Healthy Universities

UK HEALTHY UNIVERSITIES NETWORK
UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND, BRISTOL
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Aligning Healthy Universities, Mentally Healthy Universities
and the University Mental Health Charter:
Challenges and Opportunities

Manchester Metropolitan University

UWE Bristol | University of the West of England

uclan
University of Central Lancashire

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WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Judy Orme, Emeritus Professor of Public Health and Sustainability at the University of the West of England [UWE], welcomed participants to the University and the Network meeting.

NETWORK UPDATE

Prof. Mark Dooris, Co-Chair, UK Healthy Universities Network

Mark Dooris – Network Update

Mark added his welcome and provided a Network update, covering vision/context, history/development, membership, website/communication and a brief report on the recent Policy-Focused Summit and Advisory Group, held in London.

ACTION:

➔ ALL asked to submit and/or update case studies for the website – using **this link**.
➔ ALL asked to provide material (news, updates features, articles) for the newsletter – submit to **healthyuniversities@uclan.ac.uk** by **30 November 2019**.
➔ ALL asked to submit news items for the website to **healthyuniversities@uclan.ac.uk**.

FOCUS THEME: ALIGNING HEALTHY UNIVERSITIES, MENTALLY HEALTHY UNIVERSITIES AND THE UNIVERSITY MENTAL HEALTH CHARTER – CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Chair: Prof. Judy Orme, Emeritus Professor of Public Health, UWE [and UK Healthy Universities Network Advisory Group member]

PRESENTATION 1

Steve West, Vice Chancellor, UWE

Making Health (including Mental Health) a Whole University Strategic Priority

Steve provided a scene-setting keynote presentation. Key points included:

- Increasing awareness of and engagement with health/mental health.
- Increasing number of students disclosing a mental health problems.
- Increasing demand for services.
- Importance of appreciating complexity.
- Importance of prioritising innovation.
- Multiple interconnected factors and risks associated with mental health.
- UWE has made health (including mental health) a whole university priority in its 2030 strategy.
- This involves a whole population approach with a focus on everything from design of spaces to initiatives and campaigns (e.g. Feel Good February and monthly feel good focus).
- Mental wealth – about building positive wellbeing in individuals and communities by creating an open, supportive and empowering culture that enables thriving and flourishing.
- #LetsTalkNow.
- Engagement with Stepchange Framework as a pilot university.

- Linked to this, a strategic approach to 'mental wealth' has been developed: *promotion* [encouraging positive wellbeing, raising awareness and tackling stigma around mental health]; *prevention* [piloting and rolling out interventions to improve mental health and wellbeing and embedding best practice into all strands of university life]; *provision* [making it easy for students and staff to find and access the support services they need, when they need it, in a way that suits them].
- Future initiatives: online CBT; new wellbeing module; Global Centre for international students; drugs and alcohol awareness; student/staff mental health champions; campaigns.
- Key learning across different domains.

PRESENTATION 2

John de Pury, Assistant Director of Policy, Universities UK

Mentally Healthy Universities

John gave a presentation about the refresh of Stepchange, to be launched as 'Mentally Healthy Universities'. Key points included:

- **Overview of determinants of health** [Dahlgren and Whitehead, 1993]: which highlights the multiple interconnected determinants of health, including mental health.
- **First compelling case:** *compliance and risk* [e.g. 3.5% of students declare mental health condition as a disability; 20% of students have a declared mental disorder/clinical need; a larger proportion move in and out of such need but the exact % is unknown.] Where the condition is disclosed then universities are obligated to look after that student. So, universities need to target early interventions.
- **Second compelling case:** *prevention and population health opportunity* – if universities do not invest in prevention, they will not be able to cope with demand; and if they do not look beyond treatment and early intervention, they will not maximise the potential to support and promote wider wellbeing of the whole population.
- **Stepchange development/characteristics:** Stepchange was informed and influenced by the Healthy Universities conceptual thinking and framework – prioritising a whole university approach; and it provided a high level 'permissive' framework to be interpreted and applied differently in individual universities.
- **Stepchange refresh:** refresh of Stepchange as 'Mentally Healthy Universities' prioritises:
  o a whole university approach – focusing on learn, live, work, support
  o a coherent improvement approach: plan, do, check, act.
  o the improvement 'architecture', which draws on the experience, work and resources of multiple partner organisations and groupings: Student Minds Charter and Leaders' Movement; Vice Chancellors' Leadership Collaborative; Mind/Goldman Sachs; Smarten; What Works Wellbeing; AMOSSHE; UK Healthy Universities Network [particularly as a community of practice]
  o working with the NHS to integrate care
  o a whole system approach – prioritising place and transitions into, through and beyond university.

PRESENTATION 3

Gareth Hughes, Content Manager – University Mental Health Charter, Student Minds

The University Mental Health Charter

Gareth gave an overview of the University Mental Health Charter. Key issues included:

- Purpose:
  - to reward and recognise excellent practice
  - to provide evidence-informed guidance and structure to the whole sector.
- **Context and understanding:** Although much of national media focus has been on mental illness, but this is not enough – universities can and should be places of 'good mental health'.
- **Co-creation approach:** This informed the development of Charter, drawing on research evidence and experiences of students and staff.
- **Development:** This began with literature review, which identified 20 initial themes for further consultation and evidence gathering.
- **Consultation:** 6 events across 4 UK nations, involving 360 students/staff and 181 universities/organisations; 90 focus groups; 18 co-creation panels ; 18 workshops; staff survey – 1244 respondents; student survey – 1032 respondents.
- **Analysis and synthesis:** The consultation and research processes resulted in 18 themes, which will be included in the Charter Framework, organised under the new domains of 'Mentally Healthy Universities' – further informed by a series of expert panels; and then peer-reviewed.
- **Launch:** The Charter will be launched on 9th December 2019 and made available on **Student Minds website**.
- **What next:** Piloting at a number of volunteer universities during early 2020; followed by application process; followed by evaluation – prioritising an improvement approach.
- Early headlines:
  - some universities are already working towards a genuine whole university approach to mental health
  - clear need to better define the role and boundaries of universities in this area
  - staff and students see clear links between learning, teaching and mental health
  - clear links between staff and student wellbeing
  - marketization of higher education appears to have created narratives that are not helping the mental health of our communities
  - 'better is possible' – and universities should be best-placed to make this happen.

PRESENTATION 4

Simon Phillips, Deputy Director of Student and Academic Services, UWE
Alyssa Willis, Student Communications Manager, UWE

Translating Strategic Commitments into Real-World Delivery

- Simon and Alyssa focused on how UWE has sought to translate the University's strategic commitments into real-world delivery, highlighting five building blocks of personal value that

have been developed into the **'Five Secrets to Success' approach – with five modules**, each exploring key skills for development.

- Each module comprises:
  o a short introduction
  o a film to get students to start thinking
  o self-reflective tasks
  o a podcast that brings the theme into an academic space
  o signposting to resources

Each module is online with a short film to provide an entry point or 'hook' to engage students and encourage self-reflection prior to starting university:

- **Discover your student self**
- **Engage with your course**
- **Grow your confidence**
- **Visualise your future**
- **Connect wth others**

PANEL DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Chair: Prof. Sue Powell, Co-Chair, UK Healthy Universities Network

Following the presentations, there were questions and a panel discussion. Key issues raised included:

- Need a different approach to the press. How can universities create a different narrative around poor mental health moving to good mental health and not the other way round? Universities do not always get it wrong. Their focus is on the 'student' population but wider groups of young people are at more risk. Student suicides are five times more likely to be reported in the press than other suicides.
- We need positive voices about the student experience. What are the real expectations for universities and students? There is a need for city-wide positive stories and a re-framing of the issues. The panel felt that the press are definitely changing – they are now more responsive to being pulled up on inaccuracies.
- What kind of priority is being given to staff? There is a need to close the gaps between academic staff and academic services staff re: staff training. Staff training is crucial and there are good accessible resources (e.g. Charlie Waller Trust). Training needs to involve simple messages about what staff need to know, how to make good decisions and about making signposting simple. Staff wellbeing should be central but there are challenges in changing the culture e.g. stress resulting from staff over-working can be translated to students.
- Co-creation of services is important. Conversations with students need to be opened-up to find out what is behind their anxieties. Students come with fears about student mental health and they need reassurance. It is important to use the 'student voice' to talk to other students.
- With regard to the proposed 'Mentally Healthy University Award' that is proposed for next year it is important to note that the UKHUN have developed and offered a 'self review tool' for healthy universities. This model of using an online tool has proved very successful and self-sustaining and provides any university completing it with an assessment of its strengths and weaknesses across a range of criteria which then acts as guidance for future activity.

AFTERNOON SESSION: ALIGNING HEALTHY UNIVERSITIES, MENTALLY HEALTHY UNIVERSITIES AND THE UNIVERSITY MENTAL HEALTH CHARTER – CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The afternoon session comprised small group reflection and discussion. Key issues emerging included:

Challenges and Positives
- Campus Design → Green Spaces
- Use of language → Relate to HE Core Business
- Student Voice for driving change
- Linking wellbeing and health to university values
- Working groups → Engage staff and students
- Champions for well-being and health
- Working with the local community → Long term and to focus on progress
- Stigma despite increasing openness
- Joining up approaches between staff and student policies
- Whole university approach → recognise when change of approach needed → change mindsets
- Different student experiences e.g. tutor engagement
- Lack of engagement between different groups within institutions
- Framing of expectations → staff training mandatory and sustainable
- Sustainability of projects → embed in institutions
- Curriculum design + timetabling
- Possibility of influencing policy → over-time → consistent
- Training
- Pop Health?
- Jobs → academic managers
- Consistency in communications
- Multiple frameworks
- Buy ← Operationalise up → resources
- Senior leadership buy-in to wellbeing…Who delivers this?
- Whole university approach- integrating many different agendas/approaches
- Healthy Universities, Student Minds Charter and Mentally Healthy Universities
- Curriculum Design
- Healthy Universities → is this about physical + mental health- how do we separate/ align these
- Evidence-informed rather than evidence-based
- Staff capacity
- Overload on academic staff
- Finding common ground with partners
- Strategic objectives
- Student experience
- Will the charter be self-evaluation?
- Finance and funding
- Step change/charter → using a different language to Healthy University
- Lack of specialists in small organisations
- Create parallel perspectives- staff/student
- Staff overwhelmed

Opportunities

- This group being willing to share best practice
- Staff wellbeing practices- integrating staff and student initiatives
- Safe spaces for staff to offload
- Staff away days → bringing their own talents/ interests to fill the afternoon → rather than imposing a 'fun' activity without consultation
- Cooking masterclass/ gardening
- Co-creation of services- cross departmental, staff/students + 3rd party organisations
- Collaboration between services in + out of university, rather than competition.
- Enhance employability
- Some compulsory training
- Step change/ charter → educating the educators
- Involve students → co-creation
- Strategy
- Wellbeing in curriculum development
- Keep it simple
- Partnership approach

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday 13th May 2020** at **the Teesside University, Middlesbrough.** The theme of the meeting is **Healthy & Sustainable Food: Towards a Whole System Approach.**

Joanne	Addis	Wellbeing Team Manager	York St John University
Julia	Cook		Coventry University
Amber	Cowburn	HU co-ordinator	University of the West of England
Katie	Davies	Healthy UCD Research Assistant	University College Dublin
John	de Pury	Deputy Director of Policy	Universities UK
Chris	Deacy	Assistant HR Director (HSW)	Cardiff Metropolitan University
Ravtag	Dhesi	Residential Life Manager and Warden	University of London
Annette	Dix	Mental Health Coordinator	Coventry University
Paul	Dodsley	Student Health Development Officer	Nottingham Trent University
Sharon	Doherty	Healthy University Coordinator	UCLan
Mark	Dooris	Professor in Health & Sustainability	UCLan
Gary	Downing	Senior Officer, Fair Access and Participation Directorate	Office for Students
Mark	Drane	Director	Urban Habitats
Claire	Gandy	Director of Student Support Services	Sheffield Hallam University
Alison	Golden-Wright	Deputy Director of student Services	University of Bristol
Sophie	Greenfield	CBT Counsellor	City, University of London
Aimee	Grey	Occupational Health Manager	University of Bristol
Stef	Hackney	Senior Mental Health Advisor	LSE
Rob	Heyes	Wellbeing Promotion and Induction Team Leader	University of Bath
Kara	Holloway	Student Wellbeing Project Officer	Keele University
Gareth	Hughes	University Mental Health Charter Content Development Lead	Student Minds
Liz	Jenkinson	Senior Lecturer, Psychology	University of the West of England
Lizzie	Johnson	Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Operations Lead	University of the West of England
Lydia	Johnson	Student Wellbeing Project Officer	Staffordshire University
Mat	Jones	Associate Professor of Public Health	University of the West of England
Savanna	Jones	Widening Access and Inclusion Manager	Higher Education Funding
Maliika	Kaaba		Public Health Wales
Sally	Lambah	Advise and guidance manager	Glyndwr University
Mike	Larter	People Advisor (Engineering, Environment & Computing)	Coventry University
Sally	Lawson	Academic Support Tutor	Institute for Optimum Nutrition
Bernadette	McGrath	Projects and Partnerships Manager	Liverpool John Moores University
Anne	Mills	Senior Academic	Bournemouth University
Claire	Mitchell		Environmental Association of Universities & Colleges
Urvashi	Odedra		University of Leicester
Judy	Orme	Co-Director of Institute for Sustainability, Health and Environment	University of the West of England
Caroline	Pandya	De Montfort University	
Naomi	Parton	Active Lifestyles Officer	Keele University
Simon	Phillips	Deputy Director of Student and Academic Services	University of the West of England
Sue	Powell	Nuffield Health Professor of Health and Wellbeing	Manchester Metropolitan University

Hannah	Slater	Events and Executive Assistant	University of the West of England
Karen	Smith	Head of Workplace Wellbeing	University College London
Sarah	Smythson	Interim Director of Wellbeing	University of Surrey
Fenola	Traylor		Cardiff Metropolitan University
Jessica	Vance		University of Bristol
Emma	Walters	HR Advisor (Health, Safety and Well-being)	Cardiff Metropolitan University
Susie	Ward	Student Counsellor and Peer Support Coordinator	LSE
Leah	Wareham		Nottingham Trent University
Jo	Whitfield	National Officer Wales	Beat
Alyssa	Willis	Student Communications Manager	University of the West of England