

UCD Student Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Project

Student Partnership Forum - Consultation 25/01/23

The SMHSP Project Manager presented an overview of the project to date to the forum, outlining the context of the project, how the work of the project is carried out, its current status, and the next steps.

Members of the forum were asked to advise the project on the lived experience of students in relation to the discussion items below.



Engagement & Awareness - How best to deliver messaging to students, and where do opportunities exist for students to engage with MH&WB related material.

Key outputs:

- Consider the timing, positioning and lifespan of messaging. Information is best delivered when and where it is needed.
- Messaging should be concise and consistent. It should be student driven and 'UCD Jargon' should be avoided
- Questions that prompt action are effective - supported by easy links to support (QR Codes etc).
- Iconography would make accessing information and support easier.
- Wellbeing and Mental Health related material should be mandatory in curricula. Inclusion would help to normalise discussion.
- Mandatory inclusion of MH&WB material in Orientation. The overload of information in the Orientation programme was also noted.
- Screens on campus identified as effective channels of communication.

Barriers to accessing supports:

Key outputs:

- Lack of knowledge of services available
- "Knowing where you are on the journey" and what the appropriate supports are. It was noted that when students need to access supports, they may be experiencing challenges that make it more difficult than normal to navigate the supports landscape.
- Cultural and language barriers can have a significant impact on international students, who also may have particular support needs.
- Opening hours of support services
- Capacity/Resourcing of support services

Further Comments:

- The significance of faculty members' role was highlighted by members, and the importance of providing them with appropriate support and training was noted.
- Supports are not currently joined up and coordinated in terms of data sharing. Enhancements in this area would be beneficial, keeping in mind relevant data protection and privacy issues.
- Short, quick interventions/support, possibly via Zoom or similar, would be effective at the point of specific stressors, e.g. difficulty with an assignment
- Supports should be offered while students are awaiting appointments with services.

The contribution of the Student Partnership Forum was reflected in the Project Interim Report and the interim recommendations it contained, and influenced the direction of the next phase of student consultation, which is a series of Student Focus Groups.

The Project Manager updated the SPF on the 13th April 2023.