Evidence Search Service
Results of your search request

Student mental health

Thank you for requesting this evidence search. We hope you find the results useful. If you would like to discuss the findings or require an additional search, please contact: Alison McLaren: alisonmclaren1@nhs.net

Please acknowledge this work in any resulting paper or presentation as*: Evidence search: Student mental health* Alison McLaren (08 September 2022). East Surrey Hospital, UK: Surrey and Sussex Library and Knowledge Services.

Summary

This search has focused primarily on the mental health and wellbeing of university and higher education students in the UK and has excluded research results from other countries, except for those reported in the included systematic reviews and surveys which include British and EU students.

Surveys and qualitative interviews appear to be the primary research source for information about the extent and nature of student mental health issues. Students with Autism, ADHD, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ and those with existing mental health conditions are likely to experience depression, anxiety, loneliness, poor sleep quality, eating disorders, alcohol and substance abuse. Some of these groups are also less likely to access early support. [1] [2] There is some evidence that females are more prone to risk taking behaviours such as with sex and alcohol. [3] [4]

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[1] Sancho TN (2020) *"We need to slowly break down this barrier": Understanding the barriers and facilitators that Afro-Caribbean undergraduates perceive towards accessing mental health services in the UK*

[2] Goddard H (2022) *"I spent most of Freshers in my room"—A qualitative study of the social experiences of university students on the autistic spectrum*

[3] Rusi J (2021) *Predicting sexual risk behavior in British and European Union university students in the United Kingdom*

[4] Ralph-Nearman C (2020) *The role of negative urgency in risky alcohol drinking and binge-eating in United Kingdom male and female students*

LGBTQ+ students were found to be at increased risk of self-harm and suicide and more likely to self-manage using unguided self-help interventions due to negative life experience and a perception of service discrimination. [5] [6] Healthcare students are an additional group who are often reluctant to seek help, some of whom may experience shame for having a mental health problem. [7]

Although there is evidence that mental health provision to students was expanded during the pandemic, there was a proportional increase in stress and anxiety amongst students and it is apparent that the full impact on long-term mental health will not emerge for some time. [8] [9] The UK student mental health charity, Student Minds launched Student Space in 2020. [10] The temporary online platform was developed to offer a combination of psycho–educational content and real student stories alongside text, phone and email support provided by Shout and The Mix. A subsequent report discusses the consequences of lockdowns, forced isolation and financial repercussions on student mental health and makes a number of recommendations. [11] The impact of the pandemic on girls is apparent in the STEER education report (2022) which focuses on adolescents has serious mental health implications for future university students. [12]

Universities UK are active in promoting mental health as a strategic priority, developing a self-assessment tool and a good practice guide for universities and encouraging a whole university approach to improve student mental health. [13] [14] Supporting this approach, UK academic libraries are developing a holistic model of library provision, materials, hosting and signposting. [15] University initiatives include an emphasis on the importance of NHS mental health services – joined up, continuity of care across the health authorities and university counsellors during both term and vacation, depending on student location. NICE recommends the use of short questionnaires to assess mental health and wellbeing when students register for a practice. [16] UWE Bristol, Greater Manchester Universities, Liverpool Universities UCL, the University of Sheffield and the University of Warwick are some of the universities involved in student mental health research and the

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[5] Gnan GH et al (2019) *General and LGBTQ-specific factors associated with mental health and suicide risk among LGBTQ students*

[6] Kashirsky N (2022) *The experiences of young LGBTQ+ people self-managing their mental health*

[7] Kotera Y et al (2021) *Mental health shame, self-compassion and sleep in UK nursing students: Complete mediation of self-compassion in sleep and mental health*

[8] Unterhalter E et al (2021) *Mitigating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education*

[9] Evans A et al (2021) *Effects of the COVID-19 lockdown on mental health, wellbeing, sleep, and alcohol use in a UK student sample*

[10] Durcan G (2022) *Student Space: an evaluation of a web-based intervention supporting student mental wellbeing over the pandemic*

[11] Frampton N et al (2021) *University mental health: life in a pandemic*

[12] Walker S (2022) *Navigating the road of adolescence: young people's mental health in the UK: how the pandemic has affected young people's ability to self-regulate socially and emotionally*

[13] Universities UK (2021) *Self-assesment tool: stepchange mentally healthy universities*

[14] Universities UK (2021) *Student mental wellbeing in higher education Good practice guide*

[15] Cox B (2020) *Library support for student mental health and well-being in the UK: Before and during the COVID-19 pandemic*

[16] NICE (2020) *Mental health in students*

development of tools and services to inform and improve services across the sector. Co-production with students is helping to ensure appropriate service development. Additional information and additional participating universities are listed on the [Office for Students](#) website.

A Mental Health Trust has developed prescribing guidelines which encourage patient involvement in treatment options, improve physical health monitoring and build on existing NICE guidelines. Other Trusts are adopting these guidelines. [17]

Strategies involve using supportive friends and housemates for peer support; and using online and digital support. However, associated drawbacks can include a significant burden on the caregiver/ supportive housemate and although students are widely using digital tools and apps, they lack confidence and skills in finding trustworthy information and protecting sensitive data. [18] [19] A small pilot study of an online psychological wellbeing system, *MePlusMe* has had positive feedback and is in further development and trials. [20]

A dance class for Salsa proved an effective initiative. This additional non-credit class improved stress relief and provided a means to meeting and connecting with new people. [21] Equally, an arts-based project sought to raise the profile of mental health and providing a safe space to discuss and support wellbeing. [22] Further initiatives with varying degrees of success include practising mindfulness, CBT, walking and physical exercise.

[17] Avon and Wiltshire Partnership Mental Health Trust (2020) *Prescribing guidelines for patients with a first episode psychosis*

[18] Byrom B (2019) *Supporting a friend, housemate or partner with mental health difficulties: The student experience*

[19] Montagni I et al (2020) *Mental Health-Related Digital Use by University Students: A Systematic Review*

[20] Papadatou-Pastou M et al (2019) *Exploring the feasibility and acceptability of the contents, design, and functionalities of an online intervention promoting mental health, wellbeing, and study skills in Higher Education students*

[21] Domene PA (2022) *Stepping into Salsa culture: An experiential account of engaging with a university non-credit dance programme*

[22] Atayero S et al (2021) *Teaching and discussing mental health among university students: A pilot Ateray-based study*

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Universities UK: (updated May 2022) [Stepchange: mentally healthy universities](#)

(2021) A 'whole university approach' to wellbeing: meeting the challenges of Covid-19: https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/latest/insights-and-analysis/whole-university-approach-wellbeing

Warwick International Higher Education Academy: Learning Circles: Wellbeing Pedagogies
https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/academy/activities/learningcircles/wellbeingpedagogies

- Thinking about the design of a whole educational experience, from teaching space, to curriculum, to activities, to reading materials, and to assessment, that supports positive student wellbeing
- Exploring the existing literature
- Engaging with the different stakeholders across Warwick University for improving students and staff wellbeing in the teaching and learning environment

UWE Bristol: Student Mental Health Partnerships Project https://www.uwe.ac.uk/about/values-vision-strategy/mental-health-and-wellbeing/student-mental-health-partnerships-project
The project created and tested four approaches to collaboration between universities and NHS across the five regional hubs, with different levels of integration and connection

- Integrated regional student mental health service (Greater Manchester)
- Broader clinical pilots: Student Liaison Service (Liverpool)
- Targeted clinical pilots: University Research Clinic (North London and Sheffield)
- Structures for connectivity and collaboration (Bristol)

SPEQS Toolkit: The Student Services Partnerships Evaluation and Quality Standards (SPEQS) toolkit is a practical toolkit for service managers and practitioners striving to develop partnerships to respond to diverse student mental health needs.
https://www.uwe.ac.uk/-/media/uwe/documents/about/speqs-toolkit.pdf
Developed from pathways and outcomes evaluation work led by UCL and the University of Sheffield. Co-produced, with student researchers involved in reviewing the themes and developing recommendations. The toolkit covers five domains, with practical advice and guidance, suggested measures, and case studies for each:

- Developing services with student voice and co-production
- Collecting and sharing data between services
- Managing risk across partnerships
- Measuring student mental health and wellbeing outcomes
- Developing and evaluating services and partnerships

Student Minds: https://www.studentminds.org.uk

UMHAM (University Mental Health Advisers Network) https://www.umhan.com/

Office for Students: Mental health Challenge Competition: Achieving a step change in mental health outcomes for all students https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/student-wellbeing-and-protection/student-mental-health/mental-health-challenge-competition-improving-mental-health-outcomes/

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1. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Eating disorders: recognition and treatment NICE guideline [NG69]
2. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Looked-after children and young people NICE guideline [NG205]
3. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Social, emotional and mental wellbeing in primary and secondary education NICE guideline [NG223]

B. Synopsis or Summary

1. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Mental health in students
2. NICE. Prescribing guidelines for patients with a first episode psychosis
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C. Systematic Review

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2. Telemedicine and e-health. Mental Health-Related Digital Use by University Students: A Systematic Review
3. UCL Social Research Institute. Mitigating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education
4. Public Library of Science (PLoS). Supporting mental health and wellbeing of university and college students: A systematic review of review-level evidence of interventions

D. Institutional Publication

1. STEER Education. [Navigating the road of adolescence: young people's mental health in the UK: how the pandemic has affected young people's ability to self-regulate socially and emotionally](#)

2. Universities UK. [Stepchange: mentally health universities](#)

3. Universities UK. [Self-assesment tool: stepchange mentally healthy universities](#)

4. Centre for Mental Health. [Student Space: an evaluation of a web-based intervention supporting student mental wellbeing over the pandemic](#)

5. Randstad. [a degree of uncertainty: looking at student wellbeing](#)

6. University Mental Health Advisers Network. [Information sharing and student suicide report](#)

7. Universities UK. [NHS-university partnerships: Working together for student mental health](#)

8. Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCPsych). [Mental health of higher education students](#)

9. UK Universities. [Minding our future: starting a conversation about the support of student mental health](#)

10. Universities UK. [Student mental wellbeing in higher education Good practice guide](#)

11. Student Minds. [University mental health: life in a pandemic:](#)

E. Original Research

1. [A mindfulness-based intervention to increase resilience to stress in university students (the Mindful Student Study): a pragmatic randomised controlled trial](#)

2. [Adaptability and social support: Examining links with psychological wellbeing among UK students and non-students](#)

3. [Addressing the mental health crisis in medical schools in England and the Republic of Ireland: A student collaborative](#)

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6. [Challenges to addressing student mental health in embedded counselling services: A survey of UK higher and further education institutions](#)

7. [Conceptualising mental illness among university students of African, Caribbean and similar ethnic heritage in the United Kingdom](#)

8. [Coping with loneliness at university: A qualitative interview study with students in the UK](#)

9. [Determinants of wellbeing in university students: The role of residential status, stress, loneliness, resilience, and sense of coherence](#)

10. Explore. [Effectiveness of mindful walking intervention in nature on sleep quality and mood among university student during Covid-19: A randomised control study.](#)

11. BMC Psychology. Effects of the COVID-19 lockdown on mental health in a UK student sample.

12. Psychiatry Research. Effects of the COVID-19 lockdown on mental health, wellbeing, sleep, and alcohol use in a UK student sample

13. Engaging male students with mental health support: a qualitative focus group study

14. Evaluating mental health and wellbeing of postgraduate researchers: Prevalence and contributing factors

15. Evaluating mental health literacy and help-seeking behaviours in UK university students: A country wide study

16. Journal of Public Mental Health. Evaluating mental health literacy and help-seeking behaviours in UK university students: a country wide study

17. Exploring the feasibility and acceptability of the contents, design, and functionalities of an online intervention promoting mental health, wellbeing, and study skills in Higher Education students

18. Feelings of fear, sadness, and loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic: Findings from two studies in the UK

19. General and LGBTQ-specific factors associated with mental health and suicide risk among LGBTQ students

20. How is paranoia experienced in a student population? A qualitative study of students scoring highly on a paranoia measure

21. BMJ Open Access. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the experience and mental health of university students studying in Canada and the UK: a cross-sectional study - PubMed

22. The Journal of Academic Librarianship. Library support for student mental health and well-being in the UK: Before and during the COVID-19 pandemic

23. International journal of environmental research and public health. Mental Health and Wellbeing in Young People in the UK during Lockdown (COVID-19).

24. Mental health in medical, dentistry and veterinary students: Cross-sectional online survey

25. Nursing Open. Mental health shame, self-compassion and sleep in UK nursing students: Complete mediation of self-compassion in sleep and mental health.

26. Navigating the Same Storm but Not in the Same Boat: Mental Health Vulnerability and Coping in Women University Students During the First COVID-19 Lockdown in the UK

27. BJPsych open. Pandemic and student mental health: mental health symptoms among university students and young adults after the first cycle of lockdown in the UK.

28. Physical activity, mental and personal well-being, social isolation, and perceptions of academic attainment and employability in university students: The Scottish and British active students surveys

29. Positive psychology for mental wellbeing of uk therapeutic students: Relationships with engagement, motivation, resilience and self-compassion

30. Predicting sexual risk behavior in British and European Union university students in the United Kingdom

54. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. [University Students' Mental Health and Well-Being during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Findings from the UniCoVac Qualitative Study - PubMed](#)

55. [University students with autism: The social and academic experiences of university in the UK](#)

56. [Using a structured model to promote mental health](#)

57. [Web-based support services to help prevent suicide in young people and students: A mixed-methods, user-informed review of characteristics and effective elements](#)

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59. [What factors affect access, retention and graduate outcomes for university students with a background of care or family estrangement?](#)

60. [What interventions improve college and university students' mental health and wellbeing? A review of review-level evidence](#)

61. Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH). [Who is lonely in lockdown? Cross-cohort analyses of predictors of loneliness before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)

62. ['Five hours to sort out your life': Qualitative study of the experiences of university students who access mental health support](#)

63. ["Back to square one": The experience of straddling adolescence and early adulthood in unemployed UK university graduates with common mental health issues: An interpretative phenomenological analysis](#)

64. ["I spent most of Freshers in my room"—A qualitative study of the social experiences of university students on the autistic spectrum](#)

65. ["We need to slowly break down this barrier": Understanding the barriers and facilitators that Afro-Caribbean undergraduates perceive towards accessing mental health services in the UK](#)

A. National and International Guidance

1. **Eating disorders: recognition and treatment NICE guideline [NG69]**
   National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), 2020

   This guideline covers assessment, treatment, monitoring and inpatient care for children, young people and adults with eating disorders. It aims to improve the care people receive by detailing the most effective treatments for anorexia nervosa, binge eating disorder and bulimia nervosa.

   [Available online at this link](#)

2. **Looked-after children and young people NICE guideline [NG205]**
   National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), 2021

This guideline covers how organisations, practitioners and carers should work together to deliver high-quality care, stable placements and nurturing relationships for looked-after children and young people. It aims to help these children and young people reach their full potential and have the same opportunities as their peers.

Available online at this link

3. **Social, emotional and mental wellbeing in primary and secondary education NICE guideline [NG223]**

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), 2022

This guideline covers ways to support social, emotional and mental wellbeing in children and young people in primary and secondary education (key stages 1 to 5), and people 25 years and under with special educational needs or disability in further education colleges. It aims to promote good social, emotional and psychological health to protect children and young people against behavioural and health problems.

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B. Synopsis or Summary

1. **Mental health in students**

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), 2020

Higher education students are at high risk of mental health problems. Mental health problems commonly seen in people in higher education include depression and anxiety disorders, in addition to: Addiction. Psychosis and schizophrenia. Bipolar disorder. Eating disorders. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Major risk factors associated with mental health problems in students include: Loneliness. Financial and academic pressures. Pre-existing neurodevelopmental conditions such as ADHD. Chronic physical health conditions. Identifying as 'non-binary' gender. Complications of mental health problems in students can include lower educational attainment and increased risk of suicide. GP practices looking after significant numbers of higher education students could consider identifying young people at risk of mental health problems by routinely: Assessing mental wellbeing when students join the practice (using short questionnaires). Reviewing the history of students with a pre-existing mental health diagnosis. Asking students about their current mental wellbeing opportunistically. Where a mental health problem is suspected, the student should be assessed to determine the diagnosis and the severity of the condition. The risk of suicide should be assessed when appropriate. Referral pathways and ongoing management strategies will be dependent on the mental health condition and its severity. GPs involved in

caring for students with mental health problems should be aware of the importance of communicating and co-ordinating with healthcare professionals involved in the person's care at their home location, other personnel involved in their care at the university site (including university counsellors and members of multidisciplinary teams) and, if the student has provided consent and this is deemed appropriate, their parents/carers.

Available online at this link

2. **Prescribing guidelines for patients with a first episode psychosis**
   Avon and Wiltshire Partnership Mental Health Trust. NICE, 2020

   A critical component of optimal early treatment for patients with first episode psychosis includes appropriate and effective use of medications. [...] Key findings: Through presentations and consultations both within the Trust and externally, we were able to produce prescribing guidelines which incorporate NICE guideline recommendations, as well as providing prescribers with evidence-based treatment options. This therefore means that patients are correctly assessed (including a treatment-free period), and where appropriate, started on low dose, second-generation antipsychotics, with specific recommendations made, which builds on the relevant NICE guidelines. Trust prescribing information shows that prescribing for antipsychotics is on a down-ward trend overall. Second generation antipsychotics are now primarily prescribed. There has been a move away from prescribing antipsychotics such as olanzapine, with its associated detrimental cardiometabolic long-term consequences for patients. Medication is given an increasingly fair trial. Physical health monitoring is also improving. Patients have welcomed more choice in their treatment options, and we have received excellent feedback regarding information provided about the different medication options available. With patients more involved in prescribing decisions, compliance has increased and cessation of medication due to side effects has reduced. As a result, it is likely that this will have an impact on reducing rates of relapse, and thus a reduction in time spent in hospital. Not only have the prescribing guidelines benefited patients, but prescribers across the Trust have welcomed these guidelines. In addition, other Trusts are also adopting the guidelines.

   Available online at this link

3. **Suicide prevention: policy and practice**
   Balogun B. et al. House of Commons Library, 2022

   This briefing paper considers suicide prevention policies and strategies throughout the UK. It outlines national and local approaches to prevention policy in some key policy areas.. The data shows in 2020 there were 5,224 deaths registered in England and Wales where the cause was identified as suicide. This equates to 10.0 deaths per 100,000 population, which was a lower rate than 2019 but similar to previous years. However, it is lower than rates

recorded in the 1980s and 1990s. The paper covers the following policy areas: health services – including details of suicide prevention measures and mental health support in the NHS Long Term Plan (January 2019) and other NHS England reports and covering local suicide prevention plans and NHS support for high risk groups; education – this section covers suicide prevention measures taken by educational institutions, including schools and the mental health services they provide, as well as further and higher education institutions which have a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to support their students, including those with mental illness conditions; employment – this section outlines policies designed to keep people who suffer from mental health problems in work, including implementation of a Government strategy for support for people with health conditions in the workplace called 'Improving Lives', as well as a consultation on proposals to reduce ill health-related job loss; social security – this section outlines support for benefit claimants with mental health problems, training and guidance for DWP staff, the risks in Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and Personal Independent Payment (PIP) assessments, and concerns about the impact of conditionality and sanctions on people with mental health conditions; transport – this section details suicide prevention measures for railways and roads undertaken by the British Transport Police (BTP) and the Department of Transport, as well as suicide prevention strategies developed by Samaritans, BTP, Network Rail, Highways England, and other parts of the transport sector

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4. **The experiences of young LGBTQ+ people self-managing their mental health**
Kashirsky N. The Mental Elf, 2022

One in three lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) young people within the UK experience mental health difficulties, compared to one in eight young people within the general population (NHS Digital, 2018). Additionally, LGBTQ+ people are less likely to access mental health services due to reasons such as perceiving services as discriminatory and experiencing higher levels of dissatisfaction with such services (Hudson-Sharp & Metcalf, 2016). As such, many LGBTQ+ young people may feel forced to self-manage their mental health difficulties. Self-management can be defined as taking responsibility for personal wellbeing and behaviour (Oxford English Dictionary, 2020), e.g., using unguided self-help interventions (Bennett et al., 2019), self-care approaches (Wolpert et al., 2019), or strategies to cope with and regulate emotions (Stapley et al., 2019). However, research on self-management of mental health difficulties within LGBTQ+ young people is limited. *The primary paper is: Town, R., Hayes, D., Fonagy, P., & Stapley, E. (2021). A qualitative investigation of LGBTQ+ young people's experiences and perceptions of self-managing their mental health. European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*

Available online at this link

C. Systematic Review

1. **Impact of peer support on student mental wellbeing: a systematic review [version 1]**
   John NM et al. MedEd Publlish, 2018

   This article was migrated. The article was marked as recommended. Objectives: Many universities use peer support programmes to support students. However, there are currently no guidelines on the most effective way of facilitating emotional wellbeing in students. The aim of this paper is to review the evidence for the effectiveness of peer support to improve mental health wellbeing in university students. Methods: Six electronic databases (Medline, Embase, British Education Index (BEI), Australian Education Index (AEI), PsychINFO and Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA)) were searched in December 2017. Search terms included "peer support", "university students" and "mental wellbeing". Studies that did not include peer support or assess the impact of students' mental health were excluded. Data about design and delivery of the peer support intervention and changes in student mental wellbeing outcomes were extracted. Results: 489 records were identified. Three studies met the inclusion criteria; two cross-sectional surveys and one non-randomised intervention study. One study found social support to be the most important protective factor for mental wellbeing. Two studies showed no statistically significant improvement in wellbeing outcomes with peer support. One study found that majority of mentors and mentees found peer support useful. Conclusions: There is currently no evidence that peer support improves mental wellbeing among university students.
   Available online at this link

2. **Mental Health-Related Digital Use by University Students: A Systematic Review**
   Montagni I. et al. Telemedicine and e-health, 2020

   Introduction: Mental health problems are common among students at university, representing a major public health concern. The internet and new technologies are widely used by students and represent a significant resource to them for mental health information and support. Aim: The aim of this systematic review is to summarize and critique studies of mental health-related digital use (including purposes, advantages, and barriers) by students worldwide, to support the implementation of future digital mental health interventions targeting university students. Methods: We searched for peer-reviewed articles published between January 2008 and May 2018 by using Pubmed, Google Scholar, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, and SocINDEX. Studies were coded by author, year of publication, country, research design, recruitment and sampling, data collection, analysis method, key findings, and mean quality score. Outcomes were

synthetized through the textual narrative synthesis method. Results: Of the 1,487 titles and abstracts screened, 24 articles were critically reviewed. Sample sizes ranged from 19 to 6,034 participants. The two key findings were that students worldwide have a high need for mental health information and are prepared to use digital tools for their mental health and wellbeing. However, they are currently struggling to discern trustworthy information online and are expressing a desire for reliable devices handling their sensitive data. Conclusions: Through the description of patterns in university students' mental health-related digital use, this review outlines important features for potential web- and mobile-based interventions for promoting mental health and preventing mental illness at the university

[Available online at this link](#)

3. **Mitigating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education**
   Unterhalter E. et al. UCL Social Research Institute, 2021

This rapid review assesses the published research evidence on what we currently know about the nature of the harms associated with the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education institutions in the UK. It focuses on teaching, learning and research in universities and their connections with the communities they serve. Thirty-eight studies of harms associated with higher education are included in the review, documenting a deepening of inequalities associated with access and participation, harms associated with mental health and wellbeing, alterations in learning and teaching, disrupted research agendas, difficulties in planning and management, and anxieties about future work prospects. There are indications of concern at increased levels of gender-based violence, although no substantial data on this theme. 39 systematic reviews of interventions to address or mitigate these harms were reviewed together with 13 empirical studies of responses to disasters and pandemics, notably floods, earthquakes, HIV and SARS. Highly effective mitigating interventions were noted regarding grants to students to complete studies, expanded provision for and access to mental health and wellbeing services, improved learning, and teaching strategies to take account of vulnerabilities to disaster, and clear management planning to prepare for disaster and risk. Conclusions note the evidence on the harms created by the pandemic is preliminary and partial as the review has been conducted at a time when many of the effects of the pandemic on higher education are still emerging, with limited opportunities for rigorous documentation of changes over time. Nonetheless the harms summarised in the report point to pressures on widening participation strategies, student financial hardship, stress and anxiety for students and staff, uneven or truncated learning experiences, and difficulties for management in planning in the short- and medium-term. The approaches to mitigation and adaptation we have found highlight the importance of not simply seeing the pandemic as a single bitter moment affecting only certain groups in certain sectors of the education system in particular ways. Rather, they highlight the interconnectedness between the higher education sector and other parts of the education system. This shows how the

system as a whole needs to improve the ways in which it plans and supports access to higher education including student financing, how it provides wellbeing and mental health services, and how it approaches enhanced learning, teaching, research and management. All this while acknowledging both shared and sector-specific vulnerabilities as well as the centrality of education in supporting wider society through difficult times

Available online at this link

4. **Supporting mental health and wellbeing of university and college students: A systematic review of review-level evidence of interventions**
Public Library of Science (PLoS), 2022

The review of reviews had three aims: (i) to synthesize the available evidence on interventions to improve college and university students' mental health and wellbeing; (ii) to identify the effectiveness of interventions, and (iii) to highlight gaps in the evidence base for future study. Methods: Electronic database searches were conducted to identify reviews in English from high-income OECD countries published between 1999 and 2020. All review-level empirical studies involving post-secondary students attending colleges of further education or universities that examined interventions to improve general mental health and wellbeing were included. Articles were critically appraised using an amended version of the AMSTAR 2 tool. Evidence from the included reviews were narratively synthesized and organised by intervention types. Results: Twenty-seven reviews met the review of reviews inclusion criteria. The quality of the included reviews varied considerably. Intervention types identified included: mindfulness-based interventions, psychological interventions, psychoeducation interventions, recreation programmes, relaxation interventions, setting-based interventions, and stress management/reduction interventions. There was evidence that mindfulness-based interventions, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), and interventions delivered via technology were effective when compared to a passive control. Some evidence suggested that the effects of CBT-related interventions are sustained over time. Psychoeducation interventions do not appear to be as effective as other forms of intervention, with its effects not enduring over time. Conclusions: The review of reviews located a sizeable body of evidence on specific interventions such as mindfulness and cognitive-behavioural interventions. The evidence suggests that these interventions can effectively reduce common mental health difficulties in the higher education student body. Gaps and limitations in the reviews and the underlying body of evidence have been identified. These include a notable gap in the existing body of review-level evidence on setting-based interventions, acceptance and commitment training, and interventions for students attending colleges in UK settings.

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D. Institutional Publication

1. **Navigating the road of adolescence: young people's mental health in the UK: how the pandemic has affected young people's ability to self-regulate socially and emotionally**
   Walker S. STEER Education, 2022

   This report analyses data from the STEER Tracking programme, 2018- December 2021, involving twice or thrice yearly data assessment of students' ability to socially and emotionally self-regulate, focusing on the impact of the pandemic. The report reveals that to date the pandemic has had a 25 % adverse effect on students' ability to self-regulate in school. Girls are particularly affected, with a 33% decline, whilst boys' self-regulation outside school has actually improved during the pandemic. By the time girls reach 18, they now have more than twice the self-regulatory risks as boys of the same age. The pandemic public exam cancellation provided a unique opportunity to measure the social-emotional impacts of public exams vs not having public exams. Data suggests that public exams have an adverse effect on student wellbeing. Relatively stable levels of visible disruptive adolescent behaviours during the pandemic may be explained by an increase of hidden, internalised risks which are not yet visible. Strong signals indicate that the specific long-term psychological risk from the pandemic will be pathologies driven by internalised control, particularly in girls aged 14-18. Independent day schools saw some similar increases to state schools, but from a lower pre-pandemic baseline and to a lower extent.
   Available online at this link

2. **Stepchange: mentally health universities** Universities UK, 2021

   Call to action calls on universities to adopt mental health as a strategic priority, to see it as foundational to all aspects of university life, for all students and all staff. This whole university framework, co-developed with Student Minds' University Mental Health Charter, provides a shared framework for change
   Available online at this link

3. **Self-assesment tool: stepchange mentally healthy universities** Universities UK, 2021

   This self-assessment tool has been developed to encourage universities to plan and implement a whole university approach, as set out in Stepchange: mentally healthy universities. The tool aligns with the content and approach of the Student Minds University Mental Health Charter.
   Available online at this link

4. **Student Space: an evaluation of a web-based intervention supporting student mental wellbeing over the pandemic** Durcan G. Centre for Mental Health, 2022

Findings of an independent evaluation of a web-based intervention to support student mental wellbeing in England and Wales during the pandemic. The intervention, Student Space, was developed by Student Minds and funded by the Office for Students and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales. Student Space included four key elements: advice and information; student stories – five-minute video clips made by students giving practical advice; support services – from the outset, these included a phoneline, a text service, an email service and webchat; support at your university – this provides links to most higher education mental health and wellbeing services, via a search bar. All of the key stakeholders and students were impressed by the quality of Student Space and it was described as strongly evidence-based, relevant and very readable. Student Minds achieved this through ongoing insights research and robust processes to ensure the quality of material on the website. The four elements of Student Space have all been well received. However, not all elements of Student Space have as yet been fully tested and may be yet to reach their potential

[Available online at this link](#)

5. **a degree of uncertainty: looking at student wellbeing** Randstad, 2022

Registration required for free report download: Over a quarter of UK students (37%) are experiencing their state of mental wellbeing changing for the worse since starting higher education. The 2020 'an investigation into student wellbeing' report based on the responses of over 1800 highlights some alarming statistics. Comparisons to responses just two years ago reveals some interesting insights

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6. **Information sharing and student suicide report** University Mental Health Advisers Network, 2022

Student suicide is an understandably emotive topic; in addition to the loss of an individual, the impact is felt deeply by family, friends, peers and a wide range of staff. There is an urgent need for universities to develop explicit and clearer policies around information sharing. We are concerned about the potential impact on students' trust in mental health support at university when "opt in" schemes for consent are introduced. Students need reassurances that their confidential information remains so; and our member survey shows an accurate picture of how and when information is currently shared - with the student at the centre. The purpose of this document is to explore the complexities of what is being

intimated by external bodies and Government in terms of creating different information sharing practices for adult students than the rest of the population, alongside highlighting the need for an accurate reflection of what is already happening "on the ground". As the survey was anonymous we do not have information regarding which organisations or nations responses were from; however, the discussion and recommendations are based on legislation in England and Wales. Some of this paper will still be relevant to colleagues across Scotland and Ireland however we recommend further work to ensure recommendations are relevant for all 4 nations

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7. **NHS-university partnerships: Working together for student mental health** Universities UK, 2022

Students continue to find it difficult to access NHS mental health services. They're reporting gaps in care, between university support and the NHS, in-between term times and between children's and adult mental health services. This briefing covers five case studies of partnerships between universities and the NHS to join-up mental health care for students. Information on university-NHS partnerships that are developing new models for mental health services for students. A summary of five case studies of partnerships in five cities in the UK. The five case studies cover: Greater Manchester -- Liverpool -- North London -- Sheffield -- Bristol

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8. **Mental health of higher education students** Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCPsych), 2021

[...] This [updated] document considers the increase in student numbers, and changes in student characteristics and vulnerabilities, since 2011, and acknowledges the role of financial pressures on students. It provides updates on the epidemiology, prevalence, and impact of mental disorder, including neurodevelopmental disorder, in students and age-matched populations, and the issue of student suicide. It outlines the importance of good transition of care and continuity of care between services, and the challenge of effective communication in the context of medical confidentiality. The Covid pandemic has thrown up a new set of concerns that will have to be considered in the context of student mental health. These will apply to all students but will weigh more heavily on those who come to university with past histories of mental ill health. Such students may already find it difficult to integrate with a new social environment and to build relationships with clinicians, support staff, academic staff, and their fellow students. These difficulties will be exacerbated by the restrictions arising from Covid. The purpose of the following recommendations is to inform work with commissioners, service providers, and partner agencies, and to improve the

mental health support and treatment available. This is key to improving outcomes for students in higher education in the UK.

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9. **Minding our future: starting a conversation about the support of student mental health** UK Universities, 2021

As students become adults, they also take on the challenges of higher education, independent living and making new friends. At the same time, they move between their homes and university, meaning they may slip through the gaps in the health system when they are most vulnerable. Mental health support for students needs to understand these transitions and join up care around their needs. Minding our future contains new guidance to improve the coordination of care between the NHS and universities, so that all students can access the care they need.

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10. **Student mental wellbeing in higher education Good practice guide** Universities UK, 2021

This guidance has been written for senior leaders and managers, and aims to support institutions in their promotion of mental wellbeing and in the support they provide for students experiencing mental health difficulties. The guidance highlights clear routes of support, ease of access and appropriate adjustments to the learning and living environment as positive enablers for students. The reluctance of some students to disclose their experiences remains a concern, although it is encouraging to see that the development of social inclusion and anti-stigma campaigns is beginning to address this; the work done by student bodies to support this is particularly commendable. The guidance recognises and encourages the efforts of institutions in developing a comprehensive and effective range of internal support services for students with mental health difficulties, as well as developing collaborative relationships with external services, enabling referral to the NHS where necessary. This is an important point: university wellbeing services, however excellent, cannot replace the specialised care that the NHS provides for students with mental illnesses.

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11. **University mental health: life in a pandemic:** Frampton N. et al. Student Minds, 2021

In March 2020, as coronavirus (Covid–19) spread across the UK, Student Minds began a period of listening. We gathered insights from across the higher education (HE) sector in order to understand what students were experiencing and how we, as the UK's student mental health charity, could support them. We listened to the concerns of students and staff and analysed social media posts, research findings and news articles to identify the key

issues for students. We saw key themes shifting as restrictions and case numbers changed and student concerns fluctuated between immediate needs and longer–term issues. Recognising the unique and quickly–changing situation for students, Student Minds also developed and shared information and guidance. In August 2020, building on the information and guidance we'd shared over the previous five months, Student Minds launched Student Space. Student Space was developed to offer a combination of psycho–educational content and real student stories alongside text, phone and email support provided by Shout and The Mix. Since then, Student Space has also launched further services for students from backgrounds which have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, and/or who otherwise have limited access to tailored support. Now, over a year on from the first national lockdown, we have collated our learnings about students' experiences since March 2020 into this report. Along with the findings of our broader insights and listening work from throughout the year, this report also includes data from some of our own primary research (see Methodology).In recognition of the need for a whole–university approach to mental health and wellbeing, the report has been structured using the themes from Student Minds' University Mental Health Charter (2019): Live, Learn, Work and Support. The final section, Inequalities and Intersectionality, focuses on the disproportionate impact of the past 18 months on particular groups – an issue we wish to examine in more depth in the near future. The section focuses on the disproportionate impact of the past 18 months on particular groups – an issue we wish to examine in more depth in the near future

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E. Original Research

1. **A mindfulness-based intervention to increase resilience to stress in university students (the Mindful Student Study): a pragmatic randomised controlled trial**
   Galante J. et al. The Lancet Public Health 2017; 1-10.
   Available online at this link

   The rising number of young people going to university has led to concerns about an increasing demand for student mental health services. We aimed to assess whether provision of mindfulness courses to university students would improve their resilience to stress. Methods We did this pragmatic randomised controlled trial at the University of Cambridge, UK. Students aged 18 years or older with no severe mental illness or crisis (self-assessed) were randomly assigned (1:1), via remote survey software using computer-generated random numbers, to receive either an 8 week mindfulness course adapted for university students (Mindfulness Skills for Students [MSS]) plus mental health support as

usual, or mental health support as usual alone. Participants and the study management team were aware of group allocation, but allocation was concealed from the researchers, outcome assessors, and study statistician. The primary outcome was self-reported psychological distress during the examination period, as measured with the Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation Outcome Measure (CORE–OM), with higher scores indicating more distress. The primary analysis was by intention to treat. This trial is registered with the Australia and New Zealand Clinical Trials Registry, number ACTRN12615001160527. Findings Between Sept 28, 2015, and Jan 15, 2016, we randomly assigned 616 students to the MSS group (n=309) or the support as usual group (n=307). 453 (74%) participants completed the CORE–OM during the examination period and 182 (59%) MSS participants completed at least half of the course. MSS reduced distress scores during the examination period compared with support as usual, with mean CORE–OM scores of 0·87 (SD 0·50) in 237 MSS participants versus 1·11 (0·57) in 216 support as usual participants (adjusted mean difference −0·14, 95% CI −0·22 to −0·06; p=0·001), showing a moderate effect size (β −0·44, 95% CI −0·60 to −0·29; p<0·0001). 123 (57%) of 214 participants in the support as usual group had distress scores above an accepted clinical threshold compared with 88 (37%) of 235 participants in the MSS group. On average, six students (95% CI four to ten) needed to be offered the MSS course to prevent one from experiencing clinical levels of distress. No participants had adverse reactions related to self-harm, suicidality, or harm to others. Interpretation Our findings show that provision of mindfulness training could be an effective component of a wider student mental health strategy. Further comparative effectiveness research with inclusion of controls for non-specific effects is needed to define a range of additional, effective interventions to increase resilience to stress in university students.

2. **Adaptability and social support: Examining links with psychological wellbeing among UK students and non-students**
Holliman Andrew J., Waldeck Daniel, Jay Bethany, Murphy Summayah, Atkinson Emily, Collie Rebecca J., Martin Andrew. 2021

The purpose of this multi-study article was to investigate the roles of adaptability and social support in predicting a variety of psychological outcomes. Data were collected from Year 12 college students (N = 73; Study 1), university students (N = 102; Study 2), and non-studying members of the general public (N = 141; Study 3). Findings showed that, beyond variance attributable to social support, adaptability made a significant independent contribution to psychological wellbeing (life satisfaction, psychological wellbeing, flourishing, and general affect) and psychological distress across all studies. Beyond the effects of adaptability, social support was found to make a significant independent contribution to most wellbeing outcomes (but not psychological distress in university students). In a multi-group analysis comparing predictors of psychological wellbeing in university students and non-studying

adults, where the same outcome measures were used (Study 4; N = 243), it was found that adaptability played a stronger role (relative to social support) for university students, whereas social support played a stronger role for non-studying adults. Finally, (contrary to expectations) there was no evidence of an interaction between adaptability and social support predicting psychological outcomes—adaptability and social support operated as independent main effects. These findings demonstrate the importance of adaptability and social support in uniquely predicting psychological wellbeing in different sample groups. It is argued here that these two factors, should be given greater consideration in discussions of psychological wellbeing, and are relevant to psychological wellbeing at different major developmental life stages

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3. **Addressing the mental health crisis in medical schools in England and the Republic of Ireland: A student collaborative**

Ruhomauly Zeinab, Haffeez Adina, Karponis Dimitrios. 2020

The authors urge higher medical education bodies and medical schools to collaborate in the battle against the mental health crisis in medical schools. Systems to share learning and best practices should be encouraged between universities. Early interventions are essential in nurturing sustainable mental health practices

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4. **An evaluation of specialist mentoring for university students with autism spectrum disorders and mental health conditions**

Lucas Rebecca, James Alana I. 2018

Mentoring is often recommended to universities as a way of supporting students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and/or mental health conditions (MHC), but there is little literature on optimising this support. We used mixed-methods to evaluate mentees' and mentors' experiences of a specialist mentoring programme. Mentees experienced academic, social and emotional support, although subtle group differences emerged between students with ASD and MHC. The quality of the mentee-mentor relationship was especially important. Mentors also reported benefits. Thematic analysis identified that effective mentoring requires a tailored partnership, which involves a personal relationship, empowerment, and building bridges into the university experience. Mentoring can effectively support students with ASD and/or MHC, but this is highly dependent on the development of tailored mentee-mentor partnerships.

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5. **Anxiety and depression in a sample of UK college students: A study of prevalence, comorbidity, and quality of life**

    Jenkins Paul E., Ducker Imogen, Gooding Rebecca, James Megan, Rutter-Eley Emily. 2020

    Objective: This study sought to estimate the prevalence of depression and anxiety in UK college students and examine associations between mental health symptoms and quality of life (QoL). Associations between psychiatric comorbidity and degree of QoL impairment were also investigated. Participants: Participants (N = 286) were recruited from a UK university (76.1% ≤20 years-old; 86.8% female; 71.1% White). Methods: Self-report measures of depression, anxiety, and QoL were completed online. Group differences and within-group associations were examined with Chi-square analyses, linear regressions, and ANOVAs. Results: Prevalence rates were in line with global estimates and suggest female students are at elevated risk of mental health problems. Symptom severity and comorbidity were associated with greater QoL impairment. Conclusions: Presence of depression, anxiety, or both was associated with QoL impairment. Findings develop understanding of the impact of mental health problems on QoL and could inform appropriate screening and effective interventions for student mental health

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6. **Challenges to addressing student mental health in embedded counselling services: A survey of UK higher and further education institutions**

    Broglia Emma, Millings Abigail, Barkham Michael. 2018

    With reports continually demonstrating increased demand and severity of student mental health needs, it is important to gain a fuller understanding of the impact on embedded student counselling services. The aims of this research were to identify (a) service similarities, (b) factors which impact on services, (c) characteristics of service users, and (d) the use of therapeutic technology (e.g. online self-help). An online survey was completed by 113 heads of UK student counselling services across Higher Education (HE), Further Education (FE), and Sixth Form Colleges (SFCs), to capture service data from the academic year 2013/14. Students predominantly received high-intensity support (e.g. counselling) and referrals increased over 3 years. Challenges to embedded counselling services and their implications for development are discussed.

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7. **Conceptualising mental illness among university students of African, Caribbean and similar ethnic heritage in the United Kingdom**

    Dare Oluwateniayo, Jidong Dung Ezekiel, Premkumar Preethi. 2022

ABSTRACT Objective Students of African, Caribbean and similar ethnicity (ACE) encounter unique mental health challenges within the Western higher education system, such as feeling constrained in social spaces and perceiving greater stigma about mental health. Students of ACE are also resilient to mental health problems, such as depression, when enduring social inequality. This study aimed to conceptualise mental illness and help-seeking behaviours among university students in the United Kingdom (UK) in the context of their identity as ACE. Design Six university students of ACE in the UK were interviewed about the meaning of mental illness, the influence of ACE culture on mental health and help-seeking by ACE students. Thematic analysis was applied from a socio-constructionist theoretical lens to interpret the interview transcripts. Results Five main themes emerged, namely 'Perceived meanings and attitudes toward mental health problems', 'Beliefs about the non-existence of mental health problem and its spiritual attributions', 'Family dynamics and the 'silencing' of mental health problems', 'Help-seeking for mental health among people of ACE' and 'Stigma and discriminatory responses to mental health issues'. Participants expressed that mental health is an imported concept that people from ACE communities tend to shy away from. A reluctance to discuss mental health problems arose over fear of rejection from families and fear of not being understood by a mental health professional from a different cultural background. Conclusion University students of ACE and their families struggle to adopt the Western conceptualisation of mental health. Consequently, there is poor awareness of mental health issues and stigma of mental illness among university students of ACE which pose a barrier to help-seeking for mental health. The limited sample size constrains the ability to draw sound conclusions. Nonetheless, a culturally sensitive conceptualisation of mental health is needed to address poor help-seeking for mental health among people of ACE.

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8. **Coping with loneliness at university: A qualitative interview study with students in the UK**
Vasileiou Konstantina, Barnett Julie, Barreto Manuela, Vines John, Atkinson Mark, Long Kiel, Bakewell Lyndsey, Lawson Shaun, Wilson Michael. 2019

Leaving home to attend University constitutes a transition that is often characterized by an increased risk of loneliness, a psychological state that predicts poor mental health outcomes. Informed by a comprehensive conceptual framework of coping with stress, this study sought to examine the coping strategies young adults deploy to manage experiences of loneliness whilst studying at University. A qualitative, cross-sectional study was designed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 University students who had moved away from home to study, and who self-identified experiencing loneliness. We used directed qualitative content analysis to analyse the data both between and within participants. The results demonstrate that participants used a variety of coping strategies to manage the distressing experience of loneliness. Accommodation, mainly in the form of distraction,

9. **Determinants of wellbeing in university students: The role of residential status, stress, loneliness, resilience, and sense of coherence**
Brett Caroline E., Mathieson Michelle L., Rowley Avril M. 2022

Maintaining wellbeing in university students is a government priority, but robust evidence has been lacking. Higher wellbeing is associated with better mental and physical health, higher self-esteem, self-efficacy, and effective coping strategies. This study aimed to identify, through an online survey in 2018, key determinants of wellbeing amongst a sample of 574 (65.5% female) students across all levels of study at a university in the UK. Most respondents (526 (91.8%)) reported feeling unusually stressed or overwhelmed at university. Residential students reported higher loneliness and number of stressors than commuter students, and postgraduate students reported higher wellbeing, resilience, and sense of coherence, and lower perceived stress and loneliness. Hierarchical regression analyses showed that 71.8% of the variance in wellbeing was predicted by a model containing demographics (age/gender, level of study, number of stressors), psychosocial variables, and perceived stress, with perceived stress, sense of coherence, loneliness, and resilience the strongest predictors. The findings suggest that interventions designed to improve resilience and sense of coherence, and reduce loneliness and perceived stress are likely to be effective in enhancing wellbeing in a student population

10. **Effectiveness of mindful walking intervention in nature on sleep quality and mood among university student during Covid-19: A randomised control study.**
Ma Jingni, Williams Joanne, Morris Paul Graham, Chan Professor Stella W. Y. Explore, 2022

OBJECTIVE: The aim of this project was to conduct a randomised control study to examine whether outdoor mindful walking in nature can effectively improve university students' sleep quality, mood, and mindfulness during the lockdown of Covid-19 pandemic in the U.K., METHODS: Participants were measured at T0 (pre-study baseline), T1 (pre-intervention), T2 (post-intervention), and T3 (follow-up). A total of 104 participants (female = 94) who were experiencing sleep difficulties were randomly allocated to either an experimental (i.e., nature) or control (i.e., urban) walking environments. Participants in each walking condition independently undertook a daily 35-minute walk for a week (7 days). Subjective sleep quality, total mood disturbance, mindfulness, and degree of nature, and participants' perspectives and suggestions about the intervention, were collected., RESULTS: Findings suggest that both groups exhibited significant improvements on participant's trait mindfulness, sleep quality and mood after the intervention. However, mindful walking in nature did not bring additional mental health benefits to participants than those who

walked in urban environment. Participants reflected their perspectives about the intervention, which will assist with further intervention development., CONCLUSIONS: Findings contribute to the evidence base for the effectiveness of outdoor mindful walking interventions on mental health. Especially these findings add new knowledge of how mindful walking outdoors reduces university students' mood disturbances and improves their sleep quality and mindfulness level during the pandemic.

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11. **Effects of the COVID-19 lockdown on mental health in a UK student sample.**

Catling J. C, Bayley A., Begum Z., Wardzinski C., Wood A. BMC Psychology, 2022

BACKGROUND: The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting restrictions placed upon society have had a profound impact on both physical and mental health, particularly for young people., AIMS: The current study assesses the impact of COVID-19 on student mental health., METHOD: Four hundred and thirty four first year Undergraduate students completed a battery of self-report questionnaires (PHQ-P, GAD-7 and SAS-SV) to assess for depression, anxiety and mobile phone addiction respectively with data being collected over a 2 year period. The data from each year was compared (216 and 218 students respectively)., RESULTS: A MANOVA revealed that COVID-19 had a significant impact on self-reported levels of depression, anxiety and smartphone addiction-which all significantly increased from the 2020 to the 2021 group. The percentage of students who had a score which warranted a classification of clinical depression increased from 30 to 44%, and for anxiety increased from 22 to 27%-those students who showed a comorbidity across the two rose from 12 to 21%. Smartphone addiction levels rose from 39 to 50%. Correlational analysis showed a significant relationship between Smartphone usage and depression and anxiety., CONCLUSIONS: This research suggests that COVID-19 has had a major impact upon student mental health, and smartphone addiction. The importance of identifying predictive factors of depression and anxiety is emphasised, and suggestions for intervention are discussed.

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12. **Effects of the COVID-19 lockdown on mental health, wellbeing, sleep, and alcohol use in a UK student sample**

Evans, Alkan, Bhangoo, Tenenbaum, Ng-Knight. Psychiatry Research, 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent restrictions imposed by governments worldwide have had profound social and psychological effects, particularly for young adults. This study used longitudinal data to characterise effects on mental health and behaviour in a UK student sample, measuring sleep quality and diurnal preference, depression and anxiety symptoms, wellbeing and loneliness, and alcohol use. Self-report data was collected from

254 undergraduates (219 females) at a UK university at two-time points: autumn 2019 (baseline, pre-pandemic) and April/May 2020 (under 'lockdown' conditions). Longitudinal analyses showed a significant rise in depression symptoms and a reduction in wellbeing at lockdown. Over a third of the sample could be classed as clinically depressed at lockdown compared to 15% at baseline. Sleep quality was not affected across the sample as a whole. The increase in depression symptoms was highly correlated with worsened sleep quality. A reduction in alcohol use, and a significant shift towards an 'evening' diurnal preference, were also observed. Levels of worry surrounding contracting COVID-19 were high. Results highlight the urgent need for strategies to support young people's mental health: alleviating worries around contracting COVID, and supporting good sleep quality, could benefit young adults' mental health as the COVID-19 crisis unfolds.

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13. **Engaging male students with mental health support: a qualitative focus group study**
Sagar-Ouriaghli I. et al. BMC Public Health 2020; 1159.
Available online at this link

Background: Males are less likely to seek help for mental health difficulties compared to females. Despite considerable interest, a paucity of evidence-based solutions exists to address this. Concerns about students' mental health has led to the United Kingdom's Department of Education to make this a priority. Studies have shown that male students hold more negative attitudes towards the use of psychological services compared to female students and are less likely to seek help. A major concern is that male students make up 69% of university suicides, which is often associated with lower rates of help-seeking. This focus group study therefore sought to identify potential approaches that would be relevant to improving mental health help-seeking in male students. Methods: Three focus groups comprising of 24 male students at a London University were conducted. Participants were asked questions exploring: the barriers to seeking help, what would encourage help-seeking, how an appropriate intervention should be designed, and how to publicise this intervention to male students. Thematic analysis was conducted to evaluate participants responses. Results: Five distinct themes were identified. These were: 1) protecting male vulnerability, 2) providing a masculine narrative of help-seeking, 3) differences over intervention format, 4) difficulty knowing when and how to seek help, and 5) strategies to sensitively engage male students. Conclusions: These themes represent important considerations that can be used, together with the existing literature about male help-seeking, to develop more male friendly interventions that are suitable for male students. This could help improve help-seeking attitudes and the uptake of mental health interventions for male students experiencing emotional distress

14. **Evaluating mental health and wellbeing of postgraduate researchers: Prevalence and contributing factors**

Milicev Jelena, McCann Mark, Simpson Sharon A., Biello Stephany M., Gardani Maria. 2021

High rates of mental ill-health in postgraduate researchers (PGRs) represent a significant barrier to life satisfaction and academic success. Nevertheless, there is little knowledge about the extent and origins of mental health problems of PGRs in the UK. The current study addresses this gap by investigating the prevalence and provenance of anxiety, depression, sleep problems, subjective mental wellbeing, and suicide behaviours of PGRs in the UK. An online survey (N = 479) was used to measure the mental health outcomes and assess their relationships with demographic, trait and academic variables, policy, and social support. We found a high prevalence of mental ill-health and low levels of wellbeing in the current sample. Factors associated with poorer outcomes were female and non-binary gender, non-heterosexual identity, maladaptive perfectionism, workaholism and being in the 5th year of study or above. Resilience, adaptive perfectionism, higher levels of social support and positive evaluations of progress and preparation, departmental climate, and supervisory relationship were associated with more positive outcomes. The current findings contribute new knowledge about the prevalence of mental health symptoms in PGRs in the UK, implying that institutional efforts to improve PGR wellbeing should include strategies to promote equality, diversity, resilience, integration, social support, and work-life balance of PGRs.

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15. **Evaluating mental health literacy and help-seeking behaviours in UK university students: A country wide study**

Gorczynski Paul, Sims-Schouten Wendy, Wilson Clare. 2020

Purpose: Despite a high prevalence of mental health problems, few students know where to turn for support. The purpose of this study was to gain a UK wide perspective on levels of mental health literacy amongst university students and to examine the relationship between mental health literacy and mental health help-seeking behaviours.
Design/methodology/approach: A total of 300 university students in the UK participated in this online cross-sectional study. Participants filled out the mental health literacy scale, the general help-seeking questionnaire, Kessler psychological distress scale 10, The Warwick-Edinburgh mental well-being scale and the self-compassion scale: short form. Findings: Overall, 78 per cent of participants indicated mild or more severe symptoms of distress. Students reported lower levels of mental health literacy when compared to students in other nations. Women, bisexuals, and those with a history of mental disorders indicated high levels of mental health literacy. Participants indicated they were most likely to seek support from intimate partners and least likely to seek support from religious leaders. No

significant correlations were found between mental health literacy and help-seeking behaviours. Mental health literacy was not correlated with distress, mental well-being or self-compassion. Help-seeking behaviours were only significantly positively correlated with mental well-being. Originality/value: Universities should address strategies to improve help-seeking behaviours in an effort to address overall mental well-being. Programmes may wish to help provide students with information about accessing face-to-face support systems. Environmental strategies to foster mental well-being on campus should also be explored.
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16. **Evaluating mental health literacy and help-seeking behaviours in UK university students: a country wide study**
GORCZYNSKI Paul, SIMS-SCHOUTEN Wendy, WILSON Clare. Journal of Public Mental Health, 2020

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17. **Exploring the feasibility and acceptability of the contents, design, and functionalities of an online intervention promoting mental health, wellbeing, and study skills in Higher Education students**

Papadatou-Pastou Marietta, Campbell-Thompson Lauren, Barley Elizabeth, Haddad Mark, Lafarge Caroline, McKeown Eamonn, Simeonov Louise, Tzotzoli Patapia. 2019

Background: Substantial numbers of students in Higher Education (HE) are reporting mental health difficulties, such as mild to moderate symptoms of depression and anxiety. Coupled with academic skills challenges, these difficulties can lead to decreased academic performance, low levels of study satisfaction, and eventually drop out. Student support services are facing budget cuts and can only attend to limited numbers of students, usually the ones who present with more severe mental health problems. Moreover, face-to-face contact may not appeal to those students who feel embarrassed by their problems or are afraid of being stigmatised. To address this important problem, an online psychological wellbeing and study skills support system called MePlusMe, has been developed to provide personalised support to its users. In the present study we investigated the feasibility and acceptability of the contents, design, and functionalities of the system. Methods: An offline version of the system was introduced to 13 postgraduate and undergraduate students (mean age = 31.3 years, SD = 10.25 years; 4 males) in a UK HE Institution, who presented with mild or moderate mental health difficulties. The participants evaluated the design of the system, its functionalities, and contents at Baseline and at Weeks 2, 4, and 8. Results: Participants found the system easy to use, professional, and efficient and its contents non-judgemental and informative. Participants stated that engaging with and practicing the techniques targeted at mental health difficulties led to improvements in positive thinking and self-confidence, while the study skills techniques were practical. Suggestions for further improvement included the development of an app and an option for direct engagement with professionals. Conclusions: The findings confirmed the acceptability of the contents, design and functionalities of the system, while providing useful information to inform its further development. Next steps include a feasibility study, which will test and quantify the effects on everyday functioning, mood, mental wellbeing, and academic self-efficacy after using the system, and subsequently a randomized controlled trial, which will evaluate its effectiveness.

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18. **Feelings of fear, sadness, and loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic: Findings from two studies in the UK**
Ypsilanti Antonia, Mullings Emma, Hawkins Oliver, Lazuras Lambros. 2021

During the COVID-19 pandemic, exposure to COVID-related stimuli, has been enormous. Exposure to threat-related stimuli, can have a significant impact on people's wellbeing particularly in relation to COVID-related anxiety. The present research comprises two empirical studies. In Study 1, a newly developed Emotional Stroop Task (EST) and an Image Rating Task (IRT) were used to assess, automatic and non-automatic affective responses to

COVID-related words and images during the first wave of the pandemic in the UK general population. In Study 2, the same tasks were used to evaluate the affective responses of University students during the second wave of the pandemic. Additionally, loneliness and pro-social behaviours were explored in relation COVID-related anxiety in the same population. Overall, the results showed that automatic affective responses as measured by interference effects on the EST, remained unaffected during the pandemic. However, non-automatic affective responses to COVID-related images measured by the IRT, indicated that participants rated these images as more fearful sadder and higher in anger, compared to non-COVID negative images matched for arousal and negativity and this was more evident in people with high COVID-anxiety. Trait anxiety was related to higher levels of loneliness, more prosocial behaviour and higher intentions to help others, while COVID-related anxiety mediated these effects, suggesting that for high levels of trait anxiety, participants were more likely to have helped someone in need during the pandemic when their COVID-anxiety levels were low.

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19. **General and LGBTQ-specific factors associated with mental health and suicide risk among LGBTQ students**

Gnan Georgina H., Rahman Qazi, Ussher Greg, Baker Dan, West Elizabeth, Rimes Katharine A. 2019

This study investigated general and LGBTQ-specific factors associated with having a current mental health problem, use of mental health services, suicide risk and self-harm in 1948 LGBTQ university students (ages 16-25) who took part in the Youth Chances community study in the UK. In multivariate logistic regression, factors associated with all four outcomes were female gender, sexual abuse, other abuse or violence, and being transgender. Further factors that were significantly associated with one or more of the outcomes included: being bisexual; thinking they were LGBTQ under the age of 10; coming out as LGBTQ under the age of 16; not feeling accepted where they live; having no out staff at university and experiencing LGBTQ-related crime. In addition to general risk factors, negative experiences relating to being LGBTQ may be associated with the increased risk for mental health problems, suicide risk and self-harm in LGBTQ students.

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20. **How is paranoia experienced in a student population? A qualitative study of students scoring highly on a paranoia measure**

Harper David J., Timmons Caoilfhionn. 2021

Objectives: Recent studies have suggested that students may experience high levels of paranoia. This study aimed to explore both experiences of paranoia and coping strategies in

students scoring at high levels on a measure of paranoia. Design: This was a qualitative study which utilized a quantitative measure to identify potential participants. Methods: From an overall sample of 174 London-based university students in the United Kingdom, a sub-sample of 31 students with the highest total scores on the Green et al. Paranoid Thoughts Scale were invited to interview resulting in interviews with seven students (six female and one male) aged between 20 and 36 (M = 28.14). A thematic analysis of the interview transcripts was conducted from a critical realist standpoint. Results: Two key foci structured the analysis: perceived causal influences on paranoia (comprised of 'historical contexts fostering mistrust'; 'finding a social situation strange'; 'anticipating threat'; and 'evaluating the concern') and living with paranoia (comprised of 'effects on everyday life' and 'trying to minimize the effects of paranoia and regaining control'). Conclusions: Key aspects of the findings discussed in the context of the literature include paranoia as a threat heuristic; the role of internal and external dialogues; the influence of gender on content; and the importance of meaning in life as a coping resource. Practitioner points Paranoia may be a significant issue for some students. Paranoia needs to be seen in the context of past aversive experiences. Dialogical approaches may be useful in developing new therapeutic narratives. Valued social roles, activities, and responsibilities may be an important coping resource.

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21. **Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the experience and mental health of university students studying in Canada and the UK: a cross-sectional study - PubMed**
Jennifer A. Appleby, Nathan King, Kate E. Saunders, Anne Bast, Daniel Rivera, Jin Byun, Simone Cunningham, Charandeep Khera, Anne C. Duffy, Jennifer A. Appleby, Nathan King, Kate E. Saunders, Anne Bast, Daniel Rivera, Jin Byun, Simone Cunningham, Charandeep Khera, Anne C. Duffy. BMJ Open Access, 2022

Objectives To explore the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the experiences and mental health of university students. Design A cross-sectional study consisting of an electronic survey about students' experiences and concerns during the pandemic and the associated impact. In addition to the quantitative analysis, free-text responses were extracted and analysed using a framework technique. Setting Queen's University in Canada and the University of Oxford in the UK. Participants Undergraduate students at Queen's University and first-year undergraduate students at the University of Oxford were invited to complete the COVID-19 supplement survey. This study included data from 3013 Queen's students as the primary focus and 339 Oxford students as a secondary comparison. Results Females at Queen's reported greater adherence to government recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (91.3% vs 86.7%, $\chi 2$ p<0.01) and were more likely to self-isolate (63.9% vs 57.0%, $\chi 2$ p<0.01) than males. A similar trend was seen among Oxford students. Students' concerns were wide ranging including those related to their learning experience, finances and future academic and career prospects. 78.9% of Queen's students and 50.4% of first-

year Oxford students reported worries about the long-term impact on their academic and job prospects. A sizeable proportion of students also reported that the pandemic negatively impacted their plans to continue at university (29.4% of Queen's, 14.2% of Oxford) and disrupted activities important to their mental well-being. Key themes identified in the qualitative component included the negative impacts of social isolation, challenging academic changes and disruption to support services and means of coping. Conclusions Overall, findings underscore the importance of addressing areas of student concern and the aspects of student life negatively impacted by the pandemic in order to maintain student well-being and support a successful university experience.

22. **Library support for student mental health and well-being in the UK: Before and during the COVID-19 pandemic**

Cox, Brewster. The Journal of Academic Librarianship, 2020

Libraries increasingly seek to support the mental health and well-being of students. This study reports on the results of a survey examining the range of such support activities offered by UK academic libraries prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to the pandemic libraries' emphasis was on new library specific services such as a fiction collection, a type of initiative taken to proactively align with institutional policy. During the pandemic focus shifted somewhat to addressing the anxiety related to finding e-resources. Drawing on the survey data a holistic model of library support for student mental health and well-being is developed, capturing its eight different aspects: inherent library value, library services impact, well-being as a library service, detection, hosting, signposting, library as a good partner and library staff well-being. This represents a framework through which to examine how an academic library can support student mental health and well-being, and complements the "whole university" approach being increasingly adopted in the UK.

23. **Mental Health and Wellbeing in Young People in the UK during Lockdown (COVID-19).**

Owens Matthew, Townsend Ellen, Hall Eleanor, Bhatia Tanisha, Fitzgibbon Rosie, Miller-Lakin Francesca. International journal of environmental research and public health, 2022

This study aimed to assess the levels of mental wellbeing and potential for clinical need in a sample of UK university students aged 18-25 during the COVID-19 pandemic. We also tested the dose-response relationship between the severity of lockdown restrictions and mental wellbeing. We carried out a prospective shortitudinal study (one month between baseline and follow up) during the pandemic to do this and included 389 young people. We measured a range of facets of mental wellbeing, including depression, depressogenic cognition (rumination), wellbeing, stress and sleep disturbance. Our primary outcome was 'probable depression' as indexed by a score of >=10 on the patient health questionnaire (PHQ-8). The prevalence of probable depression was significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels (55%)

and did not decrease significantly over time (52%). Higher levels of lockdown severity were prospectively associated with higher levels of depressive symptoms. Nearly all students had at least one mental wellbeing concern at either time point (97%). The evidence suggests that lockdown has caused a wellbeing crisis in young people. The associated long-term mental, social, educational, personal and societal costs are as yet unknown but should be tracked using further longitudinal studies.

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24. **Mental health in medical, dentistry and veterinary students: Cross-sectional online survey**
Knipe Duleeka, Maughan Chloe, Gilbert John, Dymock David, Moran Paul, Gunnell David. 2018

Background: The mental health of university students, especially medical students, is of growing concern in the UK. Aim: To estimate the prevalence of mental disorder in health sciences students and investigate help-seeking behavior. Method: An online survey from one English university (n = 1139; 53% response rate) collected data on depression (using the nine-item Patient Health Questionnaire), anxiety (seven-item Generalized Anxiety Disorder Assessment), alcohol use (Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test), self-harm and well-being, as well as help seeking. Results: A quarter of the students reported symptoms of moderate/severe depression and 27% reported symptoms of moderate/severe anxiety. Only 21% of students with symptoms of severe depression had sought professional help; the main reason for not seeking help was fear of documentation on academic records. Conclusions: The study highlights the extent of mental health problems faced by health science students. Barriers to help seeking due to concerns about fitness-to-practice procedures urgently need to be addressed to ensure that this population of students can access help in a timely fashion.

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25. **Mental health shame, self-compassion and sleep in UK nursing students: Complete mediation of self-compassion in sleep and mental health.**
Kotera Yasuhiro, Cockerill Vicky, Chircop James G. E, Forman Dawn. Nursing Open, 2021

AIMS: To explore relationships between mental health problems, mental health shame, self-compassion and average length of sleep in UK nursing students. The increasing mental health problems in nursing students may be related to a strong sense of shame they experience for having a mental health problem. Self-compassion has been identified as a protective factor for mental health and shame in other student populations. Further, studies highlight the importance of sleep relating to mental health., DESIGN: A cross-sectional design., METHODS: A convenient sampling of 182 nursing students at a university in the East Midlands completed a paper-based questionnaire regarding these four constructs, from

February to April 2019. Correlation, regression and mediation analyses were conducted., RESULTS: Mental health problems were positively related to shame and negatively related to self-compassion and sleep. Mental health shame positively predicted and self-compassion negatively predicted mental health problems: sleep was not a significant predictor of mental health problems. Lastly, self-compassion completely mediated the impacts of sleep on mental health problems (negative relationship between mental health problems and sleep was fully explained by self-compassion)., CONCLUSION: The importance of self-compassion was highlighted as it can reduce mental health problems and shame. Self-compassion can protect nursing students from mental distress when they are sleep deprived., IMPACT: Nurses and nursing students are required to work irregular hours (e.g. COVID-19) and mental distress can cause serious consequences in clinical practice. Our findings suggest that nurturing self-compassion can protect their mental health and the negative impacts of sleep deprivation on mental health

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26. **Navigating the Same Storm but Not in the Same Boat: Mental Health Vulnerability and Coping in Women University Students During the First COVID-19 Lockdown in the UK**
Misca G. et al. Frontiers in Psychology 2021;(April): Online.
Available online at this link

Having a mental health diagnosis in both general and student populations has been found to be a risk factor for negative coping and increased psychological distress during the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing on a subset of data from a large contemporaneous research study, this report explores the experiences of 36 women students with and without reported pre-existing mental health diagnoses during the first UK lockdown, in spring 2020. Specifically, the data explored self-reported coping with the restrictions, with the abrupt move to online learning, and the loss of support; as well as students' perceived strengths and difficulties in balancing their student role with family roles such as being a partner and/or a parent. Students with a pre-existing mental health diagnosis reported higher levels of loneliness compared to a matched sample of non-students, and more avoidant coping and negative emotional coping than students without a diagnosis. Qualitative data illustrate how parenting intersects with well-being and stress as both a protective and risk factor for women university students. This research report adds to the evidence base on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the student population, and how pre-existing mental health diagnoses intersect with coping behaviours and vulnerability in women students. Exploration of potential vulnerabilities can provide opportunities for targeted support, and identifying effective coping has the potential to inform effective interventions.

27. **Pandemic and student mental health: mental health symptoms among university students and young adults after the first cycle of lockdown in the UK.**

Tang Nicole K. Y, McEnery Katharine A. M, Chandler Laura, Toro Carla, Walasek Lukasz, Friend Hannah, Gu Sai, Singh Swaran P., Meyer Caroline. BJPsych open, 2022

BACKGROUND: Early COVID-19 research suggests a detrimental impact of the initial lockdown on young people's mental health., AIMS: We investigated mental health among university students and young adults after the first UK lockdown and changes in symptoms over 6 months., METHOD: In total, 895 university students and 547 young adults not in higher education completed an online survey at T1 (July-September 2020). A subset of 201 university students also completed a 6 month follow-up survey at T2 (January-March 2021). Anxiety, depression, insomnia, substance misuse and suicide risk were assessed., RESULTS: At T1, approximately 40%, 25% and 33% of the participants reported moderate to severe anxiety and depression and substance misuse risk, clinically significant insomnia and suicidal risk. In participants reassessed at T2, reductions were observed in anxiety and depression but not in insomnia, substance misuse or suicidality. Student and non-student participants reported similar levels of mental health symptoms. Student status was not a significant marker of mental health symptoms, except for lower substance misuse risk.Cross-sectionally, greater symptoms across measures were consistently associated with younger age, pre-existing mental health conditions, being a carer, worse financial status, increased sleep irregularity and difficulty since lockdown. Longitudinally, T2 symptoms were consistently associated with worse financial status and increased difficulty sleeping at T1. However, these associations were attenuated when baseline mental health symptoms were adjusted for in the models., CONCLUSIONS: Mental health symptoms were prevalent in a large proportion of young people after the first UK lockdown. Risk factors identified may help characterise high-risk groups for enhanced support and inform interventions.
[Available online at this link](#)

28. **Physical activity, mental and personal well-being, social isolation, and perceptions of academic attainment and employability in university students: The Scottish and British active students surveys**
Budzynski-Seymour Emily, Conway Rebecca, Wade Matthew, Lucas Alex, Jones Michelle, Mann Steve, Steele James. 2020

Background: Physical activity (PA) promotes health and well-being. For students, university represents a transitional period, including increased independence over lifestyle behaviors, in addition to new stressors and barriers to engaging in PA. It is, therefore, important to monitor PA trends in students to gain a greater understanding about the role it might play in physical and mental well-being, as well as other factors, such as attainment and employability. Methods: Cross-sectional surveys were conducted in 2016 in Scottish universities and colleges, and in 2017 in universities and colleges across the United Kingdom, and the data were pooled for the present study (N = 11,650). Cumulative ordinal logistic

regression was used to model the association between PA levels and mental and personal well-being, social isolation, and perceptions of academic attainment and employability. Results: Only 51% of the respondents met the recommended levels of moderate to vigorous PA per week. There was a linear relationship between PA levels and all outcomes, with better scores in more active students. Conclusions: UK university students are insufficiently active compared with the general population of 16- to 24-year olds. Yet, students with higher PA report better outcomes for mental and personal well-being, social isolation, and perceptions of academic attainment and employability.

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29. **Positive psychology for mental wellbeing of uk therapeutic students: Relationships with engagement, motivation, resilience and self-compassion**
Kotera Yasuhiro, Green Pauline, Sheffield David. 2021

This study aimed to examine the relationships between mental wellbeing and positive psychological constructs in therapeutic students (psychotherapy and occupational therapy students). The number of therapeutic students has increased recently; however, they suffer from poor mental health, which may be improved by potentiating their positive psychological constructs, bypassing mental health shame. Therapeutic students (n = 145) completed measures regarding positive psychological constructs, namely mental wellbeing, engagement, motivation, resilience, and self-compassion. Resilience and self-compassion predicted mental wellbeing, explaining a large effect. Self-compassion partially mediated the relationship between resilience and mental wellbeing. This study highlights the importance of positive psychological constructs, especially resilience and self-compassion, for mental wellbeing of therapeutic students.

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30. **Predicting sexual risk behavior in British and European Union university students in the United Kingdom**
Jaspal Rusi, Lopes Barbara, Wignall Liam, Bloxsom Claire. 2021

Drawing on the Health Adversity Risk Model, this study examines the relationship between mental health and sexual risk behaviors in British and European Union (EU) university students in the United Kingdom. Four hundred and thirty-one undergraduate students completed a cross-sectional survey. Data were analyzed using independent samples t-tests, multiple regression and structural equation modeling. Results showed that female students and British students exhibited higher levels of psychological distress, self-harm and sexual risk behaviors than males and EU students; and that female and EU students were more likely to adopt adaptive coping styles than male and British students, respectively. The structural equation model suggests that the relationship between gender and citizenship

and sexual risk-taking is mediated by identity threat, psychological distress, coping styles and self-harm. Adaptive coping styles are not necessarily protective against sexual risk-taking but rather determine the type of sexual risk behavior: re-thinking/planning is associated with volitional risk behaviors and social engagement with non-volitional behaviors. Social and cultural norms may shed light on mental health outcomes and sexual risk-taking in university students.

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31. **Prevalence and psychiatric correlates of suicidal ideation in UK university students**
Akram Umair, Ypsilanti Antonia, Gardani Maria, Irvine Kamila, Allen Sarah, Akram Asha, Drabble Jennifer, Bickle Eleanor, Kaye Lauren, Lipinski Damian, Matuszyk Eva, Sarlak Helia, Steedman Ellie, Lazuras Lambros. 2020

Background: Evidence highlights increased susceptibility to thoughts and behaviors related to suicide (i.e. suicidal ideation) in the student population, often in co-occurrence with mental health difficulties. Typically, studies focus on specific symptoms, with few providing comprehensive examination of risk factors. In this study we examined the prevalence of suicidal ideation among UK university students and assessed the association with multiple psychiatric risk factors. Methods: A total of N = 1273 students completed online measures of suicidal ideation, anxiety, depression, insomnia, mania, psychosis, and perceived stress. Results: 37.3% students were classified as high-risk for suicidal behaviour. Moreover, 42.2% of students contemplated suicide at least once within the past twelve months, and 25.1% reported telling someone about these thoughts at least once. Logistic regression analysis showed that suicidal ideation was significantly associated with symptoms of depression, mania, psychosis, and stress. Limitations: The cross-sectional nature of ours study does not allow us to infer causality in the observed associations. Conclusions: Our results indicate the prevalence of suicidal ideation in a large sample of university students in the UK, and highlight associated mental health risk factors associated with it. Our findings have implications for mental health practitioners working with University students.
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32. **Profiling student mental health and counselling effectiveness: Lessons from four uk services using complete data and different outcome measures**
Broglia Emma, Ryan Gemma, Williams Charlotte, Fudge Mark, Knowles Louise, Turner Afra, Dufour G.éraldine, Percy Alan, Barkham Michael. 2021

ABSTRACT There remain barriers to securing robust and complete datasets from counselling embedded in Higher Education (HE). This study aimed to provide the first step towards developing a national dataset of student counselling outcomes drawn from differing outcome measures, platforms and reporting on all clients. Data from four counselling

services using two clinical outcome measures and two platforms were pooled and analysed. Students presented to counselling with low levels of wellbeing and functioning, and high levels of depression, anxiety, academic distress and trauma. Counselling was particularly effective for improving depression, anxiety, wellbeing, hostility, social anxiety and academic distress. Results demonstrate value in pooling complete data from HE counselling services and we argue for developing a national dataset of university counselling data

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33. **Psychological Impacts of COVID-19 on Healthcare Trainees and Perceptions towards a Digital Wellbeing Support Package.**

Blake Holly, Mahmood Ikra, Dushi Gonxhe, Yildirim Mehmet, Gay Elizabeth. International journal of environmental research and public health, 2021

We explore the impact of COVID-19 on the psychological wellbeing of healthcare trainees, and the perceived value of a digital support package to mitigate the psychological impacts of the pandemic (PoWerS Study). This mixed-methods study includes (i) exposure to a digital support package; (ii) participant survey to assess wellbeing, perceptions of work and intervention fidelity; (iii) semi-structured qualitative interviews. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed, data were handled and analysed using principles of thematic framework analysis. Participants are 42 health and medical trainees (9M, 33F) from 13 higher education institutions in the UK, studying during the COVID-19 pandemic. Survey findings showed high satisfaction with healthcare training (92.8%), but low wellbeing (61.9%), moderate to high perceived stressfulness of training (83.3%), and high presenteeism (50%). Qualitative interviews generated 3 over-arching themes, and 11 sub-themes. The pandemic has impacted negatively on emotional wellbeing of trainees, yet mental health is not well promoted in some disciplines, and provision of pastoral support is variable. Disruption to academic studies and placements has reduced perceived preparedness for future clinical practice. Regular check-ins, and wellbeing interventions will be essential to support the next generation health and care workforce, both in higher education and clinical settings. The digital support package was perceived to be accessible, comprehensive, and relevant to healthcare trainees, with high intervention fidelity. It is a useful tool to augment longer-term provision of psychological support for healthcare trainees, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

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34. **Roles of positive psychology for mental health in UK social work students: Self-compassion as a predictor of better mental health**

Kotera Y., Green P., Sheffield D. 2020

Despite high shame about mental health symptoms among UK social work students, positive psychological approaches to their mental health have not been investigated in depth. Emotional resilience has been a core skill in social work practice; however, its relationship with mental health is still unclear. Therefore, the primary purposes of this cross-sectional study were to (i) examine the relationships between mental health and positive psychological constructs, namely resilience, self-compassion, motivation and engagement and (ii) determine predictors of mental health in UK social work students. An opportunity sampling of 116 UK social work students (102 females, 14 males; 96 undergraduates, 20 postgraduates) completed 5 measures about these constructs. Correlation and regression analyses were conducted. Mental health was associated with resilience, self-compassion and engagement. Self-compassion was a negative predictor, and intrinsic motivation was a positive predictor of mental health symptoms. Resilience did not predict mental health symptoms. The findings highlight the importance of self-compassion to the challenging mental health of UK social work students; they caution against the overuse and misunderstanding of resilience in the social work field.

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35. **Stepping into Salsa culture: An experiential account of engaging with a university non-credit dance programme**

Domene Pablo A., Morley Sheriden. 2022

Salsa is a popular form of partnered social dance with a distinct Latinx identity. In the qualitative literature, the experience of involvement in Salsa has been explored within a community-based setting in a cultural and health promotion context. How students experience engaging with Salsa, as a social dance when instruction is provided within a university environment and delivered as non-formal learning, remains less clear. This research sought to improve our understanding of how university students in the United Kingdom experience Salsa when offered as non-credit group-based dance classes. We collected data using face-to-face semi-structured individual interviews and took a reflexive approach with our thematic analysis. The three themes we developed were: Stress relief and escapism; Challenging at first but amazing after; and Switching partners to meet people. University campus-based partnered social dance provides opportunity to experience subjective well-being, skill acquisition, and social connectedness. We discuss some of the practical implications of supporting Salsa as a means of non-formal learning to enhance mental health through physical activity engagement within higher education

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36. **Student loneliness: The role of social media through life transitions**

Thomas Lisa, Orme Elizabeth, Kerrigan Finola. 2020

The move to university can be difficult for students- a transition often characterised by a risk of loneliness and poor mental health. Previous work highlights the important role social media can play in this transition. We report findings from a large-scale survey of 510 first year undergraduates across the UK, identifying factors that predict student loneliness, and exploring their social media use. Higher levels of social capital, induction satisfaction, and sense of community are significantly associated with lower levels of loneliness. Conversely, those reporting a more 'liminal self'- the desire to edit and reinvent yourself online - experience greater loneliness- with an indirect relationship between online social information seeking and loneliness, through social capital. We surmise that being 'true to yourself' online is important when starting university, and that social media can be a useful tool in facilitating offline relationships and maintaining ties to old friends.

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37. **Student mental health and well-being: are universities doing enough?**
Barrett D. et al. Evidence-Based Nursing 2020;23(28): 33-34.
Available online at this link

Editorial: There is increasing recognition that students in higher education are a population group at high risk of facing mental health challenges. Indeed, the Institute for Public Policy Research recently acknowledged that the level of mental illness and mental distress among UK university students is increasing, and is greater than other sections of the population. [...] Universities UK has a strategy called #stepchange. This strategy makes it clear that being proactive in supporting students' mental health is fundamental to higher education and that a whole university approach is needed to drive and sustain improvements in student mental health. Buy-in and direction from senior leadership in the university is seen as the most important factor in helping improve student mental health and well-being

38. **Student mental health in higher education: The contextual influence of "cuts, competition & comparison"**
Thompson Miles, Pawson Chris, Delfino Arianna, Saunders Alex, Parker Holly. 2022

Background: The mental health of students in UK higher education (HE) is receiving increased attention, and support services for students are under increased pressure. Aims: Drawing on ecological systems theory (EST), this study sought to explore possible contextual influences, over time, on student distress within HE. Method and Samples: We conducted a two-stage Delphi study, first asking UK professionals (n = 236) from primary, secondary, further education, and HE to provide possible reasons for increases in student distress. The material was reduced to 58 representative statements across all sectors with a further 10 specific to HE. In stage 2, 89 participants rated each statement in terms of whether it: (1) takes place and (2) contributes to distress. Results: The results suggest multiple contextual

influences potentially contributing to student distress. They can be summarized using the words: cuts, competition, and comparison. Education professionals in our sample reported that, upstream from HE, pressures on schools and colleges have led to a narrowing of curricula, with a more singular focus on assessment. Reduced teaching teams and pressurized staff unintentionally embed an assessment focus within students who unhelpfully compare themselves with peers while also struggling with wider societal cuts, austerity, and political uncertainty. Conclusions: The discussion draws on the peer-reviewed literature and relevant reports, discussing them in the context of EST, finding considerable support for these influences. The potential importance of adopting a contextual approach and incorporating this knowledge into the way we understand and tackle students' distress and their preparedness for HE is discussed.

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39. **Student mental health profiles and barriers to help seeking: When and why students seek help for a mental health concern**
Broglia Emma, Millings Abigail, Barkham Michael. 2021

Background: The student mental health landscape in higher education requires preventative strategies that maintain daily functioning as well as early intervention to respond to episodes of mental ill-health. As a community, this requires capturing the needs of students in the general university population as well as those using counselling and psychological wellbeing services. Aims: This cross-sectional study aimed to characterise the mental health profile of students in the general university population and identify barriers to help seeking. Methods: A total of 1,956 students from five UK universities completed an online questionnaire comprising the CCAPS-34 and open-ended questions about their mental health concerns and intentions to seek help. Mental health profiles were explored using mixed factorial ANOVAs and post hoc simple effect analyses. Help-seeking behaviours and intentions were identified using conceptual content analysis. Results: Distinctive mental health profiles emerged across faculties and help-seeking behaviours. Content analysis identified students' help-seeking experiences, intentions, preferences and barriers. Conclusions: Characterising the mental health profile of students outside of support services, as well as their barriers to seeking help, provides a rich understanding for shaping preventative policies and service provision. Doing so will respond to student mental health needs before they require clinical intervention.

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40. **Student perspectives on improving mental health support services at university**
Priestley Michael, Broglia Emma, Hughes Gareth, Spanner Leigh. 2022

Drawing on thematic analysis of six student co-creation panels, conducted during the Student Minds University Mental Health Charter consultations, this paper elucidates students' perspectives and proposals regarding the current issues and challenges around university student mental health and well-being support services. In particular, panels identified existing challenges and opportunities to improve support service access, strategy, and delivery. The panels generated a series of recommendations aimed to establish a clear, coordinated, and strategic approach to delivering accessible and inclusive student mental health support services that are responsive to the diverse needs of the whole student population. Significantly, the student panels situated service reforms within a 'whole university approach' entailing holistic structural and cultural change to the university environment, in order to enrich student mental health and well-being and reduce demand on services. The findings of this paper can both reaffirm and specify the principles of good practice propounded by the University Mental Health Charter from a student perspective.

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41. **Suicide deaths in university students in a UK city between 2010 and 2018 – Case series**
McLaughlin Joanna C., Gunnell David. 2021

Background: There are longstanding concerns over the mental health and suicide risk of university students in the UK and internationally. Aims: This study aimed to identify risk factors for suicide among students attending universities in a UK city. Method: Suicide deaths between January 2010 and July 2018 were identified from university records. An audit tool was used to collate data from university records and coroners' inquest files. Results: A total of 37 student deaths were identified. Only 10.8% of the students had disclosed a mental health issue at university entry. There was strong statistical evidence that students who died by suicide were more likely to have been male, experiencing academic difficulties (repeated years, changing course, and suspension of studies were all associated with a 5–30-fold increased risk), and in need of financial support compared with other students. Limitations: The coroners' records were only available for around half of the deaths. Healthcare records were not available. Conclusion: Markers of academic and financial difficulty should be considered as flags to identify students at heightened risk. Whilst the relative risk associated with academic difficulties is high, the absolute risk is low. Improved disclosure of mental health issues at university registration could facilitate targeted support for vulnerable students.

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42. **Supporting a friend, housemate or partner with mental health difficulties: The student experience**
Byrom Nicola C. 2019

Aims: When experiencing mental health difficulties, university students turn to their friends for support. This study assessed the consequences of caregiving among a university sample, identifying predictors of caregiving burden among students. Methods: A total of 79 students with experience of supporting a friend with mental health difficulties were recruited through a UK student mental health charity to complete an online survey. Alongside qualitative data, the online survey used the Experience of Caregiving Inventory and the Involvement Evaluation Questionnaire as measures of the consequences of caregiving. Results: Students supporting friends, housemates or partners were found to experience significant consequences of caregiving. Frequency of face-to-face contact and duration of illness predicted more negative consequences of caregiving, but these relationships were not straightforward. The presence and intensity of professional support did not influence the experience of caregiving. Conclusions: The study suggests that the impact of supporting friends with mental health difficulties is not insubstantial for students. Broadening the network of informal social support may help improve the experience for students supporting a friend, but currently, contact with professional services appears to have a limited effect.
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43. **Teaching and discussing mental health among university students: A pilot arts-based study**
Atayero Sarah, Dunton Kate, Mattock Sasha, Gore Amanda, Douglas Sarah, Leman Patrick, Zunszain Patricia. 2021

Purpose: Interdisciplinary approaches to health education are becoming increasingly common. Here, the authors describe an arts-based approach designed by academics and artists to both supplement the study of mental illness and support the individual mental health of undergraduate and postgraduate university students, by raising the visibility of mental illness in an innovative way. Design/methodology/approach: Through workshops, university students were guided in a sensory and physical way to discuss psychological health and vulnerability. This was followed by the creation of physical representations of mental distress through art pieces. Findings: Students were able to design their own art pieces and discuss mental health issues in an open and creative way. Students reported that the arts-based initiative was beneficial to their practice as future professionals and provided a holistic learning experience. At the same time, artists were able to generate powerful images which facilitated further discussions within the faculty. Practical implications: This project provides an innovative model for workshops which could be employed to raise the visibility of common mental health disorders among university students while providing a safe space to discuss and support wellbeing. Additionally, variations could be implemented to enhance the teaching of affective disorders within a university curriculum. Originality/value: This paper presents the results of collaboration between academics and artists, who together generated an innovative way to both support students' mental health

and provide an alternative way to supplement experiential learning about common mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression.

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44. **The benefits of student-led health promotion intervention**
Lane-Martin Athene. 2019

Purpose: The benefits of a student-led mental health promotion intervention on World Mental Health day result in tangible learning benefits for those students. The event occurs within the students' own university. The paper aims to discuss this issue. Design/methodology/approach: This case study evaluates students' experience on a mental health promotion intervention. This intervention was to enable students to experience running a health promotion intervention and develop their health promotion skills outside of their lectures. Students were recruited who had just completed a module on health promotion. Students had to plan and organise the intervention, which included involving other organisations and facilities both external and internal to the university. The experience was evaluated through the case study using as data collection a semi-structured interview. Findings: Results indicated that students found the experience to be beneficial in deepening their understanding of health promotion, mental health awareness and in increasing their self-esteem. Limitations of this case study are in the argument for reproducibility of results, which is affected by the small number of students who took part. Research limitations/implications: There are opportunities to develop this idea further and to broaden the availability of the initiative, enabling more students from diverse backgrounds to experience putting theory into practice. Originality/value: To the best knowledge of the author, this study, although with limitations, provided a good understanding on how to develop health promotion skills within a university setting. The outcomes of this study are mainly applicable to a health studies course, educators of mental health promotion, university mental health support services and research related to this topic, especially on promoting mental health awareness and education.

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45. **The feasibility and effectiveness of a novel online mental health literacy course in supporting university student mental health: A pilot study**
King N., Linden B., Cunningham S., Rivera D., Rose J., Wagner N., Mulder J., Adams M., Baxter R., Duffy A. 2022

Background: There is a need for effective universal approaches to promote and support university student mental health that are scalable and sustainable. In this pilot study we assess the feasibility and acceptability of a fully-digitalized, comprehensive mental health literacy course co-created with and tailored to the needs of undergraduate students. We

also explore preliminary associations with mental health and positive behaviour change. Methods: An accredited online mental health literacy course was developed using state-of-the-art pedagogical principles and a reverse mentorship approach. The course was offered as an interdisciplinary undergraduate elective. Students completed an online survey before and after the 12-week course that collected demographic information and assessed mental health knowledge, emotional self-awareness, mental health, stigma, and health-related behaviors using validated measures. Dependent group t-tests were used to compare pre- and post-course levels of knowledge, mental health, sleep quality and substance use. Mental health outcomes of students who completed the course were compared to an age and sex-matched sample of students not enrolled in the course and who completed the same survey measures over the same academic year. Multivariable linear regression was used to examine the effect of course participation on outcomes at follow-up. Results: The course had good uptake and was positively reviewed by participants. Specifically, students found the course engaging, relevant, and applicable, and agreed they would recommend it to their peers. Among course participants there was improvement in mental health knowledge ($p < 0.001$) and emotional self-awareness ($p = 0.02$) at course completion. Compared to the matched comparison group, taking the course was associated with reduced alcohol ($\beta = -0.41$, $p = 0.01$) and cannabis use ($\beta = -0.35$, $p = 0.03$), and improved sleep quality ($\beta = 1.56$, $p = 0.09$) at the end of the term. Conclusions: Findings suggest that delivering mental health literacy as an online accredited course may be an acceptable and effective way of promoting university student mental health through improved knowledge, emotional self-awareness, and healthy lifestyle choices. As the course is expanded to larger and more diverse student cohorts we will be able to further examine the short and long-term effectiveness of the course in supporting student mental health and the underlying mechanisms.

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46. **The impact of peer mentoring on students' physical activity and mental health**
Glazzard Jonathan, Rose Anthea, Ogilvie Paul. 2021

Purpose: A peer-mentoring scheme was implemented in a secondary school using a physical activity (PA) intervention to improve mental health outcomes of students who were at risk of developing mental ill health. These students are referred to as mentees. The evaluation was a qualitative design using focus groups and semi-structured interviews. The participants reported an increase in PA in both peer mentors and mentees. By the end of the project many of the mentees recognised that they had increased their levels of PA, they were more aware of the benefits of PA and the relationship between PA and their mental health. In addition, mentees reported feeling more confident and were more confident in forming social relationships. Peer mentors reported developing many leadership skills during the project. These included improved communication, confidence, empathy for others, relationship building and improved self-awareness. The paper aims to discuss these issues.

Design/methodology/approach: Qualitative data were primarily collected from nine case study schools. Each visit included interviews with peer mentors, mentees and the Wellbeing Champion. Findings: Mentees developed improved social confidence and were generally more positive after completing the intervention. Mentors developed leadership skills and greater empathy for their peers. Originality/value: There is limited research on school-based PA interventions using peer mentoring to improve students' mental health.
Available online at this link

47. **The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student mental health and wellbeing in UK university students: a multiyear cross-sectional analysis.**
Bennett Jacks, Heron Jon, Gunnell David, Purdy Sarah, Linton Myles-Jay. Journal of mental health, 2022

BACKGROUND: Ongoing concern for the unique mental health challenges faced by university students has been magnified by the disruption of the global COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020., AIMS: This study aimed to investigate changes in mental health and wellbeing outcomes for UK university students since the pandemic began, and to examine whether more vulnerable groups were disproportionately impacted., METHODS: Students at a UK university responded to anonymous online cross-sectional surveys in 2019 (N = 2637), 2020 (N = 3693), and 2021 (N = 2772). Students completed measures of depression, anxiety and subjective wellbeing (SWB). Multivariable logistic regression models investigated associations of survey year and sociodemographic characteristics with mental health and SWB., RESULTS: Compared to 2019, fewer students showed high levels of depression and anxiety symptoms in 2020. However, there was evidence of worsened levels of anxiety and SWB in 2021 compared to 2019. Interaction effects indicated that students from a Black, Asian or minority ethnicity background and students previously diagnosed with a mental health difficulty showed improved outcomes in 2021 compared to previous years., CONCLUSIONS: There is a need for sector-wide strategies including preventative approaches, appropriate treatment options for students already experiencing difficulties and ongoing monitoring post-pandemic.
Available online at this link

48. **The mental health and well-being benefits of exercise during the COVID-19 pandemic: a cross-sectional study of medical students and newly qualified doctors in the UK.**
Coyle Conor, Ghazi Hanya, Georgiou Ioannis. Irish Journal of Medical Science, 2021

BACKGROUND: University students have been uniquely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there is currently little data upon the measures that medical students and newly qualified doctors have taken to help their mental well-being and mood during the COVID-19 pandemic., AIM: We aimed to identify the activities respondents found beneficial for their

well-being and mental health and recorded a mood score from survey respondents., METHODS: A nationwide study was completed to investigate the mental health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic upon medical students and newly qualified doctors (interim foundation year one). We received 2075 respondents from across the UK., RESULTS: Physical activity was found to be the most common activity used by the survey respondents to help with their mental well-being (80.1%) (medical students, 83.7%; interim foundation doctors, 72.3%). Participants who stated that exercise helped their well-being had a mean score (SD) of 52.3 (20.7) which was significantly higher (P = 0.048) than those who reported that they did not exercise (49.8 (21.1)). Respondents who stated they had used exercise to help with their mental well-being had (on average) a higher mood score than those who did not. This was seen in both the medical student and interim foundation doctor subgroups., DISCUSSION: Exercise can help to benefit the well-being of medical students and interim foundation doctors. It is hoped that higher education providers and employers recognise the importance of promoting physical activity for the well-being of their students and staff, respectively.

Available online at this link

49. **The mental health of university students during the COVID-19 pandemic: An online survey in the UK**

Chen Tianhua, Lucock Mike. 2022

Higher education students' mental health has been a growing concern in recent years even before the COVID-19 pandemic. The stresses and restrictions associated with the pandemic have put university students at greater risk of developing mental health issues, which may significantly impair their academic success, social interactions and their future career and personal opportunities. This paper aimed to understand the mental health status of University students at an early stage in the pandemic and to investigate factors associated with higher levels of distress. An online survey including demographics, lifestyle/living situations, brief mental well-being history, questions relating to COVID-19 and standardised measures of depression, anxiety, resilience and quality of life was completed by 1173 students at one University in the North of England. We found high levels of anxiety and depression, with more than 50% experiencing levels above the clinical cut offs, and females scoring significantly higher than males. The survey also suggested relatively low levels of resilience which we attribute to restrictions and isolation which reduced the opportunities to engage in helpful coping strategies and activities rather than enduring personality characteristics. Higher levels of distress were associated with lower levels of exercising, higher levels of tobacco use, and a number of life events associated with the pandemic and lockdown, such as cancelled events, worsening in personal relationships and financial concerns. We discuss the importance of longer-term monitoring and mental health support for university students.

50. **The perceived psychological stressors and coping behaviours in university students, on a pre-registration programme**
Mitchell Andrew E. P. 2020

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to investigate perceived stressors and coping behaviours in student nurses on a pre-registration programme of study. Stress in student nurses has been identified with decreased emotional well-being and poor academic achievement. The significance of stress and coping behaviours in students during training has implications for education and practice. Design/methodology/approach: The present study recruited 87 pre-registration student nurses in a cross-sectional design. Bivariate and multivariate analyses assessed the differences in field and year of study and the students' perceived stress and coping behaviours. Findings: The findings showed that stress is a significant issue in nurse training. Fifty-three per cent of the participants had levels higher than the mean. Interestingly, the present study found that high-perceived stress was associated with avoidance behaviours. The most common type of perceived stress and ranked by highest factor were from written assignments and a lack of professional skills and knowledge. Their peer group and everyday life activities were shown as potential ways of coping with stressors. Thus, it seems reasonable to focus support on decreasing avoidant and enhancing stress-reducing behaviours. Practical implications: Psychological stress and coping behaviours must be considered together, as perceived stress is bound by the ability to ameliorate stress by managing helpful and unhelpful behaviours. Originality/value: The findings may suggest that a potential benefit could come from the provision of helpful strategies such as peer group support and reduction of avoidant behaviours. Also, there seems to be a need for greater mental health literacy in dealing with stress during training.

51. **The role of accommodation environments in student mental health and wellbeing**
Worsley Joanne D., Harrison Paula, Corcoran Rhiannon. BMC Public Health, 2021

Explores the role of accommodation environments in first year student mental health and wellbeing. Uses eight focus groups that were conducted in two universities in North West England and carries out a thematic analysis of the data. Finds that, as attachment to place and relationships with significant others are disrupted by the transition to university, this leaves young people vulnerable whilst they go through a process to re-attach to new people and a new environment, and reports that loneliness and social isolation were keenly felt during this period. Determines that physical attributes of place that prevent social cohesion further exacerbated feelings of loneliness. Argues that, as it is common for students to withdraw physically and psychologically when they do not form friendships within their flat,

accommodation-based pastoral staff have an important role to fulfil. Concludes that cultivating environments and communities that are supportive of mental health and wellbeing is crucial.

52. **The role of negative urgency in risky alcohol drinking and binge-eating in United Kingdom male and female students**

Ralph-Nearman Christina, Stewart Jennifer L., Jones Katy A. 2020

Identifying students at risk of developing binge-eating and alcohol use disorders is a priority in the United Kingdom (UK). Although relationships between negative urgency (impulsive behavior during times of negative emotion), risky drinking, and binge-eating have been established in students from other countries, these links have yet to be replicated in male and female UK students. UK students aged 18–30 (n = 155) completed the: (1) the Urgency, Pre-meditation, Perseverance, Sensation Seeking (UPPS-P) negative urgency subscale; (2) Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT); and (3) Binge-Eating Scale (BES). For categorical analysis, participants were assigned to one of four groups as a function of AUDIT and BES clinical cut-off scores: (1) no risk (28%); (2) risky drinkers (47%); (3) binge-eaters (6%); and (4) risky drinkers + binge-eaters (19%). For dimensional analysis, across students with non-zero AUDIT and BES scores (n = 141), BES, AUDIT, gender, and their interactions were entered as predictors in the same block of a regression. UPPS-P negative urgency was the dependent variable. Categorical results indicated that binge-eaters with and without risky drinking endorsed significantly higher negative urgency than students with no risk. Dimensional results showed that although higher BES and AUDIT scores were positively linked to higher negative urgency, but only the BES was significantly associated. Furthermore, BES shared substantially more variance with negative urgency than the AUDIT, and the BES-negative urgency relationship was stronger in male students than female students. High risk students may benefit the most from interventions that help regulate negative emotion.

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53. **Understanding university student priorities for mental health and well-being support: A mixed-methods exploration using the person-based approach**

Remskar Masha, Atkinson Melissa J., Marks Elizabeth, Ainsworth Ben. 2022

Poor student well-being at UK universities is overstretching institutional support services, highlighting a need for effective new resources. Despite extensive literature on mental health and well-being interventions, students' engagement with support remains unexplored. The study aimed to understand students' experience of engagement with well-being support, identify their well-being needs and form concrete recommendations for future intervention design and delivery. The Person-Based Approach to intervention design

was followed to centralise users' experience, in turn maximising acceptability and effectiveness of resources. An online survey (N = 52) was followed by three focus groups (N = 14). Survey data were analysed descriptively, and reflexive thematic analysis was performed on qualitative data. Mixed-methods data integration produced four key student priorities for well-being resources – ease of access, inclusive and preventative approach, sense of community and a safe space, and applying skills to real-life contexts. Five actionable guiding principles for intervention design were produced through consultation with expert stakeholders. This work helps understand why and how students engage with support at university. The resulting recommendations can inform future intervention development, leading to more acceptable, engaging and effective student well-being resources.
[Available online at this link](#)

54. **University Students' Mental Health and Well-Being during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Findings from the UniCoVac Qualitative Study - PubMed**

Mayuri Gogoi, Adam Webb, Manish Pareek, Christopher D. Bayliss, Lieve Gies, Mayuri Gogoi, Adam Webb, Manish Pareek, Christopher D. Bayliss, Lieve Gies. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 2022

The worldwide spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic in early 2020 affected all major sectors, including higher education. The measures to contain the spread of this deadly disease led to the closure of colleges and universities across the globe, disrupting the lives of millions of students and subjecting them to a new world of online learning. These sudden disturbances coupled with the demands of a new learning system and the experiences of living through a pandemic have placed additional strains on the mental health of university students. Research on university students' mental health, conducted during the pandemic, have found high levels of stress, anxiety and depression among students. In this qualitative study, we aimed to understand how pandemic experiences have affected student well-being by conducting in-depth interviews with 34 undergraduate students enrolled in a UK university. All interviews were conducted through Microsoft Teams and recorded with prior permission. Transcripts of recorded interviews were thematically analysed which identified two broad themes: (i) University students' mental health and well-being experiences during the pandemic; (ii) factors that influenced students' mental health and well-being. These factors were further distributed across six sub-themes: (a) isolation; (b) health and well-being; (c) bereavement; (d) academic concerns; (e) financial worries and; (f) support, coping, and resilience. Our study identifies the importance of mental health support to university students during pandemics and calls for measures to improve access to support services through these crisis points by universities. Findings can also inform students' mental health and risk assessments in the aftermath of the pandemic.

55. **University students with autism: The social and academic experiences of university in the UK**

Gurbuz Emine, Hanley Mary, Riby Deborah M. 2019

The number of university students with autism is increasing, and it is crucial that these students can access adequate support. An online questionnaire was completed by 26 autistic students and 158 non-autistic students enrolled at UK universities to investigate social and academic experiences. Autistic students self-reported significant challenges and more mental health difficulties than non-autistic students. Significant challenges focused on the social components of university life, including social skills, social support opportunities, and levels of ASD awareness from others. Many strengths were also reported regarding academic skills of autistic university students. Importantly, there were more thoughts of withdrawal by the students with autism highlighting the need for support. These data can inform university student support services.

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56. **Using a structured model to promote mental health**

Keeling Joanne L., McQuarrie Catherine. 2018

Purpose: A Promoting Mental Health and Well-Being Working Model (subsequently "the model") was developed in response to recognition through teaching undergraduate nursing students that interventions aimed at enhancing mental health and well-being are often hidden or cloaked in traditional professional specific working interventions. The model was developed with the purpose of making the elements of mental health and well-being promotion visible and structuring them into a framework to aid working practice and personal development. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the effectiveness from the participant perspective of using the model to enhance clients' mental health and well-being in community settings (Keeling and McQuarrie, 2014). Design/methodology/approach: A total of 14 participants were interviewed within two focus groups. Five questions were posed to the participants structured around their experiences of using the model when working with clients in the community. The responses were recorded and transcribed and then categorised using a thematic analysis approach. Findings: Three key themes were derived from the analysis in equal measure: "Reconciling a Non-traditional approach", "Promoting a holistic approach" and "Developing creativity and sense of empowerment to promote mental health and well-being". The findings suggest that using the model enabled participants to engage with clients in meaningful ways that in turn developed their self-confidence in helping clients develop creative strategies to promote their own mental health and well-being. Originality/value: This paper shows that using a structured model to promote well-being and mental health has benefits in enhancing creativity, therapeutic

relationships and knowledge base. Further research is needed in terms of the utility of the model from the client's perspective.

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57. **Web-based support services to help prevent suicide in young people and students: A mixed-methods, user-informed review of characteristics and effective elements**
Cohen Rachel, Rifkin-Zybutz Raphael, Moran Paul, Biddle Lucy. 2022

The online world may provide an alternative means to engage young people and students with suicidal feelings, who are typically reluctant to seek help. We aimed to map, characterise and obtain user evaluation of current online suicide support for this group in order to assess the usefulness of current provision and how it may be improved. We conducted a mixed-methods study, comprised of an internet search, content analysis of site features and qualitative interviews with site users: 9 young people and 4 general practitioners. Data collection took place in 2019 and 2020 in the UK. Young people participants were recruited through the well-being networks of a large University in South-West England and via a national young person's mental health app. General practitioners were recruited locally through professional networks. We identified a wide range of easily accessible online support, including examples of interactive services, such as live chat and text messaging, but a lack of support that is both suicide-specific and young adult-specific, and an absence of online suicide or mental health crisis support services tailored specifically for students. Qualitative data showed that clarity, brevity and immediacy are the most important facets of engaging crisis help for young people, and that young people may prefer to use text-based rather than verbal forms of communication when seeking help. Few services provided access to active peer support, outside of lived-experience stories, which were evaluated as both valuable and potentially harmful. There is a need to further develop tailored suicide specific online crisis support for young people and students, which is able to 'speak to' their age-specific needs and preferences. While lived experience may provide a valuable means of supporting young audiences, caution is required since this may have unintended negative consequences and further research is needed to understand the safe framing of such material.

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58. **Wellbeing and burnout among medical students in Wales**
Farrell Sarah Marie, Molodynski Andrew, Cohen Debbie, Grant Andrew J., Rees Sarah, Wullshleger Alexandre, Lewis Thomas, Kadhum Murtaza. 2019

Medical students' wellbeing and mental health requires nurturing in order for them to build success in their careers, help people while doing so, and to be happy. To better characterise the current state of wellbeing in medical schools in Wales, medical students from Cardiff and

Swansea Universities were asked to complete an online survey as part of a larger international survey regarding their mental health and wellbeing. 266 students responded out of approximately 2150, a rate of 12%. 44 students received a mental health diagnosis whilst at medical school (predominantly depression or anxiety), 65 scored threshold for concerning alcohol consumption using the CAGE questionnaire, and 224 and 230 students reached threshold for the disengagement and exhaustion components of the Oldenburg Burnout Scale, respectively.

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59. **What factors affect access, retention and graduate outcomes for university students with a background of care or family estrangement?**
Stevenson Jacqueline, Et al. -, 2020

Explores the issues affecting children with care or family estrangement backgrounds in accessing and progressing through higher education, drawing on data analysis and surveys involving students and stakeholders. Outlines the background to the study, highlighting the significant under-representation of young people with a care background in higher education, and the research aims and methods. Presents key findings and recommendations relating to: the differential outcomes of care experienced and estranged students; transitions in and out of higher education; institutional support for care experienced and estranged students; support across the student lifecycle; financial struggles; accommodation concerns; and mental health and wellbeing issues.

60. **What interventions improve college and university students' mental health and wellbeing? A review of review-level evidence**
Worsley Joanne, Pennington Andy, Corcoran Rhiannon. 2020

Explores the effectiveness of interventions to improve the mental health and wellbeing of further and higher education students, drawing on the findings of an evidence review. Outlines the background to the study, highlighting increasing public policy concerns about the poor mental health of further and higher education students, and describes the aims of the review and methods used. Presents the results looking at 11 intervention types: mindfulness-based; psychological; technology-delivered; psychoeducation; educational/personalised mail; recreation; relaxation; acceptance and commitment training; setting-based; suicide-prevention; and the Tomatis method. Discusses the findings, suggesting that psychoeducation interventions are not as effective as mindfulness-based, cognitive-behavioural, relaxation or meditation interventions.

61. **Who is lonely in lockdown? Cross-cohort analyses of predictors of loneliness before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.**
Bu F., Steptoe A., Fancourt D. Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH), 2020

BACKGROUND: There are concerns internationally that lockdown measures taken during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic could lead to a rise in loneliness. As loneliness is recognised as a major public health concern, it is therefore vital that research considers the impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic on loneliness to provide necessary support. But it remains unclear, who is lonely in lockdown?, METHODS: This study compared sociodemographic predictors of loneliness before and during the COVID-19 pandemic using cross-cohort analyses of data from UK adults captured before the pandemic (UK Household Longitudinal Study, n = 31,064) and during the pandemic (UCL (University College London) COVID-19 Social Study, n = 60,341)., RESULTS: Risk factors for loneliness were near identical before and during the pandemic. Young adults, women, people with lower education or income, the economically inactive, people living alone and urban residents had a higher risk of being lonely. Some people who were already at risk of being lonely (e.g. young adults aged 18-30 years, people with low household income and adults living alone) experienced a heightened risk during the COVID-19 pandemic compared with people living before COVID-19 emerged. Furthermore, being a student emerged as a higher risk factor during lockdown than usual., CONCLUSIONS: Findings suggest that interventions to reduce or prevent loneliness during COVID-19 should be targeted at those sociodemographic groups already identified as high risk in previous research. These groups are likely not just to experience loneliness during the pandemic but potentially to have an even higher risk than normal of experiencing loneliness relative to low-risk groups.
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62. **'Five hours to sort out your life': Qualitative study of the experiences of university students who access mental health support**
Barnett Phoebe, Arundell Laura-Louise, Matthews Hannah, Saunders Rob, Pilling Stephen. 2021

Background: Previous qualitative research suggests that university students feel that current service provision does not meet their needs. Exploring the reasons for this may help to promote service change, encourage the uptake of care, improve outcomes and increase satisfaction within university services. Aims: This study aimed to improve the understanding of how students experience the process of accessing and using mental health support, barriers and facilitators to treatment, and how students would adapt provision to improve experiences. Method: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 full-time students who had used mental health services at university. Data were analysed using thematic analysis. Results: Five higher-order themes were identified: personalisation and informed

choice, simplifying the process, feeling abandoned ignored or invisible, stigma, and superiority of private and external services. Sixteen subthemes were identified within these themes. Conclusions: Findings indicate that access to mental health support should be simplified, with collaboration across university and external health and care services, to prevent students feeling lost or abandoned when seeking care. An inclusive approach to support access and provision of services for all presentations of mental health problems should be developed.

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63. **"Back to square one": The experience of straddling adolescence and early adulthood in unemployed UK university graduates with common mental health issues: An interpretative phenomenological analysis**
Cockshott Christopher J., Kiemle Gundi, Byrne Paula, Gabbay Mark B. 2018

We investigated the experiences of unemployed university graduates with common mental health issues. After conducting semistructured interviews with 12 unemployed bachelor's degree graduates with common mental health issues, we used interpretative phenomenological analysis to generate three superordinate themes: "fall from grace," "vulnerability," and "life on hold." Our focus in this article is life on hold and its constituent themes: "stagnation," "moving backward," and "feeling left behind." Graduates struggled to complete the broader structural life transition from university student to the adult world of work, experiencing a nebulous state of straddling adolescence and early adulthood. This undermined their sense of adult maturity, leaving them vulnerable to becoming entrenched in their mental health-related difficulties. We discuss these findings in relation to the developmental perspectives of life-course theory, status passages, and separation–individuation in early adulthood, which raise important issues for the applicability of life-course frameworks for these graduates, who are a disadvantaged minority group.

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64. **"I spent most of Freshers in my room"—A qualitative study of the social experiences of university students on the autistic spectrum**
Goddard Helen, Cook Anna. 2022

Autistic university students face extra challenges in both their academic and social life. Barriers to socialising appear to be less well understood and supported by universities than academic requirements. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten autistic university students to explore their social experiences. Questions explored their social experiences, satisfaction with social life, disclosure of ASD to others, and the impact of mental wellbeing on university life. Thematic analysis indicated most participants were unsatisfied with their social lives and experienced mental health issues. Factors exacerbating

social isolation included lack of suitable social events, lack of social support and feeling unable to disclose to peers. Factors which reduced social isolation included joining an autism or special interest society and receiving social mentoring.

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65. **"We need to slowly break down this barrier": Understanding the barriers and facilitators that Afro-Caribbean undergraduates perceive towards accessing mental health services in the UK**
Sancho Tamara Nadine, Larkin Michael. 2020

Purpose: Undergraduates are highly susceptible to the development of mental health difficulties. Afro-Caribbean students are particularly vulnerable to the pressures of university yet are less likely than other ethnic groups to receive early intervention. This paper aims to understand the barriers and facilitators that Afro-Caribbean undergraduates perceive towards accessing mental health services in the UK. Design/methodology/approach: Critical Incident Technique was used as the qualitative method because it explores the critical factors that contribute to or detract from a specific experience. Seventeen Afro-Caribbean undergraduates participated in five focus groups. This involved engaging in a novel psychosocial activity that incorporated vignettes to encourage the identification of barriers and facilitators to service access. The data were analysed thematically to generate categories of critical incidents and wish-list items. Findings: Analysis revealed rich data from a sub-group rarely researched within UK literature. Fifteen barriers, eleven facilitators and five wish-list items were identified. The importance of mental health literacy, social networks, cultural sensitivity and concerns surrounding services underpinned many categories. Originality/value: Findings provide a new perspective on barriers reported in previous literature. Novel facilitators were highlighted where, although psychological and sociocultural factors were deemed valuable, structural changes were most desired. Recommended changes illustrate innovative interventions that could make services accessible for young adult Afro-Caribbean populations. Future research should explore the barriers and facilitators identified by Afro-Caribbean undergraduates across various universities who have successfully accessed and engaged with services. This could provide a holistic perspective on viable facilitators enabling access despite the presence of barriers.

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S3	(MAINSUBJECT.EXACT.EXPLODE("Mental Health") OR (mental health)) AND student	APA PsycInfo® These databases are searched for part of your query.	60130
S4	(MAINSUBJECT.EXACT.EXPLODE("Mental Health") OR (mental health)) AND student AND pd(20180101-20221231)	APA PsycInfo® These databases are searched for part of your query.	16616
S5	university OR universities	APA PsycInfo®	2663047
S6	(MAINSUBJECT.EXACT.EXPLODE("Mental Health") OR (mental health)) AND student AND (university OR universities)	APA PsycInfo® These databases are searched for part of your query.	37939
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S8	UK OR (United Kingdom) OR England OR Scotland OR Wales	APA PsycInfo®	244604
S9	(MAINSUBJECT.EXACT.EXPLODE("Mental Health") OR (mental health)) AND student AND (university OR universities) AND (UK OR (United Kingdom) OR England OR Scotland OR Wales)	APA PsycInfo® These databases are searched for part of your query.	1828
S10	(MAINSUBJECT.EXACT.EXPLODE("Mental Health") OR (mental health)) AND student AND (university OR universities) AND (UK OR (United Kingdom) OR England OR Scotland OR Wales) AND pd(20180101-20221231)	APA PsycInfo® These databases are searched for part of your query.	628
S11	(MAINSUBJECT.EXACT.EXPLODE("Mental Health") OR (mental health)) AND student AND (university OR universities) AND (UK OR (United Kingdom) OR England OR Scotland OR Wales) AND (stype.exact("Scholarly Journals") AND pd(20180101-20221231))	APA PsycInfo® These databases are searched for part of your query.	498

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