



Start a ripple. Make a wave.

Student depression awareness campaign- Press Pack

1st February-29th April 2016

Who are we?- Introduction to Student Minds

Student Minds is the UK's student mental health charity. We want students to have the skills, knowledge and confidence to talk about their mental health and look out for their peers. We believe in peer support and deliver research-driven training and supervision to equip students to bring about positive change on their campuses through campaigning and facilitating peer support projects.

Student Minds was set up in 2009 and since then we have supported over 800 volunteers across the country and we have a presence in over 40 universities across the UK.

We have recently had coverage from BBC Women's Hour, BBC South and the Huffington Post to name but a few, you may also find us in published articles from the Student Guardian. Take a look at our [Press Hub](#) to have a look at our previous press coverage.

Student Minds will be working with the media and other organisations to promote our new national campaign, **Ripple**, which aims to make **information about depression available to all students** through the student minds website, collecting helpful tips **from-students-for-students** through social media and from local Student Minds groups, and **supporting the work of our student groups across the country** to run activities and events on campus.

Ripple will officially launch on Monday 1st February with launch events in universities, and will last until 22nd April.

What is Ripple?



We want to change students' opinions of depression, to stop depression being something which students deal with alone and to empower students to take action to help those around them.

Ripple is a campaign to increase awareness and knowledge of depression for students and to motivate students to think about the things that help their mental health, however small they may be. The campaign will also encourage students to share their tips with other and the wider student network through social media.

By encouraging student to talk about their mental health, Student Minds network will start a Ripple that will make a wave.

Aims of the campaign:

- Help students to understand depression, the signs of depression, what it is like to experience depression, and healthy routines to support their own mental health.
- Encourage students to talk about their experiences of depression and get support.
- Help students understand what their friends with depression are going through, and how they can support them.
- Teach students that a small thing can have a large effect, and can identify what small things are helpful for them and others.

What is depression?

Depression is characterised by persistent feelings of sadness, loss of interest and feelings of guilt or low self-worth.

Spotting the signs:

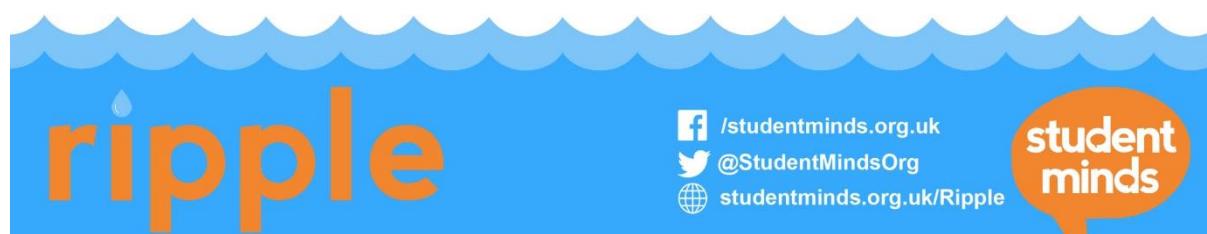
- A persistently sad, anxious or generally low mood.
- A loss of interest in life and activities.
- Decreased energy, struggling to complete daily tasks.
- Irregular sleeping patterns.
- Increased tearfulness and feelings of worthlessness.
- Poor concentration.

Why is depression and low mood important?

We know that mental health difficulties are common among students:

1 in 4 students experience psychological distress, associated with increased risk of anxiety, depression, substance abuse and personality disorders (2011, Royal College of Psychiatrists).

65% of students had experienced stress, **43%** had experienced anxiety, loneliness, and feelings of not being able to cope.



There are significant barriers to talking about mental health for students:

1 in 4 students are too uncomfortable to reveal their mental health difficulties to their friends for fear of being mistreated.

Our own research shows that students with mental health difficulties found their top challenge at university to be their **fear of being judged**, with **finding the confidence** to tell others about their difficulties following closely after.

Students value support from friends:

Students are most likely to speak to friends when they are experiencing difficulties (*2011, Student Minds*).

Day-to-day supervision most often falls on housemates (*2007, Papyrus*).

Students Against Depression



Student Minds have partnered with Students Against Depression to bring the most relevant information about depression to students during the Ripple campaign.

Students Against Depression offers information and resources validated by health professionals alongside tips and advice from students who have experienced depression themselves. The site offers comprehensive, award-winning information and resources to help students identify low mood or depression and then find a way forward.

Ripple Tips

Student Minds will be building a collection of students' Ripple Tips to find out what students do when they're feeling depressed or low. These Ripple Tips can be used as ideas by students experiencing depression looking for ways to improve their wellbeing. Students and supporters of the campaign are encouraged to share tips using the hashtag #RippleTips on Twitter or take photos at events around university campuses.



Why student mental health? - Grand challenges

In 2014, we carried out research into the key challenges for student mental health, surveying students, university staff and healthcare professionals. Some of the main challenges included:

- Living independently: the transition to living independently and managing day-to-day life such as cooking and budgeting.
- Housing: finding housing, relationships with housemates and landlords.
- Peer pressure (alcohol, consent).
- Academic pressure: anxiety around exam performance, coursework, public presentations and group work.
- Uncertainty: more generally, the high level of uncertainty in a student's life can lead to anxiety.

The full Grand Challenges report can be found on our website [here](#).

Contact details

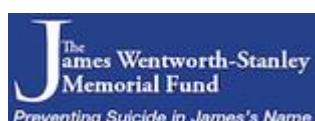
For any further enquiries on the Ripple campaign, please contact Anoushka at
anoushka@studentminds.org.uk.

You can also find us on Twitter @StudentMindsOrg and take a look at our website www.studentminds.org.uk

Student Minds Supporters:



The Matthew Elvidge Trust



We are kindly supported by Comic Relief, The Welton Foundation, UnLtd, The Matthew Elvidge Trust, The Charlie Waller Memorial Trust, The James Wentworth-Stanley Memorial Fund and Student Hubs.

Student Minds is registered with Companies House (7493445) and is a Charity registered in England and Wales (1142783).

