National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework

Implementation Guide

2020

Contents

Using this Implementation guide

This *Implementation guide* is the companion document to *A National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework for Ireland*. Its purpose is to offer HEIs guidance on how to implement the framework and embed it across all areas of campus life. For more details on the context of student mental health and the evidence base and international best practices behind the framework and its nine themes please refer to *The National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework for Ireland*.

The framework, nine interconnected themes and subsequent resources are informed by international evidence that calls for an embedded whole system approach to student metal health and well-being with recommendations drawn from: Connecting for Life: Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015-2020[1], World Health Organisation[2], Jed Foundation[3], Suicide Prevention Resource Center[4], Zero Suicide[5], Suicide Safer Universities[6], Student Minds Charter[7], Step Change 2017 and 2020[8][9] and international higher education polices[10][11].

For each of the nine themes set out in the *Framework*, this guide presents a set of good practice actions and a list of resources that give further information, links to international experience, as well as more tools and ideas for implementation.

These resources allow customisation based on individual HEIs culture, student needs and infrastructure. HEIs can review and reflect on their current support for student mental health and suicide prevention and identify areas where further improvements are needed. To implement the framework institutions must engage with the whole campus and work in partnership with students, through Students' Unions, to ensure that the student voice is central.

Build and support national and institutional strategies for student mental health

Lead

Improvements in student mental health and suicide prevention will only be effective if prioritised at a national, sectoral, and institutional levels - through policy and strategy, this is student-centred and championed by strong leadership.

Actions checklist

- Student wellbeing and mental health needs to permeate all aspects of decision-making at governmental level – to ensure HEIs can affect changes necessary in their institutions.
- Dedicated leadership – championing student success, wellbeing & mental health.
- Form a Mental Health Committee with engagement from all staff, including senior management, heads of departments and faculties, provosts, deans, counselling, students, academic staff, tutors, students' unions, security, and accommodation.
- Build and strengthen strategic partners nationally and in the community.
- Strengthen infrastructure by investing in resources (e.g., staff & technology).
- Stimulate campus-wide cultural change that de-stigmatises mental health issues, promotes wellbeing and encourages students to seek help when they need it.
- Develop or revise comprehensive institutional student mental health policies.
- Audit the campus environment with a view to restricting access to lethal means.

LEAD Resources

Whole-institution comprehensive approach

- Jed/SPRC Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health Promotion & Suicide Prevention for Universities
- University Mental Health Charter by Student Minds
- UUK Stepchange strategy and implementation of whole university mental health
- Cornell University: example of the whole campus application

Strategic policy development

- Policy for Student Mental Health Canada/UK
- The Jed Foundation Framework for developing institutional protocols for the acutely distressed or suicidal college students – includes developing a safety protocol, emergency contract notification protocol, and leave and re-entry protocol.
- Jed/SPRC Campus Mental Health Action Plan
- AUCCCD Responding to a Student Death Protocol and postvention examples
- Higher Education Mental Health Alliance Guide for Response to Suicide on College Campuses

Investment and returns

- Online calculator for economic returns on improve student mental health
- Investing in Student Mental Health for College Leadership

Means Restriction

- SPRC Restricting Access to Lethal Means at Universities
- The Jed Foundation's Means Restriction Saves Lives

Collaborate

Develop partnerships on campus and in the community with health services to support student mental health

HEIs need a co-creative inclusive, approach where students and staff are involved at every stage of the journey to improve mental health outcomes. Strong partnerships embedded throughout the institution with the HSE health services, local and national authorities, NGOs and the wider community to develop strategies, action plans and deliver services for student mental health and suicide prevention.

Actions checklist

- Establish strong and regular links with local mental health services.
- Establish formal connections between local authorities and government agencies.
- Establish formal relationships with non-statutory community agencies.
- Build staff and student capacity to work collaboratively with external agencies.

COLLABORATE Resources

Sector leading collaborations
- UUK is working with NHS leaders to improve mental health supports for students minding-our-future
- Manchester has a dedicated centre to support students from the region's 4 universities with mental health needs
- Link between NHS, Queen's University and Ulster University to support student mental health
- SMARTEN research network

Institute collaborations
- Student support services and HSE clinical nurse specialists at emergency departments

Community mental health promotion
- Mental health promotion Mental Health Ireland
- HSE mental health supports for young people
- HSE youth mental health information line 1800111888

Community mental health, suicide prevention, intervention and postvention support
- NOSP Community Resource Office
- NOSP suicide prevention training

Helpline support
- 50808
- Samaritans
- Pieta House
- Aware
- Jigsaw

Educate

Build campus knowledge and skills on student mental health and suicide prevention

Education and training are key to an improved understanding of and attitudes to mental health and suicide prevention. HEIs need to ensure that campus members are trained in mental health literacy and suicide awareness so that they can identify signs of psychological distress and direct vulnerable students to appropriate resources.

Actions checklist

- Establish training on mental health literacy, suicide awareness for all students and staff.
- Ensure that the whole community are aware of the steps to get help and support.
- Allocate time and resources for staff to support student mental health.
- Embed mental health awareness in the curriculum.

EDUCATE Resources

Gatekeeper training
- NOSP   ASIST   SafeTalk   esuicideTALK   Start
- Identifying and Responding to Distressed and at Risk Students: contact PCHEI
- University of Wolverhampton suicide risk training: 3 Minutes to save a life
- Mental Health First Aid training: mhfaireland
- Charlie Waller Memorial trust: e-learning for colleges and universities
- Free online suicide prevention training: zerosuicidealliance
- See Engage Resources in this document on page 6 for curricular infusion resources

Health promotion
- healthpromotion.ie   HSE Little Things Campaign
- USI Health Promotion Strategy 2017-2020   USI Re:Charge Campaign
- Healthy Ireland 2018-2023
- Jigsaw Workshop Brochure

CPD training for health care professionals
- STORM   CAMS   SAFETool   SAFE-T   IACP   PSI

Engage

Create campus communities that are connected, safe, nurturing, inclusive and compassionate

HEIs need to foster the development of student wellbeing through community connectedness, purpose, engagement and belonging. Institutional culture needs to reflect diversity, inclusivity and compassion.

Actions checklist

- Provide for curricular infusion of mental health across all academic disciplines – life skills, resilience, management of challenges/adversity and adaptability.
- Reduce student isolation by promoting culture of belonging.
- Initiate peer mentoring programmes.
- Show zero tolerance to bullying and harassment.
- Encourage social environments and smaller groups within campus community.

ENGAGE Resources

Whole campus engagement
- Harvard University Belonging Strategic Plan
- Canadian Association of College & University Student Services Supportive, Inclusive Campus Climate and Environment Inventory

Curricular infusion
- PCHEI student well-being resources: includes apps, podcasts, online courses, workbooks
- Work & Wellbeing Required in undergraduate business module at Trinity College Dublin
- National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Curriculum Resources – the First Six Weeks of College support for new students and Peer-assisted student support
- Wellbeing statement in a place students frequent like Moodle or module syllabi – requiring professors address mental health and normalising help-seeking behaviour

Interventions and tools
- Harvard University Resilience Consortium
- US Air Force Suicide Prevention and Resilience Program
- Resilience Skills from Positive Psychology @the University of Pennsylvania

Identify

Establish a culture of mental health awareness, recognition, and compassion

HEIs need to take action to identify students who are at risk of mental health problems as well as promoting mental health awareness for all students and all front facing staff.

Actions checklist

- Establish regular, highly-visible mental health awareness raising interventions.
- Establish a culture that encourages disclosure of mental health issues.
- Establish a culture that supports students who are experiencing poor mental health and help them identify appropriate services.
- Make non-academic help such as social interpersonal skills an integral or mandated part of every student's HEI experience; in doing so, make it easier for students to seek help.

IDENTIFY Resources

- HSE NOSP help identify someone thinking about suicide – HSE about suicide
- Screening toolkit Ask Suicide Questions – aSQ
- JED Foundation self-evaluation screening toolkit for students – ULifeLine
- Green Ribbon and work nationally and in the community – seechange
- Training for health worker in gender sensitive service provision for men – ENGAGE
- HSE mental health support services for young people
- Community support to maintain and promote positive mental health – recoverycollege

Provide students with safe, accessible and well-resourced mental health support

Support

HEIs must ensure that support services are adequately resourced, safe, inclusive, culturally appropriate, and accessible to all students, delivered by professionals using high quality, evidence-based interventions and therapies that are regularly evaluated.

Actions checklist

- Put in place high-quality, effective and adequately resourced treatment to support students with mental health issues.
- Establish better communications within the campus and between the campus and community services (in both directions).
- Develop cross-disciplinary/interdisciplinary collaborations with stakeholders.
- Provide access to referral pathways.
- Increasing mental health and suicide risk screening by support staff.
- Improve data collection, information sharing & contributing to a standardised data set.
- Provide integrated interdisciplinary services on campus.
- Provide CPD for student services staff.

SUPPORT Resources

Standards and evidence
- International Association of Counselling Services Standards
- NICE guidance, advice, pathways and quality standards on mental health and wellbeing
- ACHA, college health policies, guidelines, recommendations for college health professionals
- Jed Framework for developing institutional protocols for distressed or suicidal students
- Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors
- British Psychological Society evidence backed treatments and recommendations
- Zero suicide treatment guidelines
- Evidence-based psychotherapies for suicide prevention
- What interventions improve college and university students' mental health and wellbeing?: What Works Centre for wellbeing
- Orygen training resources
- HSE: Best Practice Guidance for Mental Health Services
- HSE NOSP: Best Practice Guidance for Suicide Prevention Services

Measures and data
- Center for Collegiate Mental Health: Standardized Data Set of student mental health
- Joint Commission Mental Health and Suicide Risk Screenings & Management
- Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) – 9 item internationally-validated screening tool
- The ACHA-National College Health Assessment – widest used annual survey and dataset of students' health habits, behaviours, and perceptions

Continuing professional development
- See Educate Resources in this document on page 5 for training/CPD
- Clinical Load Index is a tool to help on staffing for mental health services in higher education
- The Irish College of General Practitioners training and standards in general practice CPD e-learning modules in mental health

Respond

Institutions need critical incident protocols for varying levels of student mental health crisis

In addition to the provision of treatment, HEIs need to have a crisis response or critical incident plan that is accessible to the institution as a whole. The plan should include clear responding protocols for varying levels of crisis and effectively communicated to the whole institution.

Actions checklist

- Have a plan in place. Well, coordinated postvention has a critical role to play in the prevention of further suicidal actions in a community affected by suicide.

- Establish a team to execute the plan with clearly defined roles for each member.

- Suicide postvention should include: psychological support, crisis intervention and other forms of assistance to those affected.

RESPOND Resources

- Suicide Safer Universities – Postvention Strategy – preventing-student suicides
- Student death and the university response (Flynn 2019) Death Response Protocol
- Suicide cluster response plans – Suicide_Cluster_Guide
- Jed Foundation provides a range of resources – Jed Postvention resources
- Guides for memorials – HEMHA; Samaritans step-by-step; Canadian CSP
- Critical response teams – Campus teams
- A guide for response to suicide on campus – HEMHA-postvention-guide
- NOSP suicide bereavement community training programme – Suicide Bereavement Training
- Media guidelines on reporting suicide – Media_Guidelines_Ireland

Transition

Establish student supports throughout the higher education journey
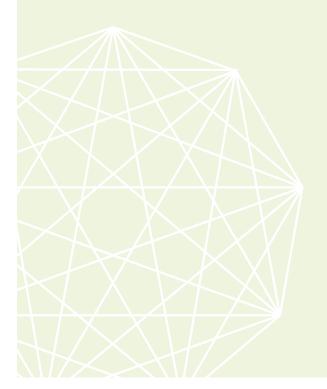
Higher education represents a major milestone and time of transition for students, therefore it is vital institutions do pre-entry, induction, re-orientation and outduction. Supports and interventions need to be in place for students who are more vulnerable to mental health issues during transitions.

Actions checklist

- Establish transition supports for students throughout the higher education journey: pre-entry, induction, re-orientation and outduction.

- Champion the introduction of 'student health passports' so that their health data and records travel with them.

- Identify at-risk groups to be targeted with intrusive student support, appropriate initiatives and outreach programmes, especially at key transition points.

TRANSITION Resources

- Student Led Learning Guidebook – peer assisted learning support transition
- Leeds for Life – peer mentoring programme
- Student Minds transition preparation package – Know before you go
- Get ready for 3rd level education MOOC getready.education
- Student Minds advice for exam stress – examstress
- Student Experience Transition model – SET
- Support for international students – International Students
- Coming out as LGBTQ+ at university – Studentminds
- Jed Foundation – Transition of Care Guide for student with mental health issues
- Jed Foundation – Set to Go

Frequent data collection and analysis to ensure an effective improvement in student mental health

Improve

A whole system response requires starting with a baseline needs assessment and evaluation of current practices. Regular collection, evaluation and strategic auditing of data is vital to ensure policies and interventions remain effective and allow prompt action to improve student mental health.

Actions checklist

- Complete an institutional baseline assessment of current practice.
- Track and analyse student risk/protective factors, and safety/health indicators using data collected via tools such as Irish Survey of Student Engagement, Graduate Outcomes Survey, as well as generic information on counselling outcomes, wait time, violent/criminal behaviour, sexual assault/substance abuse.
- Repeat institutional assessment annually and track progress against improvement goals set in each area.

IMPROVE Resources

- UUK Stepchange 2020 Institution Self-Assessment tool
- The Irish Student Survey on engagement and experiences of support – studentsurvey.ie
- The NCAA Institution Mental Health Planning & Implementation kit provides an institutional self-assessment and a campus collaboration action plan
- Canadian Association of College & University Student Services Guide to Implementing and Assessing a Systemic Approach for student mental health

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