



UOK?

STAFF GUIDE

STAFF INFORMATION

The staff guide is here to support staff to implement the UOK? project in your educational setting.

As the member of staff in charge of overseeing UOK? you will need to ensure students are equipped to use the toolkit or run the workshops in your institution. Please ensure you read through this guide before delivering UOK?

You may wish to seek further support from Mental Health Foundation by contacting Miles Carabine (Project Manager) mcarabine@mentalhealth.org.uk

Our Top Tips

- It is important that the students taking part in the project are aware that this is neither a therapeutic or an emergency “on-call” role
- We recommend having 2 recruitment cycles per academic year to maintain the project e.g. Autumn term and Spring term
- Support might be offered by one member of staff or could be shared amongst multiple staff
- We recommend monitoring the success of the project by getting feedback from students throughout the year
- Setting up bi-weekly catch-ups with students can help to ensure they feel supported

WHAT IS UOK?



UOK? is a free resource for FE and HE institutions. It was developed to address the need for peer support, to raise awareness and improve mental health outcomes in educational settings.



The U OK Project aims to prevent mental health problems through building mental health literacy in students.



We achieve this through increased understanding and self-management of mental health needs and signposting to appropriate support.



MHF worked with students to coproduce a wellbeing advocate toolkit and a collection of mental health workshops specifically designed to address mental health concerns that were raised by students.

WELLBEING ADVOCATE TOOLKIT

Students are trained by staff to become Wellbeing Advocates in their institution. Their role is to lead wellbeing initiatives in their institution.

BENEFITS TO WIDER COMMUNITY

- Students gain organisation and project planning skills
- Encourages collaborative working in your educational setting.
- Staff have more time to focus on higher level mental health concerns
- Can go alongside roles that already exist. e.g. Student council, Resident Advisors, Prefects
- Creates a network between staff & students

KEY PARTS OF THE ROLE



MENTAL HEALTH WORKSHOPS

The mental health workshops aim to open up conversations about mental health, tackle stigma, and provide practical tips. You will support students to deliver peer to peer mental health workshops in your institution.

BENEFITS TO WIDER COMMUNITY



INTRODUCTION TO MENTAL HEALTH



HEALTH AND WELLBEING



ACADEMIC PRESSURE



SOCIAL PRESSURE



FINANCIAL PRESSURE



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

- Students gain facilitation and public speaking skills, and are able to navigate difficult conversations with more ease.
- Mental health awareness is fostered in your educational setting
- Staff have more time to focus on higher level mental health concerns
- Works as a value added activity for students seeking employability skills

UOK? TIMELINE

WEEK

1

Advertise the role

- Download the recruitment pack
- Circulate with personal tutors/ tutor groups
- Share posters online and in person

2-4

Student selection

- Select students to take part
- Set up initial meeting
- Set up weekly meetings to remain on track

5

Training

- Prepare students for the role
- If you need support with training students, you can reach out to MHF

6-8

Project planning

- Decide what your first project or workshop will be
- Set a timeline for how many events or workshops will be run in a term

9

Practice and preparation

- Support students with their final preparation
- Advertise the event or workshop to students
- Support students with a risk assessment

10

Launch events and workshops

- Students will run their first workshop or toolkit event
- Establish next event or workshop
- Troubleshoot any challenges that arise

REFLECT

Reflection

Make sure after every workshop or event you set up a reflection meeting with students to share what went well and what you would change next time

HOW WILL YOU SUPPORT?

SAFEGUARDING

It is your role to take responsibility of any safeguarding concerns that arise. In all sessions, make sure that students are told who they can talk to, how and where they can access help and support, and that the staff care about their wellbeing. You should inform your safeguarding lead that students are taking on this role in case any conversations follow on from this.

PROJECT SUPPORT

It is likely you will need to be involved in the logistical planning of events and booking workshops. Remind students they will need to consider date, location, attendance, accessibility and ensuring the correct staff are informed. A staff member should be responsible for completing a risk assessment for any events students decide to host.

PASTORAL SUPPORT

You will support students taking part in the programme holistically, including regular check-ins to review scheduled events, activities and workshops to ensure they are engaging with the project in a healthy way e.g., not providing crisis support.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this staff guide.

Still have questions? Please review the FAQ.

FAQ's

How many students can be involved in the project?

- Initially 15 students max per campus or department works best.

How can I keep students engaged in the project?

- Identify areas where students are struggling.
- Use regular recruitment across the year to refresh the team.
- Consider planning a showcase event at the end of the term/ academic year both as a goal and to recognise their efforts.

How can I engage the wider student population?

- Use the academic calendar to scheduling workshops and events e.g. students can run an academic stress workshop prior to an upcoming assessment period.
- Identify times in the weekly calendar when students are already available e.g. tutorials.
- Encourage students in the role to self-promote.
- Make use of established clubs and student interest groups at your institution.

How can I ensure students feel comfortable talking about these topics?

- Encouraging working in small groups where you can.
- Explore barriers with students through regular check ins.
- Reinforce boundaries of the role.

How can I balance supporting students with my other priorities?

- Try sharing duties with your colleagues i.e. separating pastoral care from project support.
- Plan staff handovers ahead of pinch points in the academic calendar.
- Consider integrating U OK? with other schemes already in place e.g. a student course representative could also facilitate workshops or deliver wellbeing events.

Is there someone to contact with questions?

- Contact Miles Carabine (Project Manager) at mcarabine@mentalhealth.org.uk