

# Fact sheet 2

## Top Ten Tips for Supporting Mental Health in the Classroom

In Australia, 1 in 5 people will experience a mental health condition every year. This includes a wide range of conditions – such as schizophrenia, depression, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), eating disorders, substance use disorders and anxiety – which affect people in many different ways. Mental health conditions typically develop in mid to late adolescence, and young people aged 18-24 experience higher rates of mental illness than any other age group and being a university student also increases the risk of mental ill health. This affects students in a number of ways: increase in anxiety and stress, difficulties in concentration and memory lapses.

- 1. Communication and Preparation** Create a safe and comfortable environment in which students with mental health conditions feel able to approach you about their accessibility requirements by creating an environment where mental health is spoken about openly and sensitively.
- 2. Language** Be aware of appropriate language and avoid stereotypes associated with mental health conditions. [Read more](#) about language and stigma.
- 3. Resources** Get familiar with the accessibility resources and supports available to students and yourselves. Check out the Accessibility Support at UTS Fact Sheet.

4. **Provide Content Warnings** If distressing content is being covered (such as death, sexual assault or abuse) make students aware of what is coming and provide enough time for them to prepare themselves, or opt out.
5. **Assessment** Be aware that students with mental illness might find it difficult to meet standardised assessment requirements. Let your students know at the beginning of the semester that they should contact you about any concerns regarding due dates and the structure or format of assessments.
6. **Participation** Recognise that mental health conditions can make participation difficult and try to ensure students with different learning styles and abilities are encouraged to participate fully.
7. **Flexible Learning** Understand that mental health conditions are frequently episodic and may make it difficult for students to attend classes. Offering recordings of classes and online teaching materials can assist students who miss classes or have difficulties with concentration, anxiety or memory.
8. **Environment** Students may be hyper-aware of their environment; invite students to make suggestions about making the classroom environment more conducive to learning
9. **Support** If you notice a student struggling, encourage them to access support from UTS Counselling, Medical Service or Accessibility Service.
10. **Curricula** Understand that everyone may experience mental health challenges at some time; plan how you can include information about mental health in your curricula

If you become concerned about a person's mental state, you should encourage them to contact the Counselling Service for an appointment on 9514 1177.

If you have urgent concerns about a person's mental health or wellbeing, contact the Counselling Service & ask to speak to the Head of Counselling, or the counsellor on duty.