



Understanding Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Video Transcript

This is a transcript of a short introductory video from the website <http://unistudentwellbeing.edu.au>.

People in the video (in order of appearance) include:

RM	Professor Raoul Mulder	Head of School of Biosciences, University of Melbourne	Narrator
LA	Dr Lee Allen	Consultant psychiatrist, Austin Health, University of Melbourne	Interview 1
JW	Professor Johanna Wyn	Director of the Youth Research Centre, University of Melbourne	Interview 2
RJ	Professor Richard James	Director, Melbourne Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne	Interview 3
NC	Nicholas Clifford-Hordacre	Student, Bachelor of Science, University of Melbourne	Student Vox Pop 1
NA	Neshan Amarasena	Student, Bachelor of Arts, University of Melbourne	Student Vox Pop 2
S	"Sam"	Student, Bachelor of Arts, University of Melbourne	Student Vox Pop 3
SO	Stephanie Opeskin	Student, Bachelor of Law / Bachelor of Psychological Science, La Trobe University	Student Vox Pop 4
JC	Jenna Cook	Student, Bachelor of Biomedicine, La Trobe University	Student Vox Pop 5
TT	Timothy Thomaidis	Student, Health Sciences / International Development, La Trobe University	Student Vox Pop 6
EH	Evin Hartley-Murray	Student, Graduate Diploma of Mathematics, University of Melbourne	Student Vox Pop 7
HG	Hannah Garganis	Student, Bachelor of Teaching (Secondary), La Trobe University	Student Vox Pop 8
BZ	Bernard Zhang	Student, Bachelor of Science, University of Melbourne	Student Vox Pop 9

RM You could be forgiven think that University students are among those living the good life. And yet, in Australia and internationally, several recent studies involving large cohorts of students have revealed high levels of psychological distress among University students. What is going on here? Why are University students so stressed?

[Title] *Understanding Student Mental Health and Wellbeing*

RM My name is Raoul Mulder. I'm a researcher and a teacher at the University of Melbourne, and head of a large department in the University, the School of BioSciences. In recent years, I've become increasingly conscious of student mental health and the ways that it can impact students' learning, progress with their studies, and overall experience of University. This is obviously a topic that's a little outside my main area of expertise, but the great thing about being part of a university community is that I have a number of colleagues who know a lot about this topic and who've agreed to share their understanding and insight with me.

LA if we think about the rates of mental health problems, it is elevated in the university population compared to a cohort within the general population.

It can affect someone's mood state, so they may with this have impact on their energy levels, and with that an impact on their capacity to concentrate, their capacity to be motivated, their capacity to make a decision. So if these things are impaired this can significantly impact on their planning, organisation, belief in themselves or in their ability to put down a reasonable answer, and so can impact significantly on not just attendance at university but also completion of assessment tasks. And yet for some people with mental health problems it may affect more of their thinking processes, so that may be significantly impaired, which may make comprehension very difficult, or expression of their thinking, so that that can become muddled. For others can be difficulties with impulse control and so being much more erratic in their behaviour or more disinhibited, so has a period of time where they are not really putting their best potential forward in being able to complete assessment tasks.

JW Tertiary education is now the mass education sector. So it's very, very much more likely for a young person to be studying well into their 20s, which is a very different pattern from previous generations.

RJ In a mass or universal system more students are going on to university who probably have quite marginal levels of preparedness for studies in higher education.

JW Student life is likely to be one of really working hard to balance multiple commitments. It's likely quite a fragmented experience.

RJ Your average university student is juggling a complex range of study options, quite likely large volumes of work outside of their study

Precarious work is very widespread, it means people are doing small jobs, they are doing contract work, so it is contributing to the sense of it being very hard for young people to take advantage of their education in the labour market, and that is a big change.

LA You would have to think a significant number wouldn't be achieving their full potential and I suppose that's why we are wanting to think how we can better support them in the university setting to help them achieve the potential that they have when they come into the university.

JW Because things are changing so much, students are experiencing the reality that it's more difficult than it used to be, to see how you would use your qualification

- RJ I think the big step forward for universities and for university communities is for student mental health and wellbeing not to be a kind of hidden issue, that it's something that we can openly talk about, that students who face issues in this area do not feel shy or embarrassed about seeking assistance. We need a curriculum response to student wellbeing of all kinds.
- RM Of course, in addition to educators and psychologists, the other "experts" on student wellbeing are of course the students themselves.
- [Image of RM talking with students]*
- NC I think mental health is an issue for university students.
- NA I know there's a lot of university students who are depressed.
- S I know a lot of people who have gone through mental health difficulties and it's really impacted the ability to do well at university.
- SO Knowing that all of this counts to get a job is so stressful.
- JC You don't really know what you're going to do, you don't really know what's expected of you and there's just so much pressure, but sometimes you just don't know where to go with it all.
- TT I know that for (my friend) Teesh and I, you know, we're university students with full time loads, but we are also very financially independent at a young age, so we have a multitude of stressors in our lives.
- EH The University can do a lot to support people's lives.
- HG Making support services known, and reducing the stigma around seeking support.
- S Take into consideration that a lot of students would go through difficulties while studying, and just be mindful of that when setting deadlines on assessment tasks.
- NC Having more dialogue about wellbeing.
- BZ More feedback from the work that we do. Because sometimes we don't get feedback and we're just sort of left in the blue.
- NC Yeah, that's true.
- RM Students are aware that mental wellbeing is an important issue at university and it's heartening to see that university administrators are also interested in the ways that universities can better support student mental wellbeing. This needs to be a collaborative endeavour that involves everyone in the institution, and academic teachers have a key role to play in developing the curriculum and teaching and learning practices that support psychological wellbeing.
- [End of video]*