

# Transform AKC May 2026 Psychosocial Care

## Psychosocial Training for Renal Teams & Screening for Psychosocial Needs

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# Aim of workshop

## Raise awareness of the new Online Level 1 Psychosocial Training for Renal Teams

- What it covers
- Benefits it brings
- How to access

## Opportunity to consider psychosocial screening in the context of kidney services

- Why psychosocial screening is important
- What it looks like
- See an example in practice & interactive discussion

Education Hub

# Psychosocial care for people with kidney disease

## Level One Training



Self-paced & online 15-30 min modules Multi-professional kidney team



[UKKA Education Hub](https://youtu.be/0rU8qqcAcRg?si=IPEDNWldUrosgY14)

<https://youtu.be/0rU8qqcAcRg?si=IPEDNWldUrosgY14>

# Level 1 Online Psychosocial Training for Renal Staff

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Module based, user friendly, can complete in stages

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Free to access for all staff

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Certificates on completion - useful for CPD logs and reaccreditation

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Responding to need: Importance of kidney specific psychosocial training for kidney teams highlighted by people living with kidney disease and staff

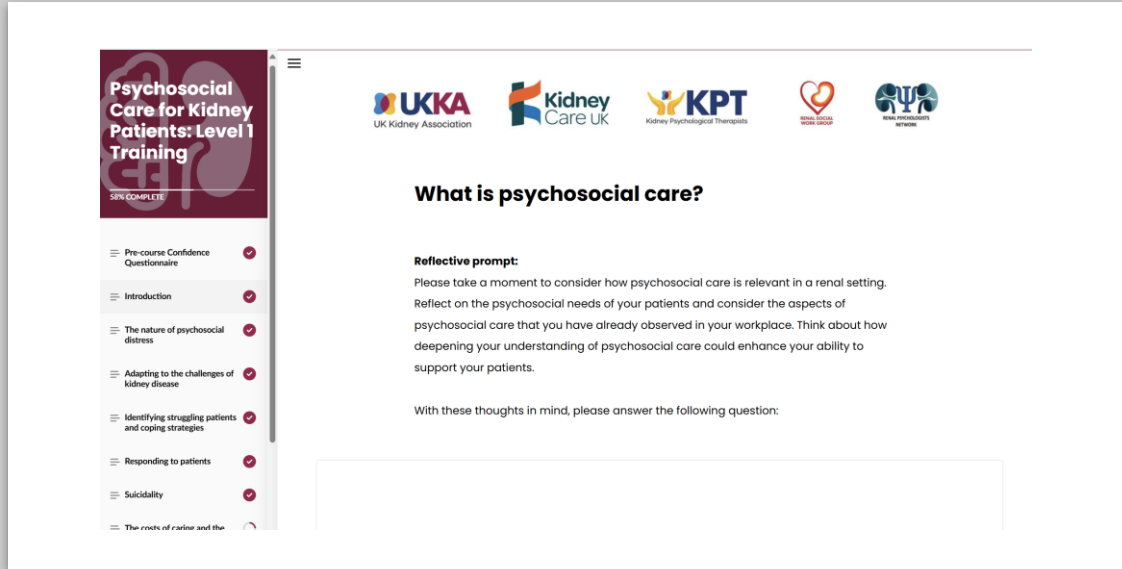
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Great foundation to help staff benefit from further psychosocial training opportunities and to support further service development

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Services will be working towards meeting RSTP Psychosocial Recommendations

# Examples of training content



**Psychosocial Care for Kidney Patients: Level 1 Training**  
38% COMPLETE

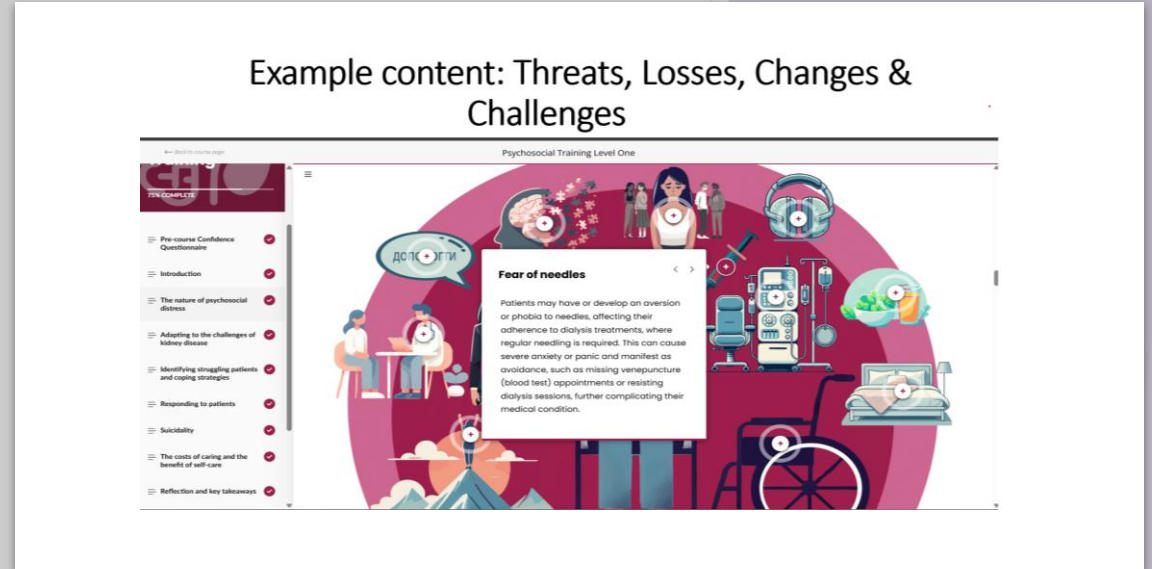
- Pre-course Confidence Questionnaire
- Introduction
- The nature of psychosocial distress
- Adapting to the challenges of kidney disease
- Identifying struggling patients and coping strategies
- Responding to patients
- Suicidality
- The costs of caring and the benefit of self-care

### What is psychosocial care?

**Reflective prompt:**  
Please take a moment to consider how psychosocial care is relevant in a renal setting. Reflect on the psychosocial needs of your patients and consider the aspects of psychosocial care that you have already observed in your workplace. Think about how deepening your understanding of psychosocial care could enhance your ability to support your patients.

With these thoughts in mind, please answer the following question:

### Example content: Threats, Losses, Changes & Challenges

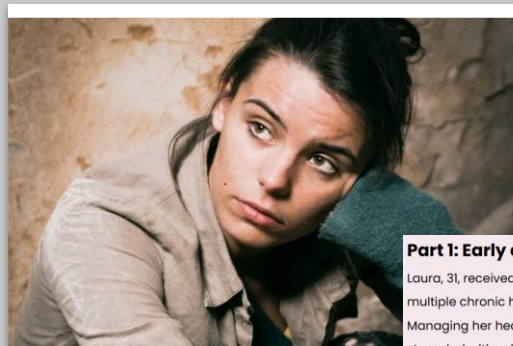


**Psychosocial Training Level One**

- Pre-course Confidence Questionnaire
- Introduction
- The nature of psychosocial distress
- Adapting to the challenges of kidney disease
- Identifying struggling patients and coping strategies
- Responding to patients
- Suicidality
- The costs of caring and the benefit of self-care
- Reflection and key takeaways

#### Fear of needles

Patients may have or develop an aversion or phobia to needles, affecting their adherence to dialysis treatments, where regular needling is required. This can cause severe anxiety or panic and manifest as avoidance, such as missing venepuncture (blood test) appointments or resisting dialysis sessions, further complicating their medical condition.



### Case Studies throughout

#### Part 1: Early challenges

Laura, 31, received a kidney transplant from her mother as a teenager. She was born with multiple chronic health conditions, including one requiring a permanent stoma. Managing her health was difficult throughout her youth, and by her late teens, she struggled with school, her mental health, and her relationship with her mother.

Despite her transplant, Laura found it hard to maintain employment due to ongoing health issues and low mood. She was first referred to psychosocial services in her early twenties while still living at home. However, she did not feel a connection with the renal social worker or psychologist, leading to minimal engagement.

As tensions with her mother escalated, Laura moved out and entered a period of instability. Sporadic engagement with her transplant team continued, and her personal circumstances worsened.

### Psychosocial Training Level One

#### Core communication skills

Click the + in the boxes below to learn about effective core communication skills.

- Listen and be present
- Show empathy and compassion
- Don't judge or impose norms: show unconditional positive regard
- Normalise and validate distress, without being dismissive

# Overall Themed Course Feedback

## 2 Dec 25- Jan 26 (n=126)

- ▶ Strengthened **conceptual clarity** around empathy and psychosocial care
- ▶ Enabled a **psychosocial reframing of patient behaviour**:
  - ▶ confidence increased in recognising psychosocial stressors by 37.15%, pre-post course
- ▶ Increased **confidence with difficult and emotionally charged conversations**
  - ▶ confidence increased in eliciting concerns or worries by 30.54%; and talking to patients or relatives about suicide by 53.24% pre-post course
- ▶ Supported **intentional practice change despite systemic constraints**
- ▶ Validated staff experience while promoting **sustainable, compassionate care**.




[Psychosocial Training for Kidney Care](#)


Education Hub



# PSYCHOSOCIAL CARE LEVEL ONE TRAINING

- Self-paced & online
- 15-30 min modules
- Multi-professional kidney team

Improve your understanding of the emotional, social and psychological challenges people with kidney disease face and how to support them.

Learn with us. 

 [education.ukkidney.org](http://education.ukkidney.org)



# Embedding Level 1 Psychosocial Training for staff in AKC teams

Consider what will support your team/unit to ensure all staff complete Level One Online Psychosocial Training

- ▶ Identify as priority/mandatory training?
- ▶ Embed in appraisals
- ▶ Clinical Lead & manager support
- ▶ Managers complete training
- ▶ Time within work to complete (or taking time back)
- ▶ Sharing benefits with each other - 'word of mouth'
- ▶ Other ideas?....

Questions?

## Embedding skills:

## Identifying & responding to psychosocial need

- ▶ Psychosocial training provides good foundational skills for renal healthcare staff to have conversations about psychosocial needs, including signposting accordingly.
- ▶ Feeling more confident in these skills is an important step in services considering how they can embed ways to identify psychosocial need more consistently
  - ▶ One option is to embed screening for psychosocial need

# Why is psychosocial screening important in Renal Care?

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Anxiety and depression common in long-term conditions

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Strong links with treatment adherence, outcomes, and quality of life

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Early detection supports timely intervention

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Suicide risk is elevated in renal disease - early detection supports timely intervention

# How do we recognise distress in people?


Distress can be difficult to spot and a person may not even be able to articulate that they are distressed



Screening for distress using measures can provide some more objective information about someone's current emotional health



Screening for distress does not mean you have a personal responsibility to 'fix' it, your role is to recognise when someone may need extra support and help guide them towards appropriate resources



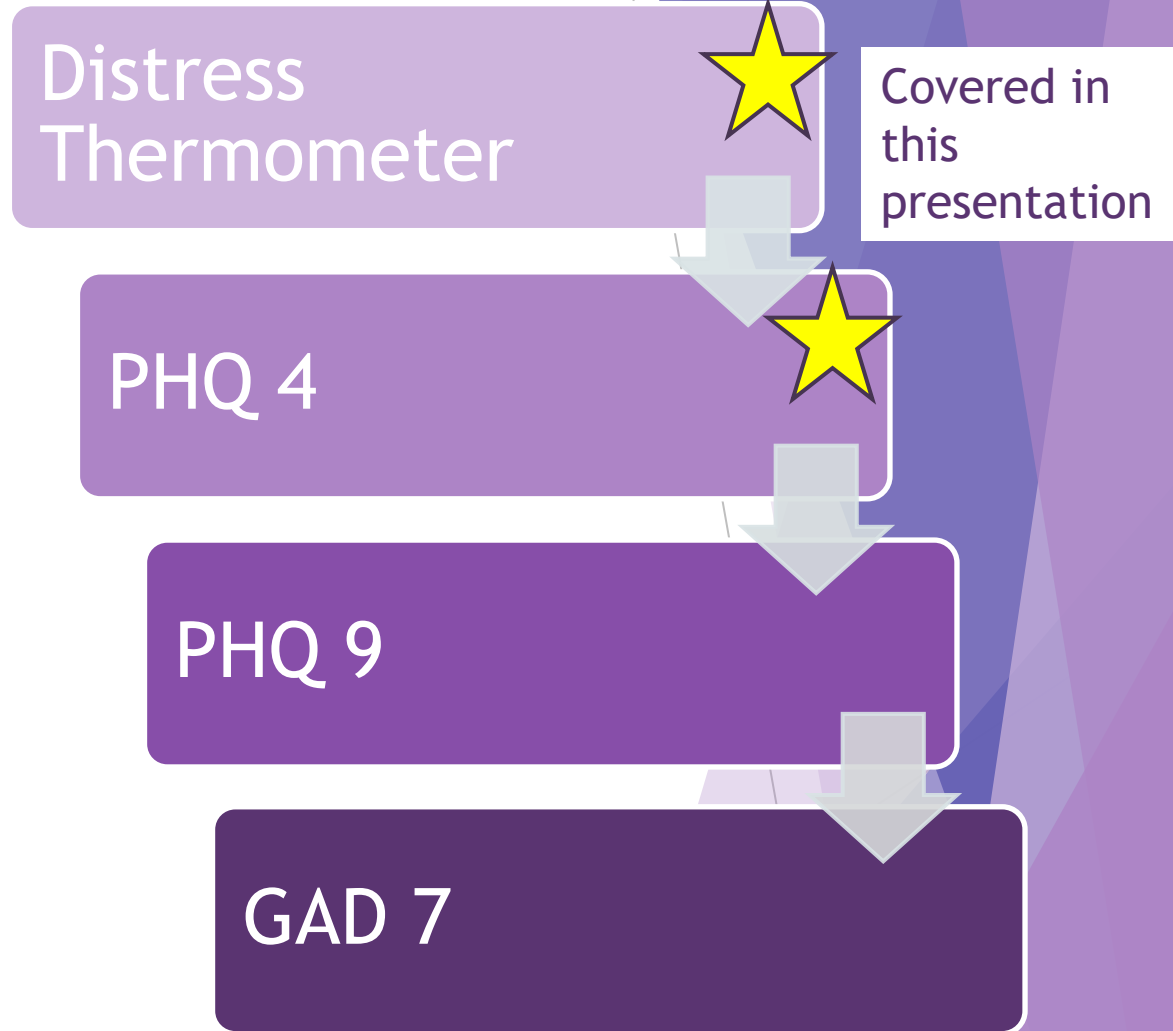
Sometimes clinicians worry that by exploring distress they open up emotions they can't contain. Level 1 Online Psychosocial Training can help clinicians feel more confident with these conversations

# RENAL SERVICE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME (RSTP) RECOMMENDATIONS



# Screening RSTP Recommendations

- ▶ **Who**  
All renal patients
- ▶ **When**
  - Entry to renal services
  - Annually
  - Key transitions
    - Modality change
    - Transplant assessment or post-transplant
    - Significant clinical change
- ▶ **How**
  - ❖ Distress Thermometer (0-10)
  - ❖ PHQ-4
- ▶ **If concerns identified**
  - Step up to PHQ-9 and GAD-7 if trained to use
  - Explore distress and suicide risk
  - Refer or escalate as needed



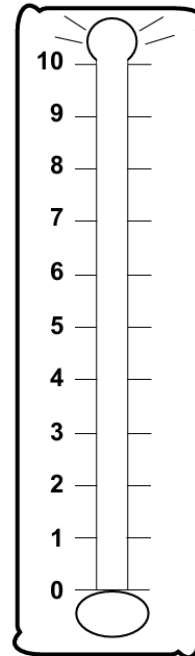
# Example of Distress Thermometer

## NCCN DISTRESS THERMOMETER

Distress is an unpleasant experience of a mental, physical, social, or spiritual nature. It can affect the way you think, feel, or act. Distress may make it harder to cope with having cancer, its symptoms, or its treatment.

Instructions: Please circle the number (0–10) that best describes how much distress you have been experiencing in the past week, including today.

Extreme distress



No distress

## PROBLEM LIST

Have you had concerns about any of the items below in the past week, including today? (Mark all that apply)

### Physical Concerns

- Pain
- Sleep
- Fatigue
- Tobacco use
- Substance use
- Memory or concentration
- Sexual health
- Changes in eating
- Loss or change of physical abilities

### Emotional Concerns

- Worry or anxiety
- Sadness or depression
- Loss of interest or enjoyment
- Grief or loss
- Fear
- Loneliness
- Anger
- Changes in appearance
- Feelings of worthlessness or being a burden

### Social Concerns

- Relationship with spouse or partner
- Relationship with children
- Relationship with family members
- Relationship with friends or coworkers
- Communication with health care team
- Ability to have children
- Prejudice or discrimination

### Practical Concerns

- Taking care of myself
- Taking care of others
- Safety
- Work
- School
- Housing/Utilities
- Finances
- Insurance
- Transportation
- Child care
- Having enough food
- Access to medicine
- Treatment decisions

### Spiritual or Religious Concerns

- Sense of meaning or purpose
- Changes in faith or beliefs
- Death, dying, or afterlife
- Conflict between beliefs and cancer treatments
- Relationship with the sacred
- Ritual or dietary needs

### Other Concerns:

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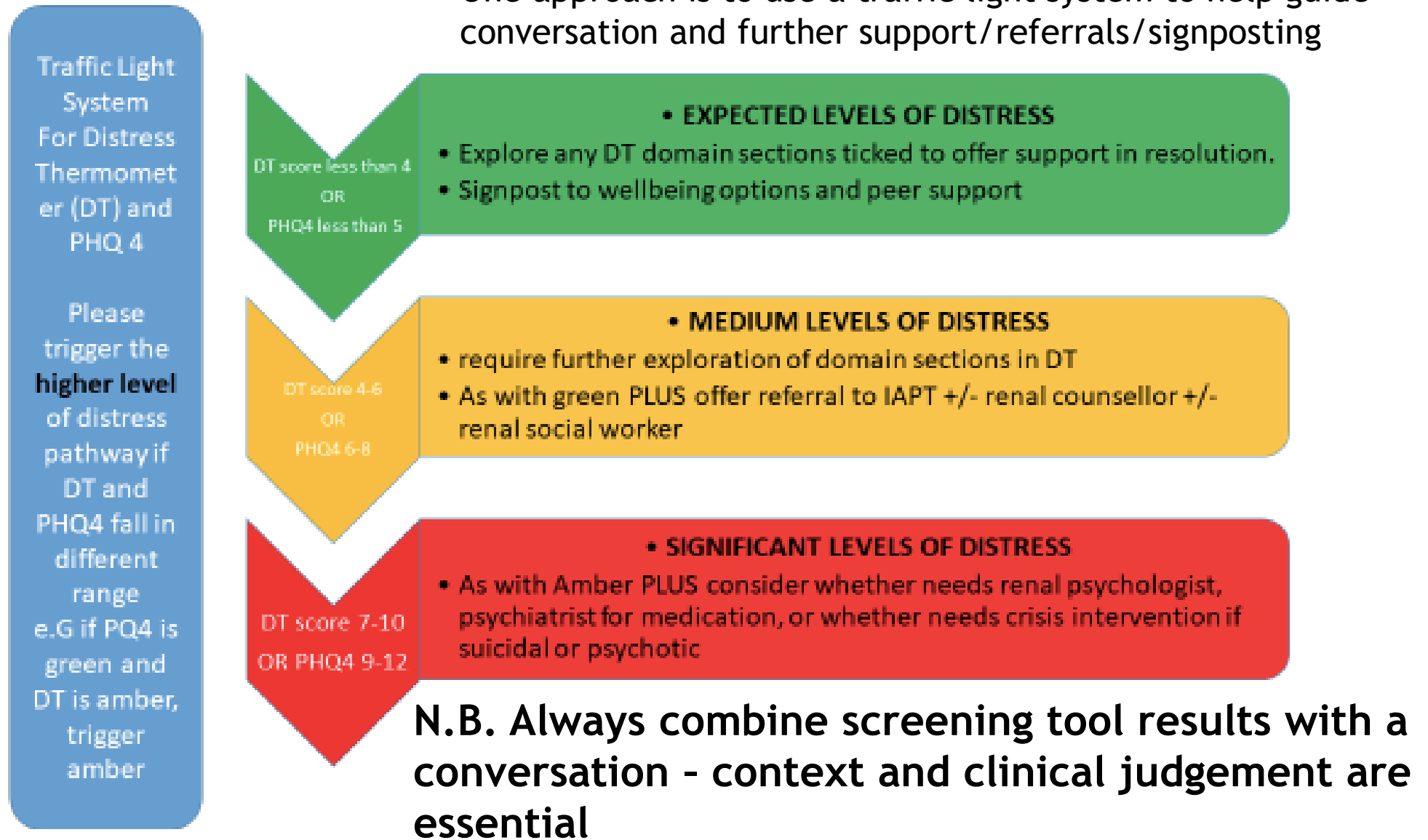
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## Example of PHQ 4

PHQ-4				
Over the <u>last 2 weeks</u> , how often have you been bothered by the following problems? (Use "✓" to indicate your answer)	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
1. Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge	✓	1	2	3
2. Not being able to stop or control worrying	0	✓	2	3
3. Little interest or pleasure in doing things	0	1	✓	3
4. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless	0	1	✓	3

Kroenke, K., Spitzer, R. L., Williams, J. B. W., & Löwe, B. (2009). An ultra-brief screening scale for anxiety and depression: The PHQ-4. *Psychosomatics*, 50(6), 613–621. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.psy.50.6.613>

One approach is to use a traffic light system to help guide conversation and further support/referrals/signposting



# Important points to remember

- ▶ Screening tools can help open a conversation and identify where people may need more support
  - ▶ They are not diagnostic
  - ▶ Do not rely on screening tool scores alone
  - ▶ Always combine with conversation to further understand an individual's situation
- ▶ The traffic light system can be a useful guide - however, always combine with conversation to get more context, understanding and use clinical judgement
- ▶ Psychosocial Level 1 online training provides a good foundation for skills and confidence in having conversations about psychosocial needs

# Opening up conversation alongside screening tools: Examples

- ▶ Summarising can be a helpful way of bringing together what someone has noted on the screening measures to open a conversation:
  - ▶ E.g. “You’ve marked that you’re about halfway up the thermometer in how distressed you’ve been feeling and the main areas of difficulty for you are feeling low in mood, having some worries, housing issues and feeling fatigued.....
- ▶ Out of these are there any that you feel are causing you the most distress?
- ▶ I can see you’ve marked [X] on here, can you tell me more about that?
- ▶ Is there any help you’ve already been getting with this/any of these?
- ▶ Have you spoken about these difficulties with anyone already?
- ▶ What’s been helping you to manage with them so far?

# Practical reminders



Tools are not diagnostic  
- they flag concern



**Always combine with  
conversation - context  
and clinical judgement  
are essential**



Watch out for cultural  
and literacy differences  
- some may need extra  
support to understand  
or complete



Record results and  
communicate to MDT -  
ensures everyone is  
aware of concerns &  
can contribute to  
ongoing support

# Further questions to ask if suicidal thoughts are disclosed?



Have you thought about ending your life?



Do you have a plan how to end your life?



Have you harmed yourself in the past?



What stops you harming yourself?

When a patient shares/indicates that they're experiencing suicidal thoughts, it's important to gently and respectfully explore their feelings and intentions further

# Further questions to ask if suicidal thoughts are disclosed?

- ▶ Ask these questions calmly and without judgement
- ▶ Allow the patient time to respond—silence is okay
- ▶ Listen actively and validate their feelings throughout
- ▶ Only ask questions you feel comfortable with and within your level of competence
- ▶ **Always document the conversation and escalate concerns according to your organisation's policies**

# Your Helping Role

Talking about suicide doesn't make it more likely to happen

Recommended further training options to increase confidence:

- Module in UKKA Level 1 psychosocial training
- Zero suicide alliance training



# Suicide Prevention Training for UK - Zero Suicide Alliance

<https://zsa.frank-cdn.uk/scorm/full-training-v2/story.html>

A video thumbnail for 'ZSA Suicide Awareness Training'. The background is a dark, blue-tinted image of a woman with long, curly blonde hair and a headband, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The text 'ZSA Suicide Awareness Training' is overlaid in large, bold, orange letters. In the top left corner, the Zero Suicide Alliance logo is displayed with the tagline 'Because ONE life lost is ONE too many'. In the top right corner, the NHS Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust logo is visible. In the bottom left corner, the version number 'v1.3.0' is shown. In the bottom right corner, there is a QR code and a button with a hand icon and the text 'Select or scan for BSL'.

**Zero Suicide Alliance**  
Because **ONE** life lost is **ONE** too many

**NHS**  
Mersey Care  
NHS Foundation Trust

## ZSA Suicide Awareness Training

v1.3.0



Select or scan for BSL

## Resources & Support - e.g.

Renal psychology service (If you have one)



NHS Talking Therapies (IAPT)



Kidney charities (e.g. Kidney Care UK, NKF)



Safety netting advice (NHS 111 select option 2)

N.B. You may need to refer and/or signpost to a range of resources/services appropriate to individual need

### Example Psychosocial Resource/Signposting List

(N.B. This will need tailoring for individual areas/services)

<p><b><u>Example</u></b>  <b>General resources – helpful for all</b></p>	<p><b><u>Example</u></b>  <b>Resources for:  <u>Medium levels of need</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Example</u></b>  <b>Resources for:  <u>Higher levels of need</u></b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Kidney Federation (NKF)</li> <li>• Kidney Care UK</li> <li>• PKD Charity</li> <li>• Peer Support (local or via above charities)</li> <li>• Kidney Care UK Young Adult Group</li> <li>• Kidney Patient Association (KPA)</li> <li>• Social Prescribing Services</li> <li>• Kidney Information Network (KIN)</li> <li>• Carers' KIN</li> <li>• Mental health websites (e.g. Leeds – <a href="#">Mindwell</a>)</li> <li>• Young Minds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHS Talking Therapies (IAPT)</li> <li>• Kidney Care UK Counselling</li> <li>• Renal Counsellor (if available)</li> <li>• Renal Social Worker (if available)</li> <li>• Kidney Care UK Advocacy</li> <li>• Social Care referral</li> <li>• Local welfare/benefits advice services</li> <li>• Housing Support Worker</li> <li>• Citizen's Advice</li> <li>• Social Prescribing Services</li> <li>• Seek review with GP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renal Psychology (if available) (may be in addition to services below)</li> <li>• Liaison Psychiatry</li> <li>• Urgent mental healthcare</li> <li>• Community Mental Health Team Referral (CMHT)</li> <li>• Crisis Support (local crisis service, NHS 111, Samaritans)</li> <li>• A&amp;E/NHS111/999 in emergency</li> </ul>

# Screening as part of a clinical pathway

Screening

Acknowledge distress

Further assessment (if trained)

- Explore suicidal ideation if disclosed or indicated
- Escalate if imminent risk

Offer referral, self-help, psychosocial support as appropriate

Document clearly

# Key Takeaways (1)

Psychosocial Level 1 Online Training is essential for all renal staff



Supports staff with foundational skills for conversations related to psychosocial need



Important to ensure team members aware of where to refer/direct/signpost



All the above is helpful foundation for psychosocial screening

## Key Takeaways (2)

Screening normalises conversations about mental health



Tools guide but don't replace clinical skill



Suicide risk always requires direct follow-up



Embedding screening improves outcomes

Questions?

# Opportunity to practice



Observe 'real play' of brief screening for psychosocial need



Examples of completed forms

Highlight what action you would take for each (including helpful communication skills)

# Example 1

## PHQ-4

Over the <u>last 2 weeks</u> , how often have you been bothered by the following problems? (Use "✓" to indicate your answer)	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
1. Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge	0	1	2	3
2. Not being able to stop or control worrying	0	1	2	3
3. Little interest or pleasure in doing things	0	1	2	3
4. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless	0	1	2	3

## Distress Thermometer

- ▶ Distress Thermometer rating = 2
- ▶ Identified problem areas: financial, loneliness, fear

- ▶ What questions might you ask?
- ▶ Which area would this fall within on the traffic light?
- ▶ Where/who might you signpost/refer to?
- ▶ Any other key actions?

Consider what communication skills could be helpful in these conversations

## Example 2

### PHQ-4

Over the <u>last 2 weeks</u> , how often have you been bothered by the following problems? (Use "✓" to indicate your answer)	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
1. Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge	0	1	2	3
2. Not being able to stop or control worrying	0	1	2	3
3. Little interest or pleasure in doing things	0	1	2	3
4. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless	0	1	2	3

- ▶ What questions might you ask?
- ▶ Which area would this fall within on the traffic light?
- ▶ Where/who might you signpost/refer to?
- ▶ Any other key actions?

### Distress Thermometer

- ▶ Distress Thermometer rating = 6
- ▶ Identified problem areas: sadness or depression, fear, loss of enjoyment, childcare, work

Consider what communication skills could be helpful in these conversations

## Example 3

### PHQ-4

Over the <u>last 2 weeks</u> , how often have you been bothered by the following problems? (Use "✓" to indicate your answer)	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
1. Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge	0	1	2	3
2. Not being able to stop or control worrying	0	1	2	3
3. Little interest or pleasure in doing things	0	1	2	3
4. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless	0	1	2	3

- ▶ What questions might you ask?
- ▶ Which area would this fall within on the traffic light?
- ▶ Where/who might you signpost/refer to?
- ▶ Any other key actions?

## Distress Thermometer

- ▶ Distress Thermometer rating = 5
- ▶ Identified problem areas: sadness or depression, fear, housing, fatigue, changes in eating

Consider what communication skills could be helpful in these conversations

# Questions and discussion

What key points  
will you take away  
from today?

What could you &  
your team do to  
take next steps?

## Useful reading:

- ▶ Sachar A, Urquhart A, Bevin A et al. Psychosocial screening for patients in the renal setting: is it feasible and acceptable to healthcare professionals and patients? J Kidney Care. 2023; 8(10):26–32. <https://doi.org/10.12968/jokc.2023.8.1.26>

## Reminder of how to access training:

[UKKA Education Hub](#)



A promotional poster for the UKKA Education Hub. The top right corner says "Education Hub". The main title is "PSYCHOSOCIAL CARE LEVEL ONE TRAINING" in large, bold, yellow and white letters. Below the title, there are three bullet points: "Self-paced &amp; online", "15-30 min modules", and "Multi-professional kidney team". To the right of these points are two circular illustrations: the top one shows a person with a distressed expression surrounded by medical icons, and the bottom one shows a person sitting at a desk with a computer, surrounded by icons representing social and psychological aspects. Below the bullet points, there is a paragraph: "Improve your understanding of the emotional, social and psychological challenges people with kidney disease face and how to support them." Below this paragraph is a small QR code and the text "Learn with us." At the bottom left of the poster is the website "education.ukkidney.org". At the very bottom of the poster are several logos: UKKA (UK Kidney Association), Kidney Care UK, KPT (Kidney Psychological Therapists), a heart icon with "with love", and a logo for "UKPSYCHOSOCIAL SOCIETY".