look After Your Mate
- Bringing supervisors into the conversation
- Next Steps

Postgraduate Research School

- University wide graduate school
- Engagement Team: supporting supervisors and students
- Embedded in a wider wellbeing strategy

What does this describe?

- High motivation to achieve a valued goal
- Chance of other people viewing you/your work negatively
- Not a lot of control
- Lots of unpredictability

Components of effective laboratory stress manipulations

- High motivation to achieve a valued goal (***Motivated performance***)
- Chance of other people viewing you/your work negatively (**Social evaluative threat**)
- Not a lot of control (**Low controllability**)
- Lots of unpredictability (**High unpredictability**)

Dickerson & Kemeny, 2004

Why – PGRs?

- PhD journeys are challenging
- 64% of PhD candidates feel lonely at work, this can be due to the nature of the PhD setting ,particularly when doing long experiments, field work
- 12% of UoA students who applied for a change of status request stated mental health as a key reason
- Increased needs from PGRs and supervisors to support mental health

Student Minds

Student Minds is the UK's student mental health charity.

- Aim empower students and members of the university community to look after their own mental health, support others and create change.
 - Mental Health Charter
 - Online Training
 - Library of Resources
- Funded via Development Trust Student Experience fund

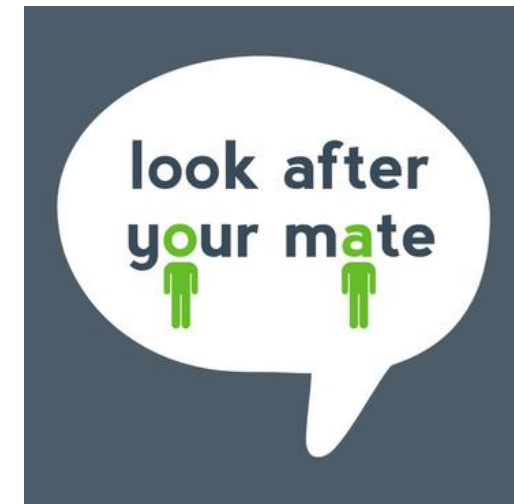
Look After your Mate

A decorative graphic on the right side of the slide. It features several curved lines and patterns of dots. From top to bottom, there is a dotted line, a line of small dots, a solid double-line, and a dashed line. All these elements curve upwards from the bottom left towards the top right.

Look After Your Mate

- Workshop designed by Student Minds
- Based on research showing value of peer support for mental health
- Equip students with knowledge and confidence to support each other

student
minds



LAYM objectives

Increasing knowledge and understanding of what mental health is, the difficulties faced and the support available.

Increasing the skills and confidence required to support a friend who is experiencing difficulties.

Increasing knowledge of your own wellbeing and how to look after yourself.

Key messages

- Understanding the student journey
- Practical tips for looking after a peer
 - Starting a conversation
 - Communication techniques and tools
- Signing posting to support
- Looking after yourself
 - Setting boundaries
 - Support

Feedback and Reflections

- Enabling students to understand mental health both within themselves and supporting others
- Feedback demonstrates 'Setting Boundaries' is the most useful section of the workshop
- (Followed by Tools for starting a conversation and the differences between 'fixing' and 'supporting')

**We're asking you to notice,
not to fix**

Why Supervisors?

Benefits to Student

- Often first point of contact / in regular contact with student
- Role in students' monitoring and progression processes
- Creates a platform for open and honest discussion
- Informal route of support/ sign posting
- Key role in student's mental health and wellbeing
- Role model/ person of respect

Why Supervisors?

Benefits to Supervisors

- Increasing concerns around students wellbeing
- Increasing demands to provide pastoral care
- Lack of available training
- Protecting the mental health of supervisors
- Setting boundaries
- Community of practice

Look After your Student

- Same objectives and key messages as LAYM
- Tailored to supervisor experiences
- Case studies focused
- Warning signs specific to a Supervisor
- Communication toolkit
- Setting boundaries
- Relevant signposting (for supervisors and students)

Feedback and Reflections

- Value of shared experiences from other supervisors
- Case studies best way to encourage discussion
- Boundary setting highest rating in feedback
- Creates a community of good practice to share, reflect and discuss experiences
- Empathetic listening

Next Steps...

Next Steps

Strategic plans for supervisor and student mental

- Embedding openness around discussion of mental health into training
- Changing culture through governance

Thank you

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www.abdn.ac.uk/pgrs

www.studentminds.org.uk