



Creating a culture of mental wellness: Not only surviving but thriving

In today's fast-paced world, mental wellness is no longer a luxury: it's a necessity. As students, you face a growing list of challenges: academic pressure, financial strain, social expectations, and uncertainty about the future. Amid these demands, mental health often takes a backseat. But building a culture of mental wellness isn't just about avoiding burnout. It's about creating a sustainable environment where you can thrive, grow, and show up fully as yourselves.

Understanding mental wellness

Mental wellness is more than the absence of anxiety or depression. It's the ability to cope with life's stressors, maintain strong relationships, manage emotions, and stay focused on personal goals. For you as students, it is the foundation for academic success, meaningful relationships, and long-term growth.

“You don’t have to control your thoughts. You just have to stop letting them control you.”
- Dan Millman

Why it matters in student life

When mental wellness is prioritised, everything else improves. Academic performance, creativity, collaboration, and resilience all benefit. Too often, students feel pressure to “push through” exhaustion, keep emotions hidden, or wear busyness as a badge of honour. These habits don't lead to success and they may lead to burnout. The long-term consequences can be serious. Creating a mental wellness culture means challenging those norms.



Steps toward a mentally healthy student culture

1. Normalise the conversation

Talking about mental health shouldn't feel a taboo. Whether it's opening up about stress before an exam or checking in on a friend who seems distant. Normalising these conversations is a powerful first step. As Glenn Close put it - "What mental health needs is more sunlight, more candour, and more unashamed conversation." It's okay to not be okay, and it's okay to talk about it.

2. Prioritise rest and recovery

In student life, sleep is often sacrificed for deadlines, and "hustle culture" is celebrated. But rest isn't a reward, it's a requirement. Mental wellness thrives when we recognize rest as a core part of productivity. Establish routines that include sleep, breaks, and time away from screens.

3. Build peer support networks

Community is one of the strongest protective factors for mental health. Whether it's a study group that values balance, a club that creates space for vulnerability, or just a friend who checks in weekly, having people who understand and care makes all the difference.

4. Redefine success

In a culture of mental wellness, success isn't measured only by marks or accolades. It's about growth, effort, self-awareness, and resilience. When you start to value these things, you relieve the pressure to be perfect and open the door to deeper learning and authentic achievement.

Celebrate progress over perfection. Learn to rest without guilt. And remember that success can include saying no, setting boundaries, or asking for help.

5. Leading by example

You don't need a leadership title to shape culture. Every student has influence through how you speak, how you treat others, and how you take care of yourself. Leading by example shows that wellness is a strength, not a weakness.

When you protect your boundaries, talk openly about challenges, or support a peer in need, you help create a safer and more supportive environment for everyone.



Final thoughts

Mental wellness isn't a trend. It's a long-term commitment to healthier, more sustainable ways of living and learning. As students, you have the opportunity to shape that culture every day: in your conversations, study groups, community and everywhere.

The goal isn't to eliminate stress or sadness. It's to create a culture where those feelings can exist without shame and where every student knows they're not alone.

Start where you are. Check in with yourself. Reach out to someone. Share a resource. Rest when you need to. Speak kindly to others and to yourself.

“Self-care is how you take your power back.”
- Lalah Delia

Counselling and Career Development Services

Reach out to the Directorate: Counselling and Career Development for further support.

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