

# Looking After Your Mental Health

You may notice that many of the suggestions for preparing for a Ren Xue event encourage you to be in a "relaxed, calm and natural" state. Feeling this way is necessary for you to be able to integrate new insights and grow, and also for your safety. If your mental state is unstable or highly changeable and it is not within your ability to return to a calm state, we would advise that this is not the time to attend a Ren Xue event. The kind of mental states which are referred to here include but are not limited to the following:

- severe depression
- strong fluctuations of mood
- mania
- disturbing or racing thoughts
- feelings of unreality
- extreme sleep disturbance
- paranoia
- feeling unsafe due to thoughts of self-harm or others feeling unsafe around you
- addiction
- extreme and uncontrolled anxiety
- or other significant mental health issues or disorders.

These experiences can be very distressing and our advice at this point would be for you to work with a health professional to stabilise your condition.

If, however you are comfortable that your mental health is relatively stable and that you can bring some clarity to any internal mental or emotional challenges that may come up as you reflect and work on your life, you are very welcome to participate, and may experience much benefit.

If you had a severe condition in the past or are currently experiencing a mild to moderate mental health disorder, we would encourage you to engage with support before, during and after the event. Participation is at your own risk, and you are strongly advised to discuss the potential risks and benefits of taking part with a health

professional who knows you well beforehand. Sometimes current or previously challenging experiences do come up during a Ren Xue event. The Mental Health Advisory team of Ren Xue is also available to discuss your situation with you in confidence if that would be helpful. They are a team of experienced Ren Xue teachers and retired mental health professionals who advise Ren Xue participants and teachers around mental health matters.

Now that you have read this through, we hope you are clearer on the right decision for you. If you have decided that you would like to take part, please know that if you feel challenged or overwhelmed or have questions over the course of the event, you will have the support of many experienced teachers and we encourage you to reach out to any of the many helpful people available:

- teachers you already know or have had support from in the past
- teachers you meet as the event unfolds who feel like the right person to talk to
- your event contact person who emails you with updates
- the Guidance Team of Ren Xue
- your own health practitioner if you have one
- the Mental Health Advisory (MHA) - contact your event contact person for details

We are all here to help. Most of us have experienced various challenges as we have learnt and practiced Ren Xue. For many of us, the support of our fellow Ren Xue teachers and practitioners has been essential in transforming our challenges into real growth in our own lives and our ability to help others.