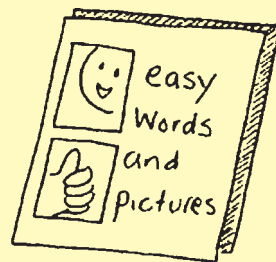


Should I say?

A leaflet about telling your college or learning centre that you have a mental health difficulty

Easy read version



What is good about adult learning?



Adult learning is any course or training or studying you do when you are 16 years old or older.

It is not learning at school.

It is usually learning at college or a learning centre.

Adult learning can be lots of fun.



Adult learning can

help you meet new people



help you learn new things



help you feel better about yourself



help you get a qualification, like a Level 2 certificate or a GCSE or an NVQ or



help you get a job.

What is this leaflet about?



This leaflet should help you decide whether or not to tell your college or learning centre that you have a mental health difficulty.



Sometimes this is called 'disclosing' or 'declaring'.



NIACE wrote this leaflet.

NIACE is the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education.

NIACE tries to help more people take up adult learning.

NIACE also helps to make adult learning better.



You should read this leaflet if

- you have a mental health difficulty
- and
- you are doing some adult learning, or you are going to do some adult learning.

Words used in this leaflet

This leaflet uses some long words.

This is what they mean.



Mental health difficulty

A mental health difficulty is where you have thoughts or feelings that make your life very difficult a lot of the time.

If you have a mental health difficulty you might

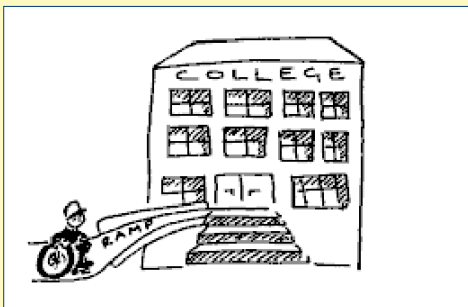
- feel very sad or angry or nervous
- worry a lot about talking to people
- find it very difficult to leave your home.

A lot of the time you might get help from a doctor or take medication.

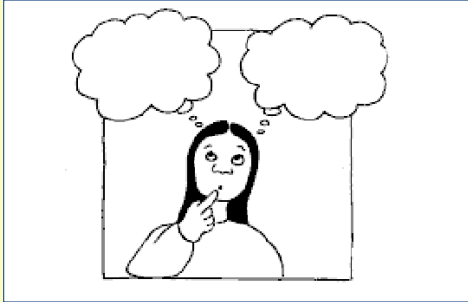
College or learning centre

A college or learning centre is a place where adults go to learn, like

- further education college
- university
- community centre
- day centre that runs classes.



Should I tell the college or learning centre that I have a mental health difficulty?



Usually, this is your choice.



Sometimes you **have to** tell the college or learning centre.

You have to tell the college or learning centre if you are doing a course that means you will be caring for other people, like children.



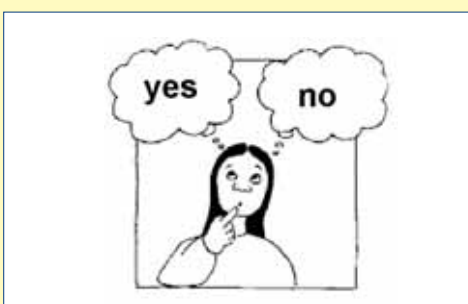
There are lots of good reasons you should tell the college or learning centre.

You can read these on page 5.



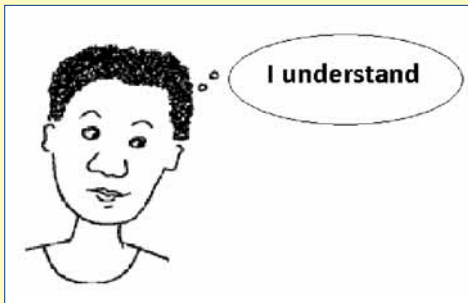
There are some reasons you might choose not to tell the college or learning centre.

You can read these on page 6.



After you have read this leaflet you can decide whether or not to tell your college or learning centre that you have a mental health difficulty.

What are the reasons I *should* tell the college or learning centre?



It would help teachers and other staff understand you and the way you learn best.



You might get help and support from the college or learning centre to support you on the course.

This could help you do better in your learning.



It might help teachers, staff and learners learn more about making things better for you and other people with mental health difficulties as well.



You might find out about activities at the college or learning centre for people with mental health difficulties.

What are the reasons I *should not* tell the college or learning centre?

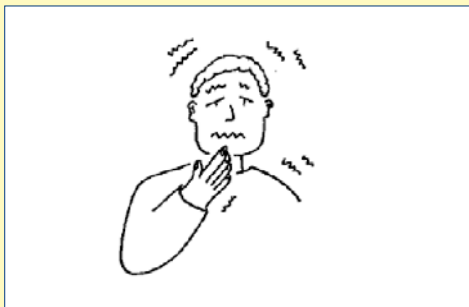


You might think it is none of their business.



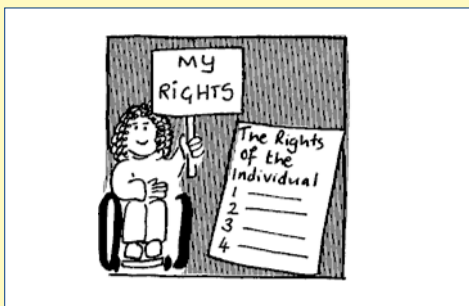
You might think that your mental health difficulty won't make a difference to your learning.

So you might think there is no point telling them.



You might worry that the college or learning centre won't treat you well or won't know how to support you.

But...

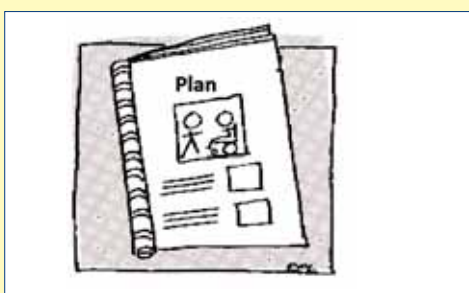


The **Disability Discrimination Act** says it is against the law to treat disabled people unfairly.

This includes people with learning difficulties, learning disabilities and serious and long-term mental health difficulties.



This means a college or learning centre should not treat you badly because you have a serious and long-term mental health difficulty.



The college or learning centre should have a plan about how to support disabled people.

This might be called a 'Disability Equality Scheme' or a 'Single Equality Scheme'.

If I do want to tell the college or learning centre, how can I prepare?

Ask yourself



What difference will my mental health difficulty make to my learning?



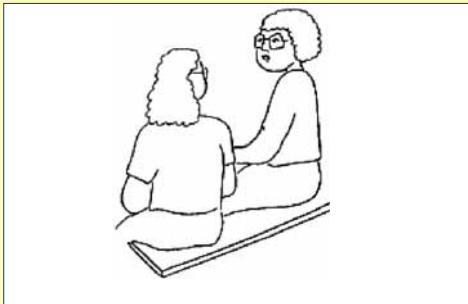
Do I need support to help me learn in the best way for me?



What support would I like from the college or learning centre?



Am I worried about going to the college or learning centre or doing the learning?



Talk to somebody who can help you decide what to say to the college or learning centre.

You could talk to a friend, your support worker or nurse or care coordinator.

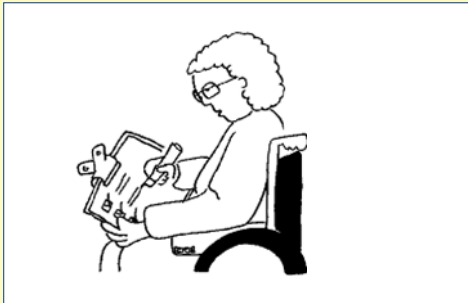
If you have a meeting at the college or learning centre, you could ask your friend or support worker to come with you.



Before you go, write down the things you want to tell the college or learning centre.

How should I tell the college or learning centre that I have a mental health difficulty?

There are lots of different ways you can tell the college or learning centre.



To do the course you might need to fill out an enrolment form or an application form.

This form should ask if you have a disability. You can say 'yes' and write that you have a mental health difficulty.

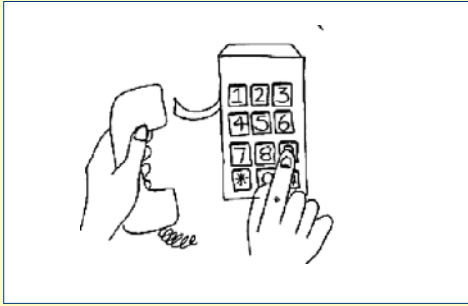


To do the course you might have an interview.

You can tell them at the interview that you have a mental health difficulty.



You can email the college or learning centre and tell them that you have a mental health difficulty.



You can telephone the college or learning centre and tell them that you have a mental health difficulty.



You can talk to someone at the college or learning centre about your mental health difficulty.

You should talk to your teacher or someone who works in 'learner support services'.



If you tell the college or learning centre you have a mental health difficulty, you should ask what they can do to support people with mental health difficulties.

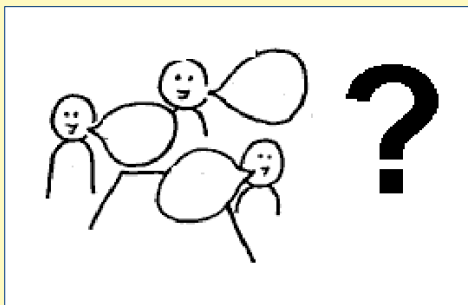
What will the college or learning centre do?



If you tell the college or learning centre that you have a mental health difficulty, they should arrange a time to talk to you.



They should talk to you in a private place about how they can help and support you.



They should ask if it is ok for them to tell other staff at the college or learning centre.

They might want to do this so more people will understand how you learn best and so more staff can support you.

If you say 'no' they are not allowed to tell other staff unless there is a very good reason.

What help will the college or learning centre give me?

Every college or learning centre is different.

There are lots of different things they could do to help like



make sure you settle in well and feel welcome



help you plan your learning



meet you on your own sometimes to see if you are ok



make things better for you in exams, like making sure you can have a break



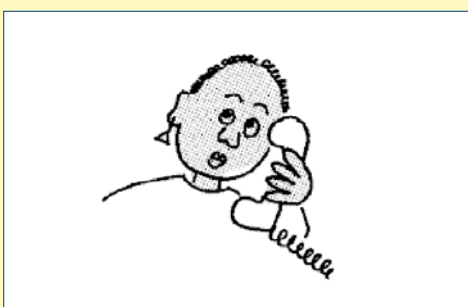
give you a note taker or support worker if you need this



make sure you work in small groups, not big groups



make sure other staff or learners don't treat you badly



stay in touch with you if you are ill.

Your college or learning centre may not do **all** of these things, but they must do all they can to help you.

Where can I find out more?



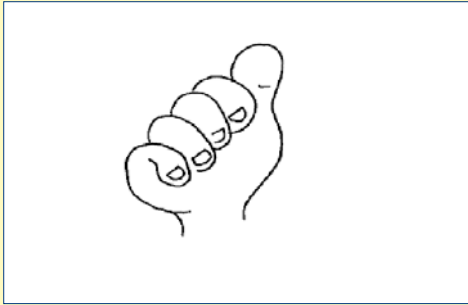
There are some more leaflets about telling your college or learning centre, but they are not 'easy read'.

If you want to read them



- go on the Internet
- go to **www.niace.org.uk**
- find the box where it says 'search this site'
- type 'should I say' and
- click 'search'.

And finally...



Good luck!



We hope you really enjoy adult learning.



NIACE

www.niace.org.uk

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