

Information on Mental Health Conditions

Mental health condition is an umbrella term used for a range of illnesses affecting a person's psychological wellbeing. They can cause severe disturbances in thinking, feeling, relating, functional behaviours, and substantially diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life.

Examples of mental health conditions:

- Depression.
- Anxiety Disorders.
- Bipolar Affective Disorder (previously called Manic Depression).
- Schizophrenia.
- Borderline Personality Disorder.

A mental health condition is an invisible disability; it is typically not apparent to others. However, students with mental health conditions may experience symptoms that interfere with their educational goals.

Examples of ways a mental health condition may affect a student:

- Difficulty concentrating, or remembering things.
- Increased levels of fatigue.
- Heightened anxieties and fears.
- Marked mood changes (low and/or high).
- Difficulty prioritizing tasks, and meeting deadlines
- Difficulty in attendance, e.g. due to tiredness, lack of social confidence and treatment commitments.
- May find it hard to contribute to group work.
- Could find it challenging to seek help or advocate for self.
- May be concerned about disclosing due to fear of discrimination.
- If severe, confused or disorganized thinking.

Ways staff can assist:

- Create an environment where students are encouraged to disclose their needs and seek appropriate support as required.
- Provide a clear structure for the course with explicit information about assessment, dates, and resources.
- Provide a safety net for students unable to attend or concentrate on lectures by making lecture material available on Cecil, Moodle or in the Department.
- Make available the option of flexible assignments (provide students with a range of ways to show their understanding and grasp of material).
- Have available the possibility of flexible deadlines or a system for extensions which reduces the amount of self-advocacy that the students need to undertake (with documentation of the impairment and possibly for the life of the subject).

The University of Auckland encourages partnerships between Faculties, student services and students, to support students achieve their academic potential.

- Be aware of relevant support services on campus and in the community, and where appropriate, seek advice from them or encourage students to ask for help.

Available support services for staff and students

- Student Disability Services: Ph: 09 373 7599 ext 82936
Email disabilities@auckland.ac.nz
- Student Learning Ph 09 3737599 ext 88850
Email slc@auckland.ac.nz

Useful Website www.flexiblelearning.auckland.ac.nz

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