Grand Challenges in Student Mental Health

#StudentMentalHealth

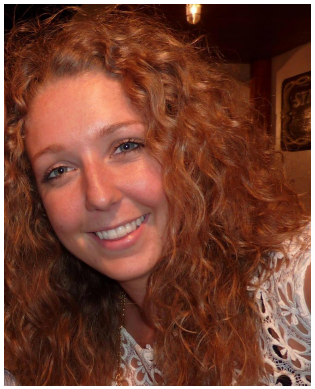
student minds

Making everything happen

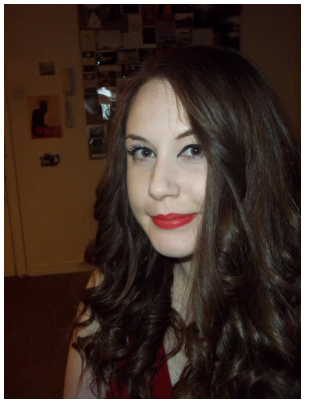
Elisabeth Gulliver

Rosanna Hardwick

Rosie Tressler



Georgie Aisbitt



Katherine Fender

Anja Drautzburg

Richard Keen

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Student Minds

Students & the University Community	+	Student Minds	=	Better Student Mental Health
		• **Research** into the challenges students face. • **Share knowledge** & **resources;** supporting students to take care of their own mental health. • **Deliver training, support and supervision**, tailor-made for students to run **peer support interventions** and **campaigns.** • **Connect** volunteers with a **national community** of activists **passionate** about student wellbeing.		• More students **taking action**; delivering **safe** and **sustainable** interventions on campuses across the UK. • More students having the **confidence to talk** and **listen** to each other. • More **resilient** graduates equipped with the **skills** to improve the wellbeing of others. • More students equipped with **knowledge** of how to proactively look after their own mental health. • More students **influencing decisions** around service provision. • More **universities supported** to deliver a joined – up approach to student mental health.

80%: Shared Experience

Eating Disorders Support Groups

STUDENTS AGAINST DEPRESSION .ORG

Positive Minds Course

Supporting Supporters Workshops

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- **29%** of students report clinical levels of psychological distress – Berwick et al 2008
- **4%** of students are seen by counselling services – Grant (2011)
- **0.7%** of students disclose a mental health condition to their university – Equality Challenge Unit report 2012

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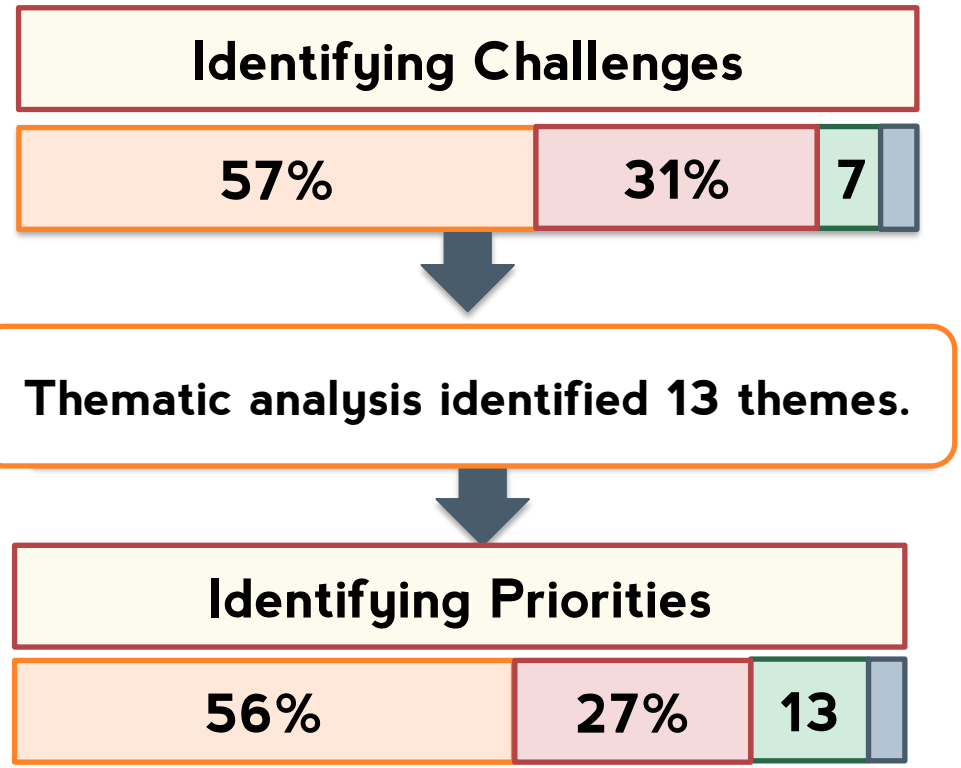
Grand Challenges in Student Mental Health

Students | Graduates | University Staff | Other Healthcare



- Academic Pressure and Concerns about future employability.
- Study Skills and Support.
- The University Academic Environment.
- Life Skills and Personal Development.
- Accessing Support through the NHS.
- Accessing Support in General.
- Structures for Pastoral Support and Mentoring.
- Managing the Transition to University.
- University Lifestyle.
- Relationships.
- Coordinating Responsibility for Student Mental Health and Wellbeing.
- Campaign Messages and Public Attitudes.
- International Students.

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Fear of being judged

(4) Finding the confidence to tell people you have a mental health problem or are struggling

"Fear of being judged - not being able to easily be able to talk to people - scared to go talk to my uni lecturers. Other students not wanting to know me because I am quiet and therefore not like them which just isolates me even more."

- The Challenge of Stigma: Time to Change
  - Venita Boon
- Taking up the challenge on campus
  - Seb Baird, former OUSU welfare officer and founder of Mind Your Head
  - Nikita Thakrar & Laura Heath, Open Minds
  - Sam Galler, It Gets Brighter
  - Think Positive

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Stress

"Stress - obvious but it really shouldn't be ignored… Many students suffer from more severe stress at uni with all the combined pressures. The changing environment, the harder work, the smaller ability gap causing more academic pressure and multiple other things. Stress is normally shrugged off and ignored but for many students it can quickly take over their lives and can worsen or prompt other mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, perfectionism, OCD etc. and needs to be wider acknowledged as an issue."

- Building personal skills & resilience: fighting depression
  - Denise Meyer, Students Against Depression

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Finding the confidence to tell people you have a mental health problem or are struggling

(6) Finding the confidence to ask for help.

(10) There is a general reluctance to disclose mental health problems.

"Throughout my four year course, I never plucked up the courage to talk to any of my tutors about the mental health issues I faced..."

- Accessing Support: Finding the confidence to ask for help.
  - Anne Ford, Oxford University Counselling Service
- Looking after your mates
  - Charlotte Gatherer & Vicky Gall.

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Loneliness

- **Looking after your mates & the campaign launch.**

“Figure out a way to reach those students who isolate themselves because of their mental health issues. I was totally saved by the fact that one guy on my course really made the effort to get to know me and came round to my room for a chat most days... no doubt some people aren't so lucky, and it's so easy to completely cut yourself off at university, with no one realising that you're struggling until it's too late. Most universities have some kind of buddying/ parenting system and I think this could be really valuable if it was implemented to its full potential - maybe suggest how parents or buddies can get to know one another, hold 'family' dinners/ group events, encourage regular contact etc.”

“Isolation. Students write their essays, do their readings and revise their studies often only with few to none social contact which makes them feel even worse. I remember times where I haven't been speaking to a person for a couple of days because I was writing an essay or revising for an exam."

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Slow and difficult process of referring students to specialist services.

"Quick access to mental health services is a problem. Referrals take a long time; talking therapies take much, much longer. In the interim, students are missing classes, falling behind with coursework, and needing help. We ask students to document any illness or adverse circumstances but this documentation takes time and effort, and students may not be in a fit state to provide it. The impact on grades can be huge..."

- Accessing Support; Transitions between home and university
  - Lydia Pell, Chair of the University Mental Health Advisors Network & Ellie Hambly, Assistant Psychology, Berkshire CAMHS.
- #studenttransitions

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Poor general understanding about mental health problems

(14) Building skills around personal resilience necessary to cope with the challenges of life at university: 4.10 (1.00) / 4.34 (0.69)

"Students don't know how to manage stress or their own mental wellbeing."

"Building student's own resilience to manage their mental health - promote positive mental wealth as well as provide professional help where required.

(16) Among students, a limited understanding about mental health and limited personal knowledge of steps that can be taken to look after personal mental health: 4.08 (1.02) / 4.17 (0.82)

"We see a lot of students who feel that the way they feel or the difficulties they experience because of their mental health or the situations that are affecting their mental health should be dealt with by other people or are something that other people should be responsible for. It is their mental health, therefore without that ownership there will never be the building of the skills needed for long term condition management."

"Mental health issues are often recurring or even permanent and so must be managed carefully throughout a student's university stay. Students should be taught to understand appropriate action to take if circumstances start to deteriorate once more."

- An Introduction to…
  - Bipolar disorder: Professor John Geddes,
  - Eating Disorders: Professor Janet Treasure,
  - Psychosis: Professor Daniel Freeman,
  - Sleep: Dr. Bryony Sheaves & Dr. Kate Porcheret

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Mental health problems have a substantive negative impact on concentration.

- Concentrate… How to be your most productive
  - Sara Fernandez, CEO of Student Hubs
- What has sleep got to do with it?
  - Dr Bryony Sheaves & Dr Kate Porcheret

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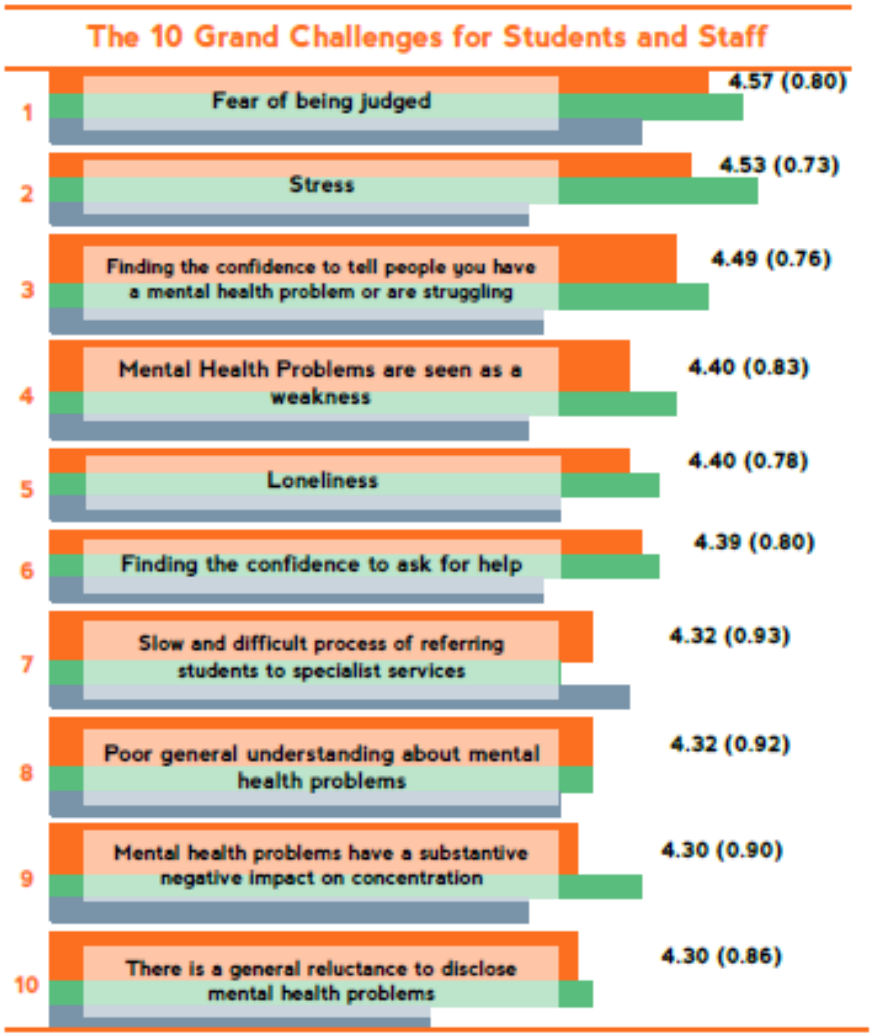
www.studentminds.org.uk/grand-challenges



Orange: Everyone
Green: Students
Blue: Staff

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