

SENSITIVE CONTENT COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES (SCCG): A RESOURCE FOR LECTURERS

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PURPOSE

This resource guide aims to support students and staff re: sensitive content in the HE context to gain stronger student engagement. To help lecturers navigate communicating challenging concepts within a modern, student-centred learning environment.

It is important that we engage in the study and critique of sensitive and emotive materials and we in IADT will strive to do so in an inclusive, supportive, and empathetic manner which aligns to our values as an Institution.

GUIDELINES: WHAT ARE THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES, WHAT THESE GUIDELINES ARE, WHAT THEY ARE NOT:

PRINCIPLES – OUTLINE OF GUIDELINES – MAIN CONSIDERATIONS:

GUIDING PRINCIPLES: For education to be effective, it needs to be challenging. Is it through our challenges that we develop resilience, empathy, acumen, deeper understanding and critical perspective. Engagement is a core concept for both students and lecturers for learning to be its most challenging, constructive, and powerful.

WHAT ARE SCCGS?

In recognition of statistical rise of emotional and physical trauma (see [HEA, 2022](#), [AHEAD,2019](#), [USI Student Mental Health in Ireland](#), Women's Aid Ireland [2020](#), [2021](#)) within the Higher Education student body in Ireland and internationally, SCCGs are a resource for lecturers in approaching sensitive and challenging content around emotionally difficult, traumatic and/or anachronistic works within disciplinary context.

SCOPE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This resource guide is intended to be initiated by lecturers at their discretion and prerogative. This document aims to provide staff and students with a collection of language that can be used to scaffold discussions of sensitive content.

This resource is not intended to be prescriptive, essential, or binding. It is understood that this document is a guidance resource and does not cover an exhaustive list of potentially sensitive materials; we recognise that some topics may not be perceived as sensitive. The approach advocated in this resource guide highlights that as a community we are learning and acting with respect.

This is not a policy document.

HOW MIGHT WE USE SCCGS AS A RESOURCE?

CONTENT CONSIDERED:

Up to the lecturer, supported by discipline, HOD and teaching team, as required.

SUGGESTIONS OF MATERIAL TO CONSIDER:

Materials that depict the following:

- Exploitation
- Abuse
- Assault
- Stigmatisation of mental health

PRINCIPLES FOR USAGE:

- Timely (given in advance of the material)*
- Clearly given (in writing or orally in class)
- Presented with respect, support, and an invitation to engage

EXAMPLES AND RESOURCES FOR CONSIDERATION:

EXAMPLE OF CONTENT GUIDELINES IN USE

Below are some examples of specific suggestions which may be of assistance to you.

| Type of Communication | When to use | What to say |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Tagging material | Syllabus | Include tags noting the content of the lecture/reading under the description of each within the syllabus |
| Blanket Module Guidelines | Modules focusing on specific emotionally difficult subjects e.g. Abnormal Psychology | <p>This module requires frequent discussion of X, X, and X. Much of this content may be emotionally and intellectually challenging and I will aim to flag any particularly difficult material in advance. We all will strive to create an open and safe classroom environment in which we can discuss these topic(s) empathically and mindfully in the academic context. Your colleagues and I would ask that you each as students engage with these topics in a respectful manner which allows for in depth discussion of challenging materials.</p> <p>I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the supports that are available to you. Please see the below list of internal, local, and national services should you wish to seek support.</p> |

| | | |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Material specific | Before instructing students to engage with content which may be sensitive | <p>The assigned material(s) (NAME OF ARTICLE/FILM ETC.) deals with topic(s) of a sensitive nature including X, X, and X. We appreciate that this content may be difficult for some of you to engage with. We all will strive to create open and safe classroom environment in which we can discuss these topic(s) empathically and mindfully within the academic context.</p> <p>I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the supports that are available to you. Please see the below list of internal, local, and national services should you wish to seek support.</p> <p><i>Feel free to add the following if appropriate</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This/These topic(s) is/are specifically addressed *on pages X-X* *from X-X time* should you wish to avoid it/them. • Should you find this/these topic(s) particularly difficult to engage with, please contact me to arrange an alternative • We will still, however, be responsible for material that you miss, so if you leave the room for a significant time, please arrange to get notes from another student or see me individually |
|-------------------|---|--|

| | | |
|------------------|---|---|
| Lecture specific | Before a lecture/seminar in which sensitive topics/material will be discussed | <p>The following lecture/seminar will include a discussion(s) on the following topic(s); X, X, and X. This content may be difficult for some of you to engage with. We will strive to create open and safe classroom environment in which we can discuss these topic(s) empathically and mindfully within the academic context.</p> <p>I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the supports that are available to you. Please see the below list of internal, local, and national services should you wish to seek support.</p> <p><i>Feel free to add the following if appropriate</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should you find this/these topic(s) particularly difficult to engage with, please contact me to arrange an alternative • This/these topic(s) will be discussed during *details of the class time they will be discussed*, should you wish to excuse yourself in advance • You will still, however, be responsible for material that you miss, so if you leave the room for a significant time, please arrange to get notes from another student or see me individually |
|------------------|---|---|

INTERNAL SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS

| What | Who | How | When | Where |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Student Counselling Service | Carly Salter | Request an appointment via email: studentcounselling@iadt.ie | Emergency consultations are available weekdays from 9 – 9:30am at 01 239 4650 and via video call | Student Services Area, Carriglea Building |
| Disability Support Service | Alexandra McDonald | Request an appointment via appointment request form (available on the wall at the waiting room of the student services suite) and placing in the black post box. Telephone: 01 239 4895 Email: alexandra.mcdonald@iadt.ie | | Room C006e, Carriglea Building |
| Health Centre | Joan Broderick Suzanne Keily | Request an appointment via appointment request form: https://iadt.formstack.com/forms/health_centre_patient_registration_and_consent_form or telephone 01 239 4760 Other queries via email: studenthealth@iadt.ie | <u>Nurse Appointments</u> Monday – Thursday 9:30 – 12:30 14:00 – 16:00 Friday 9:30 – 14:00 <u>Doctor on Campus</u> Tuesday & Thursday 9:30 – 12:30 | Ground Floor, Atrium Building (opposite Student Canteen) |

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| Access Service | Laoise Darragh | Email: access@iadt.ie or sinead.mcentee@iadt.ie Telephone: +353 1 239 4628 | | Carriglea Building |
| Student Learning Centre | Loretto Meagher Brian McNamara Jessica Dully | Request an appointment via email: learningdevelopment@iadt.ie | | Carriglea Building (Glass fronted office) 1st right when you come through the main door |
| Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion | Claire McGing | Email: equality@iadt.ie | | |
| Head of Teaching and Learning | Rebecca Roper | Email: Rebecca.roper@iadt.ie | | |

INTERNAL SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STAFF

Employee Assistance Programme for Staff + Families

Confidential supports and resources are available through our Employee Assistance Programme. The service is free of charge to all IADT staff and their families.

EAP provides a wide range of supports with trained specialists able to give you practical information. Staff also can access additional professional supports if required. The Freephone number is 1800 995 955 or email eap@vhics.ie.

EXTERNAL SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF

| Who | How | When |
|---------------------------------------|---|------|
| Samaritans | Freephone 116 123 Email: jo@samaritans.org | 24hr |
| Pieta House | Freephone: 1 800 247 247 | 24hr |
| Dublin Rape Crisis Centre | Freephone: 1 800 77 8888 | 24hr |
| Sexual Assault Treatment Units | https://www.hse.ie/satu | |
| Crime Victims Helpline | Freephone: 116006 Email: info@crimevictimshelpline.ie Text on: 085 133 7711 | |
| Crisis Textline | Text IADT to 50808 | 24hr |
| Aware | https://www.aware.ie/ | |

SELF-CARE FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF

Breathing

Practice these tips to help you take a moment and breathe:

- sit in a comfortable and supportive chair,
- put one hand on your chest and the other hand on your abdomen,
- breathe as you would normally, but notice where your breath is coming from in your body,
- concentrate on taking a deep breath - notice how your abdomen rises and falls,
- as you get used to taking deep breaths try holding the breath for a count of 4 and then exhaling to a count of 6 - this will encourage you to take deeper breaths
- when taking a deep breath, it is important to focus on the exhale,
- as you get better at taking deep breaths, try working towards exhaling for 9 seconds and inhaling for 7.

Grounding exercises

For example, you could describe your surroundings out loud or count objects of a particular type or colour.

Time for yourself

Take a moment to step away from the situation.

Schedule time for yourself each week.

Talk to people around you

Speak about the disclosure with someone you trust– but be careful not disclose any identifying details.