

MENTAL HEALTH POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Approving Authority	Board of Directors 14 Nov 2019
Responsible Officer	Head of Counselling
Version	1.1 Reformatting and expanded procedures. Principal Approved 30 th November 2020
Next Scheduled Review	Oct 2020
Related Legislation and Regulations	Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015. Standard 2.3 Work Health and Safety Act 2011 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011
Associated Documents	Well and safe Students Protocols Diversity and Equity Policy and Procedure Student Support Services Policy and Procedure Student Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure Student Applications and Admissions Policy and Procedure Staff Support Protocols Specialist Mental Health Services Disabilities / Special Needs Policies

1 SCOPE

This policy applies to everyone within the ACCS work and study environment.

2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish, promote and maintain an environment conducive to the wellbeing and mental health of students and staff within the college environment. ACCS considers the mental health and wellbeing of students and staff as key to the mission and vision of the college. This is in association with the College's promotion of a diverse and inclusive community. As such the College is committed to equitable access, support for positive health practices and responsiveness to cater for the variance of needs of staff and students in regard to their health and wellbeing.

3 DEFINITIONS

Mental health: Mental health is defined as mental and social wellbeing in which individuals can realise their potential, cope with the normal stresses of life, work fruitfully and productively, and make a contribution in their community (WHO, 2005).

Good mental health is not merely the absence of mental illness but is the capacity of individuals and groups to interact with one another and the environment, in ways that promote subjective wellbeing, optimal development and the use of cognitive, affective and relational abilities (DoHA & AIHW, 1999).

Mental health difficulties: A mental health difficulty interferes with a person's cognitive, emotional and social functioning, but to a lesser extent than a mental illness and is usually temporary. It is often a reaction to life stressors. Mental health difficulties are more common than mental illness.

With effective and appropriate support, mental health difficulties can be resolved. However, at times they may develop into a mental illness.

Mental illness: Mental illness is a term used to describe diagnosable disorders that affect a person's cognitive, emotional and social functioning.

Stress: Stress is "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them". This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.

Pressure - if managed correctly - can be positive, challenging and helps to keep us motivated, but excessive pressure can lead to stress which undermines performance and affects health.

4 POLICY/PROCEDURE STATEMENT

ACCS is committed to protecting and promoting the health, safety and welfare of members within the community. Psychological injury is recognised as a health and safety issue. The College acknowledges the importance of:

- supportive leadership and environmental climate
- developing a responsible culture of support
- increasing morale
- identifying and reducing stressors

This policy aims to promote positive mental health and wellbeing. It also aims to provide a systematic approach to:

- Creating and sustaining healthy work and study environments and conditions;
- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing through the learning and teaching, support services and policies and procedures;
- Promote psychological safety in the teaching environment;
- As far as possible prevent psychological injury through the encouragement for students and staff to seek early assistance;
- Provide professional development or course related selfcare to foster health and wellbeing;
- Identify and positively managing psychological injury;
- Encourage resilience and stress minimalisation skills for the present and for student future workplaces;
- Reduce stigma or discrimination by awareness raising and education, and
- Promote a caring responsive community for the prevention of circumstances which may affect the wellbeing of self and others.

1. Policy Outcomes for staff and students

- Participation is active
- Engagement, motivation and commitment are evident.
- As far as possible, psychological injury will be prevented within the community.

2. Policy Implementation

The College counselling faculty will perform a pivotal role in ensuring that this policy is current and appropriate to need.

Professional development is provided to persons with specific tasks where psychological injury is a risk.

Records of activities are maintained, including training undertaken, information provided to employees and students and the use of strategies to prevent and manage psychological injury.

3. Communication

The policy will be stored within the framework of student support and wellbeing policies on Moodle.

4. Recording

Confidentiality in respect of student health and welfare is maintained in accordance with the College Privacy Policy. The general principle being consent is sought before information is shared, with very rare exceptions

if deemed necessary in the student's safety and vital interests. Any decision to break confidentiality should be with the approval of the Principal. All information related to a person's mental health is regarded as sensitive personal information. The Dean of students will ensure such information is kept securely.

5. Policy Review

Effectiveness of the policy will be assessed through:

- Feedback from employees, students, the Well and Safe Committee and the Board of Directors
- Review of the policy to determine if objectives have been met and to identify barriers and enablers to ongoing policy implementation.

6. Mental health framework – supporting staff

ACCS promotes health through:

- A focus on supportive leadership, climate and employee wellbeing
- A proactive approach to managing the risk factors for psychological injury
- Providing information to staff on how they can promote physical and psychological health

The Procedures include

1. Prevention

In order to prevent psychological injury from developing, ACCS will, as far as is reasonably practicable:

- Promote supportive leadership
- Focus on morale and wellbeing
- Proactively manage stressors
- Consider adjustments for those who have a recognised disability which comes under the scope of the Disability Discrimination Act (1992)
- Be aware of staff training and development needs

2. A Mental health framework for supporting students

The framework is for the creation and maintenance of a culture and environment conducive to health and wellbeing. The underlying principle is the recognition of the spectrum of mental health and therefore a graduated response to mental health, determined by need.

The framework consists of the incorporation of related policies and practices supportive of and aiming to

1. create and enhance a culture supportive of mental health and wellbeing, through the recognition of mental health considerations within organisational structure, policy and planning.
2. increase student engagement, connectedness, and meaningful participation in the learning environment, with an acknowledgement of the diverse community, and a strong emphasis on stigma reduction and collaborative sharing of resources.
3. increase student knowledge and understanding of mental health issues, especially their nature, determinants, impact, management and prevention.
4. improve early recognition of mental health issues and timely access to relevant resources and support, through the provision of related training programs and centralisation of mental health resources.
5. strengthen resilience and coping skills in the context of academic demands, for those with identified coping concerns, to decrease vulnerability to mental illness.
6. improve timely and coordinated access to relevant College mental health services and referral to community services for students with identified mental health needs, with a service focus on building strengths and recovery.

7. ensure a well-communicated, coordinated, and timely college response to mental health crises (situations of acute distress and imminent risk of harm to self or others), including the clarification of student role expectations and channels of emergency support.

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[Lifeline](#) 13 11 14 (online chat or video also available 7pm – midnight)
[Mental Health Line](#) – 1800 011 511
[Headspace](#)

Inform

[Reachout](#)
[Beyond Blue](#) - 1300 22 4636

Interact

[This way up](#)
[Mindspot](#)

Enhance

[I.M.Well](#) (Phone App)

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This policy acknowledges the following resources:

https://www.anu.edu.au/files/corporate_message/MentalHealth.pdf

<http://pimg.mhcc.org.au/media/1533/sample-psychological-health-and-injury-policy.pdf>