

UWE Wellbeing Service

Managing Distress

A mental health crisis often means that you no longer feel able to cope or be in control of your situation. You may feel great emotional distress or anxiety, can't cope with day-to-day life or work, think about suicide or self-harm, or experience hallucinations or hearing voices.

Whether you experience a sudden deterioration of an existing mental health problem, or are experiencing problems for the first time, there are services to support you through this.

What can I do?

- **If you need urgent help, contact one of the support services listed below**
- If you have been working with a professional, you may have created a personalised Safety Plan – please refer to this when you are in distress
- Tell someone how you're feeling – this could be a friend, family member, helpline or online forum
- Intense emotions can often feel overwhelming which can cause us to panic. Try using deep breathing, mindfulness, or meditation to calm down
www.youtube.com/watch?v=xoYnqvadurg
- Try a grounding technique such as noticing your surroundings which can be stabilising and help you feel calmer
www.peirsac.org/peirsacui/er/educational_resources10.pdf
- Do something which you know brings you comfort or try self-soothing techniques such as taking a bath <https://blogs.psychcentral.com/mental-health-awareness/2015/02/self-soothing/>
- If possible, try to distract yourself with music, television, games or something creative
- Try to avoid things which may cause more distress. Certain people or situations may be difficult to manage if you are distressed
- Try to avoid using drugs or alcohol, these can heighten the distress or make you more disinhibited which could become unsafe



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Support Services

- **Emergency Services** – if you or someone you know is in immediate danger, please call 999
- **Hospital/Local GP** – a hospital or GP can be a place of safety and provide access to mental health support
www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Hospital/LocationSearch/8/Hospitals
<http://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/GP/LocationSearch/4>
- **NHS 111** – provides out of hours support (urgent but non-emergency)
- **Bristol Crisis Team** - provides 24/7 support to people experiencing an extreme mental health or emotional crisis that requires help. T: 0300 555 0334
www.bristolmentalhealth.org/services/crisis-service
- **Bristol Sanctuary** – a supportive place where those who are experiencing severe emotional distress can go for help outside of normal working hours. Friday - Monday 7pm to 2am
T: 0117 954 2952
www.bristolmentalhealth.org/services/bristol-sanctuary
- **Samaritans** – 24/7 phone and email support T: 116 123 E: jo@samaritans.org
www.samaritans.org
- **Self-Injury Support** – support for women affected by self-harm.
Text and web chat support open Sunday to Thursday 7pm – 9pm. Text: 0780 047 2908 www.selfinjurysupport.org.uk/help-and-support-with-self-injury/tess-text-and-email-support-service
Helpline open Monday to Thursday 7-10pm. T: 0808 800 8088
- **Elefriends** – a supportive online community which includes a section for urgent support www.elefriends.org.uk

Apps

- **Calm Harm** – award winning free app which provides tasks that help you resist or manage the urge to self-harm www.stem4.org.uk/calmharm
- **Sam App** – a UWE-created app to help you understand and manage anxiety
<http://sam-app.org.uk>

After a period of distress passes, you may feel emotionally and physically exhausted. Remember to take time to look after yourself by having enough sleep, eating, drinking fluids and taking any medication as prescribed. If possible, try to keep to usual routines but recognise when you need to take time off from work or study.

