



# Helping a Friend in a Crisis

**Same day appointments**

Monday to Friday

Access through **iPoint**

**Workshops and support groups**

See website for details

[hud.ac.uk/wellbeing-disability-services](http://hud.ac.uk/wellbeing-disability-services)

Life throws all kinds of difficulties at us and sometimes, for whatever reason, they overwhelm us. Our usual coping strategies don't work and we can't cope with every-day events let alone the extra difficulties that triggered the crisis.

Different people react in different ways. Some will withdraw and feel helpless. Some will become angry or tearful. Some will try to run away. Some will harm themselves or misuse drugs and/or alcohol. Some feel a sense of urgency and this can make it seem even worse.

If you know someone who is feeling like this you will know that a crisis impacts on the people around too. As a friend you may want to help out but you may also have strong feelings about the situation and what should be done.

**Wellbeing and Disability Services**  
**Level 4**  
**Student Central**  
**Email. [studentwellbeing@hud.ac.uk](mailto:studentwellbeing@hud.ac.uk)**  
**Tel. 01484 471001**



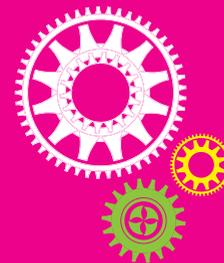
UoHWellbeing



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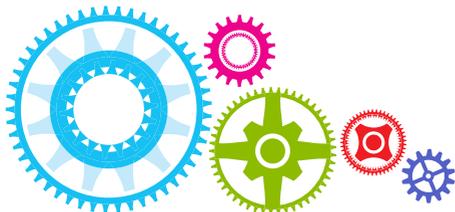


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## What is helpful?

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- Listen and show you understand.
- Keep calm, urgency is infectious but remember it is not your urgency and you do not need to make it yours.
- Speak of your own experience of similar situations.
- Decide how much you are able to give to your friend in this particular situation. Be honest with yourself.
- Once you have decided, think of ways in which you can clearly show your boundaries. This will reassure your friend that they are not over-burdening you.
- Remember that you don't have to listen to everything all the time. Don't pretend you have endless time for them.
- Look after yourself. Give time to your own needs—supporting others is stressful and you will need to get away to recharge your batteries.
- Don't forget your other friends and keep up with your studies.
- It's natural to have mixed feelings about your friend and about the situation.
- It is common to feel angry and frustrated as well as sympathy.
- Involve others so your friend has a support team rather than just you.
- If your friend wants to see a professional you can get information about suitable support services from Wellbeing and Disability Services (Level 4, Student Central).
- Keep checking with your friend what they think would be helpful. Encourage them to keep as much control of their life as possible. Decide things together rather than taking responsibility yourself.
- You can ask for help for yourself from Wellbeing Advisers or the Counselling Service.



## What is unhelpful?

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- Giving lots of advice—if it goes wrong you might be blamed.
- Telling your friend what to do.
- Taking on too much.
- If you don't define and stick to your boundaries.

You may find your own life taken over by your friend's problems.

These won't help your friend and certainly won't help you. Sometimes the helper can end up in a worse mess than the person they were helping and your friendship may never recover!

## Confidentiality

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Check with your friend before you speak to anyone else about the situation, but if you become worried for your friend's safety, or the safety of others, then you should contact local helping agencies, even without permission.

## Other Useful Contacts

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### Counselling Service

**Tel.** 01484 471001

**Email.** [counselling@hud.ac.uk](mailto:counselling@hud.ac.uk)

### In an emergency

Police/Ambulance **dial 999**

### Samaritans

**Freephone.** 116 123

