



Le Cordon Bleu New Zealand

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of tertiary students is incredibly important. The New University Students Association report (2018) on student mental health in Aotearoa stated that 28% of students considered giving up on their tertiary studies when they were feeling overwhelmed, 20% because of mental illness and 17% because they feared failure. Many of the students who took part in the survey said they didn't have strategies in place to help them deal with depression, stress and anxiety.

Le Cordon Bleu New Zealand's (LCBNZ) Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy provides a guide for improved mental health and wellbeing for its learners by creating an environment of recognition and support, leading to increased retention and success.

DEFINITION

The World Health Organisation (2018), defines mental health as follows:

Mental health is a state of well-being in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.

Similarly, Te Ara - the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand states Mental health as 'a process that enables people to realise their abilities, deal with life's challenges and stresses, enjoy life, work productively and contribute to their communities' (Brunton, 2018).

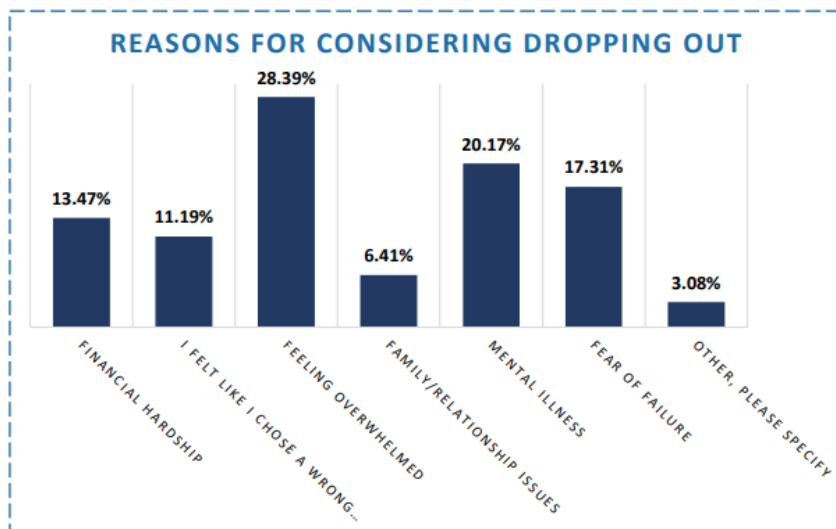
Mental health is a positive sense of emotional and spiritual well-being that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice, personal dignity and diversity. Mental health also refers euphemistically to mental problems, illnesses or disorders and services for treating them. Living with mental health issues can lead to optimal wellbeing, and people without mental issues can experience poor wellbeing, the two are not exclusive.

MENTAL HEALTH AND NEW ZEALAND TERTIARY STUDENTS

Kei Te Pai? is research completed by the New Zealand Union of Students' Associations (2018) as the national voice of students on this extremely important issue. The results below have come directly from this report.

The participants were asked if they had ever considered dropping out of their tertiary studies. 1737 respondents took part in this question. 56.3% of respondents (n = 978) reported that they have considered dropping out, while 43.7% (n = 759) have never considered this. Figure 1 illustrates the reasons considered for dropping out of tertiary studies, feeling overwhelmed (28.4%, n = 784), mental illness (20.2%, n = 557) and fear of failure (17.3%, n = 478) were reported as the most common reasons.

Figure 1:
Reasons for Considering Dropping Out



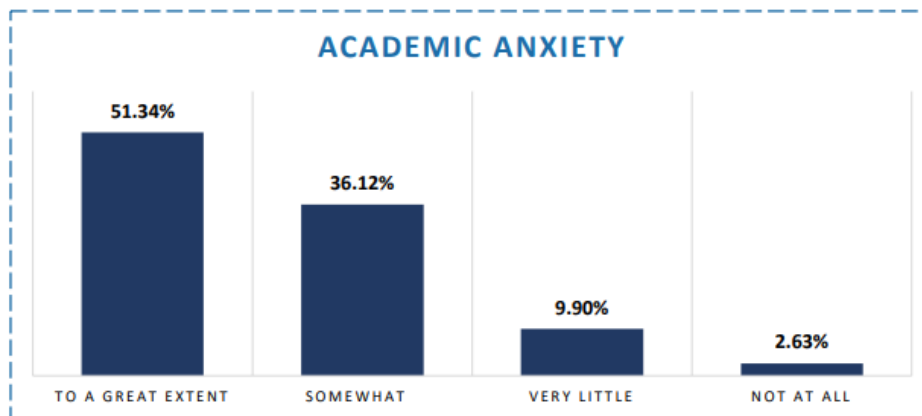
Causes of Depression, Stress and Anxiety Respondents were presented with some risk factors and were asked to indicate the extent these factors generally trigger their senses of depression, stress, anxiety, etc. The first cause was “family issues and responsibilities”. 1636 participants took part in this question. This factor was triggering for 23.3% of respondents’ (n = 381) senses of depression, stress and anxiety to a great extent, while it was reported as somehow triggering for 34% (n = 568) of respondents, very little for 26.4 % of respondents (n = 432) and not triggering at all for 15.6% of participants (n = 255).

Friends/social circles were also triggering to a great extent to 12.5% (n = 204) of all respondents to this question (n = 1636), while they were not triggering at all to 14.7% of them (n = 240). In addition, this factor was somewhat triggering to senses of distress to 36.9% of respondents (n = 603) and very little triggering to 36% of the participants (n = 589).

Furthermore, adjusting and coping with university/student life was found to be triggering to 24.4% of respondents (n = 399) to a great extent. In addition, it was somewhat triggering to 41.9% of respondents (n = 685), whereas it was very little triggering to 24.6% of respondents (n = 402). Adjusting and coping with university and student life was not triggering senses of stress, depression and anxiety of 9.2% of respondents (n = 150) at all.

Figure 3 illustrates academic anxiety/stress was reported as one of the most triggering causes of stress, depression and anxiety. While this factor is triggering to a great extent to more than half of respondents (51.3%, n = 840), it was not triggering at all to a small percentage of them (2.6%, n = 43). Additionally, academic anxiety and stress was reported as somewhat triggering to 36% of the participants (n = 591) and very little triggering to 9.9% of them (n = 162).

Figure 3
Responses for Academic Anxiety

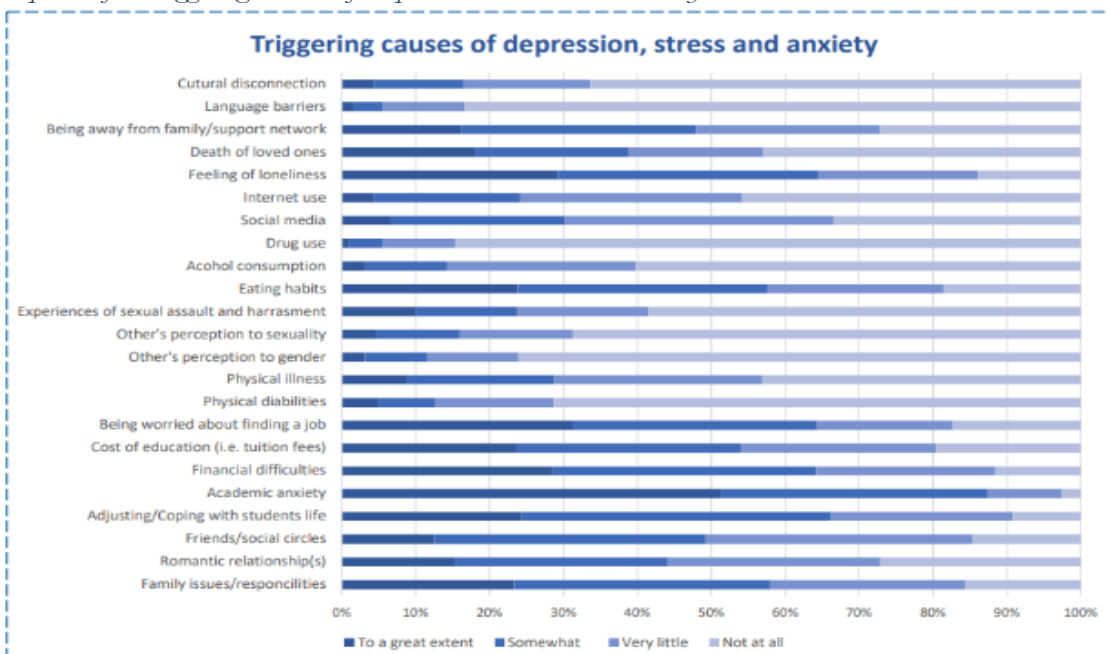


Being away from family and their support network was somehow triggering for more than a third of respondents (31.8%, n = 520). While it was triggering to a great extent to 262 of respondents (16.1%), 444 of them (27.1%) mentioned that it was not at all triggering their senses of depression, stress and anxiety. In addition, it was found to be very little triggering to 408 participants (24.9%).

Some studies on international students (i.e., non-English speaking students) found that language barriers can trigger their senses of depression, stress and anxiety. Drawing on these studies, the survey asked respondents how triggering language barriers were to them. While language barriers were to a great extent triggering to 25 respondents (1.5%), they were reportedly not triggering at all to 1361 participants (83.3%). Language barriers were somewhat triggering to 64 respondents (3.9%) and very little triggering to 184 participants (11.3%).

The study also covered areas such as cultural disconnection, social media use, drug/alcohol use, sexuality, physical disabilities and relationships. The Figure 4 is the overall illustration on the main triggering causes of mental illness within Tertiary Students in New Zealand.

Figure 4
Responses for Triggering Causes of Depression, Stress and Anxiety.



It can be concluded from these findings that student mental health is an area which needs constant support to not only improve study outcomes and experience, but also to help create a positive influence on graduates as they pursue further study or enter the work force

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

LCBNZ's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy strengthens a strategic direction for LCBNZ that includes a determined focus on student mental health and wellbeing. Concurrently the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 states that providers must take a whole-of-provider approach to maintain a strategic and transparent learner wellbeing and safety system that responds to the diverse needs of their learners, and regularly review their learner wellbeing and safety strategic goals and strategic plans.

Development of the Strategy is achieved by the LCBNZ's Student Services team and Senior Management of the school, and implemented by all staff.

The Strategy provides implementation objectives and suggests actions, and current good practice. It is intended that, as the wider LCBNZ community is engaged in bringing their experiences and expertise to promoting mental health outcomes for students, the Strategy will evolve and change. Student Mental Health and Wellbeing will be a focus for all staff KPI's from 2022.

2022 Objectives and KPI's

New Objective	KPI	Date
Strengthen LCBNZ commitment to improving Mental Health and Wellbeing of students as strategic imperative	Place Mental health and Wellbeing of students on Senior Management Team meetings agenda	Feb 2023
Ensure all staff participate in improving Mental Health and Wellbeing of students going forward	Make Mental Health and Wellbeing of students a KPI on staff performance review document.	2024
	Staff refresher of Student support flow chart at PD day session.	2024
Ensure policies and procedures support student success and minimise undesirable effects on mental health and wellbeing	Review relevant policies through mental health lens	Completed 2021 so next by 2024.
Increase student participation in co-designing and implementing mental health initiatives	Involvement by Student Voice group	2023
	Mental Health First Aid course for student representatives	TBC Once enrolment grows
Reduce stigma and barriers to help-seeking for students needing support	Involvement by Student Voice group	End 2022
Respond effectively to students in crisis	Develop critical incident protocols for students with acute mental health concerns Create directory of support services and care providers	2023
Easily accessed 24/7 information and resources about mental health	Create an online space for students to confidentially access information and resources about mental health	2024

LCBNZ to continue current practice:

- Mental health training for staff - Student Services
- Mental Health Information Pack – provide at Orientation/Pastoral workshop – also reminding before internship
- Two designated school 24/7 emergency contacts
- Support staff in student facing roles to assist students with mental health and well-being
- Comply with all areas of The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021
- Convene student advisory group and focus groups to hear student voice and suggestions
- Facilitate social activities for students
- Student social media groups
- Review and balance assessment workload
- Scheduled welfare check-in for all students while on placement
- Mentoring services provided at each LCBNZ campus, free of charge
- External Counselling services provided, free of charge
- Target communications to students at time of stress

REFERENCES

Brunton, W. (2018). *'Mental health services - Mental health and mental illness'*, *Te Ara - the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/mental-health-services/page-1>

New Zealand Union of Students' associations. (2018). *Kei Te Pai? Report on Student Mental Health in Aotearoa*. https://gallery.mailchimp.com/b109fde7924adea2d9afaa28d/files/3d3cdb2b-c0ef-4191-847e-3f32b0bf21eb/Kei_Te_Pai_Report_on_Student_Mental_Health.pdf

World Health Organisation, (2018). *Mental health: strengthening our response*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>