

Information about Student Teachers with 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)
- Borderline Personality Disorder
- Schizophrenia

A mental health condition is an invisible disability; it is typically not apparent to others.

Impact of Impairment

Mental Illness is something people recover from. If the condition is severe it can affect some people in the following ways:

- Difficulty concentrating, making decisions, or remembering things
- Heightened anxieties, fears, or suspicions
- Marked mood (low and/or high)
- Difficulty managing assignments, prioritizing tasks, and meeting deadlines
- Difficulty in attending classes due to lack of stamina, social confidence and/or impact of medication
- Difficulty getting along, fitting in, contributing to group work, and reading social cues
- Lack of insight about obvious problems or a resistance to offers of help
- If severe, confused or disorganized thinking
- Thinking or talking about suicide

When a person has dealt with their mental health difficulties they have first-hand understanding of the challenges faced by others with a mental health condition. They are more likely to make supportive and inclusive teachers.

They can also:

- Identify and relate to pupils with a mental health condition.
- Provide valuable role models for students with disabilities.
- Provide heightened awareness of the need to teach inclusively.
- Contribute solutions to problems facing students with mental health conditions, based on their own experiences.

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

Prospective students should read the 'Good Character and Fit to be a Teacher Policy' from the New Zealand Teachers Council website, in particular Section 9– Definition of 'Good Character and Fit to be a Teacher'.

For more information on disclosure of your impairment please see the Disclosure Guidelines on the Disability Services Website www.disability.auckland.ac.nz

CONTACTS FOR MORE INFORMATION OR SUPPORT

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