



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

Purpose

This policy provides a framework for promoting positive mental health at Marjon, and how we respond to mental health difficulties. It fits within an umbrella of mental, physical, nutritional, social and spiritual health and wellbeing. It's for everyone.

This policy is not intended to be a strategic action plan and should be read in conjunction with the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy [Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) on our website.

Principles

- Plymouth Marjon University is centred on student success – in their degree, in their wider university experience and in their life after graduation. We recognise that supporting our community to manage mental health can support student success.
- We recognise that mental health and wellbeing is a continuum and needs to be considered for everyone. Mental ill health can be long-lasting or short-term. It can be a declared and managed disability, or can be undiagnosed or undeclared. It can impact on people at any life stage, and people manage mental ill health in different ways. It is complex and individual. Not all people wish to disclose to others. Some people are aware of periods of mental ill health but consider it something they can manage without wishing to disclose information.
- We will use non-discriminatory language, but we recognise that people may have their own ways to describe their mental health and wellbeing:
 - Mental Health: A level of emotional wellbeing that allows an individual to function in society, or an absence of significant mental health problems.
 - Mental difficulty, or mental ill health: A range of experiences and diagnosed conditions that can seriously limit an individual's ability to cope with day-to-day living.
- We will promote a culture that:
 - is informed and open about mental ill health and actively encourages positive discussion.
 - finds effective ways to embed positive mental health practices and wellbeing into university life.
 - takes a whole university approach to good mental health, developing inclusive, supportive and compassionate learning communities across staff and students.
 - takes a holistic leadership approach, involving external partners and working with the community to support student mental health.
 - treats students and staff with mental ill health with humanity, consistency, clarity, confidentiality and fairness. For example, we will consider these attributes when we

consider ways to support students in their studies, or staff in their jobs, and when mental ill health is disclosed for the first time.

- considers our values in our approach to mental health, and embeds a consideration of mental wellbeing across all our policies and practices.
- We will consider how the whole community – both staff and students - needs to feel ready and capable to step in and support others. This covers a variety of desired behaviours from simple steps such as allowing time to ask others if they are OK; to ensuring everyone knows how to signpost others to extra support; and ensuring we support people in our community to provide that help.
- We recognise that finding ways to live with mental ill health can mean very successful outcomes for students and staff.
- We will assume students and staff are fit to study or work, unless we are told otherwise or unless evidence demonstrates otherwise. If we have concerns, we will always be prepared start a conversation.
- Whilst recognising some people may not require support, we will promote a community that responds with purpose when action is required and always considers safety.
- We recognise that effective mental health support often involves professionals external to the community and we will work with them to share best practice and improve our network of support.
- We will maintain knowledge of sector best practice and guidance.
- We will monitor and record incidents and share trends in mental-health related events, without disclosing personal information, to ensure we learn from activities and are ready to respond.
- We recognise that effective systems and processes are fundamental to supporting people with mental ill health, and we will endeavour to provide clear direction at all times on how we can or cannot support staff and students.

The University has legal obligations and must:

- Recognise that where mental ill health is long term and affects day to day activities, it is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.
- Eliminate discrimination and make reasonable adjustments to support staff and students' mental health – this will involve sharing information on a need to know and relevant basis where we can better support students by doing so (for example, in order to put reasonable adjustments in place)
- Adhere to the GDPR and Data Protection Act.
- Follow our legal duty to keep individuals safe, which may mean there will be rare occasions when we have to exercise our 'duty of care' without consent.
- Use Equality Impact assessments to assess relevant changes to policies.

Students and staff must:

- Consider their needs and the implications of not keeping the university informed of mental health issues which may affect their study or their work.

- Recognise that if mental ill health is not disclosed, the University cannot provide appropriate individual support arrangements. (Disclosure of a disability or health condition is defined as any verbal or written declaration to a member of University staff).
- Be aware that on occasion, the University will seek an individual’s permission to share information with relevant people, in order to get appropriate support, following relevant protocols but the University will also need to share information *without consent* if that information would be in the best interests of the students’ successful studies or wellbeing (for instance to put reasonable adjustments in place).
- Recognise and maintain their own personal limits in supporting friends, peers or colleagues with mental ill health and ask for help and advice when needed, anonymously if appropriate.
- Recognise the limitations of the University in being an educational institution or place of work, and not a medical or therapeutic institution.
- Staff must exercise duty of care with students, recognising the boundaries of their role and responsibilities, and asking for help and advice to ensure that both they and students are properly supported.
- Promote a positive mental health environment.

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Appendix – Relevant documents

- [Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-25](#)
- Support to Continue to Study Procedure found in Section 9 of the [Student Regulations Framework](#)
- [Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Data Protection Statement for Students](#)
- [Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [Trusted Supporter Communication Protocol](#)