

Student Mental Health Agreement

By

GCU Students' Association

&

Glasgow Caledonian University

Background of Student Mental Health, and GCU

Within the education sector students are disproportionately experiencing poor mental health (5, 6, 7). Research undertaken by the National Union of Students has reported that up to 80% of student's respondents experienced mental health concerns (5), 80% of students experienced stress, 55% reported feeling anxiety, and 49% reported feeling depressed (6).

The impacts of experiencing mental ill health can be considerable. This can include impacts on the student experience whilst studying in the institution, student retention whilst studying; with a 210% increase nationally in 2014/15 in the number of students who withdrew from their course in comparison in the previous 5 years due to mental ill-health (6), suicide; with the Mental Health Foundation reporting an increase in death by Suicide in Scotland for the first time in 6 years (2), and up to 13% of student respondents to research by the National Union of Students disclosing they had experienced suicidal thoughts (3), or many other impacts.

Students' who experience mental ill health may access a wealth of support across different services in both the community, or their local institution. However, it was highlighted that up to 21% of student respondents would choose to utilise their university or students' union services (3). Moreover, in their report, the Mental Health Foundation note the significance of education-based counselling services within their recommendations to educational institutions; as they reported that 70% of young individuals did not receive adequate support or interventions for their mental ill health (1).

This statement can be supported in studies of institutions in which 94% of higher education institutions saw an increase in demand for usage of their counselling services, and 61% of respondents noted an increase of 25% or more (6). When examining further education institutions, research has reported an 81% increase in the usage of counselling services; with the estimation that up to 1 in 4 students at any one time are using, or waiting to use, the institutions counselling services (6).

Regarding GCU specifically, there has been a considerable increase in the use of not only our counselling services, but our wellbeing provisions across the campus. Previously, GCU have worked to restructure their services to ensure that students could access a holistic range of wellbeing provisions in addition to counselling; including a Mental Health Advisor, Disability Advisor, Wellbeing Advisor, etc.

Given the aforementioned context of student mental welfare, it is essential that education institutions and student associations work together to support students' welfare throughout their educational journeys (4).

GCU Students' Association alongside Glasgow Caledonian University, document in their values, mission, and vision a common theme of student support to enable an outstanding student experience at GCU. This theme is carried into both institutions respective Strategic Plans, and additionally both institutions have a great history of coming together to work in partnership on a variety of projects to enhance the student experience, and student wellbeing. In 2017, Glasgow Caledonian University, and GCU Students' Association built upon existing work and frameworks for student wellbeing and established their first Student Mental Health Agreement.

Both institutions are continually working in partnership to enhance the Student Mental Health Agreement, where both institutions can come together to provide a more holistic support provision at GCU.

Structure of Agreement

This document is part of the Student Mental Health Agreement project (co-ordinated by Think Positive and NUS nationally, which aims to bring students' associations and universities together to help support student mental health) outlines the working areas that GCU Students' Association and Glasgow Caledonian University agree to develop to positively benefit GCU Students throughout the Academic Year 2018-19.

This work noted in this document further enhances and builds upon the actions established in 2017-18 when the first iteration of this Agreement was produced. The Agreement will be reviewed annually, with the work completed evidenced in another document produced at the end of the academic year. Prior Student Mental Health Agreements and the respective evaluation documents can be assessed at <https://www.gcustudents.co.uk/advice-centre/student-mental-health-agreement>.

The action plan outlined below is broken into specific sections on areas of work undertaken at GCU by both the University and Students' Association, and all actions through the document look to help challenge and decrease the societal stigma which exists around mental ill-health and help seeking, and promote the availability of support to both students and staff at GCU – whilst helping to develop a supportive, inclusive and open community.

The progress which has been made for the 18-19 Action Plan will be available in the evaluation document, however GCU are striving to undertake a strategic approach towards their work for student and staff mental wellbeing.

Therefore, we aim to continue key themes as strands of work in coming academic years, alongside developing an evaluation framework in order to ensure new areas of work are positively impact on student mental health.



Student President at GCU Students' Association
Executive Lead for Student Mental Health



Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic at GCU
Executive Lead for Student Wellbeing

References

- (1) The Mental Health Foundation; *Surviving of Thriving – the State of the UK's Mental Health*
- (2) The Mental Health Foundation; *World Suicide Prevention Day Policy Briefing*
- (3) NUS; *Mental Distress Survey Overview*
- (4) Think Positive; *Silently Stress – A survey into student mental wellbeing*
- (5) NUS-USI; *Student Wellbeing Research Report*
- (6) Institute for Public Policy Research; *Not By Degrees- Improving Student Mental Health in the UK's Universities*
- (7) NUS Disabled Students; *Mental Health and Suicide Prevention: an in-depth guide for Students' Unions and student activists*

2018-19

Overview of Action Points

1. Delivering and Developing the Student Mental Health Agreement
 - a. Launch Event for Student Mental Health Agreement
 - b. Student and Staff Mental Health Survey
2. Hosting Events on Campus
 - a. World Mental Health Day (10th October)
 - b. University Mental Health Day (7th March)
 - c. Wellbeing Fayre
 - d. Paw's Against Stress Event
3. Delivering Campaigns
 - a. Men's Mental Health
 - b. Benefits of Physical Activity on Mental Wellbeing
 - c. Exam Stress
 - d. Student Mental Health Officer and Representation Group
4. Enhancing and promoting on-campus support services
 - a. Develop a Support Booklet with every internal support service
 - b. Host a Publicity Campaign for the Nightline Service
 - c. Continuing ongoing advertisement of Advice Centre & Wellbeing Service
5. Providing Training Opportunities for Staff and Students
 - a. Mental Health Workshop
 - b. Continue the Scottish Mental Health First Aid Award to Students
 - c. Continue to Encourage Participation in SMHFA Course for Student facing staff
 - d. Mindfulness Course
6. Enhance Peer to Peer Support Networks at GCU
 - a. Preventing and Responding to Gender Based Violence Peer to Peer Training
 - b. Continue our Nightline Service
 - c. Postgraduate Space
 - d. Establish a quiet space on campus
 - e. Social Meet Up Groups
 - f. Free Closed Yoga Group
 - g. Action for Happiness
7. Review Policies and Report Recommendations at Glasgow Caledonian University
 - a. Undertake a review of the Mitigating Circumstances Policy at GCU
 - b. Revision of role of Academic Advising to Personal Tutoring and host a campaign to publicise this
 - c. Enact the report and recommendations from the Student Mental Health Task Group
 - d. Further enhance the mental wellbeing support available to staff
 - e. Mental health and curriculum - INCLUDE

2018-19 Action Plan

Delivering and Developing the Student Mental Health Agreement

We recognise the importance of both continually developing and enhancing the Student Mental Health Agreement, and also ensuring that staff and students are aware of the Agreement and the ongoing work aimed at supporting their mental health.

For these reasons throughout the Academic Year we will not only aim to expand our ongoing work on student mental health, but will also undertake additional opportunities to consult students and staff to ensure they continue to shape the action plan, and to help co-create the launch event of the Student Mental Health Agreement to ensure maximum impact.

1. Launch Event for Student Mental Health Agreement

We intend to launch the Student Mental Health Agreement from 2017/18 to help educate students and staff on the pre-existing support on campus for student mental health, alongside using this as a mechanism to encourage greater student involvement in shaping the actions undertaken in our mental health agreement this year. The launch event will also be used, alongside other mechanisms such as the Mental Health Workshop to gain extensive and greater student input into the agreement, and will be fed back to a working group with representatives from both the University and Students' Association who will evaluate the impact of the Student Mental Health Agreement.

2. Student and Staff Mental Health Survey

We intend to undertake a mental health survey independently for both students and staff in order to assess the mental health literacy of the population at GCU, and what we could do to help improve both student and staff wellbeing at the university, not only the Student Mental Health Agreement – but other ongoing areas of work including the Mental Health at Work Action Plan, and Healthy Body, Healthy Mind Accreditations.

This will be done for staff through the Mental Health at Work Task Force, and for students through consultation being led the Students' Association.

Hosting Events on Campus

We aim to deliver a range of events to help increase student and staff wellbeing at GCU through raising awareness of different coping mechanisms and support available.

These events will be for World Mental Health Day, University Mental Health Day, an annual Wellbeing Fayre and a Paws Against Stress Event.

3. World Mental Health Day (10th October)

Young People and Mental Health in a Changing World was the theme of the World Mental Health Day in 2018. World Mental Health Day is observed on 10 October every year, with the overall objective of raising awareness of mental health issues and mobilizing efforts in support of better mental health. We aim to create a short online campaign on how students at GCU can keep themselves mentally well.

4. University Mental Health Day (7th March)

University Mental Health Day is the national campaign to focus efforts on promoting the mental health of people who live, work and study in Higher Education settings run jointly by Student Minds and The University Mental Health Advisers Network.

The theme this year is 'Use Your Voice'. Whether you're a student, a member of support staff, an academic, or a senior university leader, we all have a part to play to cultivate a positive mental health community at university.

We hope to improve students' and staff's awareness of support and promote a sense of belonging by running workshops and events throughout the 6th and 7th of March.

5. Wellbeing Fayre

Each year, we host an annual wellbeing fayre, where we invite external organisations onto campus at GCU Glasgow to distribute information to GCU students on how they can improve their wellbeing. This year, the fayre will be on Thursday 21st March between, 11-3pm.

6. Paw's Against Stress Event

“[Conner and Miller \(2000\)](#) state that for many years, the therapeutic value and importance that animals have in the spiritual and secular lives of people have been observed. Lutwack-Bloom et al (2005) document an extensive history of pet therapy dating back to 1792. In addition, Stanley-Hermanns and Miller (2002) and Ormerod (2005) state that in the mid 1800s, Florence Nightingale understood the therapeutic value of pets and encouraged her patients to care for animals.”

After previous success hosting a Paws Against Stress Event on Campus with Canine Concern Scotland, we aim to host another event throughout the academic year to engage students with the positive impacts of Therapets.

Delivering Campaigns

We also recognise the importance of ensuring that we deliver campaigns which challenge stigma around mental health, and encourage the use and awareness of the support services which is available to GCU Students both on and off campus, and outside of the University opening hours.

This is why we aim to work to deliver a campaign on Men's Mental Health, the benefits of undertaking Physical Activity on your Mental Health, and a campaign around Exam Stress and the support available at peak times throughout the trimesters.

7. Men's Mental Health

We know from academic research that males are disproportionally impacted by the impacts of mental health than females. In the UK 3 out of every 4 Suicides are by male individuals, and suicide is the biggest killer of men under the age of 45.

GCU and GCU Students' Association are therefore aiming to work with the charities which specialise in supporting the mental health of men to help support male students and staff at Glasgow Caledonian University to seek support for their mental wellbeing, and improve the culture around men seeking help.

8. Benefits of Physical Activity on Mental Wellbeing

We aim to host a campaign on campus to raise awareness of the positive impact being physically active can have on mental health and wellbeing, to support and encourage daily activity to enhance mental wellbeing on campus.

9. Exam Stress

We recognise that examinations can be an unusually stressful time for students, and at GCU we wanted to help support students through this by hosting a campaign during this period to promote awareness of on campus support services, and ways for students to maintain their wellbeing through self-care.

10. Student Mental Health Officer and Representation Group

We aim to establish a part time representation officer to support the Students' Association, Full Time Officers, and University in campaigning for Student Mental Health and wellbeing. The officer will feed into a wider representation group on mental health, and be able to ensure student views are at the centre of the project.

Enhancing and promoting on-campus support services

Within both the Students' Association and University there is a wealth of student facing support services which aim to positively impact upon the lives of students and their wellbeing. It is therefore essential that the current services which are available to GCU students are effectively highlighted so students know where to go for support.

The hope is that by focusing on this objective, we can not only see an increase in student wellbeing at GCU, but also an increase in appropriate support service contact.

11. Develop a Support Booklet with every internal support service

We hope to finalise a booklet which outlines every support service available to GCU students on campus, as well as out of hours' contacts, in one easily accessible and understandable booklet. The booklet would then be implemented on a tab on GCU Learn. This would make the information visible, and accessible to all students.

12. Host a Publicity Campaign for the Nightline Service

The Nightline service is currently advertised through Plasma Screens around campus, and on the university and association websites. The service itself has a publicity officer who helps to organise Nightline Awareness Week in Trimester 1; and publicity campaigns throughout the academic year.

13. Continuing ongoing advertisement of Advice Centre & Wellbeing Service

Currently, there is a focus from the University and the Students' Association to continue effectively advertising these services to students. This occurs in several ways such as leaflets, through online webpages, in all student emails and in social media. These methods, and more, will be demonstrated in the final report for the Student Mental Health Agreement.

It is hoped that these advertisement methods could be expanded in ways such as Sabbatical Officer social media posts, lecture shouts, the support booklet and GCU learn support tab.

Providing Training Opportunities for Staff and Students

We recognise the necessity of equipping students and staff with the tools to not only positively impact their own mental wellbeing, but to be supportive to those around them. It is for this reason that we aim again to utilise the places made available to us through NUS Scotland and send staff and students to attend the Scottish Mental Health First Aid Award, continue ongoing provisions on campus, alongside providing mindfulness courses and designing and developing a Mental Health Workshop at GCU.

14. Mental Health Workshop

We wanted to work to increase the knowledge and understanding of students on what support GCU and GCU Students' Association provide for student mental wellbeing, and also improve our student's mental health literacy. This is why we're working to develop and deliver a workshop on mental health at both of our academic representative gatherings this academic year.

15. [Continue the Scottish Mental Health First Aid Award to Students](#)

The course, as explained above, is recognised by the NHS, and would be a great opportunity for students to learn how to better support their peers at university.

Last year, the course was introduced to the GCU Glasgow Campus free of charge to students through embedding it into our Student Leaders Programme. Courses will continue into the 18/19 Academic year, and be promoted for students to attend.

16. [Continue to Encourage Participation in SMHFA Course for Student facing staff](#)

The Scottish Mental Health First Aid Award is a course which aims to equip individuals with the skills to help someone in distress in the same way a first aid certificate can help educate those in assisting those in physical distress.

The skills and abilities taught in the course may assist student facing staff in supporting distressed students, and as such we aim to increase the number of staff who have received the training and achieved the award throughout the 18/19 Academic Year.

17. [Mindfulness Course](#)

Mindfulness meditation offers simple yet powerful techniques that can be incorporated into our daily lives to help us cope with stress and increase feelings of contentment, and numerous studies have found that regular practitioners can experience a decrease in anxiety, low mood and irritability, better and more fulfilling relationships, lower levels of stress, a reduction in the impact of serious conditions such as chronic pain and an improved immune system.

As such, at GCU we're aiming to continue offering free mindfulness sessions to GCU Students.

[Enhance Peer to Peer Support Networks at GCU](#)

Alongside services provided by the University and Students' Association, the aspect of enabling peer support within the GCU community is another working area both parties would like to develop this academic year.

There are multiple benefits to this – including allowing students to gain confidence to engage with university and association support services; as well as providing a safe and inclusive environment in which students may seek support.

By developing this network, we hope to provide a more holistic approach to providing student support. This will be through the introduction and development of various support networks currently.

18. Preventing and Responding to Gender Based Violence Peer to Peer Training

Throughout the past two years the university and Students' Association have been working to provide a free programme for students which aims to challenge sexual violence in society. Students will be trained and supported to deliver workshops in which issues such as consent, how the media portrays gender-based violence, and other topics will be discussed with other students in a safe environment.

19. Continue our Nightline Service

Nightline is a confidential listening and information service run by and for students of Glasgow Strathclyde and Caledonian Universities. The service operates from 7pm-7am, Monday-Friday during terms time.

The service requires student volunteers each year, who the Students' Association trains and supports in both trimester 1 and 2, and then help to facilitate a rota in which students can sign up to support their peers. We are committed to continuing this service throughout the 2017/18 academic year, and increase student awareness of this.

20. Postgraduate Space

In previous feedback from our Postgraduate Students, we found that they often reported that they felt isolated on campus and didn't have a sense of social community. We aim this year to establish and open a post graduate space for students to study and socialise in to help build a sense of community.

21. Establish a quiet space on Campus

We recognise that students and staff at Glasgow Caledonian University could benefit from a quiet space on campus to individuals to reflect quietly and take some time out to de-stress and relax. This is why we aim to establish a space on campus in the 2018-19 Academic year to enable this.

22. Social Meet Up Groups

This year the Wellbeing Service is pleased to introduce a new informal programme of activities for students to take some time out to focus on their health and wellbeing. This will be a good opportunity to make friends and develop new skills in a relaxed environment.

The programme will run every Wednesday afternoon term-time from 2pm until 4pm and will include a variety of activities to help boost your wellbeing, such as:

wellbeing sessions and workshops, team volunteering, visits to local museums and art galleries, bike rides, yoga, meditation and mindfulness, creative sessions – arts and crafts, music etc., baking and cooking, games, watching films, sports, gardening and photography.

23. Free Closed Yoga Group

We aim to continue a partnership with our on-campus University Gym in which the Wellbeing Service are able to refer students to attend a free, closed Yoga Group to help them build their confidence to attend another classes at the gym, and benefit from the positive impacts of physical activity, whilst also gaining a sense of community.

24. Action for Happiness

This year at GCU, we're also aiming to introduce an 8 week course to campus called Action for Happiness. The Course is run by local volunteers, and gives individuals the ability to meet friendly, like-minded people, and come together to find simple ways to improve the happiness of both the individual attending, and others.

Review Policies and Report Recommendations at Glasgow Caledonian University

We recognise the important role that current policies can play in regards to student wellbeing at Glasgow Caledonian University. This is why we've committed to undertaking a review of our current Mitigating Circumstances Policy, and Academic Advising Models to ensure that they are inclusive and supportive for

GCU Students. Additionally, we are going to enact a number of recommendations from task groups, specifically our Student Mental Health Task Group, and Mental Health at Work Task Force, to help increase wellbeing within our student and staff communities at Glasgow Caledonian University.

25. [Undertake a review of the Mitigating Circumstances Policy at GCU](#)

Conduct a review in the University of the current Mitigating Circumstances Policy, and how this interacts to support applications from students in relation to mental health.

26. [Revision of role of Academic Advising to Personal Tutoring and host a campaign to publicise this](#)

To conclude the review of the Academic Advising model, and implement recommendations to re-brand the model to Personal Tutoring in order to enhance a culture of supporting students holistically throughout their studies. Host a publicity campaign for the new model to increase staff and student awareness of the support network.

27. [Enact the report and recommendations from the Student Mental Health Task Group](#)

To carry forward and implement the recommendations from the Student Mental Health Task Group within Glasgow Caledonian University. This includes the appointment of an additional Mental Health Adviser within the GCU Wellbeing Service to help provide enhanced support for GCU Students. The Task Group also recommended the introduction of a GCU Student Wellbeing Advisory Group to oversee the on-going development and monitoring of progress against the Student Mental Health Action Plan.

28. [Further enhance the mental wellbeing support available to staff](#)

Establish a Mental Health at Work Task Force and produce an Action Plan with recommendations on how staff can be supported at Glasgow Caledonian University to ensure that staff are able to encourage a culture of wellbeing at GCU.

29. Mental health and curriculum – *(Project INCLUDE)*

We recognise that certain points in the academic year may be more stressful for students than others, and as such we wanted to explore what these points may be, and if there is anything we can do to mitigate this for students. As such, as supporting the Inclusive Curriculums Design (INCLUDE) project to examine the way in which curriculum at GCU is structured and produce recommendations which could help improve student wellbeing and ensuring an accessible curriculum.

2017-18

Overview of Action Points

1. Support Services Promotion
 - a. Develop a Support Booklet with every internal support service
 - b. Host a Publicity Campaign for the Nightline Service
 - c. Continuing ongoing advertisement of Advice Centre & Wellbeing Service
2. Tackling Stigma
 - a. Organise a Mental Health Campaign – Wellbeing Volunteering
 - b. Mental Health Themed Student Summit Event
 - c. Organise for an Anti-Stigma Speaker on Campus
 - d. World Mental Health Day (10th October)
 - e. University Mental Health Day (1st March)
 - f. Encourage Participation in SMHFA Course for Student facing staff
3. Peer Support Networks
 - a. Introduce the Scottish Mental Health First Aid Award to Students
 - b. Preventing and Responding to Gender Based Violence Peer to Peer Training
 - c. Continue our Nightline Service
 - d. Promote the Gender and Sexuality Safe Space
 - e. Introduce 8 Week Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Course
 - f. Introduce a 6 Week My Recovery Action Plan (My Rap) Workshop
 - g. Introduce Look After Your Mate Workshops

2017-18 Action Plan

Support Services Promotion

Within both the Students' Association and University there is a wealth of student facing support services which aim to positively impact upon the lives of students and their wellbeing. It is therefore essential that the current services which are available to GCU students are effectively highlighted so students know where to go for support.

The hope is that by focusing on this objective, we can not only see an increase in student wellbeing at GCU, but also an increase in appropriate support service contact.

30. Develop a Support Booklet with every internal support service

Produce a booklet which outlines every support service available to GCU students on campus, as well as out of hours contacts, in one easily accessible and understandable booklet. The booklet would then be implemented on a tab on GCU Learn. This would make the information visible, and accessible to all students.

31. Host a Publicity Campaign for the Nightline Service

The Nightline service is currently advertised through Plasma Screens around campus, and on the university and association websites. The service itself has a publicity officer who helps to organise Nightline Awareness Week in Trimester 1; and publicity campaigns throughout the academic year. By introducing a campaign which is supported and organised with the Sabbatical Officer Policy Lead a greater awareness of, and engagement with, the service can hopefully be observed.

32. Continuing ongoing advertisement of Advice Centre & Wellbeing Service

Currently, there is a focus from the University and the Students' Association to continue effectively advertising these services to students. This occurs in several ways such as leaflets, through online webpages, in all student emails and in social media. These methods, and more, will be demonstrated in the final report for the 2017-18 Student Mental Health Agreement.

It is hoped that these advertisement methods could be expanded in ways such as Sabbatical Officer social media posts, lecture shouts, the support booklet and GCU learn support tab.

Tackling Stigma

The university and students' association also recognise the importance of challenging societal stigma which currently surrounds mental health. It is important that this is challenged as research has previously shown that negative and stigmatising attitudes may lead to discrimination, prejudice, or self-stigma and this can have a further negative impact on individuals' mental health.

33. Organise a Mental Health Campaign – Wellbeing Volunteering

GCU Students' Association currently host a range of campaigns aimed at improving student wellbeing. The campaigns always reference the university wellbeing department, and Students' Association Advice Centre. The campaigns are usually championed by the Wellbeing Volunteers, who are registered GCU students.

Each year the association and full time sabbatical officer policy lead decide on the topics which will be covered in the campaign, and in November 2017 a topic surrounding mental health will be delivered in collaboration with SeeMe to address societal stigma. Through this campaign we aim to normalise discussing mental health issues and decreasing stigma.

SeeMe Scotland will then be invited to participate in the annual Wellbeing Fayre, further precipitating the message. Breathing Space will also be invited to attend the Wellbeing Fayre.

34. Mental Health Themed Student Summit Event

The Student Experience Summit is an annual event at GCU, where students and staff discuss issues surrounding the University's commitment to deliver a 'truly outstanding' student experience. This year, the summit is focused on the theme of Mental Health; with the title being "Mental Wealth; Enhancing GCU Student well-being".

The focus of this is to inform the development of an action plan to enhance student mental health and well-being at GCU. Aside from informing this action plan, we hope that the conversations which arise from the summit event, as well as the active promotion will challenge stigma in regards to Mental Health.

35. Organise for an Anti-Stigma Speaker on Campus

To educate students on the topic of mental health stigma, the idea of having a speaker come onto campus to speak on Mental Health was discussed.

This has been incorporated into one of the sabbatical officer's individual objectives (Rachel Simpson, VP GSBS).

36. World Mental Health Day (10th October)

Mental health in the workplace was the theme of World Mental Health Day in 2017. World Mental Health Day is observed on 10 October every year, with the overall objective of raising awareness of mental health issues and mobilizing efforts in support of better mental health.

37. University Mental Health Day (1st March)

University Mental Health Day is the national campaign to focus efforts on promoting the mental health of people who live, work and study in Higher Education settings run jointly by Student Minds and The University Mental Health Advisers Network.

The theme this year is community. Whether you're a student, a member of support staff, an academic, or a senior university leader, we all have a part to play to cultivate a positive mental health community at university.

Within this, we hope to:

- Improve students' and staff's awareness of support and promote a sense of belonging.
- Improve understanding among students and staff of the role the environment and community can play in protecting student mental health.
- Raise awareness of the specific challenges students face with regards to support for their mental health and influence education institutions and health providers to work collaboratively so all in higher education can thrive.
- Improve students' and staff's awareness of support and promote a sense of belonging.

38. Encourage Participation in SMHFA Course for Student facing staff

The Scottish Mental Health First Aid Award is a course which aims to equip students with the skills to help an individual in distress in the same way a first aid certificate can help educate those in assisting those in physical distress.

The skills and abilities taught in the course may assist student facing staff in supporting distressed students.

Peer Support Networks

Alongside services provided by the university and Students' Association, the aspect of enabling peer support within the GCU community is another working area both parties would like to develop this academic year.

There are multiple benefits to this – including allowing students to gain confidence to engage with university and association support services; as well as providing a safe and inclusive environment in which students may seek support.

By developing this network, we hope to provide a more holistic approach to providing student support. This will be through the introduction and development of various support networks currently.

39. Introduce the Scottish Mental Health First Aid Award to Students

The course, as explained above, is recognised by the NHS, and would be a great opportunity for students to learn how to better support their peers at university.

The aim is that the course will be introduced to the GCU Glasgow Campus free of charge to students. This would be incorporated into the already existing Student Leaders Programme, and is included in one of the individual objectives of the full time sabbatical officers, Rachel Simpson, VP GSBS.

40. Preventing and Responding to Gender Based Violence Peer to Peer Training

In the past year the university and association have been working to develop a programme for students which aims to challenge sexual violence. Students will be trained and supported to deliver workshops in which issues such as consent, how the media portrays gender-based violence, and others will be discussed with other students in a safe environment.

These workshops would be free to students; and will be available from September 2017. The idea is that the workshops will be free, and frequent to allow it to be as accessible as possible to students within the GCU population.

41. Continue our Nightline Service

Nightline is a confidential listening and information service run by and for students of Glasgow Strathclyde and Caledonian Universities. The service operates from 7pm-7am, Monday-Friday during terms time.

The service requires student volunteers each year, who the Students' Association trains and supports in both trimester 1 and 2, and then help to facilitate a rota in which students can sign up to support their peers. We are committed to continuing this service throughout the 2017/18 academic year, and increase student awareness of this.

42. Promote the Gender and Sexuality Safe Space

The Students' Association currently hosts a Gender and Sexuality Safe Space. The space was established to provide a safe space for students to find community regarding gender and sexuality, as well as seeking peer support. The room is open to any student and is located on the second floor of the Association, in NH205.

It is our ambition to increase the current knowledge of the space, and encourage more students to make use of the supportive environment. This will be done by the sabbatical officer policy lead for Equality and Diversity, publishing an article on the space, and the inclusion of the space in the support booklet.

43. [Introduce 8 Week Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Course](#)

Mindfulness can help us to learn to cope better with the pressures we are under, recognise the thoughts and judgements we make, often subconsciously, that generate more stress and find balance and a sense of calm.

The Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Course is a recognised and established mindfulness course, proven to help people cope better with stress, depression and anxiety. This eight-week life-skills course combines experiential mindfulness practices and includes mindfulness meditation practices, gentle stretching and movement, group dialogue and discussion and individually tailored instructions.

44. [Introduce a 6 Week My Recovery Action Plan \(My Rap\) Workshop](#)

MyRAP is the work of a multi-agency group whose aim was to produce a self-management tool to support people in taking control over their own wellbeing and recovery. It is an enabling tool to assist people identify their strengths and build on them. There may be a number of reasons why people come to MyRAP workshops, for example they may be mentally well and simply wish to learn more about staying well or they may be currently unwell and being supported by mental health services but would like to take more control over their own recovery through self-management.

45. [Introduce Look After Your Mate Workshops](#)

This is a student peer to peer support group for mental health which has been developed by Student Minds. It is a 2-3 hour interactive workshop for students who may be supporting a friend experiencing mental health difficulties or would like to know more about mental health, the support available for university students, and how to look after your own wellbeing whilst at university.

The workshop is delivered through trainer presentation, group discussion and individual and group activities.