Mental Health Policy and Procedure HEPP69

PURPOSE
To promote awareness and assistance to students and staff who experience mental health issues within the Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education) teaching and learning environment. Student mental health and well-being is supported when curriculum and teaching practices engage students' hearts and minds and when the learning environment fosters a community of support, social connection and sense of belonging. The Institute aims to promote positive mental health in its staff and students by providing a safe, healthy and supportive environment.

OBJECTIVE
Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education) will promote positive mental health and respond to the needs of students and staff who present with mental health difficulties by: - Encouraging students and staff to seek assistance if they experience mental health difficulties;   - Promoting institute wide awareness of mental health issues that may erupt within and impact learning environments;   - Providing guidance and training for the Institute Student Welfare and Academic teaching staff to effectively respond to the needs of individuals experiencing mental health difficulties;   - Ensuring that all staff and students are made aware of the services, advice and trained staff available to respond to the needs of individuals experiencing mental health difficulties (e.g., EAP constitute a service to staff);   - Reducing the stigma surrounding mental illness in the workplace/learning environment;   - Clearly identifying major responsibilities of staff members to report mental health/wellbeing concerns to the appropriate channels, so the students can be best supported in a proactive manner (as opposed to reactive); and   - To identify a process map for support of staff who are concerned about colleagues (e.g., to whom do they go for support?).

SCOPE
This policy applies to all students and staff of Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education). It is an overview of aims regarding the promotion of positive mental health in an educational environment and references committees and strategies that outline positive action towards the fulfilment of those aims.

DEFINITIONS	
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
Mental Health Issue, Concern or Disorder	Any pre-existing or emergent psychological condition that impacts on student course progression or staff performance and creates anxiety in the individual. Issues or disorders may include (but are in no way limited to): - Depression; - Chronic anxiety disorder; - Eating disorders; - Addictive behaviours; - Bipolar mood swings; and - Inability to focus on studies/duties.
Mental Health Disorder Symptoms	SCEI-HE staff must be watchful for symptoms of mental health issues in staff or students, as the sufferer may not always volunteer information of pre-existing or emergent conditions. Among the signs and symptoms to watch for are: - Feeling sad or down; - Confused thinking or reduced ability to concentrate; - Excessive fears or worries, or extreme feelings of guilt; - Extreme mood changes of highs and lows; - Withdrawal from friends and activities; - Significant tiredness, low energy or problems sleeping; - Detachment from reality (delusions), paranoia or hallucinations; - Inability to cope with daily problems or stress; - Trouble understanding and relating to situations and to people; - Problems with alcohol or drug use;

Mental Health Policy and Procedure HEPP69
Version: 2.2
Effective Date: February 2024
© 2017-2023 SCEI-HE. All Rights Reserved.

Page 1 of 5
ABN: 79 605 294 997
TEQSA Provider ID: PRV14066
CRICOS Provider Code: 03739K

530-538 Victoria Street, North Melbourne, VIC, 3051, Australia.
155-161 Boundary Road, North Melbourne, VIC, 3051, Australia.
41 Boundary Road, North Melbourne, VIC, 3051, Australia.
14-16 Grote Street, Adelaide, SA, 5000, Australia.

Email: info@scei-he.edu.au
Web: www.scei-he.edu.au
Phone: +61 3 9602 4110 (Melbourne) / +61 8 8212 8745 (Adelaide)

	11. Major changes in eating habits; 12. Excessive anger, hostility or violence; 13. Fear for physical safety; 14. Suicidal thinking or conversation; and 15. Bereavement grief.
Mental Health Service	1. Any service, internal or external to SCEI-HE that is prepared to give support to students or staff suffering from a mental health issue, as defined above. Such services available in Victoria include: Beyond Blue[1]; 1800RESPECT[2]; Lifeline[3]; Griefline[4]; Butterfly Foundation[5]; Suicide Call Back Service[6]; Youth Support and Advocacy Service[7]; Mind Australia[8]. 2. An example of an internal Mental Health Service would be the specialised Student Welfare staff with Mental Health First Aid training and qualifications in Psychology and Counselling.
SCEI-HE	Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education)

POLICY

1. SCEI-HE staff are pro-active in identifying students suffering under the weight of a mental health issue. The impact of a mental health issue may severely impact on a student's capacity to progress with their studies, which will compound on their issue. Likewise, academic staff suffering mental health issues may impact on the delivery of course content and program quality.
2. SCEI-HE is dedicated to identifying and assisting students and staff presenting with mental health issues, and to the eradication of the stigma attached to persons exhibiting mental health disorders.

PROCEDURE

1. SCEI-HE provides the following student mental health well-being support services.
   1.1 Student Welfare Officers are available to discuss personal, physical, mental, or emotional issues and hardships (homelessness, severe depression, suicide and self-harm) that may arise for students during the course of their studies.
   1.2 Student Welfare Officers with current accreditation in Mental Health First Aid and are able to identify and assist students and staff with mental health concerns or illnesses as they affect studies, interpersonal relations, professional and personal life as well as capacity to undertake basic activities of daily living.
   1.3 There may be instances where a Student Welfare Office believes the student requires additional professional support than what is within their scope of practice/qualifications. In this situation, the Student Welfare Officer will refer the student to an external counselling service, General Practitioner (GP) or escorted to a hospital emergency department in a crisis situation. Any costs associated with the use of external professional external will be borne by the student/staff member (except in the case of a staff member using the services of an EAP).
   1.4 Student Welfare will report the effectiveness of strategies and services in regard to the mental health and well-being of students and any critical incident records to the Mental Health Standing Committee (MHSC).
2. Centralised oversight of the objectives of the *Mental Health Policy and Procedure HEPP69* is exercised by the MHSC. The MHSC is comprised of members of SCEI-HE staff with responsibility in regard to the mental well-being of students and staff. To learn how the membership of the MHSC is determined and managed, see the *Mental Health Standing Committee Terms of Reference HETOR11*.
   2.1 The MHSC oversees the development, implementation and evaluation of SCEI-HE's *Mental Health Policy*

---

[1] https://www.beyondblue.org.au/
[2] https://www.1800respect.org.au/
[3] https://www.lifeline.org.au/
[4] https://griefline.org.au/
[5] https://butterfly.org.au/
[6] https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/
[7] https://ysas.org.au/
[8] https://www.mindaustralia.org.au/

Mental Health Policy and Procedure HEPP69
Version: 2.2
Effective Date: February 2024
© 2017-2023 SCEI-HE. All Rights Reserved.

Page 2 of 5
ABN: 79 605 294 997
TEQSA Provider ID: PRV14066
CRICOS Provider Code: 03739K

Southern Cross Education Institute
Higher Education

530-538 Victoria Street, North Melbourne, VIC, 3051, Australia.
155-161 Boundary Road, North Melbourne, VIC, 3051, Australia.
41 Boundary Road, North Melbourne, VIC, 3051, Australia.
14-16 Grote Street, Adelaide, SA, 5000, Australia.

Email: info@scei-he.edu.au
Web: www.scei-he.edu.au
Phone: +61 3 9602 4110 (Melbourne) / +61 8 8212 8745 (Adelaide)

and Procedure HEPP69. The Mental Health Policy is an institute wide policy covering staff, students and internal SCEI-HE collectives. The MHSC aims to work with different areas of the institute to meet the objectives of the policy.

2.2 The MHSC's ultimate responsibility is to work with relevant SCEI-HE Student Welfare and Academic teaching staff to evaluate the functionality and effectiveness of the measures contained in the *Mental Health Policy and Procedure HEPP69*.

2.3 The line of reporting to the MHSC will enable review of SCEI-HE's services in regard to the mental well-being of students and staff and enable revisions and enhancements to policy, processes, extension of services and additional staff training where indicated.

3. The MHSC has specific functions and:

   3.1 Will facilitate provision and dissemination of appropriate information to the Boards and other relevant groups. In doing so, the MHSC will be cognisant of and respond to information from those groups.

   3.2 May request and obtain information relevant to the Student Welfare student mental health interventions, advice and records (de-identified) for the purpose of oversight, summation to SCEI-HE Boards and to the National Regulator and/or Education Department.

   3.3 Will assist Student Welfare in arranging an annual calendar of mental health awareness events for students and advocate for and/or apply to the relevant SCEI-HE body for funding of same.

   3.4 Will stand ready to be called to emergency meetings to address critical incidents involving the mental health of students/staff that require urgent strategic plans best addressed by the whole MHSC.

   3.5 Will ensure that its decisions, strategies and observations are disseminated and implemented at the appropriate levels within the Institute.

   3.6 Will remain reactive and considerate of the mental health needs of students and staff of SCEI-HE.

4. SCEI-HE Human Resources Management (HR) will be informed of, or otherwise liaise with SCEI-HE Welfare, in regard to staff who present with mental health difficulties:

   4.1 Where a teacher has presented with abnormal stress or other mental health difficulties and the supervising academic has made recommendation to involve HR in strategies to alleviate the problem.

   4.2 Where administration or teaching staff present with mental health illness, concerns or disorders that indicate external services or consultation with SCEI-HE welfare and counselling officers may benefit the individual

   4.3 Where administration or teaching staff present with mental health conditions that may impair their function within their job role

   4.4 On presentation of a staff member with a mental health issue, the HR Officer or Manager may:

       4.4.1 ask the staff member what they feel the appropriate action would be or what they would like to do;

       4.4.2 encourage the staff member to go home for the day to get some rest and/or clear their mind;

       4.4.3 contact the staff member's emergency contact to make them aware and ask them to pick the staff member up (if staff member agrees to this);

       4.4.4 encourage the staff member to go and see their General Medical Practitioner;

       4.4.5 suggest alternative or reduced work hours;

       4.4.6 suggest a period of time off work;

       4.4.7 assist the staff member to work with their manager to create a support plan which may include reduced workload and/or additional support; and

       4.4.8 encourage the staff member to contact the company's registered EAP.

5. SCEI-HE will continue to review and align its policies and processes in regard to student/staff mental well-being with the recommendations of the *Higher Education Standards Panel Final Report – Improving Retention, Completion and Success in Higher Education*[9].

6. **Supportive Services**

   6.1 **Managers**

   SCEI-HE Counsellor endeavours to provide intensive training and emotional support to all managers at SCEI-HE. Educating the management department is vital in allowing managers to have access to the knowledge, skills, tools and resources to increase mental wellbeing awareness within the workplace. It further expands the managers' understanding of, and engagement in, organisational decisions.

---

[9] https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/resources/higher-education-standards-panel-final-report-improving-retention-completion-and-success-higher

Mental Health Policy and Procedure HEPP69
Version: 2.2
Effective Date: February 2024
© 2017-2023 SCEI-HE. All Rights Reserved.

Page 3 of 5
ABN: 79 605 294 997
TEQSA Provider ID: PRV14066
CRICOS Provider Code: 03739K

Southern Cross Education Institute
Higher Education

530-538 Victoria Street, North Melbourne, VIC, 3051, Australia.
155-161 Boundary Road, North Melbourne, VIC, 3051, Australia.
41 Boundary Road, North Melbourne, VIC, 3051, Australia.
14-16 Grote Street, Adelaide, SA, 5000, Australia.

Email: info@scei-he.edu.au
Web: www.scei-he.edu.au
Phone: +61 3 9602 4110 (Melbourne) / +61 8 8212 8745 (Adelaide)

6.2 SCEI-HE Counsellor will provide monthly workshops and activities, tailored specifically to the management department, geared around a wide range of mental health themes, including:

    6.2.1 Knowledge of the impact of poor mental health on employee performance;

    6.2.2 The soft skills to build rapport and create psychological safety and trust;

    6.2.3 Necessary tools to have positive, solution-focused conversations;

    6.2.4 Techniques to assist them protect their own mental health and manage boundaries;

    6.2.5 Transparency regarding their roles and responsibilities in addressing mental health concerns; and

    6.2.6 Useful ways to start a conversation regarding mental health, creating a strong culture of wellbeing and lifting the stigma about mental health in the workplace.

6.3 For All Staff

    6.3.1 Mental health training must be available and compulsory for all employees to increase their knowledge of mental health and to acquire the necessary skills to help colleagues or students that are experiencing mental health issues. Empowering all staff members with mental health knowledge can support early detection and facilitate help seeking.

    6.3.2 SCEI-HE Counsellor will provide monthly workshops and activities, tailored specifically to staff members, geared around a wide range of mental health themes, including:

        1. Mental health awareness training;

        2. Emotional intelligence training;

        3. Resilience training;

        4. Educating managers to recognise, understand and deal with a widespread of mental health conditions and their symptoms, including but not limited to:

            a. Anxiety and all types of anxiety disorders;

            b. Depression and all types of depressive disorders;

            c. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder;

            d. Dissociation and dissociative disorders;

            e. Eating disorders; and

            f. Self-helping strategies for a healthier mind.

        5. Training staff on emotional regulation and expression; and

        6. Training staff on the identification, support and response to self-harm and suicidal behaviour.

    6.3.3 SCEI-HE Counsellor will always ensure confidentiality and autonomy, unless the individual is in high risk of danger to themselves or to others.

    6.3.4 SCEI-HE Counsellor will share useful resources and tools to staff on how to handle mental health conversations. These resources will be accessible at all times, to all staff.

    6.3.5 SCEI-HE Counsellor will be have a referral system in place for all staff members who are in need of ongoing mental health support management.

6.4 For All Students

    6.4.1 SCEI-HE Counsellor strives to improve the emotional, social and developmental wellbeing of students.

    6.4.2 Frequent presenting concerns that will be addressed with students include:

        1. SCEI-HE Counsellor will encourage students to recognise, understand and deal with a widespread of mental health conditions and their symptoms, including but not limited to:

            a. Anxiety and all types of anxiety disorders;

            b. Depression and all types of depressive disorders;

            c. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder;

            d. Dissociation and dissociative disorders; and

            e. Eating disorders

        2. SCEI-HE Counsellor will provide ongoing emotional support to all students on a one-on-one or group basis.

        3. SCEI-HE Counsellor will educate students on resilience, self-awareness, mindfulness, emotional regulation and self-expression.

        4. SCEI-HE Counsellor will provide personalised support to students regarding all personal and educational concerns.

        5. SCEI-HE Counsellor will assist students in creating personalised action plans and strategies to help them through their times of difficulty.

        6. SCEI-HE Counsellor will share useful mental health self-management resources and tools

Mental Health Policy and Procedure HEPP69
Version: 2.2
Effective Date: February 2024
© 2017-2023 SCEI-HE. All Rights Reserved.

Page 4 of 5
ABN: 79 605 294 997
TEQSA Provider ID: PRV14066
CRICOS Provider Code: 03739K

530-538 Victoria Street, North Melbourne, VIC, 3051, Australia.
155-161 Boundary Road, North Melbourne, VIC, 3051, Australia.
41 Boundary Road, North Melbourne, VIC, 3051, Australia.
14-16 Grote Street, Adelaide, SA, 5000, Australia.

Email: info@scei-he.edu.au
Web: www.scei-he.edu.au
Phone: +61 3 9602 4110 (Melbourne) / +61 8 8212 8745 (Adelaide)

to students, relative to mental health. These resources will be accessible on Moodle at all times, for all SCEI-HE students.

7. SCEI-HE Counsellor will be have a referral system in place for students who are in need of further, professional, external mental health care.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Change The Course: National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities (2017) https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination/publications/change-course-national-report-sexual-assault-and-sexual

Mental Health Standing Committee Terms of Reference HETOR11

RightsED: Tackling sexual harassment https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/publications/rightsed-tackling-sexual-harassment

Student Welfare Policy HEPP49

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-standards-panel-hesp/higher-education-standards-framework

Higher Education Standards Panel Final Report – Improving Retention, Completion and Success in Higher Education https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/resources/higher-education-standards-panel-final-report-improving-retention-completion-and-success-higher

RESPONSIBILITIES

Nil

DOCUMENT AND RECORD CONTROL	
Created	Oct 2019 (V1.0)
Amended	Feb 2021 (V2.0); Feb 2022 (V2.1); Feb 2024 (V2.2)
Last reviewed by	Quality Assurance and Compliance Unit (Feb 2024)
Last approved by	Quality Assurance and Compliance Manager (Feb 2024)
Version	2.2
Effective date	February 2024
Next planned review	February 2025

Mental Health Policy and Procedure HEPP69
Version: 2.2
Effective Date: February 2024
© 2017-2023 SCEI-HE. All Rights Reserved.

Page 5 of 5
ABN: 79 605 294 997
TEQSA Provider ID: PRV14066
CRICOS Provider Code: 03739K