

Supporting Students' Mental Health & Well-being in the New Semester



Sean Morrissey
academic developer

COVID-19 and Student Mental Health

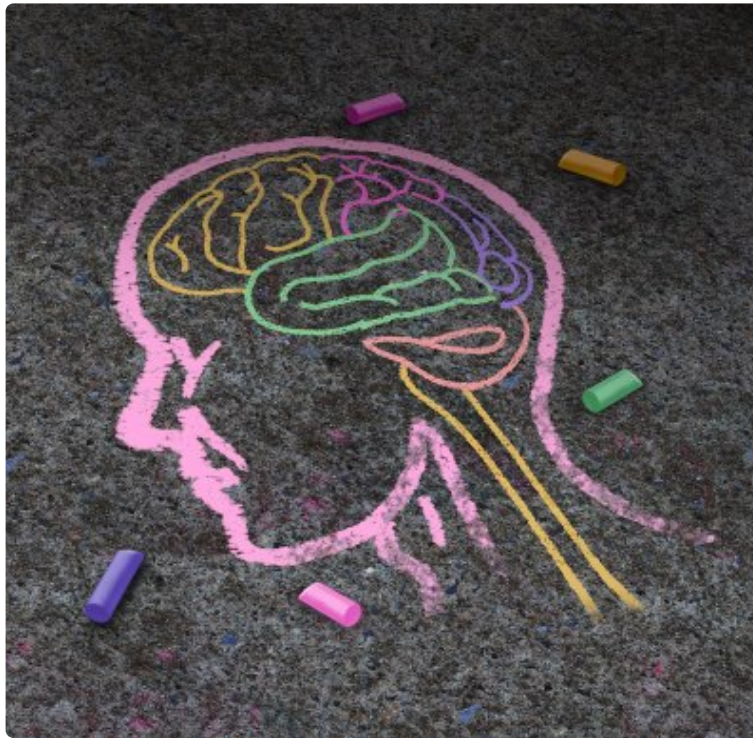
Coronavirus is affecting student mental health in many different ways including the prevalence of distance learning, changed to the labour market, career opportunities, hygiene-related behaviour (e.g. mask wearing), and daily routines. [Even in the pre-pandemic period, more than one-third of students experienced mental health problems.](#)

However, a recent paper published in [Scientific Reports](#) (Nature), which examined health indicators among students across nine countries during the early stage of the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the extent of growing mental health concerns across universities in nine different countries.

The prevalence of high stress, depression, and generalized anxiety disorder risk among students was 61.30%, 40.3%, and 30% in the total sample, respectively.

Female gender was a predictor of perceived stress, anxiety, and depression.

The authors of the scientific report concluded that in addition to dedicated programmes, Universities need to provide "regular psychological support to students"



"I'm a 45-year-old mature student and should be writing my dissertation as it's my final year. Instead I am frozen with fear, my brain is not working and I'm failing miserably"

- [Mind Survey, July 2021](#)

How can teachers support student well-being?

The health and welfare of all members of the University is everyone's concern. Staff can often be well placed to support students in crisis or emotional distress and can play important roles in signposting students to sources of support. [Moreover, how educators teach and interact with students creates a 'learning climate' that can affect student learning and wellbeing.](#)

In the first instance, supporting student well-being in the new semester could begin with ensuring you are listening to your students concerns and checking in

with them from time to time. It is important to ensure that students have accurate information around COVID-19 and any changes as they occur.

You may have opportunities to model a positive attitude, while being honest and open about your own concerns. And finally, because student and teacher well-being are inextricably linked, make sure you are looking after yourself.

Further Resources

[Strathclyde's Disability and Well-being Service](#) has produced a number of resources to support student mental health and well-being. These include:

- [Helping students in distress: a guide for staff](#)
- [Guide to stress free exams, personal circumstances and appeals](#)

A host of additional support is in place for staff can signpost students to including [Self-help Guides and Online CBT](#), [Emergency Contact details](#), and a wide array of development and training for staff (including provision to support you with your own mental health and well-being) can be booked via the [DAT booking system](#)

If you have found this resource useful, or have any additional concerns, please leave a comment below and join the conversation: