

Mental Wellbeing in HE Conference 2024: Better than rocket science! “Futureproofing” student and staff wellbeing

Session abstracts

15 May 2024

P2 Can polling platforms boost inclusivity in higher education?: An experimental study

Dr Christina Stanley, University of Chester

Poster

Polling platforms can facilitate in-class participation; they allow students a safe environment in which to evaluate knowledge or ask questions. This could be particularly important for students with mental health conditions. We investigated participation rates in first year higher education sessions to identify where polling platforms could be most beneficial. Twenty-eight percent of students declared diagnosed neurodiverse or mental health conditions; these students reported significantly lower confidence to participate during in person sessions (although not during online sessions). Students showed a clear preference for anonymous polling platforms, demonstrating these can be extremely beneficial in terms of inclusive teaching.

P3 Embedding mental health and wellbeing support strategies into MSci and MSc speech and language therapy curricula

Joe Spackman, University of Reading

Poster

The Health and Care Professions Council and the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists have developed frameworks that emphasise practitioner health and wellbeing. Within the University of Reading speech and language therapy (SLT) degree programmes, we are integrating these elements into the curriculum to support and prepare our students for their working lives as SLTs. We will share real-world support strategies that have been developed by our programme leadership and clinical teams, and will reflect on positive feedback received from students. We will explore the role of these strategies in enhancing student mental health and wellbeing.

P4 Examination of the consequences of performance measurement and management systems on the wellbeing of academic workers in higher education

Aigerim Otepbergen, University of Glasgow

Poster

This research examines how managerialism philosophy impacts academic workers' wellbeing in a developing country's higher education. The shift towards financial indicators and business-oriented practices has introduced psychosocial risks, affecting academic independence, workload, and relationships. The pressing need for a robust human resource management program is emphasized, particularly given the developing country's adherence to international policies and government funding criteria. This session aims to spark dialogue

on wellbeing and advocate for performance management practices. Addressing the scarcity of research on this issue in developing countries, it offers crucial insights into sustaining academic wellbeing within the evolving landscape of higher education.

P5 Embedding a wellbeing thread across the length and breadth of health professional undergraduate programmes

Dr Jennifer Oates, University of Surrey

Poster

This presentation is an overview of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Thread which is embedded in the Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedic Science undergraduate programmes at the University of Surrey. The Mental Health & Wellbeing Thread is scaffolded and tailored to each programme at level 4,5 and 6, in line with Surrey's integrated interprofessional approach. It incorporates peer-to-peer learning and a co-production. The presentation aims to inspire attendees to consider curriculum-embedded wellbeing in a longitudinal, broad way. We will also consider solutions to the challenges of championing curriculum-embedded wellbeing in a wider academic milieu with so many competing priorities.

P6 Embedding resilience in the language curriculum and preparation for the year abroad

Dr Mariana Bonnouvrier, University of Bath

Poster

This presentation will offer an overview of the new challenges faced by students in the context of the Year Abroad, a compulsory element in most universities' languages degrees. It will highlight and evaluate some of the initiatives we have attempted to implement at Bath and is intended at any academics and support officers whose roles require helping students involved in a placement or exchange. The session also intends to lead to a fruitful conversation on how we can create new ways of helping students develop resilience at university and become more prepared to tackle other challenging transitions in their lives.

P7 Early identification and support mechanisms to improve retention and student experience in an undergraduate adult nursing programme

Rachel Lewis, University of East Anglia

Poster

Attrition issues are prevalent within health programs in the UK, prompting the need to adopt proactive measures. The current focus is on improving retention and the student experience, especially in nursing programs following Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) standards. The Holistic Educational Learning Progress (HELP) review project is aimed at first-year Adult Nursing Students, with biannual reviews involving Course Directors and Lead Advisors. The review identifies students needing targeted support, fostering collaboration with wider university services. This innovative project serves as a model for early intervention, emphasising both academic and overall student well-being.

P8 Know your students! Four student profiles and how students become engaged and emotionally energised

Dr Elisabeth Klinkenberg, Inholland University of Applied Sciences

Poster

No two students are the same. So how can we ensure that as many students as possible become and remain engaged and energetic? In this interactive session, our mixed-methods study on four student profiles based on engagement and emotional exhaustion will be presented. Each student profile has its own characteristics and needs, which we'll reflect upon in this session. We will also share practical tips and exercises for teachers and support staff to identify student profiles and improve student well-being.

P9 "I now consider it a piece of home": Exploring the sense of belonging among international students

Dr Elisabeth Klinkenberg, Inholland University of Applied Sciences

Poster

Sense of belonging is essential for the well-being and academic success of higher education students. This is particularly evident among international students who, faced with language barriers and cultural clashes, may struggle to feel at home in their academic environment. In this session, results from a qualitative interview study with international students at Inholland University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands will be presented. We will reflect on similarities and differences with the UK context and brainstorm on how we can make a sustainable impact on the sense of belonging, helping them develop into resilient professionals.

P10 Evaluating an academic social comparisons and burnout workshop using the Kirkpatrick Evaluation Tool

Gamze Kocdemir, Lancaster University

Poster

Prior qualitative studies have demonstrated that university students engage in academic social comparisons to their peers. It is also known that adverse academic social comparisons are connected to worse mental health. There is a need to explore students' awareness of the connection between academic social comparisons at university and mental well-being, including burnout. This study implemented a mixed-methods approach to assess students' understanding of academic social comparisons and burnout. The overall mean relevance score for participants was 86%. According to the qualitative comments, the workshop was useful in increasing awareness about the connection between academic social comparisons and burnout.

P11 Supporting students during transition from undergraduate study to MSc

Dr Amy Griffiths, Swansea University

Poster

This is a mixed-methods research project on student experiences of the transition from undergraduate to MSc-level study. We collected quantitative and qualitative data from N=50 students during November 2023. The Demands-Resources-Individual Effects model will be used to examine the interplay of factors in student wellbeing during transition to MSc. Our qualitative data provide direct insights into the factors during transition that students feel have been helpful or have hindered their transition to MSc. These insights will inform recommendations for how academic staff and support services can design inductions and embed support for students into the curriculum to better support transition.

P12 NHS to higher education institutions: Does the leap have a supportive landing? Supporting the transition for new academics

Kira Redburn, University of Central Lancashire

Poster

As higher education evolves in a turbulent landscape, staff well-being emerges as a cornerstone of institutional success. Kira and Hannah plan to deep dive into future-proofing strategies for a flourishing, resilient workforce; especially those who are new to HEI from an NHS background. Join them in their exploration of the challenges new starters face in the transition from Nurse to Academic. Providing a practical approach to combatting issues such as imposter syndrome, professional identity loss and compassion fatigue.

P13 Wellbeing Washing: How senior leaders affect organisational culture and the perception of staff wellbeing

Nevin Mehmet, University of Greenwich

Poster

Staff mental health and wellbeing is an integral component to all HEI's. Where there is evidence of positive wellbeing practice this is often led by senior leaders who strongly advocate staff wellbeing. Staff wellbeing should not be seen as a stigma, staff should feel they can be open about their mental health, and create an environment where wellbeing is at the forefront of senior leaders when implementing policies/practices. Its not rocket science! How can role modelling, creating open dialogues, setting appraisal objectives around wellbeing, supporting line managers to deal with staff mental health and wellbeing create sustainable organisational change.

P15 From child to adult with lockdown in-between: Learning lessons from the lived experiences of adolescents during lockdown

Diana Downer, Buckinghamshire New University

Poster

“From child to adult with lockdown in-between – learning lessons from the lived experiences of adolescents during lockdown,” is a qualitative study that explored the lived experiences of young adults (currently aged 18-22) during lockdown. The study employed semi-structured one-to-one interviews to gather the accounts of young adults. Reflexive thematic analysis was used to examine the findings and report the emerging themes. The study is motivated by international literature that evidences the negative impact lockdowns had on the mental health and wellbeing of young people and aims to identify areas of meaningful change.