

## Mental Health Conditions

Mental health problems occur when there is a disturbance in the way an individual feels, thinks or behaves. If untreated, this can have implications for the individual's ability to function, work or maintain relationships.

There is a wide range of mental health conditions which include mood-related disorders, anxiety-related disorders, psychosis, eating disorders and personality disorders.

### Top Tips for Academic Staff

- Mental health conditions often manifest in decreasing concentration and memory, fatigue, worry, lack of engagement, avoidance and altered self-perception
- Sometimes physical symptoms may also be experienced - some of these, such as sweating or irritability, may be visible
- With the right support and/or treatment, individuals can and do recover even when they have experienced severe mental health difficulties
- Social situations may be particularly difficult for an individual experiencing mental health illness
- Group work and meetings may be particularly challenging as social interaction and development of peer relationships may sometimes be difficult. Group arrangements in particular may require formal allocation to ensure that the student isn't 'left out'
- A higher degree of informal supervision than might otherwise be expected may be necessary
- Students with mental health conditions may find presentations challenging and their condition may prevent participation. Staff should consult the Statement of Compensatory Measures and make reasonable adjustments, providing learning outcomes can be maintained. Reasonable adjustments might include allowing the student to present to just the tutor, or a small audience or to present first or last if that would help. An alternative piece of work could be considered, providing learning outcomes permit.
- Students with mental health conditions may, at times, need to go out during sessions, be unable to attend full contact hours, or find early morning sessions difficult due to additional fatigue or anxiety caused by their illness, or because of the effects of medication.
- Be as accommodating as possible in relation to arranging one-to-one meeting times. It is also helpful to provide written information which the individual can take away with them.

For further information please visit [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)