



Networks and collaborative projects



## Facilitating the Development of Evidence-Based Self-Management Strategies in Australian University Students

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Our collaborators, including: Sue Morris, Peter Baldwin, Vik Nithy, Annette Olschewski, Lorenzo Vigentini and UNSW Fellowship course coordinator/staff partners: Tom Beesley, Kate Hutton-Bedbrook, Rebecca LeBard, Leela Cejna, Lyn Brady, Paul Tuohy, Luke Hunter & Steve Yannoulatos

## Why should we be concerned with student self-management, success, & well-being?

**Self-management** = the capacity to work effectively toward achieving meaningful goals, *and* to be flexible in the face of setbacks

Need for **greater self-management capacity** in university students is based on:

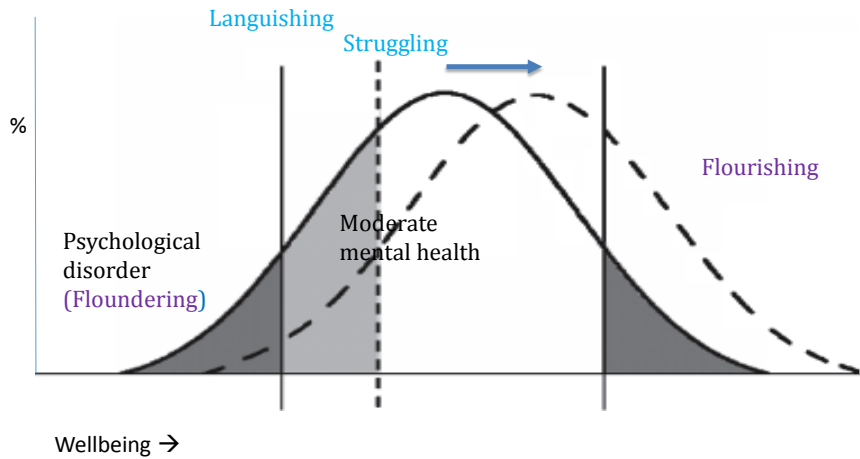
1. argument that graduates should be **more psychologically literate** (evidence-based self-management capacity is a component of psychological literacy) (APA, 2011; Cranney & Dunn, 2011a, 2011b; Cranney et al., 2012; Sokol & Kuebli, 2011)
2. argument that **self-development**, which is a component of self-management, is an essential pre-requisite to **professional development** (Tano & Vines, 2009)
3. research indicating that university students experience substantial levels of **distress**, and distress predicts poor academic outcomes (eg Andrews & Chong, 2011; Field et al., 2014; Larcombe et al., 2014; Stallman, 2010)



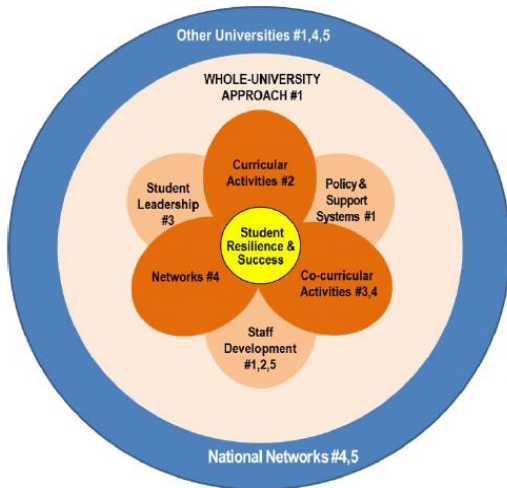
*ie* self-management should be a key 21<sup>st</sup> Century graduate capability

## Thriving and the population approach: continuum

Strategies produce a small shift in the population mean on the mental health spectrum (modified from Huppert, 2005).



*How can we support increased student self-management capacity, success, & well-being?*



### OLT/UNSW SEF funding (2012-2015+): Four components:

1. Support of university-wide initiatives
2. Initiation of network (including mini-projects); staff PD
3. Curricular programs:
  - **PSYC1031: Psych. Science of Resilience;**
  - **Integration of self-management into other courses**
4. Extra-curricular and resourcing curricular initiatives, eg:
  - **Student Minds**
  - **Video Resources**

## Approach:

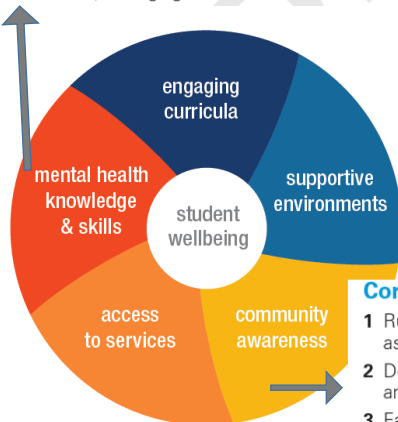


### “Upward spiral”

*Yes, this is over-simplified, and does not take into account NOT achieving your goals and the importance of learning from that experience (ask Jacky about that later)*

#### Core activities (to undertake in the first year):

- 1 Providing opportunities within the formal curriculum for students to learn health promoting knowledge and skills – such as resilience, conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, mindfulness, and time and task management.
- 2 Developing curricula and co-curricular offerings that build students’ self-knowledge (e.g. values and character strengths) so they are better able to make decisions and identify career pathways consistent with their values, interests and strengths
- 3 Developing print and online information and resources that build students’ knowledge and skills for mental wellbeing (e.g. mental health essentials, stress-management, mindfulness, self-compassion, autonomous motivation, managing emotions)



#### Core activities (to undertake in the first year):

- 1 Running regular campaigns to raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing and redress stigma associated with mental health difficulties
- 2 Developing or reviewing online and print resources that promote mental health literacy among students and staff
- 3 Facilitating student involvement in activities and programs to raise students’ awareness of mental health issues and the academic benefits of mental wellbeing

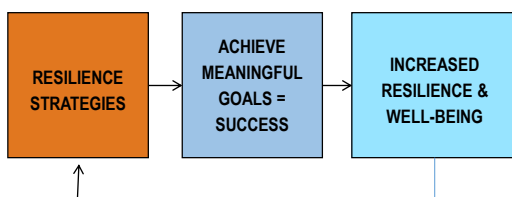
Two main areas of overlap with your project

## Curricular programs:

- *PSYC1031: Psychological Science of Resilience*
- *Integration of self-management into other courses*

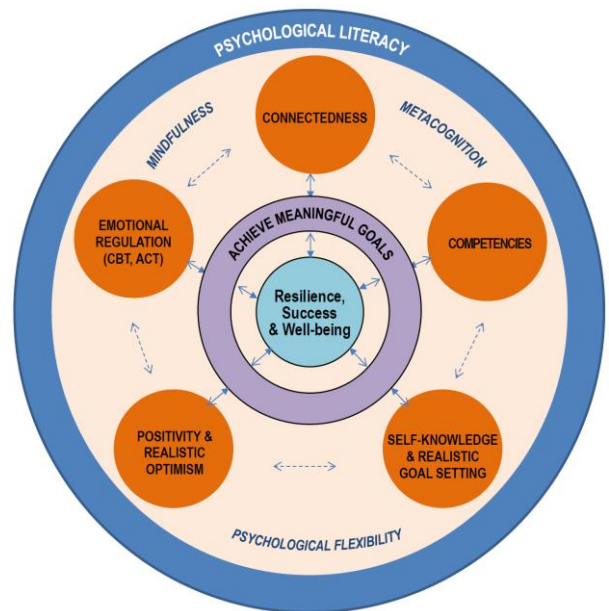
## PSYC1031—Psychological Science of Resilience

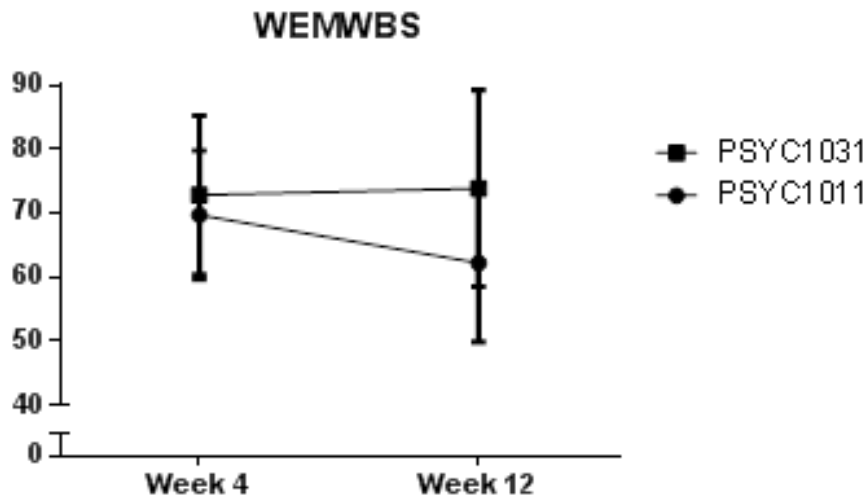
Psychological science regarding:



**Orange** = categories of evidence-based resilience strategies that underpin the structure of course

**Note: Self-management** = the capacity to work effectively toward achieving meaningful goals, *and* to be flexible in the face of setbacks





Less decrease in well-being in target course (PSYC1031, compared to comparison course (PSYC1011), during stress-filled final weeks of semester

## Challenges

- Maintaining academic rigour and emphasis on psychological science
- Ensuring a safe scaffolded environment
- Novelty of flipped format for students—pre-practical requirement
- Balance between knowledge, self-knowledge, and application to others
- *Scaling up and out...*

## 2015: Scaling up and embedding strategies in large psychology and non-psychology courses...

### **Intended OUTCOMES =**

- learn **which of the self-management strategies** are the most promising in different contexts
- through partnerships, support **staff capacity-building** in large first- and second-year courses
- contribute to improving student success at UNSW

*“The self-management resources will include topics of interest to most students, such as time-management, procrastination and study strategies.” [these themes identified in 2013 Community of Practice meetings]*

**Courses:** *Biology, Chemistry, Business & Law, Psychology...*

### Topics (*ie* SM strategies based on psychological science)

[thefridge.org.au](http://thefridge.org.au)

#### **STARTED** with (thefridge.org.au):

- Goal and time management
- Motivation management
- Study and work management
- Well-being management

#### **“ENDED”** with (Moodle Section):

- Goal setting
- Scheduling time
- Study strategies
- Procrastination and motivation management
- Assessment feedback and reflection
- Stressors vs. distress
- Balancing life
- Mindfulness meditation and learning effectiveness
- Emotional management for a balanced life
- Quiz and exam preparation



## 2016: MOODLE SECTION: Self-management for effective learning: Weekly schedule and topics

**TOPICS**

Below is a list of topics relevant to self-management, which is the capacity to work effectively towards meaningful goals, and be flexible in the face of setbacks (Cranney & Nithy, 2015). You can (a) browse any topic at any time and (b) choose to engage with specific activities at times that suit you, according to your availability to do so and/or your weekly course schedule (see above).

This initiative is supported by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), who is interested in giving all students opportunities to gain knowledge and skills that will help them succeed at university and beyond. Ultimately YOU need to decide how much you engage with the initiative—it has been incorporated into this course to help you with your approach to learning and assessments (in this and other courses).

**GOAL SETTING**

What do you want to get out of your time at university? In particular, what is your goal for this course? Research has shown that being very explicit and specific about what you want helps you to spend your time more effectively in achieving your goals.

**Some Goal Selection Activities:**

1. This define your goals video outlines the steps necessary in selecting your goals:
2. As a warm-up group activity, with some friends or fellow students, choose a "silly" goal and practice going through the planning steps to achieve that goal, using this worksheet: 191.7KB PDF document
3. As an individual activity, choose a realistic goal (e.g., your desired grade for this course), and go through the planning steps to achieve that goal, using this Individual goal selection worksheet: 194.3KB PDF document
4. Check out the Goal and Time Management Module:
5. Sometimes it helps us understand our own motivation if we consider whether a particular goal is one that we chose to achieve, or whether we are striving toward that goal because someone else wanted us to. Try this worksheet: 198.6KB PDF document
- 6a. Often we are not sure what we want—we are unsure of our interests, our strengths, and our values. To find out about your strengths, you could take the VIA Survey of Character Strengths:
- 6b. If you wanted to find out more about your career-related strengths, visit the Careers Research Advisory Service:
- 6c. If you want to find out more about your values, use this Valued Intentions worksheet: 38.4 KB PDF document
7. We need to make sure our goals satisfy our basic psychological needs, and are aligned with our values. Check out this website, which includes the values bullseye video:

**The Science—eg:**

1. Here's a great article on how you can gain more self-knowledge which may help with your goal-setting: 50.4KB PDF document
2. This website has evidence-based surveys that may allow you to find out more about yourself eg personality:

**SCHEDULING TIME**

After selecting your goals, planning time (and other resources/skills) necessary to achieve those goals has been shown to be a worthwhile exercise.

**Some Scheduling Time Activities:**

## Curricular

### OUTCOMES SO FAR:

- SM strategies need to relate to their **core assessments** (or be assessable)
- Students have **different needs**—allow choice; “just in time” alerts re resources; normalize help-seeking
- Increasing interest amongst educators
- Manual & 2015 report: [unistudentsuccess.com/the-fridge/](http://unistudentsuccess.com/the-fridge/)



### ONGOING:

- Courses are continuing with adaptable Moodle section on “Self-management for effective learning”
- Continuing development of resources/websites eg [thefridge.org.au](http://thefridge.org.au)
- Continuing data analysis and write-up—initial report on Business & Law (Cranney, Nithy & Cejnar, 2016)
- Continuing to contribute to university-wide mental health strategy; hope to integrate your project findings





## Student Minds®

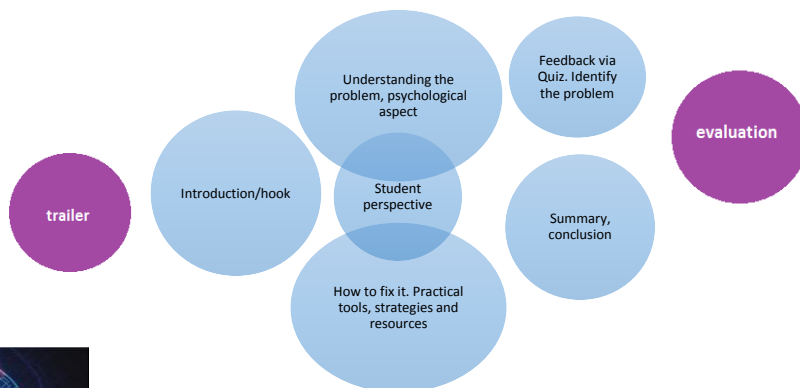
## Extra – Curricula and Resourcing Curricula

- is the student voice on mental health: an outreach program driven by student volunteers – supported by CAPS.
- Student Minds® aims to raise awareness, cultivate knowledge and develop skills that contribute to student success, wellbeing and resilience.
- Student Minds® volunteering is AHEGS recognized upon completion of necessary hours.

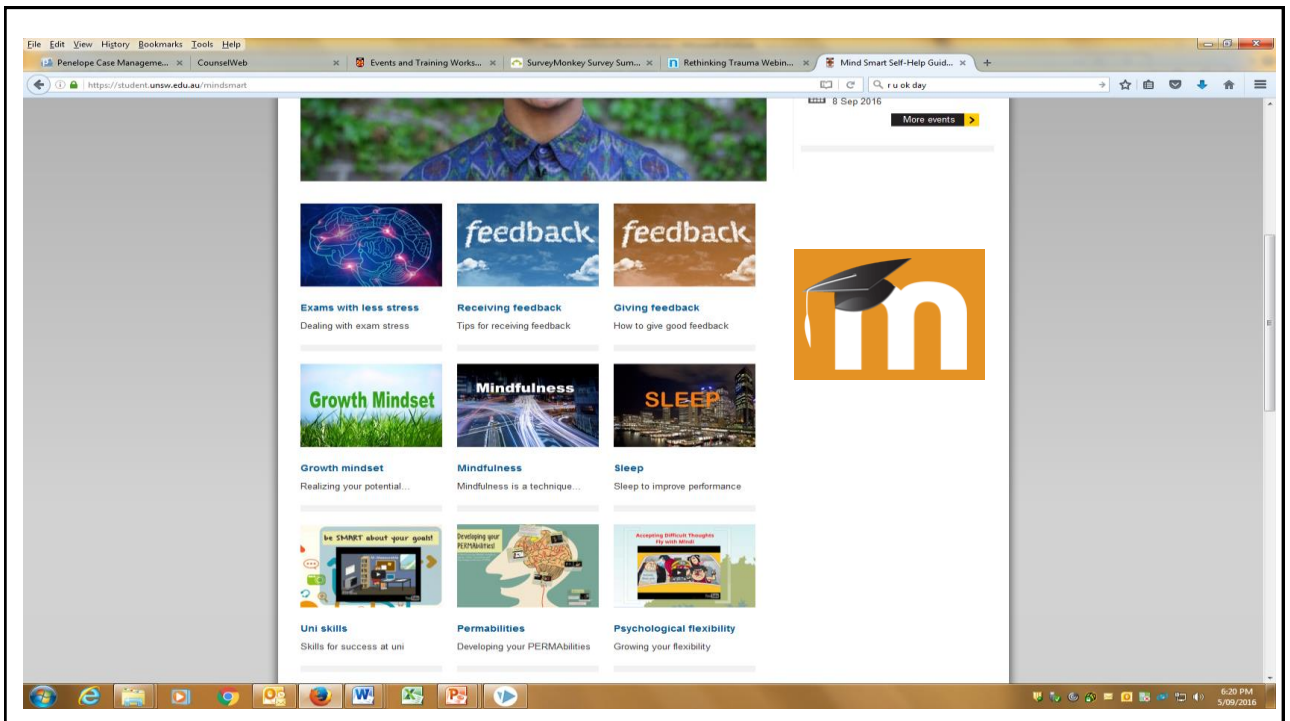
Students can contribute to Student Minds® at one of two levels:

- Student Minds® Executive - Complete 10 hours of training and a minimum of 20 hours volunteering.
- Student Minds® Volunteer - Complete 10 hours of training and a minimum of 10 hours volunteering.
- *Growing influence*
- *3<sup>rd</sup> Annual conference 2016*

# Digital Resources







## THANK YOU!

### Bibliography/Resources

**psychliteracy.com      unistudentsuccess.com      thefridge.org.au      student.unsw.edu.au/mindsmart**

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