



Mental health and wellbeing

August 2021

In the light of the extreme uncertainty, and resulting stress under which students and staff are living, this Spotlight provides links to key publications and some deeper reading for staff on the topic of **mental health and wellbeing in higher education**.

From the Learning & Teaching Repository

Stimulating curriculum and teaching innovations to support the mental wellbeing of university students



ltr.edu.au/resources/ID14-3905_Melbourne_Baik_Final%20Report_2017.pdf

This seminal learning and teaching project fostered sector-wide conversations and promoted a whole-of-institution approach to promoting student mental wellbeing in universities. The resulting suite of research-informed resources continue to help academic educators to identify curriculum and teaching approaches that can promote and support students' mental wellbeing.

Project team: Dr Chi Baik, Associate Professor Wendy Larcombe, Professor Johanna Wyn, Dr Lee Allen, Mr Matthew Brett, Professor Rachael Field, Professor Richard James & Dr Abi Brooker

Check out the related **Enhancing Student Wellbeing** website which includes online professional development modules to advance awareness of student mental health issues and of curriculum and pedagogical approaches that can support mental wellbeing in the teaching and learning environment.

The learning modules are licensed for adapting and re-using (CC-BY-SA 4.0).



Learning modules for university educators

1. Student wellbeing
2. Curriculum design
3. Teaching practice
4. Difficult conversations
5. Your wellbeing

ltr.edu.au

Discipline-specific mental health guides

The following projects researched mental health and resilience in specific disciplines of teacher education, health and law.



Promoting resilience in higher education: A collaborative approach to curriculum development for student resilience in teacher education

ltr.edu.au/resources/FS16-0264_Murdoch_Mansfield_FinalReport_2021.pdf

Resilience is a process by which an individual mobilises personal and contextual resources to navigate challenges over time. This research shows it is important that teacher education programs provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to develop the skills and strategies needed for resilience in their chosen profession.

Fellow: Associate Professor Caroline Mansfield

Building Resilience in Teacher Education website: www.brite.edu.au

Staying BRITE website: www.stayingbrite.edu.au



Reshaping curricula: Integrating culturally diverse mental health online content to prepare work ready health professionals

ltr.edu.au/resources/ID13_2675_Muir-Cochrane_Report_2016.pdf

This 2016 report outlines the development, evaluation and dissemination of online guided learning journeys to prepare health science students in the interprofessional mental health assessment and management needs of specific cultural populations. The program supported undergraduate students from nursing, psychology and health sciences to gain clinical and cultural mental health competence as they engaged in simulated online interdisciplinary communication to provide culturally sensitive care.

Project lead: Professor Eimear Muir-Cochrane



Promoting law student wellbeing through the curriculum

ltr.edu.au/resources/Field_R_NTF_report_2014%20.pdf

Psychological distress in law students was addressed in this project. It focused on the importance of dispute resolution as an intentional curriculum strategy to promote law student well-being.

Fellow: Rachael Field

Wellness Network for Law project website: <http://wellnessforlaw.com>



NCSEHE

National Centre for Student
Equity in Higher Education

*Students feel known,
catered for and
connected.*

*Students benefit from
the nuts and bolts of
teaching and learning
done well.*

“On the radar”: supporting the mental wellbeing of mature-aged students in regional and remote Australia

www.ncsehe.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Crawford-Equity-Fellowship-Report_FINAL.pdf

Nicole Crawford, University of Tasmania

A 2019/20 National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education Equity Fellowship research report highlights the mental wellbeing needs of regional and remote students, noting that they are proportionally older, female, from low socio-economic status areas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and studying online and/or part-time. Some students feel isolated, invisible, unsupported and undervalued.

Mental health policy initiatives

Australian University Mental Health Framework

www.orygen.org.au/Policy/University-Mental-Health-Framework/Framework

Guidance for mentally healthy university settings that support students to thrive educationally and personally. The framework released in 2020 also includes guidance for the mental health sector to strengthen its engagement with universities to support student mental health and wellbeing.



Case studies from universities

www.orygen.org.au/Policy/University-Mental-Health-Framework/Case-studies

A range of case studies highlighting good practice initiatives supporting student mental health and wellbeing within universities across Australia.



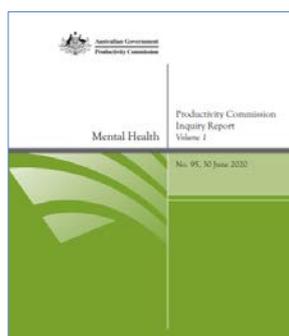
Responding to Suicide: A toolkit for Australian universities

www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/publication/responding-to-suicide-a-toolkit-for-australian-universities

Developed in partnership with headspace, this toolkit highlights that Universities have an important responsibility to respond to suicide in a safe and evidence-informed way so the health and safety of the university community is protected.

Universities Australia also worked with headspace and Everymind to deliver interactive online training for senior university leaders.

Inquiry into Mental Health: Actions for universities



Productivity Commission, 2020, Vol.1
pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/mental-health

The **Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health report**, released in November 2020, noted that institutional support for tertiary students with mental ill-health needs improvement, and made the following recommendations:

- Tertiary education institutions should be required to have a student mental health and wellbeing strategy – including staff training – as a condition for their registration (6.3).
- Online services for student mental health should be expanded to meet student needs (6.1).
- Institutions should arrange for international students to have health insurance that covers any required mental health treatment (6.2)

The Universities Australia Learning and Teaching Repository is a collection of higher education learning and teaching research valuable to university academics. It welcomes submissions related to mental health and wellbeing from Australian university staff.

Email the Repository: contact@ltr.edu.au

