

Student life is full of twists and turns, and things can get a little rocky at times. The RNCM has a wide-ranging support network designed to help you get back on your feet, but we can't always see what's going on - especially outside college walls. That's where YOU come in. Read on to see how you can #lookoutforyourmate and potentially save lives along the way.

#look
out
for

your
mate

1

GOOD NIGHT OUT

Stick together on nights out and keep an eye out for each other! If you see a friend in a difficult situation or being pressured by another person, intervene. If you think your personal safety may be at risk, get help from club security or elsewhere.

Don't leave a friend in a club alone ever - especially if you know they've had a lot to drink. If your friend seems drunk or high, make sure they get home safely. Don't leave it to luck!

Keep an eye on how much they're drinking - if you think they might need a glass of water instead of another pint, don't be afraid to let them know.

Don't let your pal get into an unlicensed taxi and where possible, travel together.

3

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Drugs are very dangerous and can kill. Our advice is not to take them, but if your friend has taken something resulting in hospitalisation, it is CRUCIAL that you tell medical professionals what you think they've taken. It's not a betrayal to your friend and might save their life. Remember that alcohol can be just as dangerous!

2

TRAVEL SAFE

If you know a friend is staying late to practise or for a rehearsal and has to head home alone, drop them a text when they're leaving and ask them to text you when they arrive. You can also ask them to share their route in advance and what time they're expecting to be back. When you can, try and match schedules so you can walk all or part of the way home together when travelling late at night.

students
save lives

find out more at
www.rncmsu.co.uk

1 IN 4 OF US WILL EXPERIENCE MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS THIS YEAR

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP

1

YOU ARE IMPORTANT

Students rely on students. Housemates and friends are most likely to spot the signs of someone struggling, and are usually the people students speak to when things aren't going great. Good social networks also have a protective influence against mental health struggles and can help us through whatever life sends our way. Support from family and friends was found to be the most cited reason for staying in HE - that's how much of a difference you can make!

2

SPOTTING THE SIGNS

Depression is more common than you think and affects 1/10 of us a year. Signs to look out for include loss of interest in activities and life, persistent sad or anxious mood, decreased energy and concentration, irregular sleeping patterns.

Anxiety is something present in all of us, so it can be difficult to spot when it's out of control.

Look out for permanent tense and jittery language or a constant sense of being 'on edge', complaints of a racing heart and difficulty sleeping, catastrophizing or needing things to be done a certain way to retain a feeling of control.

Eating disorders or disordered eating show themselves in avoidance or nerves around mealtimes or public places to eat, hyper-awareness of other people's diets, preoccupation with food, strict habits around eating, sudden weight loss and mood swings.

3

HOW TO HELP

Talking Spend a bit of time preparing for the conversation. Choose somewhere quiet and relaxing, and a time where you know you won't have to rush off. Try to focus on thoughts and feelings, rather than behaviours, to help you get the bigger picture of what's going on in your pal's life. Don't worry about saying the right thing, giving advice or not understanding everything your friend is going through - just by chatting with them, you've shown them that they're not alone and that you're there for them.

Keeping up with the fun stuff

Friendship is also about keeping up with the stuff you enjoy and hanging out together.

Look out for yourself too! Remember that you can't solve everything. Look after yourself and remember your own needs and priorities. Recovery often depends on the motivation on the individual and not taking care of yourself can be damaging to you and your friend.

4

WHEN TO GET MORE SUPPORT

It is important to remember that your job as a friend is to be supportive and understanding but it's not to give professional help. If you feel out of your depth or would like a bit of extra advice you can always talk to Cara Houghton (your welfare officer) or Jane Gray (your student wellbeing advisor) in confidence.