By the end of this workshop you will be able to:

- Understand the importance of maintaining wellbeing
- Be able to recognise the signs that someone may be depressed or feeling suicidal
- Know how to respond to someone in distress

Myths

- Asking someone about suicidal intention makes suicidal behaviour more likely
- If someone is suicidal you don’t need to ask about it, it will come out in the interview anyway
- People who talk about suicide don’t do it
- People who self-harm are attention-seeking
- If a person is serious about taking their own life then there is nothing you can do.

Supporting someone who is distressed:

- Assess the risk of suicide or self-harm
- Listen non-judgementally
- Give reassurance and information
- Encourage the person to get appropriate professional help
- Encourage self-help strategies
- Validate and show understanding of what is being said
- Enable the student to talk freely
- Respect the student's feelings

Scenario 1

A group of students come to find you. They are concerned that a girl is in the toilets crying. They think they saw the same girl earlier on and she was upset then. One of them seems to think she has some painkillers with her.

How would you respond to the situation?

Scenario 2

A second year student bumps into you at a social event. She always seems lively and outgoing, the life and soul of the student bar. When you have been talking for a few minutes she takes her cardigan off to reveal several cuts on her arms. Her demeanour remains unchanged.

How would you respond to the situation?
Scenario 3

You are standing at the bus stop on your way to a job interview when a student approaches you. The student is clearly distressed. He is a student you have had regular contact with and he is becoming increasingly more demanding, wanting more frequent contact with you. He says that he could not manage without your support and when you broach the subject of him getting some other help, he gets angry and accuses you of not caring.

How would you respond to the situation?

Scenario 4

A very distressed student comes to speak to you. In between sobs he tells you he has just found out that he has failed his exams. He tells you that he is caring for his Father who is unwell and he can’t cope any more. He says he doesn’t see the point of carrying on.

How would you respond to the situation?

Look after your self

- Supporting a suicidal person is upsetting and stressful
- Know when to refer on
- Share your concerns – talk to people
- Do the thing that keeps you well: exercise, relax, sleep, socialise
- Contact the counselling services for further support.

For more information on our services please go to www.gre.ac.uk/students/support/counselling

Resources

- PAPYRUS: Prevention of Young Suicide http://www.papyrus-uk.org/ 0800 068 41 41
- The Samaritans: http://www.samaritans.org 0845 790 9090
- Supportline: http://www.supportline.org.uk 01708 765200
- National Self Harm Network: http://www.nshn.co.uk/

Student Wellbeing Service

Counsellors:
Robert Sookhan (ext. 9070)
Christine Ojera (ext. 9154)

Mental Health Adviser:
Zoe Linekar (ext. 9661)

Head of Student Wellbeing Service:
Pauline McFarlane (ext. 9064)