

# Student Mental Health Agreement – themes and activities

## Introduction

This Student Mental Health Agreement was created by Abertay University and Abertay Students’ Association through participating in NUS Scotland’s ThinkPositive initiative.

The organisations involved have mapped out the current support offered at Abertay, researched the issues faced by students at this university and elsewhere, and consulted with students and staff alike. This is to help promote the support offered by Abertay to our students.

Students have contributed and produced this document by:

* Answering the Students’ Association annual survey’s questions about loneliness and peer support.
* Giving insights to staff on the landscape of student mental health at events, workshops, and pop-ups.
* Creating ideas for support activities.

This agreement will cover the years 2024 – 2026. A self-evaluation will be completed in April/May in 2025 and 2026 for Think Positive to review. Within Abertay, we will continue to monitor and improve our support for students and mental health as a whole.

This SMHA will remain in place until a new SMHA is launched in 2026.

* The Counselling & Mental Health Team
* The Students’ Association

Our shared objectives are as follows:

* Fostering a sense of belonging and community for everyone at Abertay
* Increasing awareness of availability of support at Abertay
* Improving mental health education through free workshops and activities
* Reducing feelings of loneliness for everyone at Abertay

## THEME 1 – Come This Way for Support

This theme was created because we know that students are aware of the services on offer at Abertay but have reported that they struggle to access these services and desire a centralised approach (Abertay Students’ Association, 2024).

We will support this theme by continuously advertising our services in effective and impactful ways, examine and improve our digital resources, and ensure that our staff are properly trained to handle mental health emergencies on campus.

### Activities for Theme 1:

* Digital Resources Project: The Counselling & Mental Health team is running a project to determine the best way to collate digital resources and share these with students, so everyone has equal awareness and access to mental health support and services.
* Student Services involved in Welcome Week Fair & Re-Freshers' Fair: Staff from different departments of Student Services will be invited to ASA’s Fairs as part of Welcome Week and Refreshers. This will ensure that students are introduced to the support available at Abertay as soon as they begin their journey or come back for a new year.
* Promotion of services: We will promote our various support services through Abertay social media accounts and Students’ Association social media.
* Mental Health First Aiders: There are several staff on site who have been trained in mental health first aid by an accredited trainer. As part of the SMHA, these staff will be listed prominently on Abertay resources and the ThinkPositive hub, so students and staff know who may be able to signpost them to support in a crisis, alongside emergency services.

### Success measures for Theme 1:

* + Completion of Digital Resources project; publicisation of findings to Abertay Community; following up on project recommendations.
	+ Resources for mental health & wellbeing available at the Fair; student and staff awareness increase of available support.
	+ Posting about support year-round; engagement with social media (such as views, likes, and shares).
	+ Promotion of mental health first aiders; training new staff each year; creation of a directory of trained individuals on MyAbertay; and promote the Think Positive Hub and Abertay’s dedicated page.

## THEME 2: Mental Health for Everyone

This theme was created because Abertay University and Abertay Students’ Association are committed to creating a culture where mental health is openly discussed, accepted, and supported.

We will achieve this by developing projects and events to increase the visibility of mental health as a concept, understanding the impact of mental health & wellbeing, and encouraging people to take care of all aspects of their health.

### Activities for Theme 2:

* Mental Health events during Welcome Week: The Students’ Association will plan and deliver a “Recharge” themed day each year – this day will involve talks from local wellbeing charities, support groups, and taster sessions of physical activities like yoga.
* Relax Trolley: The Students’ Association has delivered the Relax Trolley project every semester during exam weeks since 2016. This ensures that students have access to healthy snacks, drinks, and adequate breaks throughout a stressful period of their lives.
* Workshops from the Counselling & Mental Health Service: The service delivers a suite of free workshops for students throughout the year.
* Self-referral to Counselling & Mental Health services: Using AbertayConnect, students can self-refer and book appointments with the service.

### Success measures for Theme 2:

* + All workshops and events will have their attendance monitored and feedback evaluated to improve future delivery.
	+ Continue to increase percentage of students who self-refer to the service (2023/24 - 90%).
	+ Monitor the ease of self-referral by facilitating the submission of feedback about the process and track the percentage of students who continue to self-refer.
	+ Continue to deliver a suite of workshops designed to support student mental health and wellbeing.

## THEME 3: Building Our Community

This theme was created because we have noticed that loneliness has become a common part of the student experience. Most students at Abertay say they experience loneliness to some degree (88% - Abertay Students’ Association, 2024), while 1 in 5 students has said they are lonely often or always. Even though so many students feel lonely, almost half of UK students aged 18-24 worry that their peers would judge them for saying so (Better Health: Every Mind Matters, 2023).

The activities to support this theme will aim to build up links between our students, encourage everyone to take notice of their peers, and work in partnership to help people become proactive with their mental health and wellbeing.

### Activities for Theme 3:

* Look After Your Mate: Staff at the Students’ Association and the University are trained to deliver these Student Minds workshops, which encourage students to look out for their friends and build a community.
* Speedfriending: During Welcome Week and at other points in the year, the Students’ Association will deliver speedfriending events, where students can canvas a wide variety of their peers to search for friends in a supportive and open environment.
* A wide variety of free events for students to engage in:
	+ Chatty Café: Support Session for International Students
	+ Reality Bites: Bespoke training for students from certain departments.
	+ Neurodivergence awareness workshop for students: These are aimed at staff in the School of Design and Informatics.
	+ Moving to Uni (School and Colleges): Awareness workshop for Freshers
	+ Moving to Uni (International): Awareness workshop for Freshers
	+ Mental Health Awareness Sessions (Self -Harm and Suicide Awareness): 2 sessions delivered by the Counselling and Mental Health team, promoted in collaboration with the Students’ Association.
* Suicide Awareness: We will promote opportunities to connect with groups and charities who support young people in crisis via signposting and directing students to opportunities for training.
* Positivi-tree: The Students’ Association will promote and update the Positivi-tree, a cherry blossom tree in the library where students can leave notes on the branches.
* Thera-pets visits: The University and Students’ Association will work with Canine Concern Scotland to book therapy dog sessions on campus throughout the academic year.

### Success measures for Theme 3:

* + Staff are trained in delivering the LAYM workshop; workshops are delivered at least twice an academic year; workshop attendance and feedback are evaluated.
	+ The Positivi-tree will receive monthly updates of theme, regular promotion on social media, and engagement will be counted via the number of tags on the branches.
	+ All free workshops will have their attendance monitored and feedback evaluated to improve future delivery.
	+ Signposting to charities and groups outwith Abertay will occur at least once a month on social media and our internal websites, and physical ads will be posted on campus.

This Student Mental Health Agreement and further information on the support offer available to students can be found at the following webpages:

* www.abertaysa.com/student-mental-health-agreement
* https://www.abertay.ac.uk/life/student-support-and-services/counselling-and-mental-health/
* https://thinkpositive.scot/resources/university-of-abertay/

### Appendix

* Students’ Association Survey - [UADSA Student Survey 2024 Report FINAL.pdf](https://liveabertayac.sharepoint.com/%3Ab%3A/s/StudentsAssociation/EQkztA68vPtAlZc80lgCL4EBHkEUU6pLWS9m94q_cR9LqA?e=bjR5wg)
* Better Health: Every Mind Matters, 2023 - <https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/lv0l198c6o/YouGov%20DCMS%20-%20Loneliness%20Uni%20Students.pdf>.

This document and further material related to Abertay University's SMHA, and support offerings can be found at [www.abertaysa.com/advice/smha](https://www.abertaysa.com/what-s-on/smha) and https://thinkpositive.scot/resources/university-of-abertay/

Signed by:

On this date:

13th March 2025