Intersectional approaches to support student mental health (webinar 1)

8 June 2023

Amy Norton – Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (OfS)

Event notices

- Closed captions are available – please click the CC icon

- A recording of this event will be available on the OfS website

- Please use the Q&A box rather than the Chat box to ask a question

- Use the Chat box if you would like to speak to the events team.

Office for Students

Agenda

1000   **Welcome and introduction**

             Wavehill: external programme evaluators

             University of Central Lancashire: Creative Mental Health Framework

             University of Westminster: a mental health virtual reality intervention

             Coventry University: mental health resources for hard-to-reach students

             Questions and answers

1115   **Close**

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Office for Students

OfS objectives

Every student, whatever their background, has a fulfilling experience of higher education that enriches their lives and careers.

Participation

Objective 1

All students, from all backgrounds, with the ability and desire to undertake higher education, are supported to access, succeed in, and progress from higher education.

Experience

Objective 2

All students, from all backgrounds, receive a high quality academic experience, and their interests are protected while they study or in the event of provider, campus or course closure.

Outcomes

Objective 3

All students, from all backgrounds, are able to progress into employment, further study, and fulfilling lives, and their qualifications hold their value over time.
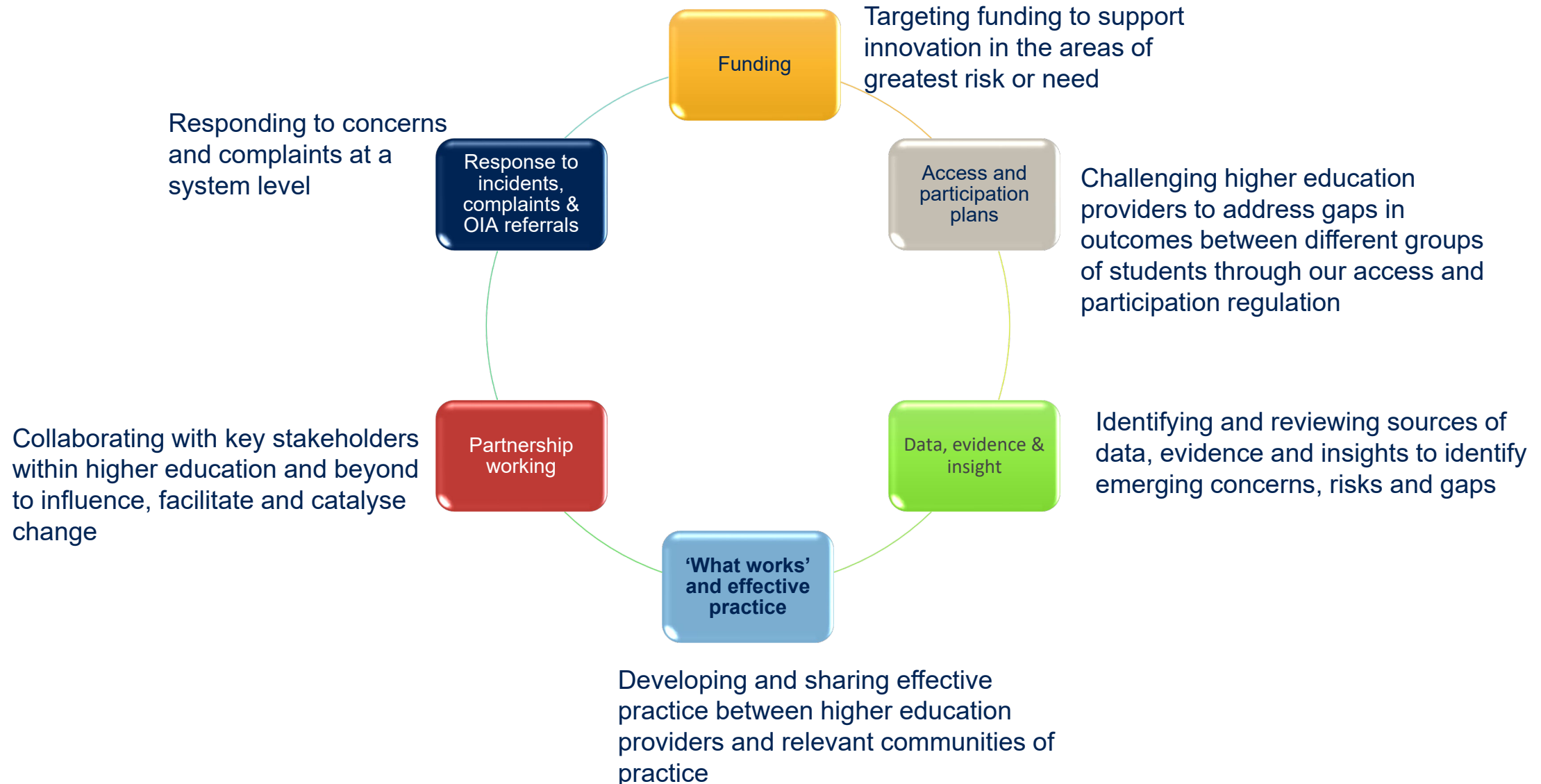
Value for money

Objective 4

All students, from all backgrounds, receive value for money.

Office for Students

OfS

OfS approach to student mental health

- Individual institutions are responsible for developing their own mental health policies and procedures and have legal requirements under the Equality Act 2010

- However, we would encourage providers to:

  - Take a whole-institution approach with clear commitment from senior leaders and joined up thinking between academic staff and student services

  - Ensure that they have robust, evidence-based policies in place to support students

  - Encourage students to declare mental health conditions

  - Evaluate their own work and learn from others to make sure they're working in the most effective ways

  - Collaborate with other organisations

  - Put co-creation with students at the heart of their intervention planning

Office for Students

OfS approach to student mental health

Funding — Targeting funding to support innovation in the areas of greatest risk or need

Access and participation plans — Challenging higher education providers to address gaps in outcomes between different groups of students through our access and participation regulation

Data, evidence & insight — Identifying and reviewing sources of data, evidence and insights to identify emerging concerns, risks and gaps

'What works' and effective practice — Developing and sharing effective practice between higher education providers and relevant communities of practice

Partnership working — Collaborating with key stakeholders within higher education and beyond to influence, facilitate and catalyse change

Response to incidents, complaints & OIA referrals — Responding to concerns and complaints at a system level

Mental Health Funding Competition: Using innovation and intersectional approaches to target mental health support for students

- Launched in 2021 with £3 million investment from the Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Education to the Office for Students for a new mental health funding competition.

- 18 projects awarded and commenced in 2021.

The competition has prioritised:

> students with **characteristics identified as increasing the risk of poor mental health** (e.g. ethnicity, socioeconomic background)

> students who might experience **barriers to accessing support due to their course, mode of study, or other characteristics** (e.g. those on placements as part of their course, commuters, mature students, part-time students, postgraduate taught students, international students, first in family, carers, care leavers, LGBT+).

Office for Students

Timeline of the MHFC

August 2021

Programme begins

March–August 2023

Projects complete and begin to publish outcomes and resources

December 2022

Independent evaluation report is published exploring co-production activities

Early 2024

Final programme-level evaluation report will be published

Office for Students

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Office for
Students

Overview

- Student co-creation
  - Barriers
  - Push factors
  - Effective recruitment
  - Effective practice
  - Impacts including early Year 2 findings.

Preventing access to student mental health support

Chart showing barriers preventing access to student mental health support:

- I did not think that my problem was serious enough — 42%
- Concerns that staff would not understand my support needs — 32%
- Concerns about facing stigma for accessing support — 27%
- I have never needed to access support for my mental health or wellbeing — 25%
- Concerns about whether the information I shared would be kept private — 24%
- Concerns that the information would be shared with staff who are involved in marking my work — 23%
- Prefer not to say — 5%
- Other, please tell us more about this barrier — 13%

Prevention factors by intersectional group

Stigma

Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority students

'Not Serious Enough'

First generation students

Confidentiality

Placement students (health care students), disabled students, international students and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students.

Staff won't understand needs

LGBT+ students, disabled students and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students
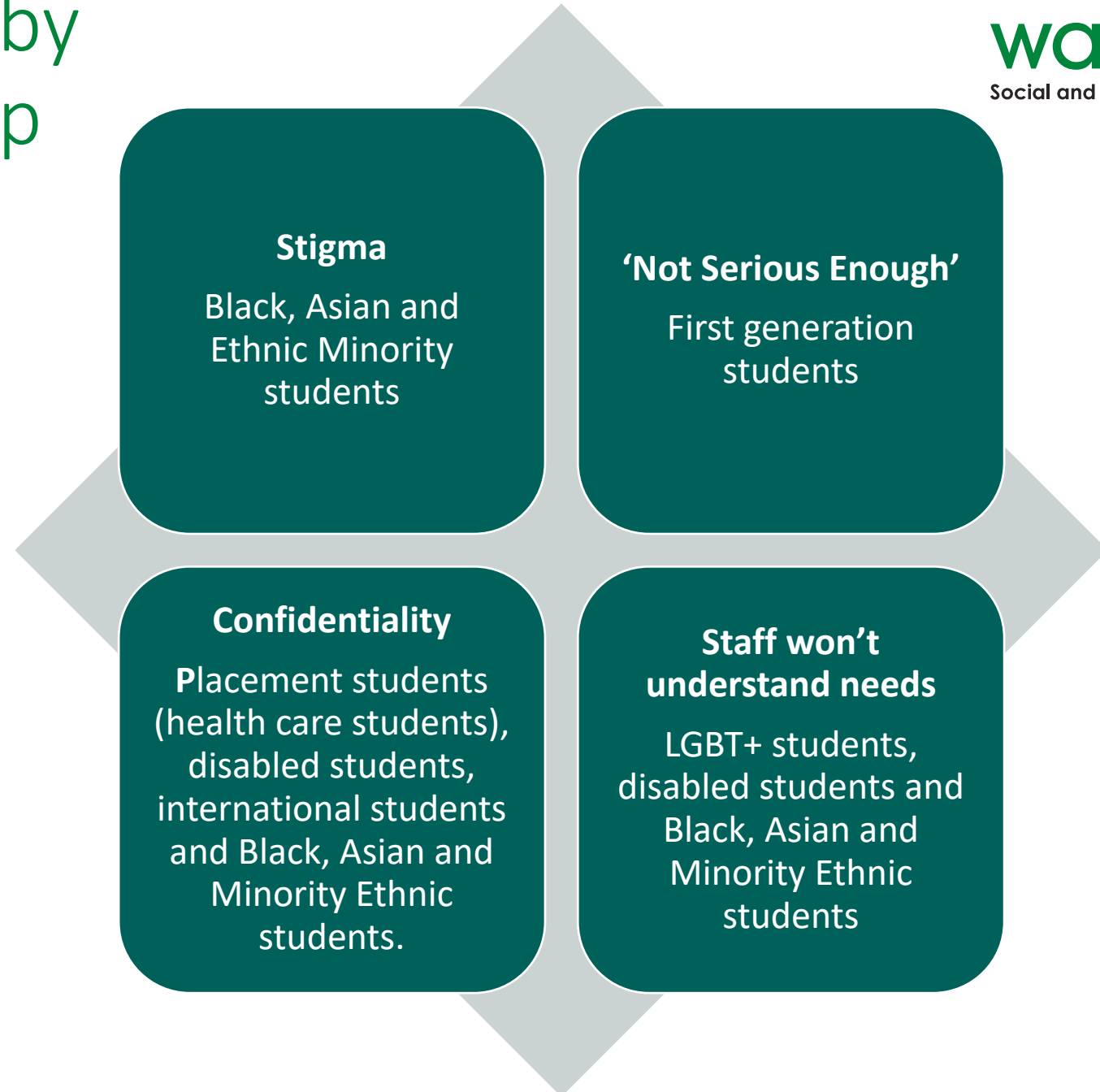
Co-creation 'push' factors

- 77 per cent are interested in **improving student mental health**.

- 46 per cent to **learn more about what their HEP is doing** to support student mental health (LGBT+, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students).

- 45 per cent to **learn more about student mental health**.

- 31 per cent to learn strategies to **improve their own mental health**.

- **Incentives** as part of a full package can help – good for first generation.

Effective recruitment practice

Involve trusted individuals

Shared background and strong reputations important here.

Providing financial incentives

Most important for first generation students, but offer should be part of an overall 'benefit' package
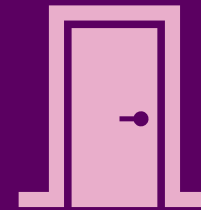
Involving students in decisions about what co-creation opportunities involve

Targeted approaches

One to one approaches or focussed on specific 'experience' groups can work here.

Effective Co-creation

wavehill
Social and economic research

Ensure students and staff are on and even footing

Embed student support staff in co-creation opportunities

Ensure appropriate support for staff delivering co-creation opportunities

Avoid clinical language to prevent stigma arising

Use an experiential focus, lived experience sharing is most valuable

Review delivery

Impacts

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Social and economic research
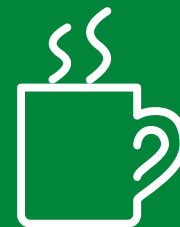
Student co-creators

Improving student mental health awareness	Improved confidence to access support as services are more relevant
Students feel heard, and sense of belonging increases	Students develop new skills, confidence and friendships

Target group support

Staff understand needs and barriers better	Better support and services are available
Easier support access, stigma reduced and confidence to access greater	Better wellbeing and improved mental health

Emerging impacts

wavehill
Social and economic research

64 per cent of respondents say staff have a better understanding of the barriers that prevent some students from seeking support for their mental health and wellbeing

68 per cent of respondents said their understanding of student mental health and the issues affecting it has improved, and 56% said they've learned new skills.

"My first session with the project was the first day I'd left the house, on my own, in over 3 years. Due to my health condition, I was anxious and nervous all the time. Worrying about what if this happens and I'm on my own etc the project has encouraged me to grab opportunities and I feel so much more confident. I even attended and spoke at conferences, completely out of my comfort zone but it was a great experience."

"I worked alongside tutors and there weren't any barriers put up and I was only made to feel completely valued and validated. It too was a great way for me to be able to view my past painful experiences in a positive light, since I was putting my experience and knowledge to good use."

Co-creation students

![Wavehill logo] **wavehill** — Social and economic research

Access the Student Co-creation report **here** on the OfS website.

Thank you!

For more information, please contact us

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wavehill.com

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University of Central Lancashire
UCLan
1828

Presenters:

Emma Speed - Director - Creative Innovation Zone

Loraine Dinham - Project Lead - Creative Innovation Zone

Danielle Spencer - Project Coordinator Creative Innovation Zone

Prepared by: Loraine Dinham – Project Lead

Where opportunity creates success

Office for Students
OfS

The Power of Creativity

In 2015, psychologist and art therapist Dr. Cathy Malchiodi cited multiple studies confirming that being creative can increase positive emotions, lessen depressive symptoms, reduce stress, decrease anxiety, and even improve immune system functioning. A 2016 study in *The Journal of Positive Psychology* supported these earlier findings, concluding that "spending time on creative goals during a day is associated with higher activated positive affect (PA) on that day."

Outputs

- Growing Resilience: 13 workshops (Feb 2022 – Dec 2022)
- Tate Liverpool: 6 workshops (Jan – June 2022)
- Podcasts: 6 produced
- Sarah Marsh: 6 workshops (Jan – June 2023)
- Sky TV programmes: 6 produced
- Student services & wellbeing: training sessions with the resilient peer support mentors
- Network meetings with partners and other collaborators
- Social media – various channels
- Key speeches at conferences.

Progress, outputs & impact
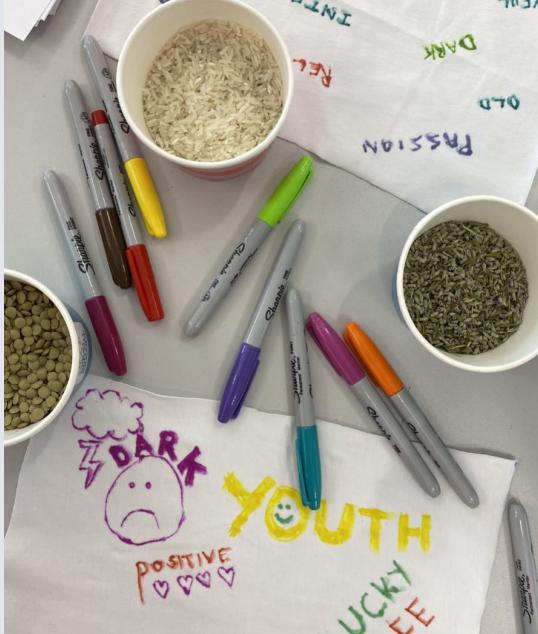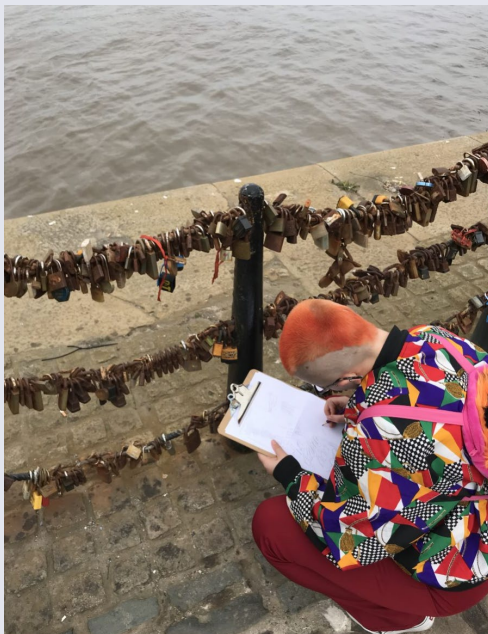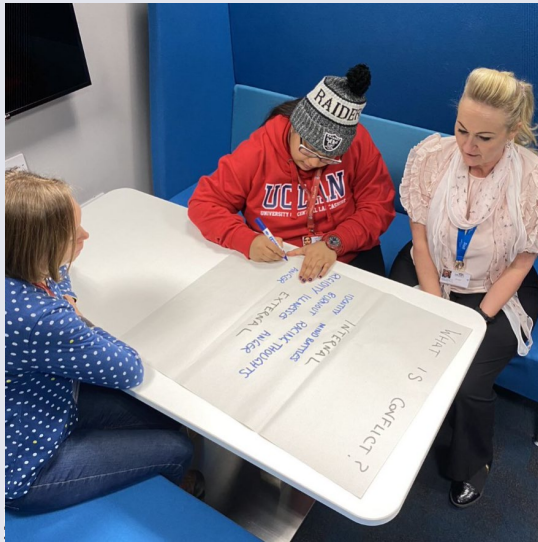
Tate Liverpool

- Located on the Albert Dock, Tate Liverpool is one of the UK's largest galleries of modern and contemporary art outside London.

- The aim of Tate is to increase public enjoyment and understanding of British art from the 16th century to the present day, and of international modern and contemporary art.

- Tate's involvement in the project

- Using art and creativity as a tool to support mental health and wellbeing.

- Creative learning and co-production.

Tate Liverpool – Workshops to-date

* Connections
* The Self
* Artworks & Artists
* The Senses
* Mindfulness

*5 Steps to Wellbeing
* How to Queer a Painting
* Identity
* Sexuality
* Story Telling
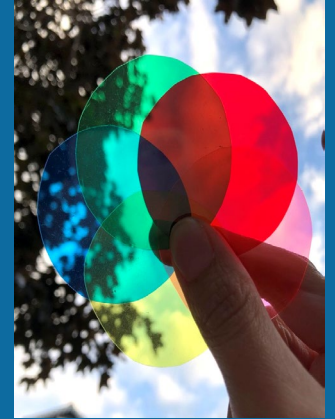
UCLan Creative Innovation Zone on Instagram: "This #pridemonth we are shining a light on our OfS Mental Health project. 🌈 This project is delivered by students, for students..."
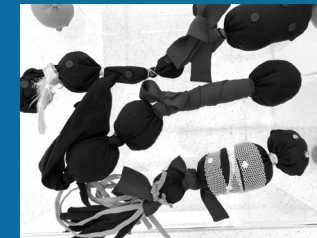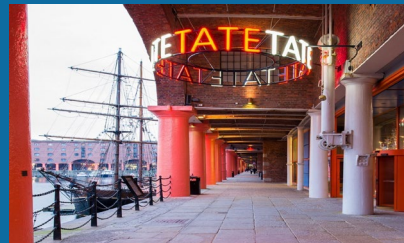
Growing Resilience

Growing Resilience is a self-awareness course that considers encountering conflict and stress in everyday life as a certain inevitability:

The main components of the programme include:

- Self-awareness, conflict, consequential thinking and self direction
- Restorative practice to deal with conflict
- Five ways to wellbeing
- Healthy body, healthy mind
- Chaos: coping with a bad day – making every day good

https://www.instagram.com/p/Cd58u_hA8BM/

A co-production approach with students throughout the project

(Healy et al 2014, Higher Education Academy)

- Mentors (students) are working with leads to design the mentorship service together
- Media students are leading the podcasts and Sky TV programmes
- Art resource
- Students on steering group
- Student led Theatre production finale
- CP Evaluation
- Student led focus group

- CIZ Student consultation event prior to bid

Co-production

Consultation

Participation

Involvement

- Co-presenting conferences
- Active at events
- Collaborative approach

- Feedback on all workstreams influencing future work

Evaluation plan

- Ethical approval.
- Student questionnaire for all workstreams.
- Staff questionnaires (at the end of each workstream)
- Two student focus groups for the mentors (end Y1 and Y2) once practicing. (Student researcher and Lancashire mind facilitated)

SKY TV programme

- https://youtu.be/pzaP8mS_aLE

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Office for
Students

UniVRse

Co-developing, evaluating, and implementing a virtual reality intervention for first-generation university students with social anxiety.

The Team
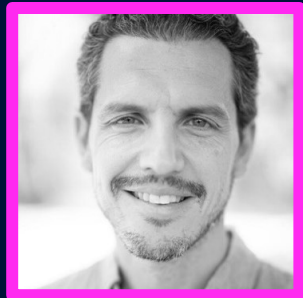
First-generation Students

A first-generation student is any university student with no parent(s) who attended university.
A parent is anyone who has guardianship over you – for some people this may include step, adoptive and/or foster parents.

Anxiety & graded exposure

Fears reinforced

Anxiety

Avoid

Fears aren't challenged

Anxiety & graded exposure

Fears
reinforced

Anxiety

Fears aren't
challenged

Avoid

Work towards the feared stimuli
in a series of gradual steps
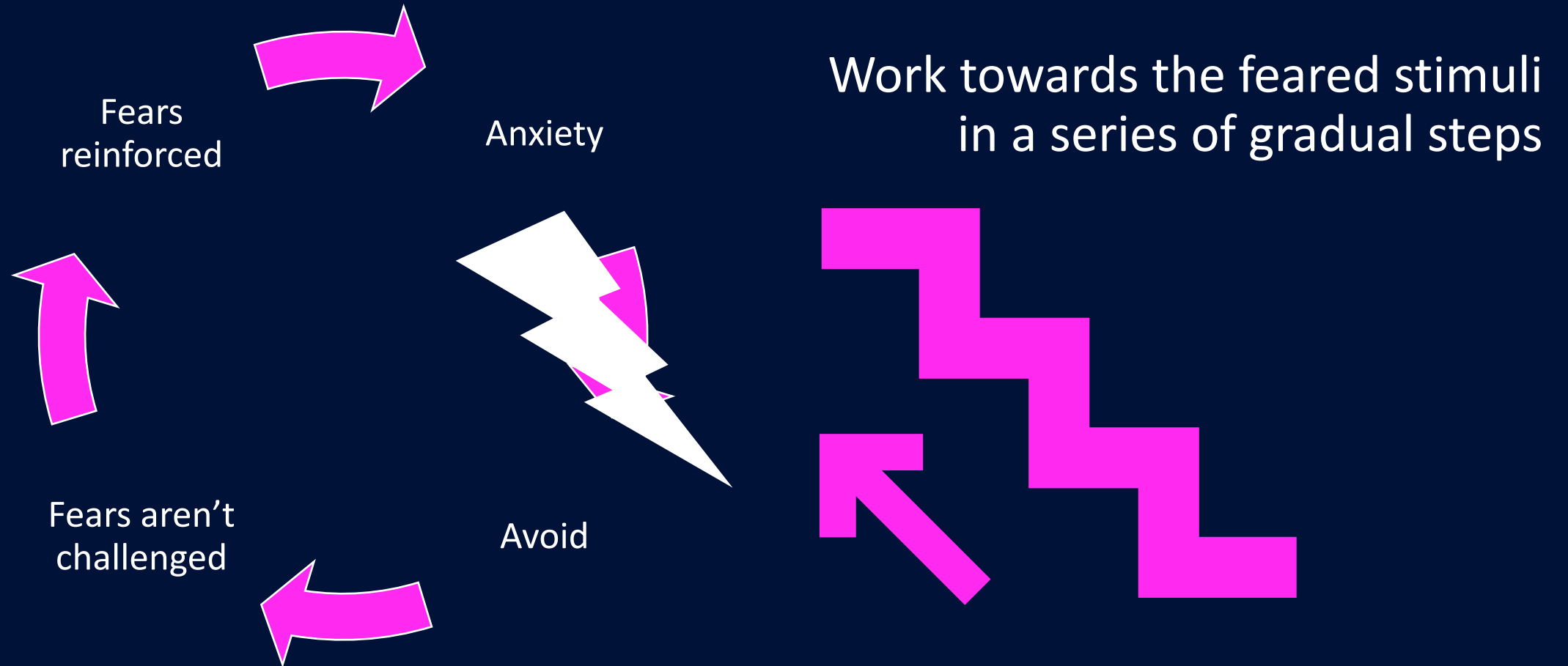
Why virtual reality?

▶Greater control

▶Protects confidentiality

▶Time efficient

▶Resource light

▶Self-help

UniVRse Project

Phase 1▶

Co-production of the UniVRse programme with First-Generation Students

Phase 2▶

Evaluation of the UniVRse programme and development of implementation plan

Social anxiety triggers

Large groups

Presence of lecturers

Initiating interactions

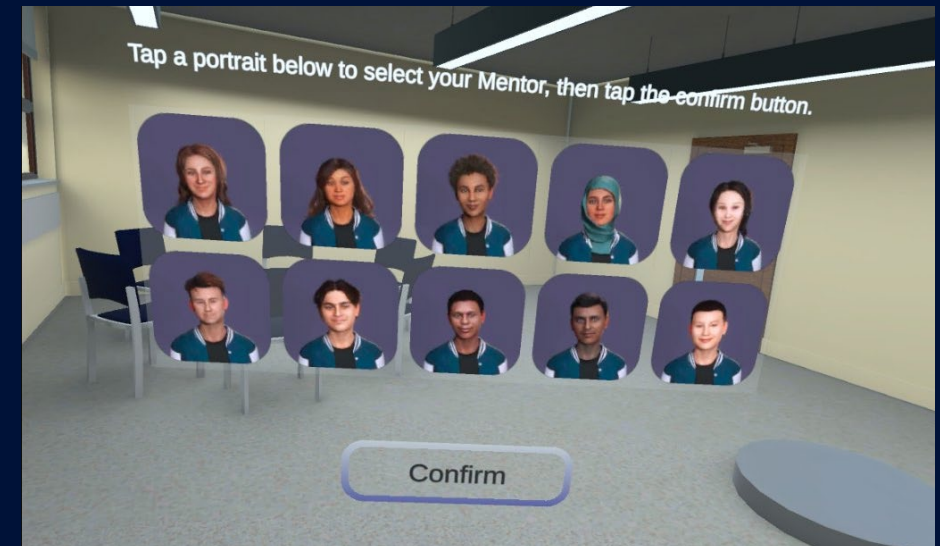Inability to prepare

Confrontation

Neutral or ambiguous responses

Being asked questions

Public speaking
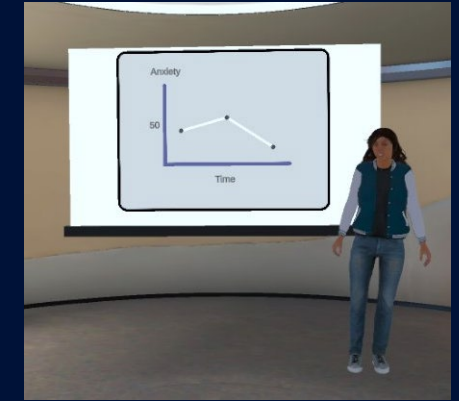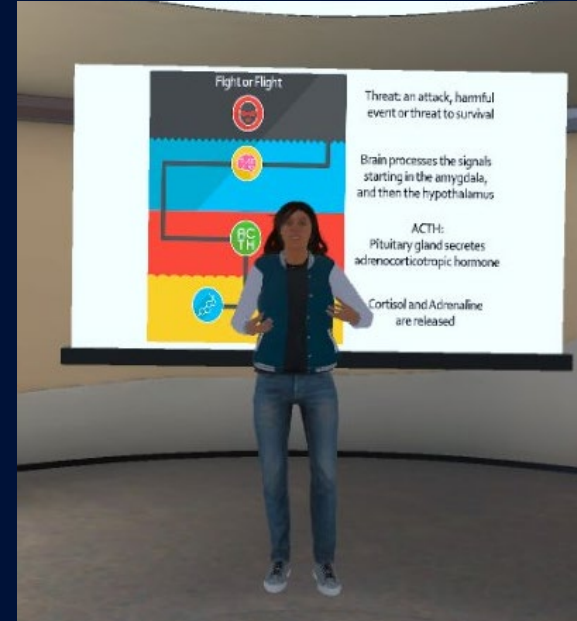
1. Attending a lecture
2. Group work in a seminar
3. Delivering a presentation
4. Engaging in an online class

Click the mouse to turn your mic on then introduce yourself to the group

UniVRse
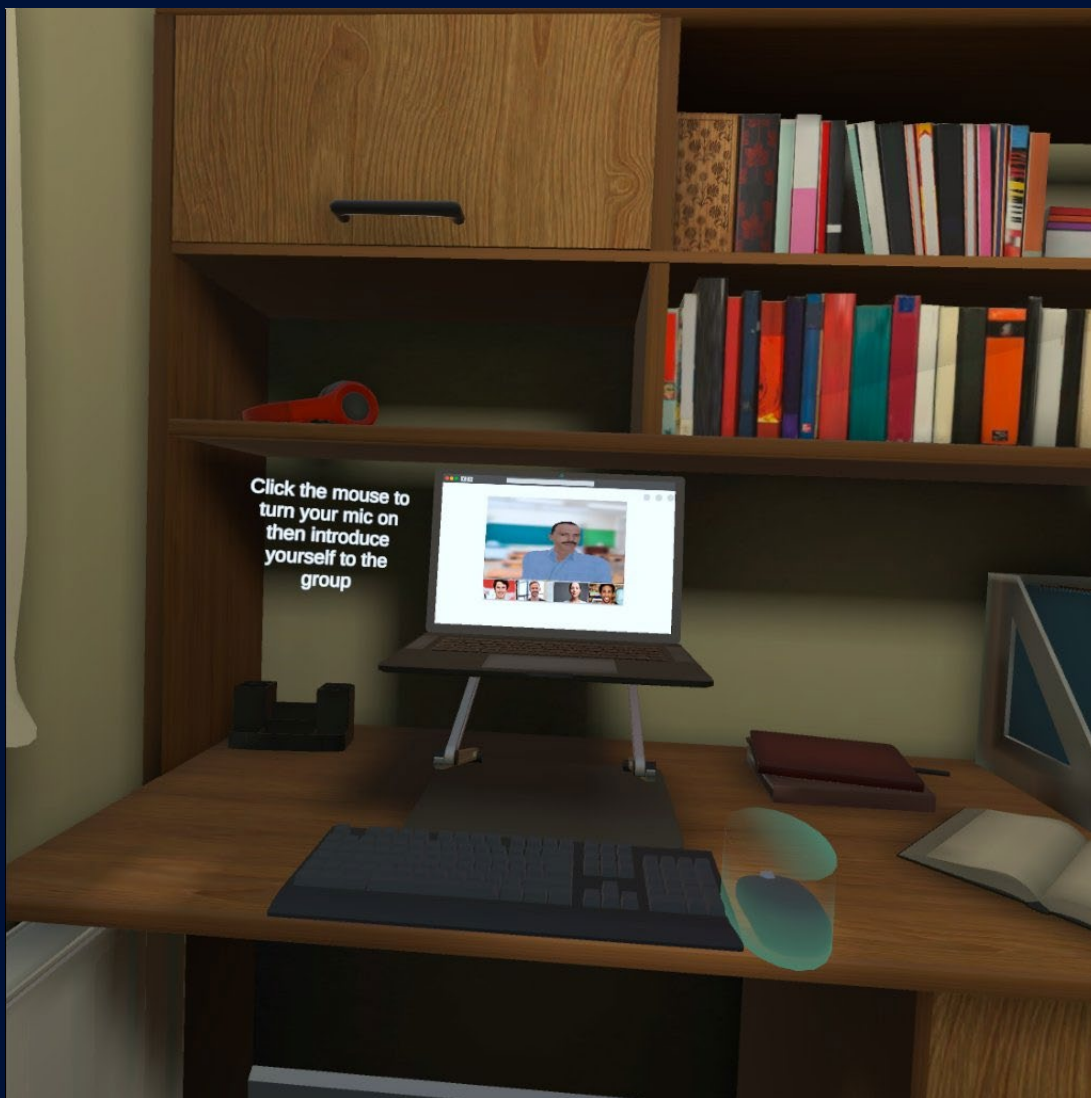
💻 https://blog.westminster.ac.uk/univrse/

✉️ UniVRse@westminster.ac.uk

🐦 @UniVRse_Project

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Coventry University

Health and Wellbeing

Introduction to the Office for Students Mental Health Challenge at Coventry University

Gold for outstanding teaching and learning
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

No.1 Modern University in the Midlands
Guardian University Guide 2021

Top 30 in the World for International Students
QS World Rankings 2021

Introduction

- Ashleigh Hargrave LinkedIn

- What is the Office for Students Mental Health Challenge at Coventry University

- What we did and achieved

- Over to you – Q and A

Project Aim

- Coventry University were awarded £178,000 in 2021, with internal match funding the total value of the work is £0.5 million

- The aim was to develop a sustainable student-centric set of resources to support the mental health of Coventry University's (CU) students from minority ethnic backgrounds to ensure they are seen, heard and supported from the point of entry to graduation.

Engagement

Over 60 students engaged to co-create materials
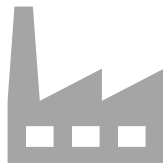
We have both digital and hard copy materials in production

We held a launch event on 22 March 2023

Six project partners named in the bid and more developed

Work package 1: Educate the educators

- **Lead and organisations**

- Lead: Ashleigh Hargrave, Deanne Dunstan, Jas Nagra

- Team: Your Students' Union, Student Minds, Operational Group

- **Task**

- **Process**: regular student focus groups across the organisation (CUSU) and national (student MINDS) to identify lessons learnt and understand what is working and what needs to be, and can be, changed.

- **Outcomes**: staff actively engage with students around health and wellbeing issues; staff will signpost to support leading to improved mental health for students.

Work package 2: Digital intervention tool

- Lead: Ashleigh Hargrave, Deanne Dunstan, Jas Nagra

- Team: Your Students' Union, Student Minds, Operational Group

- **Task**

- **Process:** review the statistics every three months to review uptake of the support services. Who has engaged and how many? Target focus groups across the organisation and wider (via Student Minds) to identify lessons learnt; understand what is working and what needs to be changed; look at barriers and solutions to increase uptake of the tool. Ensure ongoing evidence of co-creation and engagement with students in relation to evaluation and adaptations. Regular feedback from the operational group, expert reference group and steering group.

- **Outcomes**: students will have a better understanding of the support available to them both within and outside the university and online; more students will actively seek support leading to improved mental health.

- [Mental Health Support for Students - Overview (coventry.domains)](#)

- [Mental Health: resources for staff to support students - Overview (coventry.domains)](#)

Work package 3: System (AI tool)

- **Lead and organisations**

- Lead: Deanne Dunstan

- Team: CUSU, Student Minds, Operational Group

- **Process**: review the statistics every three months to review uptake of support services.

- **Outcomes:** 'at risk' students will be identified through the AI data; staff will make contact with these students; staff will refer students to support services.

Work package 4: Welfare appointment

- **Lead and Organisations**

- Lead: Deanne Dunstan and Sally Strapps

- Team: Your Students' Union, Student Minds, Operational Group

- **Process:** review the statistics every three months to review uptake of the support services. Who has engaged and how many? Access already established evaluation processes for existing student support services. Regular feedback will be offered and sought from local (CUSU) and national (Student Minds) student focus groups, the operational group, expert reference group and steering group.

- **Outcome:** more students have knowledge of support services; more students take up services available; improvements in students' mental health.

Work package 5: Partnership model

- **Lead and Organisations**

- Lead: Ros Alstead, Jas Nagra

- Team: ITBTT, CWPT, UHCW, Your Students' Union, Student Minds, Operational Group

- **Process:** test against current approach and benchmark change using feedback from partners and local (CUSU) and national (Student Minds) student focus groups (confidentially permitting). Use existing model of evaluation of the service for client feedback. Regular feedback from the operations, expert reference and steering groups.

- **Outcomes:** students will have an easier pathway from NHS services to the university, and university students who need access to the NHS will have an easier pathway to support. Co-ordination between university and the NHS will be much improved to ensure smooth transitions for students between the two entities. As a result of a more joined-up approach students' recovery will be quicker.

Thank You

Supporting Students' Mental Wellbein (coventry.domains)

Coventry University

Health and Wellbeing

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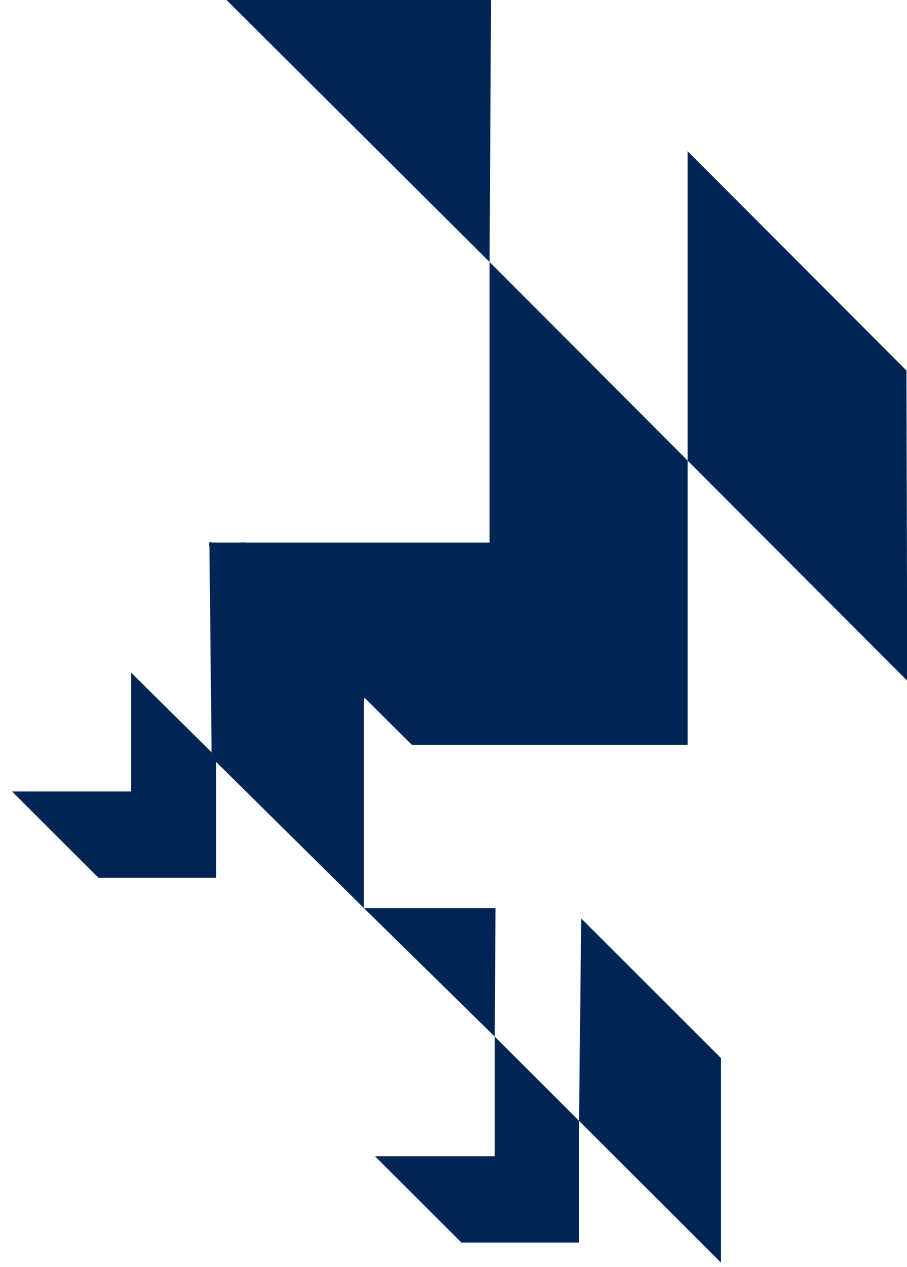**University of Central Lancashire: Creative Mental Health Framework**

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Questions and answers

Project leads contact details

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Office for Students

Thank you for listening

Contact us: mhfundingcomp@officeforstudents.org.uk

Office for Students