

# MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all Monash University staff and students, with the exception of the former Monash South Africa campus.

## POLICY STATEMENT

Monash University (the University) is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment that promotes good mental health and high quality support to staff and students experiencing poor mental health.

The University is committed to treating people living with poor mental health with dignity, equality and respect as set out in the [Equal Opportunity Policy](#) and [Integrity and Respect Policy](#).

### 1. Understanding Mental Health

- 1.1 Mental health can be considered across a continuum, with good mental health at one end, difficulties in coping or increased distress in the middle, and poor mental health at the other.
- 1.2 The University acknowledges that staff and students may move back and forth along this continuum throughout their time at the University and that as a result, their mental health support needs may vary.
- 1.3 The causes of poor mental health are complex, with genetics, environment and life experiences influencing a person's risk. Environmental factors and life experiences can also decrease risk, such as having strong social supports and learning resilience strategies.

### 2. Fostering Good Mental Health

- 2.1 The University promotes a culture that supports good mental health, social connectedness and resilience by:
  - using evidence to ensure best practice approaches to mental health are implemented in University activities;
  - fostering respectful and inclusive behaviour;
  - encouraging staff and students to participate in wellbeing and health-promoting activities;
  - creating work and study conditions (including curriculum and learning environments) that optimise good mental health and general wellbeing;
  - providing tailored support to help staff and students thrive, and assist those experiencing poor mental health.
- 2.2 The University understands that some individuals may be at a higher risk of experiencing poor mental health and has targeted strategies to support these cohorts, set out in the University's [Diversity and Inclusion Action Plans](#).
- 2.3 The University has a [Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) outlining goals to empower staff and students to lead a life of sound psychological and emotional health. The Strategy is linked to a specific [Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan](#) to provide a safe, accessible and fair environment for staff and students with ongoing mental health conditions.

### 3. Prevention and Resilience

- 3.1 The University coordinates activities and initiatives to promote mental health literacy, combat stigma associated with mental illness, and connect staff and students with mental health resources and support services. The University takes steps to ensure that information is available to all staff and students about how they can access these resources and supports.
- 3.2 The University seeks to prevent mental illness from developing or worsening by:
  - considering the unintended mental health consequences of decisions made by the University;
  - offering programs that help staff and students manage a range of demands, particularly those associated with work and study;

- supporting staff and students with disabilities, including mental illness, in its policies, strategies and practices; and
- providing access to broader University support services, such as financial assistance, legal services and child care services and/or connecting them with other services provided by government, private providers and the community.

## 4. Managing Poor Mental Health

- 4.1 The University acknowledges the importance of early intervention in achieving good mental health outcomes and encourages staff and students to seek support if they have concerns or are experiencing poor mental health.
- 4.2 Training is available to supervisors, student-facing staff and students in leadership roles to empower them to sensitively and appropriately engage with staff and students who need mental health support, and to connect them with services.
- 4.3 The University provides inclusive medical and mental health services for staff and students experiencing poor mental health or caring for someone with mental illness.
- 4.4 To connect staff and students with specialist support, the University works with community mental health and other services, such as for sexual assault, domestic violence and drug and alcohol use.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 The Monash University Standing Committee on Mental Health advises the University on mental health issues impacting staff and students and on mental health policy, services and programs. Its membership includes senior officers, medical and mental health practitioners, and students.
- 5.2 All staff and students are responsible for:
- contributing to a mentally healthy University culture;
  - taking reasonable care of their own mental health and wellbeing; and,
  - taking reasonable care that their actions do not have a negative impact on the health, safety or wellbeing of other staff and students.
- 5.3 Staff who teach, manage or supervise others, and students in leadership roles are responsible for:
- promoting awareness of this policy and supporting its implementation; and,
  - completing training to understand how to promote a mentally healthy University culture and support people experiencing poor mental health.

## DEFINITIONS

Good mental health	Good mental health refers to a state of wellbeing in which a person realises their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to their community ( <a href="#">Royal Commission Into Victoria's Mental Health System Interim Report</a> , 2019, p. 16)
Mental illness	A medical condition that is characterised by a significant disturbance of thought, mood, perception or memory ( <a href="#">Mental Health Act 2014 (Vic)</a> ).
Poor mental health	Poor mental health is a combined term for referring to mental illness and psychological distress ( <a href="#">Royal Commission Into Victoria's Mental Health System Interim Report</a> , 2019, p. 16).

## GOVERNANCE

Supporting procedures	<a href="#">Mental Health Procedure</a>
Associated policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Assessment and Academic Integrity Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Equal Opportunity Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Integrity and Respect Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Leave and Wellbeing Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy</a></li> </ul>
Related legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Disability Discrimination Act (1992) (Commonwealth)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">ESOS National Code Standard 6, Overseas students support services</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Fair Work Act 2009</a></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Fair Work Regulation 2009</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">TEQSA Higher Education Standards Framework S. 2.3, Wellbeing and Safety</a></li> </ul>
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