Mental Health Toolkit

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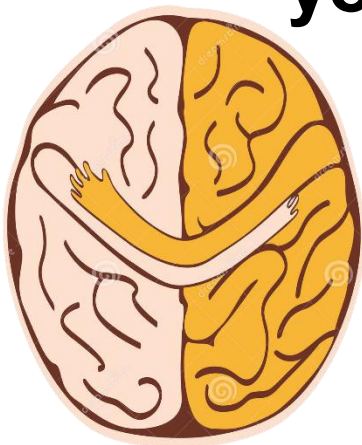
Session Structure

- What is mental health?
- Why did we feel the need for a 'Toolkit'
- Purpose of the Toolkit
- What next?
- Content of Toolkit

What is **Mental Health**

Mental health refers to our state of mind and our ability to cope with the everyday things that are going on around us.

Being mentally healthy doesn't just mean that you don't have a mental health problem

Why is it important?

We all have mental health, like we all have physical health. Like our bodies, our minds can become unwell.

- Affects how we think, feel, and act

- **1 in 4** people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year

- **75%** of mental health problems are established by age 24[1]

- **92%** of students identified as having had feelings of mental distress, **20%** a mental health problem, and **13%** suicidal thoughts[2]

Mental health is everyone's business

Why do we, as FE/HE staff, need to be aware?

- Because we have a duty of care to all students

- Because we need to know what we can do to help

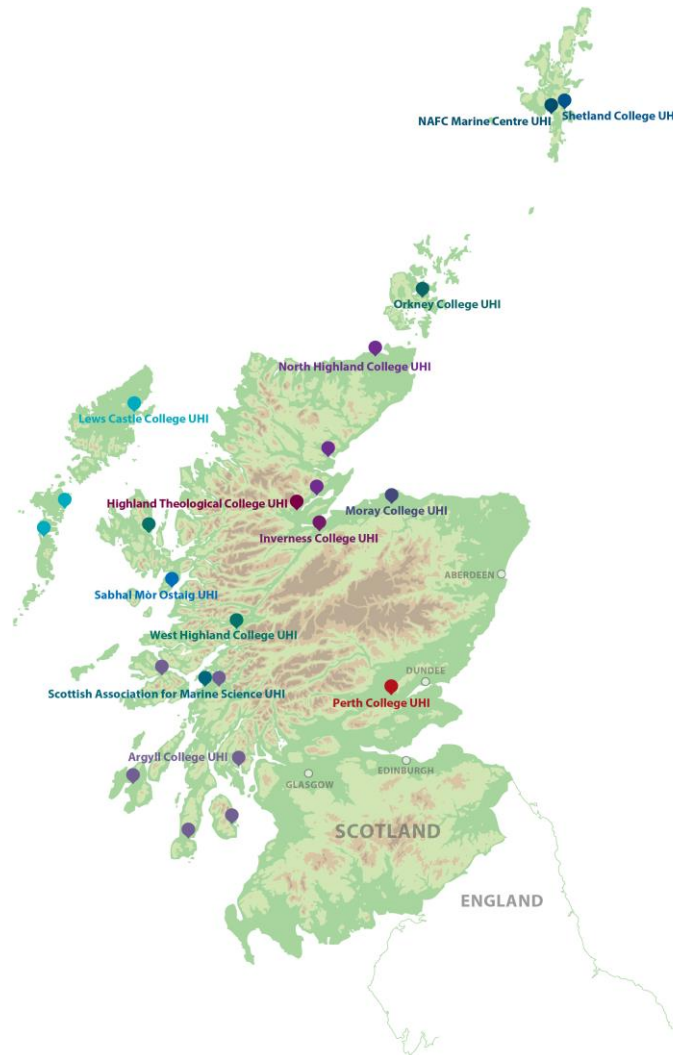- Because student suicides are increasing annually

Students

- When students come to college/university, they may be experiencing poor mental health for the first time and may not yet have sought support from any health professional.

- If they are away from home, this complicates things for GP surgeries & services via NHS

The University of the Highlands and islands

UHI Context

- UHI is a unique tertiary institution – covers an area the size of Belgium

- 13 Academic partners and 70 learning centres

- Everything from SCQF L1 to research PhDs

- Ethos – to provide education in the communities where people live so that they do not have to leave to access quality education

- Widening access institution

UHI Context

- Rural and island communities, different travel issues
- Do have electricity , mobile phones and Broadband – but not everywhere!
- Use of VC, online & blended courses
- More mixed student cohort – not all school leavers
- Small student numbers = student centred approach

Where we live and work!

Real life 2017-18

Mental Health as 2nd largest disclosed disability after dyslexia at LCC in 2017-18

- ❖ Anxiety, depression, PTSD, bi-polar
- ❖ Self harm, drug abuse, social exclusion, family issues
- ❖ Suicide in local school in December
- ❖ Drug-related sudden death at New Year
- ❖ Suicide attempt by student (not in college)
- ❖ 2 teenage on-island suicides Aug 2018 – with UHI links

Mental Health Conditions Toolkit

Origins

- ❖ Experiences as Module Leaders
  - Disclosed and 'undisclosed' cases
  - Particular challenges in an online environment
- ❖ Student Services involvement
- ❖ Awarded AMOSSHE funding
- ❖ Cooperation with EDU

  (UHI's Educational Development Unit)

Mental Health Conditions Toolkit

- Purpose
  - to help all staff to support students with mental health conditions in UHI and other universities
  - to provide a single resource which can be used by all university staff to increase knowledge, understanding and confidence, in order to help students maximise their academic potential

- USP
  - to focus on the differing needs and responses required for online and mature students

What next?

Well-received externally – AMOSSHE, CDN

Annual updates

Analyse user feedback

Embed it into staff consciousness!

Student focus-group work – to help assess impact – December/January

Mental Health Conditions Toolkit

Mental Health Toolkit: A resource for staff wanting to know more about students and mental health

To view the toolkit, please visit: **staffresources.uhi.ac.uk/mhc/**

- Find it: http://staffresources.uhi.ac.uk/mhc/
- *also as a tile on MyDay – our staff portal*