

CPD Exemplar Cycle: Academic Pharmacy Scheduled Cycle

Cycle name: Student Mental Health

Scheduled

This learning activity is within my current scope of practice ✓

This learning activity is relevant to the safe and effective practice of pharmacy ✓

All criteria are essential and must be completed successfully for the cycle to meet the required standard.

Reflection

1. I identified the following specific learning need(s)... (500 word maximum)

I need to learn more about student mental health, particularly the affect that mental health issues have on a student's studies/progression and how course design can have an impact on his/her mental health issues/problems.¹

Specifically, I need to learn:

- What is the prevalence of student mental health problems in the UK?
- What are the most common mental health problems experienced by students?
- What course changes/accommodations can be made to prevent/ease mental health problems amongst students?
- What can I do (tips/strategies to use) if a student is presenting with mental health problems?

¹ He/she and him/her has been used to help anonymise sex throughout this document.

2. I wanted to learn about this because (give context for learning activity / activities)... (500 word maximum)

As a Pharmacy Lecturer, I need to learn about this because, although I am aware of a national increase in student mental health problems as a result of COVID (home learning & lockdown impacts), I am unsure what I can do (e.g. any course improvements/strategies) to help improve students mental health from a course leader's point of view. As I will have direct student contact (both face-to-face and via zoom), it is important that I am able to help any student that is affected by mental health/mental wellbeing problems.

Planning

3. I plan/planned to complete the following learning activity/activities to meet the identified learning need(s). (Please describe the learning activity/activities and the planned completion date(s)).

I plan to complete the following activities by the 10/11/2024:

Read and make notes on: Milicev, J. McCann, M. Simpson, S. Biello, S. and Gardani, M. (2021) 'Evaluating Mental Health and Wellbeing of Postgraduate Researchers: Prevalence and Contributing Factors.' *Current Psychology*, Vol 42, pp 12267-12280.

Read and make notes on: Hughes, G, Panjwani, M, Tulcidas, P. and Byrom, N. (2018) *Student Mental Health: The Role and Experiences of Academics*. Kings College London and The University of Derby. Available from:

https://www.studentminds.org.uk/uploads/3/7/8/4/3784584/180129_student_mental_health_the_role_and_experience_of_academics_student_minds_pdf.pdf

Action

4. In meeting the identified learning need(s), I completed the following learning activity/activities

Activity: : Milicev, J. McCann, M. Simpson, S. Biello, S. and Gardani, M. (2021) 'Evaluating Mental Health and Wellbeing of Postgraduate Researchers: Prevalence and Contributing Factors.' *Current Psychology*, Vol 42, pp 12267-12280.

Hours: 1

Start date: 06/11/2024

End date: 06/11/2024

Evidence type: Notes

Evidence: Self-Study

Evidence upload (optional): Notes made of important points and stored in CPD folder, copy also uploaded as evidence.

Activity: Hughes, G, Panjwani, M, Tulcidas, P. and Byrom, N. (2018) *Student Mental Health: The Role and Experiences of Academics*. Kings College London and The University of Derby. Available from:
https://www.studentminds.org.uk/uploads/3/7/8/4/3784584/180129_student_mental_health_the_role_and_experience_of_academics_student_minds_pdf.pdf

Hours: 1.5

Start date: 07/11/2024

End date: 09/11/2024

Evidence type: Notes

Evidence: Self-Study

Evidence upload (optional): Notes made of important points and stored in CPD folder, copy also uploaded as evidence.

Summary of what has been learned in relation to the identified learning need(s) (500 word maximum)

Research and official figures indicate that there has been a rise in the number of students experiencing mental ill health. Studies have indicated that students have lower mental wellbeing than the general population and that low mental wellbeing can have negative consequences for student experience and success. Students are also unlikely to disclose mental health problems or seek formal support in a timely manner, which may lead to a longer duration of untreated illness and poorer outcomes. According to MIND UK, 1 in 5 students has a diagnosed mental health problem. Anxiety, depression and suicidal feelings are the most common mental health problems among students. Course/curriculum design can impact on workloads, due dates, stress, anxiety and the wellness of both students and tutors/academics. To support mental wellbeing, course providers should focus on curriculum design - student experiences should include encounters that help build resilience, develop self-management strategies and coping mechanisms. Assessment issues (timing, methods and frequency) can be a cause of considerable stress for students. Stress can be reduced by ensuring that any assignments are spaced throughout the term/year, rather than be bunched together at the end. A range of assessment methods should be used to enable all students to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes. Assessment stress can be reduced by giving the students opportunities to practice assessment tasks (mock exams), as the students then understand what is expected from them. Students benefit from being provided with detailed course information, both before and during the course, so that they can manage their time and can plan to cover the course content/sit the assessments. The provision of regular and ongoing opportunities to meet with course leaders, tutors and peers can be helpful to students. Assigning personal tutors gives students opportunities to foster positive personal networks and helps them form relationships with a tutor who can respond to individual queries, concerns and provide support. Peer learning/small group work can enable students to interact with their peers, helping them to develop social networks and build confidence in speaking/learning together. What can I do to support a student with a mental health or mental wellbeing issue? Good communication is the key. Follow the acronym ALOE when communicating with an individual presenting with potential mental health issues: A = Ask (e.g. 'Is everything okay?', 'Is there anyone you would like me to call?'); L = Listen non-judgementally (try not to interrupt, pauses and silences are okay); O = Offer reassurance and information (e.g. 'you may not believe it right now, but the way you are feeling can change', 'I may not understand exactly how you are feeling, but I want to help'); E = Encourage the person to get appropriate help and encourage self-help strategies (talk to them about what support is available, ask how they feel about getting help, signpost to organisations that can help e.g. GP/AWARE/PIPS/Samaritans/personal tutor and follow-up with the student. Try to avoid saying, 'Don't worry about it', 'We all go through times like these', 'I can't do anything about it'. If the student/individual is stressed/anxious or having a panic attack, encourage them to breathe. Breathing exercises can help balance the nervous system

and improve mental focus. Breathe in through nose and out through mouth, breathe in gently and regularly (count steadily from 1 to 5) and then breathe out gently counting again from 1 to 5; keep doing this for 3-5 minutes.

Evaluation

5. Having met the specific learning need(s) identified, my practice has changed or will change as follows: (500 word maximum)

I have fully met my learning needs. As a result of my learning, I now know that students and their mental health can benefit from regular contact with course leaders and peers. During this academic year, I have organised extra Q and A zoom webinars so that students have an opportunity to ask any questions that they may have about any of the assessments and they know exactly what is expected of them. During one of the webinars, the students were split up into breakout rooms with their peers to discuss sections of their upcoming module assignment - this gave them an opportunity to discuss concerns/queries among themselves before presenting to the main group.

During one of the Pharmacy Practice teaching sessions, one student started crying and left the room. I followed him/her along with one of the other tutors to ensure everything was okay. Using the acronym ALOE, I was able to ask if everything was okay and I listened to him/her without interrupting. I was able to establish that he/she was overwhelmed by the amount of information in the session and did not know how he/she would cope with the exam. I was able to offer words of encouragement and told him/her that we could provide extra support if needed and this was also reiterated by the other tutor. After a couple of minutes, the student was able to rejoin the main group. I followed up with the student before he/she left at the end of the session and also the day afterwards to make sure he/she was okay (and if there was anyone, he/she wanted me to contact for him/her). I also signposted him/her to University Student Support Services and the extra Q and A sessions, which would give him/her an opportunity to answer any queries or concerns. I also made sure to check with this student on the morning of the assessment to make sure he/she was okay to proceed.

6. I confirm that the identified learning need(s) has/have been fully addressed in this CPD cycle:

Your selection of “direct” or “simulated/future” evaluation (tick boxes below) must reflect the application of your learning described in (5) above.

This CPD cycle has been directly evaluated within my current practice & environment (minimum of 75% of cycles submitted) ✓

Community
Pharmacy Prescriber
Primary Care / Practice
Training
Hospital
Industry
Academia ✓
Other

I have recently returned to practice (within the last 12 months): [NO](#)

I have changed my scope of practice within the last 12 months: [NO](#)