



Embedding Mental Wellbeing Online Resources

QAA Collaborative Enhancement Project

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Today

- The collaborative project & team
- **Defining** embedding mental wellbeing
- **Examples** of embedding mental wellbeing
- **Benefits** of embedding mental wellbeing
- Navigating through the open educational online resources
- Summary and questions

QAA Collaborative project

- Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Collaborative Enhancement Project, funded in 2021.
- This project aimed to:
 - **provide sector definitions** for embedding mental wellbeing
 - **share examples** of embedding mental wellbeing in higher education, drawing on examples from the collaborative partner providers shared through the open educational resources (OERs)
 - **identify the benefits** that you may see if you replicate the examples in your setting.
- Supporting colleagues across the sector to embedding mental wellbeing in their own contexts.
- Launched the resources at a dissemination event on 'Blue Monday', 17 January 2022, to reframe and refocus on the positive activity happening in the sector to support mental wellbeing.

Collaborative team

Zoë Allman - De Montfort University

Dr Kate Lister - Open University
(now Arden University)

Professor Emma Sutton-Pavli and
Dr Neil James - University of East Anglia

Fabienne Vailes - University of Bristol

Benjamin Smith - De Montfort Students' Union

Dr Alison Gilmour - University of Greenwich
(now University of West of Scotland)

Annie Jennings and Nicola Smith - London South
Bank University

Dr Alicia Peña Bizama - University of Reading

Defining embedding mental wellbeing

- There are various definitions around mental wellbeing and “no standard definition in use across the sector” (Pollard et al. 2021, p.21).
- Project team selected a few regularly occurring definitions that particularly resonate and encourage these to be considered alongside any definitions that exist within providers.
- Drawing from this literature, we have identified five core concepts of wellbeing:
 1. A sense of flourishing or thriving
 2. Includes a sense of balance
 3. Is strengthened by community and belonging
 4. Wellbeing is dynamic; it can change from day to day and over time
 5. Inclusive, for all students

Defining embedding mental wellbeing

- Project team identified five core properties of 'embeddedness' in practice (where 'practice' includes teaching, pedagogy, curriculum, assessment, student support and skills development).
- Mental wellbeing should be:
 1. **Modelled** in practice, as well as situated in it; i.e. wellbeing should be inherent in pedagogy and the design of learning, as well as present in curriculum content (Zundans-Fraser and Lancaster, 2012; Green and Meyer, 1991)
 2. **Tailored** to students' needs, allowing for different approaches to be adopted in different contexts
 3. **Inherent** in the values, ethos and culture of the institution, as well as ubiquitous across it (Moody and White, 2003)
 4. Represented in **strategy** and **resourced** appropriately, as well as being ongoing practice (Laud et al., 2015)
 5. A **holistic**, partnership effort (Hughes and Spanner, 2019)

Examples of embedding mental wellbeing

- **27 examples** from collaborative partner providers, curated under 6 categories:
 1. What **pedagogical approaches and techniques** can support embedding mental wellbeing in the curriculum?
 2. What approaches can we take to embed mental wellbeing across higher education **providers, programmes and modules**?
 3. How can we best support student mental wellbeing in the **design of assessment and feedback**?
 4. What initiatives and interventions support students navigating **transitions** and through the **student journey**?
 5. How does embedding mental wellbeing support student engagement in **work-based placements and professional experiences**?
 6. How can **relationship-building, connection and belonging** be utilised as approaches to embedding mental wellbeing?

Examples of embedding mental wellbeing

Examples include:

- Classroom based activities
- Subject specific ideas that can be transposed into other settings
- Frameworks and concepts
- Approaches and toolkits
- Whole-institutional approaches

General format:

- Introduction and rationale
- Method – what, how and why this activity occurred
- Evaluation – of the activity and what was learned
- Takeaway message

Benefits of embedding mental wellbeing

- Benefits are **measurable improvements from outcomes** as seen by stakeholders (students, practitioners/programmes, and institutions).
- Benefits can be **realised during** an activity, but many benefits are realised a long time **after** the activity has ended.
- Identified benefits of the examples included in the online resources to support you in considering which of these examples may be of interest for replication in your own setting.

Benefits of embedding mental wellbeing

- Benefits to **students** of embedding mental wellbeing include:
 - Enhanced resilience, communication, confidence and preparedness, alongside a greater sense of belonging.
- Benefits to **practitioners/programmes** of embedding mental wellbeing include:
 - Increased student engagement, enhanced student partnership, and greater student achievement.
- Benefits to **institutions** of embedding mental wellbeing include:
 - Enhanced engagement, whole University approaches to an important topic, and ensuring equitable access.

Navigating through the resources

The webpage

The screenshot shows the QAA website header with navigation links: Home, About Us, Membership, Study Guide, Embedding Mental Wellbeing, Assessment, Quality Improvement, and Research. The main content area features a teal header with the title 'EMBEDDING MENTAL WELLBEING: METHODS AND BENEFITS'. Below the title is a paragraph of text and a list of bullet points. A dashed blue line points from the title area towards the 'EXAMPLES OF EMBEDDING MENTAL WELLBEING' section. At the bottom of the screenshot, there is a smaller version of the 'EXAMPLES OF EMBEDDING MENTAL WELLBEING' grid.

Examples links

The grid is titled 'EXAMPLES OF EMBEDDING MENTAL WELLBEING' and contains six cards, each with a header, a question, and a 'View more >' link. The cards are: 1. 'APPROACHES AND TECHNIQUES' with the question 'What pedagogical approaches and techniques can support embedding mental wellbeing in the curriculum?'; 2. 'PROVIDERS, PROGRAMMES AND MODULES' with 'What approaches can we take to embed mental wellbeing across higher education providers, programmes and modules?'; 3. 'ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK' with 'How can we best support student mental wellbeing in the design of assessment and feedback?'; 4. 'TRANSITIONS DURING THE STUDENT JOURNEY' with 'What approaches can we take to embed mental wellbeing across higher education providers, programmes and modules?'; 5. 'WORK-BASED PLACEMENTS AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES' with 'What approaches can we take to embed mental wellbeing across higher education providers, programmes and modules?'; 6. 'RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING, CONNECTION AND BELONGING' with 'How can we best support student mental wellbeing in the design of assessment and feedback?'. Each card includes a small image related to the topic.

Example:
Approaches and techniques

This section provides a detailed view of the 'EXAMPLES OF EMBEDDING MENTAL WELLBEING' grid. It features a teal header and a sub-header 'What pedagogical approaches and techniques can support embedding wellbeing in the curriculum?'. Below this, there are eight cards, each with a title, a 'View document (PDF)' link, a 'BENEFITS' section, and a list of benefits for students, practitioners, and institutions. The cards are: 1. 'Embedding wellbeing in the classroom: Staff workshop'; 2. 'A Mindful LEGO® Meditation'; 3. 'Establishing a Shared Values Base'; 4. 'Compassionate Play: Reflective worksheet'; 5. 'Embedding Wellbeing in the French Language Curriculum'; 6. 'Embedding wellbeing in the classroom: Staff workshop' (repeated); 7. 'A Mindful LEGO® Meditation' (repeated); 8. 'Establishing a Shared Values Base' (repeated). Each card includes a list of benefits for students, practitioners, and institutions.

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Summary

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- Upcoming event: **QAA Quality Insights** [‘Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Workshop’](#) on Tuesday, 14 June 10:00-12:00

References

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