

# Mental Health First Aid for academics

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## **Introduction/background:**

Students experience fitness to practise issues which comprises freedom from impairment (mental/physical health), professionalism, clinical competency, communication and recognition of limits. Clinical educators don't feel confident supporting students with mental health issues. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) has been found to increase participant confidence to provide help, knowledge and decrease stigma and social distance from a person with a mental health condition. This year we conducted a 2-day multidisciplinary MHFA course for clinical educators. This was very well received. The results included significant increases in confidence ( $t(34.4) = 5.868, p < 0.0001$ ) and knowledge ( $t(24.8) = 3.94, p = 0.0006$ ). There were significant decreases in social distance from a person with a mental health issue according to two vignettes John ( $t(40.8) = 2.592, p = 0.013$ ) and Paula ( $t(32.8) = 4.015, p = 0.0003$ ). While some of the content is from an accredited MHFA course, there will be no accreditation provided after completing the course as it for one day only instead of two days.

## **Purpose and outcomes:**

The purpose is to equip participants with skills to support students with the most common mental health issues seen in tertiary education. We wish to increase participant confidence in supporting students with mental health issues.

## **Issues for exploration or questions for discussion:**

We wish to explore strategies to help educators recognise particular mental health disorders in both students and colleagues eg: anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts and referring them on to appropriate services.

## **Outline of workshop activities**

The workshop will include case studies that can be worked through in groups and discussed with the larger group.