

Fife College Mental Health Strategy

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2	All	This strategy was reviewed and there were no changes to the content. Change from Director of Student Experience and Engagement to Head of Student Experience. Review date was updated to August 2023.	August 2021
	All	Changing some wording throughout the strategy to present tense. For example, instead of saying 'we aim to', some elements are changed to 'we are currently'.	9/4/2020
1			

Contents

Introduction	2
Fife College Vision for Mental Health	2
Development in the support of Mental Health	2
Fife College Counselling Provision	3
Health and Wellbeing	3
Training and Support Strategies – Staff and Students	4
Best Practice	5
Evaluation and Assessment	5
FCSA and Mental Health	6
Commitment - Attendance and Achievement	6
Partnership Working	7
Diverse Access to Mental Health Services	7
Training Provision	8
Suicide Prevention	8
Tackling Stigma Campus Wide	8
Fife College Strategic Plan 2018-23	9
Associated Documents	9
Appendix 1 - Recurrent Events at Fife College	10

Introduction

Here at Fife College we are committed to supporting and developing the mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing of students and staff. Fife College understands the challenges faced by people with mental health issues and the impact that this can have on both their personal and academic lives.

Our motivation to support the mental health of all our students and staff is to understand, support and contribute to the treatment of mental health problems with commitment, passion and drive.

That means working to improve:

- Prevention and early intervention;
- Access to treatment, and joined up accessible services;
- The physical wellbeing of people with mental health problems;
- Rights, information use, and planning.

We want to create a College where stigma and discrimination related to mental health is removed and awareness and understanding of mental health issues is raised through training, resources and information and education.

Through a joined up working programme of initiatives we aim to arm people with resources and training activities to ensure that all of our students and staff are contributing to the recommendations of policies such as the Scottish Government's' Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027, and the Mental Health Strategy for Fife 2019 to 2023.

Wellbeing and Support Mission Statement;

"It is our commitment to provide a supportive and compassionate service for students of Fife College that promotes positive health and wellbeing and aims to engage and empower individuals to thrive"

Fife College Vision for Mental Health

Fife College is committed to the guarantee that it is an organisation in which students can reach their academic and individual potential to the full.

Fife College is dedicated to

- upholding the wellbeing of all the individuals of its community
- To allow all students and staff to flourish, to thrive and ultimately to succeed.

The Fife College Mental Health Strategy is in addition to the current Fife College Wellbeing and Support Strategy.

Development in the support of Mental Health

At the heart of the Mental Health Strategy for Fife College is the drive to create campuses that are not only transformative spaces where students can achieve academically but also places where students well-being is supported and cultivated.

Prevention and early intervention are crucial in reducing the prevalence and occurrence of poor mental health. Prevention and early interventions are a focus for Fife College in order to ensure that students and staff mental health remain a priority.

The creation and commencement of the Fife College Health and Wellbeing Adviser in partnership with NHS Fife will ensure an improvement in mental wellbeing, encourage students' independence in learning and enhance the quality of the student experience, as well as contributing to the training of and awareness raising initiatives for staff within various areas of Wellbeing and Mental Health.

The Guidance and Attendance teams support students with mental health issues and are all qualified and trained in an abundance of relevant competencies including Scotland's Mental Health First Aid, ASIST (Suicide Prevention) and Self Harm.

The Fife College Guidance team and Fife College Student Association are dedicated to raising awareness and improving on the barriers that many students with Mental health issues face by conducting workshops, promotion events, creating resources and liaising with internal and external stakeholders to ensure that all students get the best holistic support with any and all mental health issues.

Fife College Counselling Provision

Fife College is committed to the provision of high quality support for students to improve and enhance their physical, emotional and mental wellbeing being. Our Counselling Service offers one to one counselling sessions and group support, information and advice to individuals and families, a fully confidential service, triage assessment, referrals to other external agencies and staff training.

A number of workshops relevant to student life will be delivered throughout term time focusing on good mental health and wellbeing. Examples of workshop topics might include stress management, exam stress, maintaining good mental health, suicide awareness and prevention and mindfulness.

Health and Wellbeing

The Health and Wellbeing Adviser helps to contribute to an improvement in health and wellbeing. This in turn will encourage student's independence in their own learning and an enhancement to the quality of the student experience. The Health and Wellbeing Adviser also organises and provides training and awareness raising initiatives for staff within health and wellbeing.

The main areas that the Health and Wellbeing Adviser covers are:

- Development of and delivering a range of Mental Health initiatives
- Contributing to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Improving communication between Fife College and Health Promotion Service and improving links to agencies in order to support transitions.
- Being instrumental in promoting and educating students and staff in regards to mental health and wellbeing thus contributing to an overall improvement of student and staff wellbeing – through ongoing training and workshops, including Scotland's Mental Health First Aid, Mindfulness, Suicide Alertness etc.
- Working closely with NHS Fife to promote positive lifestyle behaviours including tobacco prevention
- Enhancing pathways to access services and support in the community to include stop smoking service, drug misuse, sexual health etc.
- Creating and producing Health and Wellbeing events and initiatives through campaign work
- Working directly with a cohort of students who require more in depth Health and Wellbeing support

The Health and Wellbeing post is widespread, and has a presence on each campus as well as online – providing a comprehensive and inclusive service to ensure that Fife College’s focus on Health and Wellbeing for all its learners and staff is key.

The Health and Wellbeing adviser provides regular Boom radio (Fife College student radio) interviews to promote Health and Wellbeing and there has been a development of a Health and Wellbeing blog and podcast to promote Health and Wellbeing for Fife College.

Mental Health prevention and support has a presence online with the promotion of Health and Wellbeing via the Fife College website, social media, student newspaper and staff gateway, providing students and staff with regular relevant and current information and resources.

The Health and Wellbeing role organises and hosts a Health and Wellbeing Event for Fife College annually in March each year. Working collaboratively with internal and external agencies and departments, including the FCSA, the event showcases stalls, information, resources and referral opportunities that are available on all campuses to promote the ethos of Health and Wellbeing for all students and staff. Internal organisations and external organisations were represented and students and staff engaged well. Overall, more a thousand people have previously been involved with the event, with lots of literature and freebies distributed and many referrals were taken.

Alongside the Head of Developing Young Workforce, Fife College is generating a ‘Get Ready for College’ initiative that will allow all prospective students to engage with the College through the summer break that ensures the opportunity for students to have the correct support put in place early to help alleviate any anxieties or mental health issues that may be a barrier to their learning.

Throughout the academic year, the Guidance Team & Health and Wellbeing Adviser offer workshops to students and staff to combat a range of mental health issues including Mindfulness workshops and bespoke mental health sessions such as Stress Management, dealing with Anxiety and Mental Health Conversation Cafes. Development plans are in place to implement further workshops and initiatives including; laughter yoga.

The Implementation of a Wellbeing Point in collaboration with Penumbra is now in place and sees a computer terminal with relevant and updated information at students and staff’s fingertips on each campus to allow people to access an abundance of health and Wellbeing resources online.

Training and Support Strategies – Staff and Students

Fife College is dedicated to providing training and professional development, as well as other implementations and initiatives College-wide to make sure that there is inclusion, engagement and involvement in education. That means ensuring that providing a positive culture for everybody’s social, emotional and mental wellbeing, and that appropriate access to support is available.

Wellbeing at work day provides staff with inside and outside stakeholders providing training and workshops to cover a host of wellbeing issues.

Regular in house training for staff is provided including: Scotland’s Mental Health First Aid.

The Guidance team have developed and implemented an initiative to improve Mental Health and Wellbeing via a walking group called Positive Steps, with positive results. This is aimed at both students and staff.

Fife College staff are Corporate Parents. “An organisation’s performance of actions necessary to uphold the rights and safeguard the wellbeing of a looked after child or care leaver, and through which physical, emotional, spiritual, social and educational development is promoted.” (Scottish Government, 2015). Fife College understand that there are circumstances that lead to students having been in, or continuing to be care experienced and it is important that mental and emotional health and wellbeing needs are considered throughout for these students to aid improved outcomes.

The 2011 Census highlighted that 4% of young carers in Scotland said they had a mental health condition compared to 1% of non-carers. Fife College, in conjunction with the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 and through their commitment to achieve the ‘Going Further’ Award understand the impact of mental health and wellbeing for young carers and are committed to further developing and evolving the support available for students Carers experiencing mental health issues.

It is vital to understand the mental health needs of disabled students. Some may be disabled because of mental health issues while others may have poor mental health as a result of physical impairment or long-term illnesses. Students with physical health conditions can experience higher risks for anxiety, low mood or mental health difficulties than others. Fife College are conscious of mental health and wellbeing inequalities and are determined to help reduce these inequalities, remove barriers to education and progress to guarantee better outcomes for students.

Best Practice

Partnership relationships with other colleges and universities is essential in order to share good practice and develop networks for the benefit of all our staff and students. With this in mind Fife College collaborate with a number of institutions, sharing resources and opportunities in an open, honest and cooperative way to ensure professionalism and joined up working.

Evaluation and Assessment

Fife College regularly review the provision of mental health initiatives in accordance with the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Mental Health strategy for Scotland 2017-2027.

Fife College are dedicated to the creation and maintenance of policy, procedure and legislation within its own documentation, including Mental Health policies and strategies and other policies and procedures that adhere to Mental Health legislation. There is also a commitment to the development of a quality indicator profile in mental health provision within Fife College which will include measures across six quality dimensions;

- Person-centred
- Safe
- Effective
- Efficient
- Equitable
- Timely

Fife College will look to carry out annual progress reviews to ensure evolution and developments are maintained within this sphere.

We currently carry out various assessments of current activities to ensure development and improvements, including; Evaluation of Guidance support services; Evaluation of Mindfulness Workshops; Evaluation of events (Health and Wellbeing, Get ready for Christmas, Get ready for college). These are completed throughout the academic year and reviewed in June/July.

There are many initiatives regarding the evaluation and assessment of the impact of Fife College's mental health support that we are committed to achieving including a whole College Wellbeing appraisal using a veritable evaluation tool such as the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS).

A major area for evaluation and assessment is within student withdrawals and monitoring the number of students who are leaving courses early due to mental health. Withdrawal data is provided to all staff on a fortnightly and monthly basis that highlights withdrawal numbers and makes comparisons to previous academic periods. The data of students who are withdrawing due to mental health will be followed up appropriately by Fife College Wellbeing and Support Teams.

FCSA and Mental Health

Fife College are committed to supporting and enhancing where possible, the Fife College Mental Health Agreement lead by the Fife College Students Association. The Agreement incorporates the College signing up to Think Positive (a Scottish Government funded student mental health project at NUS Scotland).

This Student Mental Health Agreement framework can also implement actions to review existing policy and staff training and consider improvements which could have a positive effect on the staff and student experience, and can go a way to ensuring that anyone facing mental health issues can remain on their courses without facing stigma or judgement.

Signing up to the agreement may also support networking opportunities for student's associations and college staff to promote further joined up working initiatives.

Commitment - Attendance and Achievement

Fife College recognises that particular behaviours such as attending class, participation in class activities and discussion, being conscientious with work and deadlines and adhering to College Policies and Procedures can all be regarded as useful measures of student engagement.

Additional measures of student engagement can be monitored through a student's demonstration of qualities such as curiosity, motivation, interest and enthusiasm. Monitoring student attendance is an important measure of student engagement. Attending classes provides students with the best opportunities to develop knowledge and skills that are necessary to successfully completing their course and good attendance can be a significant factor of student success.

Through the use of the Attendance Monitoring and Withdrawal Procedure, academic staff in partnership with the Attendance team, can liaise on a weekly basis to ensure that all the varying measures of student engagement, including attendance, are considered and that the necessary support interventions can be implemented.

The Attendance team are trained and skilled in a variety of qualifications and training including Scotland's Mental Health First aid in order to identify and support students who may be having issues with their attendance due to mental ill-health. They also work directly with the College Guidance team who they can refer to for cases where students require more intensive support.

Combined working between academic and support departments ensures that students receive a holistic and well-rounded commitment to their needs.

Partnership Working

Smoking rates among those with mental health problems has not changed in over twenty years; 1 in 3 people with mental health problems in the UK smoke, as compared with 1 in 5 of the general population. Smoking can adversely disturb the effectiveness of medication taken for mental health issues. The Fife College Health and Wellbeing Adviser works closely with NHS Fife in order to raise awareness and provide resources to help students to stop smoking as this can reduce depression, anxiety and stress amongst other health concerns. There is also work ongoing with NHS Fife to promote smoking cessation programmes and target those programmes towards people with mental health issues.

Work is ongoing with the Fife College Students Association to maintain the 'Action for Health Working Group' to continue work for the 'Healthy Body Healthy Mind' enterprise. Within this we are dedicated to partnering with agencies such as SAMH and the initiatives that they champion such as the 'physical activity programme' as well as the 'Think Positive' agreement.

At Fife College we work in collaboration with many internal departments to encourage the Health and Wellbeing of students and staff, including working with the Sports Department on initiatives external to the college to promote health and Wellbeing in Fife (Fife Sports Stars, Sport Scotland, Fife Active Schools).

Change can be stressful as well as an opportunity for growth. At Fife College we understand that transitions are a process of change and as such we are committed to managing every transitions whether it be from school to college, from one course to another or from college to work or University. Transitions can cover a range of experiences, all of which involve some degree of challenge and readjustment and they can carry a factor of risk affecting student's mental health. To ensure we manage these changes we have staff dedicated to transitions including Guidance, School transitions, Developing workforce partnership, quality and curriculum partnership, employability hub etc.

Diverse Access to Mental Health Services

Universities and colleges should, in partnership with care providers and NHS Scotland, have in place a range of support services that are sensitive to the varying needs of all students, that identify mental health difficulties early and provide appropriate support to meet these.

Fife College is committed to growing its access to a diverse range of both internal and external mental health services. The Health and Wellbeing Adviser role does look to create and build upon existing partnerships such as SAMH and CAHMS, as well as to continually source new ones.

Training Provision

Fife College runs the 12 hour certificated Scotland's Mental Health First Aid course for staff at least three times per year. The aim of this is to train as many staff as possible to be Mental Health First Aiders. The main benefits of this is the promotion of Mental Health provision and raised awareness of Mental Health issues, their impact and the support available to help those who suffer from them.

Fife College also run a 2 hour SMHFA taster session on Mental Health Awareness that runs as a precursor to the full course and allows staff to experience an introduction to the full certificate and what the full course entails.

Fife College Guidance team and the Health and Wellbeing Adviser run an Introduction to Mindfulness course for students and staff, which presents an overview of mindfulness practice, activities and resources to help people combat stress and other issues within this discipline.

Fife College has the capacity to run the training programme safe TALK which is a half-day (3.5 hours) suicide prevention training course that help inform of what to do if someone exhibits as being suicidal by following the TALK steps - Tell, Ask, Listen and Keep-safe. These practical steps offer immediate help to someone having thoughts of suicide. Health Promotion Training Programme Fife, features a wide range of free training courses aimed at helping people working in Fife to contribute towards preventing ill-health, improving health and wellbeing and reducing inequalities in health across Fife. This programme is produced by Health Promotion Services, part of Fife's Health & Social Care Partnership and Fife College staff undergo many of the partnerships training provision each year in order to be able to provide continued professional academic and pastoral support for staff and students.

Fife College also look to offer a Wellbeing Day for staff. This is an opportunity, through a mix of 'Marketplace stalls' and short workshops, for staff to consider their own mental health and wellbeing and gather the relevant information and support.

Fife College has an Employee Assistant Programme which can be accessed on the Staff Gateway that gives staff the opportunity to access 24-hour support with a range of health and wellbeing concerns they may have, including mental health. In addition, there is also a Wellbeing Zone and Staff Resources page on the College iLearn site.

Suicide Prevention

In 2017, According to Choose Life, 680 suicides were registered in Scotland (522 males and 158 females). Fife College is committed to promoting the ideals of organisations like Choose Life and the Scottish Government's Suicide Prevention National Action Plan 2018 in order to help reduce these statistics. The college will implement the SAFE talk Suicide Alertness training for staff during CLPL weeks. The implementation of the Scotland's Mental Health First Aid training is available to all staff throughout the year and we are dedicated to training all our staff in this to ensure that suicide prevention is everybody's business.

Tackling Stigma Campus Wide

At Fife College we are devoted to the reduction of stigma in mental health and raising awareness of mental health issues in order to allow students and staff to access support and engage in meaningful education and pastoral activities that improve lives.

By increasing information streams, through marketing and information sessions we hope to disseminate non-judgemental and factual information that challenge myths and promote mental health problems in an accurate and realistic manner.

Posters, activities and initiatives that challenge attitudes and behaviours are evident throughout Fife College. Contesting prejudices and judgmental thinking by seeing the person behind the mental health issue is a challenge that Fife College take very seriously. Activities in college like the Health and Wellbeing event and the RESPECT campaign dynamically express support and promotion of those who provide for individuals with mental health issues. At Fife College we ensure that we instil attitudes of inclusion, equality and diversity.

Fife College Strategic Plan 2018-23

The Fife College Mental Health Strategy supports the ambition of Fife College, demonstrated within the Fife College Strategic Plan, to provide all students with “transformational learning opportunities that are tailored to their own aims, aspirations and circumstances”.

Our Vision is to transform the lives of students through inspirational learning and teaching. Our Mission is to deliver excellent opportunities for our students and work with them to develop their full potential.

Our Values are to be;

- Student-centred
- Ambitious
- Inclusive
- Collaborative
- Integrity
- Innovative

Associated Documents

Document Title	Location
• Safeguarding Policy	My Fife, Learning & Teaching Toolkit, iLearn
• Safeguarding Procedure	My Fife, Learning & Teaching Toolkit, iLearn
• Procedure for Identifying and Supporting vulnerable students	My Fife, Learning & Teaching Toolkit, iLearn
• Attendance Monitoring and Withdrawal Procedure	My Fife, Learning & Teaching Toolkit
• Student Guidelines: Attendance Procedure	iLearn
• Wellbeing and Support Improvement Plan	My Fife
• Student Experience Strategy	My Fife

Appendix 1 - Recurrent Events at Fife College

In December each year, Fife College Guidance team host a 'Get Ready for Christmas' event that brings together external and internal agencies to providing students and staff with a range of information and resources on several health and wellbeing issues, including Mental Health that may occur over the festive period.

No-Smoking day in March yields an opportunity to hold an event that showcases students work in the field of tobacco prevention as well as providing information and resources on the connection between smoking and mental health, and the support available, in collaboration with Fife Health and Social Care partnership.

In April, 'Stress Awareness Month' includes activities and resources to highlight what it is like to feel stressed, be under pressure or become overwhelmed by stress. Importantly, information, advice and support is provided for students and staff of Fife College on managing stress.

In May, Mental Health Awareness Week is supported with resources, activities and information in order to recognise and address the issues and support Fife College students and staff.