



Charles Sturt
University



Social Impact Project

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Innovative Industry-Led Co-design Sprints 2024

Contents

<u>Welcome</u>	4
<u>WIL Strategy Team</u>	7
<u>Intern Interview with Dr Claire Kelly</u>	8
<u>Project Mental Health and Wellbeing</u>	10
<u>Minds Matter: Embrace the Healing</u>	12
<u>Community and Industry Partners</u>	14
<u>Intern Interview with Emily Lawson</u>	16
<u>Intern Team</u>	18
<u>Mental Health Check-in</u>	20
<u>Sprint 1</u>	21
<u>Sprint 2</u>	22
<u>Sprint 3</u>	23
<u>Sprint 4</u>	24
<u>Sprint 5</u>	24
<u>Thank You</u>	27



Professor Janelle Wheat
Pro Vice-Chancellor
Division of Learning and Teaching
Charles Sturt University



My name is Janelle Wheat, Pro Vice-Chancellor at Charles Sturt University. I had the pleasure of welcoming students as they commenced the Charles Sturt Social Impact Project.

To create positive and lasting solutions, we must encourage innovation through projects that cultivate creativity and disrupt current ways of thinking and doing. Over the past few years the landscape of tertiary education has changed. While at times this has been extremely challenging, these changes provide opportunities and are key drivers for our students and community and industry partners to collaborate and co-design solutions to key social justice areas that affect our community.

I would like to congratulate and thank our students and our partners on the highly successful virtual Social Impact Project innovation sprint series that has facilitated the translation of creative ideas into actionable solutions in line with our Charles Sturt values and our ethos Yindyamarra Winhanganha which is, *'The wisdom of respectfully knowing how to live well in a world worth living in'*.

I would also like to thank Dr Faith Valencia-Forrester, the Academic Lead for work-integrated learning and Dr Noelia Roman, the work-integrated learning coordinator, and the WIL Strategy Team for their innovative practices, resilience, and collegiality in visioning these projects and seeing them through to successful completion; this has been a significant and rewarding undertaking.

Lloyd Dolan
Academic Lead, First Nations (Curriculum)
Division of Learning and Teaching
Charles Sturt University



Yuwindhu Lloyd Dolan, gadang, ngarangdhuray, maliyan, girawaa

Guwaymbanhadhu nginyalgir nginha ngan.girra

Ngadhu gulbarra ngurumbang.galang-dhi Wiradjuri mayiny

Baladhu yindyamalngidyal birrandhi mayiny maradhalbu, yaalabu, girrabu

Ngianhiguna gulbarra mayinyguwal-bu ngurumbang.galang-bu ngunggilanha winha-ngidyal murunha dhulu-biny.mubang

Ngianhi wirrimbirra wii-gunhal-birra

(Acknowledgment in Wiradjuri language)

Welcome everybody. My name's Lloyd Dolan.

I want to pay my respects to and acknowledge our elders past, present, and also emerging.

I also acknowledge all the different nations and the lands that we may be coming from.

As we come together today to exchange learning and knowledge. One of our challenges is how do we listen to hear, and not listen to respond or answer as part of this process.

Thank you.



Dr Faith Valencia-Forrester

Designer and Developer, Social Impact Project

Division of Learning and Teaching



Dr Noelia Roman

Academic Coordinator, Social Impact Projects

Division of Learning and Teaching

Our vision for these projects was to make a positive social change while giving students valuable work experience as they develop employability skills and provide a service to their communities.

These inclusive and equitable projects are defined by collaboration, creativity, flexible agility, solution-focused design and critical thinking. We think we have been able to evidence this through the student interns, Charles Sturt University, and our community partners, collaborating on solutions for positive social change.

In 2024, our student interns were given three key challenges facing policy makers and communities here in Australia across our projects. Homelessness, Environmental Sustainability, Mental Health and Wellbeing, all intersect and interconnect. These are issues that are misunderstood, under-supported and in urgent need of addressing.

These interns are going to graduate with valuable experience, a professional network, and importantly a deeper insight and understanding of complex social issues and the need for change. We are sure the benefits of participating in these internships will last long into the interns professional careers.

The feedback from the students about their experience has been overwhelmingly positive. We attribute the success of these projects to the team of people working on these sprints.

A huge thanks to our community and industry partners as co-designers who have been enthusiastic and supportive, wanting to be involved in these sprints. Their attitude and commitment to supporting the student interns has made all the difference to the success of these projects. They are equally passionate about making positive social change.

We are really proud of what our student interns participating in the Social Impact Projects at Charles Sturt University have achieved. We are proud of how they have engaged with the issues and become so passionate about doing what they can to address these important social justice issues. We know they will continue to work across disciplines towards solutions to these complex social issues.



Dr Faith Valencia-Forrester

Academic Lead



Dr Noelia Roman

WIL Coordinator



Kirsty Munn

Project Officer



Sabrina Forlin

Partnerships Officer



Rebecca Hambilton

Communications Officer



Leonie Summersby

Finance Liaison



Michelle Apps

Data Systems Officer



Mavis Jenkins

Project Officer

Intern Interview with Dr Claire Kelly

Senior Advisor, Research Translation and Impact at Mental Health First Aid

1. Can you tell us about your current role?

My role is Senior Advisor, Research Translation and Impact. My main responsibilities are around taking the research that we, our partners, and others have done around mental health literacy and mental health first aid skills, and making them understandable and useful to the public. I work with researchers and our curriculum team as well as talking with external stakeholders and the media. I help to create the materials that we use to train people to support each other here in Australia and all around the world.

2. Could you share a little about your current role and what led you to this role?

I have been with Mental Health First Aid for a very long time, helping the founders Betty Kitchener and Tony Jorm as a research assistant back in 2001. Then while I worked on my PhD, I became an instructor. Since then I have done research on mental health first aid guidelines, written manuals, trained hundreds of instructors, taken the program to partners around the world and most importantly to me I have made an impact. I can't really say what led me to this role specifically, because it's an evolution, but what led me to the work was the realisation that it was work that would have an immediate impact.

3. What does mental health and wellbeing mean to you personally?

I have had mental health problems for all of my life, and so have some of my family and friends. It's life on hard mode, and it doesn't have to be. No one wants people they care about to feel terrible and struggle daily, but they will put up with it themselves, because mental illness tells you that you don't deserve better, and you can't do anything about it. You do, and you can. I've had a lot of therapy and I use medication to manage a lot of my symptoms and I'm not embarrassed or conflicted about it.

4. What are some of the key mental health issues you and your team are noticing among university students?

Lots of depression and anxiety, of course. Young adulthood is the most common age for substance use problems. But young people now are using less alcohol and other drugs than previous generations, which is great to see. I think there is so much loneliness now. People struggle to connect and it's harder since the pandemic. And of course, everything is so expensive. How people are supposed to work enough to live but still leave enough time to do well in their tertiary studies and still see friends, and have time for rest and fun, I don't know.



5. Can you share an example of a successful initiative developed towards university aged students?

We recently teamed up with the Medical Deans to roll out a tailored version of our Tertiary Students' Mental Health First Aid blended course for medical and other health professions students. It's already been a great success. It's much more likely that someone will seek help and make changes if someone they believe cares about them suggests it, so it's a really great approach. Incorporating the experiences and views of health students into the materials has been great, and really brings it to life. It's still too early for us to release research findings, but keep an eye out.

6. What advice would you give to new advocates looking to make a difference in the mental health and wellbeing space?

First: Don't reinvent the wheel. That's not to say that everything has already been done, but it's a crowded space with insufficient funding, and you are more likely to have an impact by supporting something that is already working, and developing from there. Meet people, listen out for those who are excited by the same things you are. Make friends, help each other out, bounce ideas around — it's rewarding work, but it's hard and sometimes thankless, and having people you connect with around will make it easier.

Second: If you have a specific goal in mind, that's great; but don't be afraid to reevaluate it. I thought I would be an academic. Research and lecturing. When I realised that wasn't enough, I felt like I had to abandon that path, but no, I didn't. I have an unusual role that I love, I know what I need to thrive, and I wouldn't have found my place in this world without taking opportunities whenever they felt right. If something makes your heart beat faster that's a sign to have a really close look at it.

Project Mental Health and Wellbeing



Vision

Our vision for this Social Impact Project was to educate students about mental health, including its prevalence, various mental illnesses, and the available support services at Charles Sturt University.

We wanted to highlight the different stages of the student journey within our modules. We focused on new students transitioning to university life, the challenges faced during social integration (represented by the “Welcome” phase), understanding the challenges leading up to and during work integrated learning, and the heightened stress experienced during exams, ensuring that relevant resources and support mechanisms are accessible throughout their academic experience.

Mission

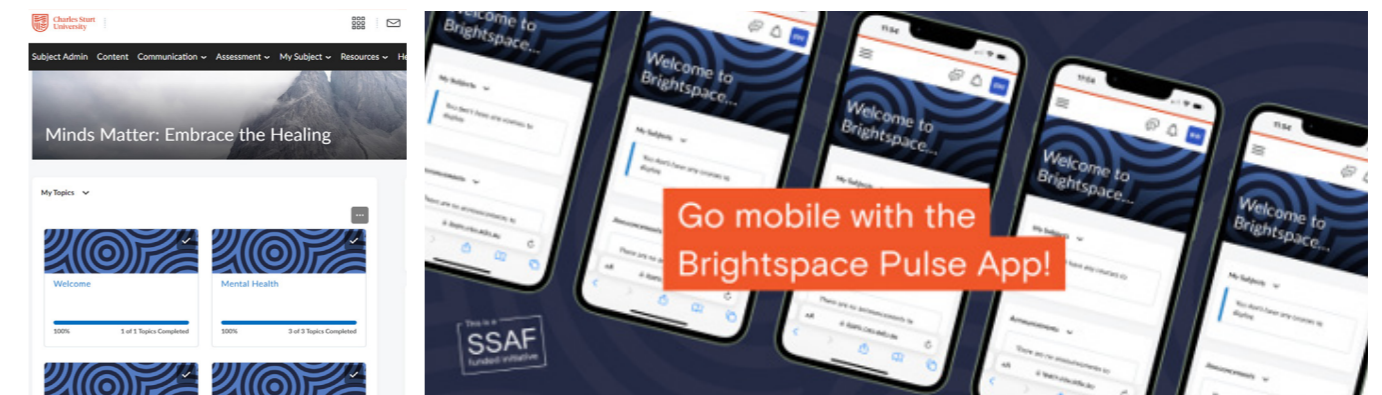
Charles Sturt University currently offers multiple platforms and services for students. We identified that many students are unaware of these services or how to access them. By creating a mental health module, we aim to put all of this information and place it in one easily accessible location.

Values

Our values are centered on providing mental health and wellbeing guidance in a safe, understanding, sensitive environment, using empathy and ethical principles. In our work, we value personal experiences, collaboration with external institutions, integrity, and courage.

Project Overview

Our project	Our project’s goal is to create a mental health support module within Brightspace, our Learning Management System (LMS), for students to access, outlining key information regarding mental health, including its definition, different types of mental illness and available support services. This module will also be easily accessible via the student app, PULSE.
Our audience	<p>Our target audience for this project includes all existing and future Charles Sturt students, both online and on campus. Charles Sturt students represent a diverse group of people that can greatly benefit from our mental health module.</p> <p>To connect with our target audience, we plan to develop an accessible mental health module located within the university learning platform, that offers valuable information on understanding mental health, seeking support, and practical tips for navigating challenges while at university.</p> <p>Engaging these future professionals is crucial for the project’s success.</p>
Our goal	Our goal is to improve students’ mental health by educating them, about various types of mental illnesses, highlighting the prevalence of these conditions, informing them about available support services, and offering tips and strategies to help cope with challenges such as stress and isolation.



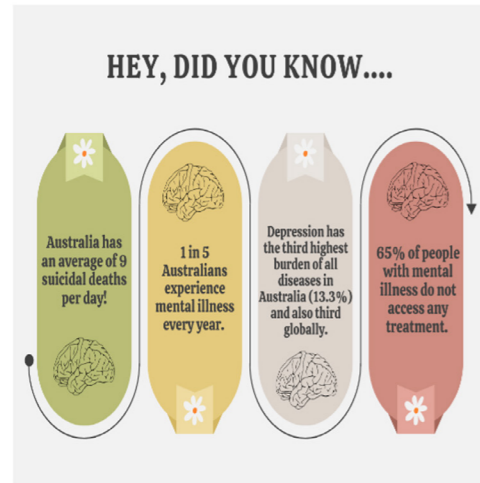
Minds Matter: Embrace the Healing

Online Mental Health Support Student Module in Brightspace*

* Brightspace is Charles Sturt University's Learning Management System (LMS)

What is mental health

Mental health encompasses our emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. It influences our thoughts, feelings, and actions, and plays a crucial role in how we cope with stress, interact with others, and make decisions.



Mental health is significant throughout all stages of life, from childhood and adolescence to adulthood. It's important to take care of your mental health and wellbeing and look out for those around you as well.

(Data source for image <https://www.aihw.gov.au/>)

Types of mental health disorders

Mental health disorders are classified based on clinical significance. Below is a list of some of the disorders with some basic information.

Select each item to learn more.

Anxiety

What is anxiety?
Anxiety is a natural human response to stress, characterised by feelings of worry, nervousness, or fear about an event or situation that is perceived as threatening or challenging.

Depression

Eating Disorders

Bipolar Disorder

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

Sleep Wake Disorders

What is self-care?

Self-care involves engaging in activities that maintain our work-life balance, offer stress relief, and promote overall well-being. It has the greatest positive impact on our well-being when integrated into our daily routines.

In addition to maintaining healthy sleep habits, consuming a balanced diet, and engaging in regular exercise, research has demonstrated the significance of practicing mindfulness in our daily lives.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness involves paying full attention to your surroundings and thoughts in a purposeful, open-minded, and non-judgmental manner. It is a practice that supports mental and emotional well-being.

Research indicates that practicing mindfulness can help us understand and manage our challenging emotions, thereby increasing our resilience to potential mental health difficulties.



Sleep

The relationship between mental health and sleep is bidirectional, meaning that they affect each other in both cause and effect. Poor mental health, including conditions like depression, anxiety, and stress, can lead to sleep disturbances such as insomnia or disrupted sleep patterns. Conversely, chronic sleep problems can worsen mental health issues and increase the risk of developing mood disorders.

Quality sleep is crucial for emotional regulation, cognitive function, and overall psychological well-being. Addressing sleep problems and prioritising good sleep hygiene can be a vital for managing and improving mental health, while mental health treatment can help alleviate sleep-related issues, highlighting the interconnectedness of the two.



Nutrition

Nutrition plays a crucial role in mental health by influencing brain function and mood. A balanced diet rich in vitamins, minerals, and healthy fats supports cognitive processes and emotional stability, reducing the risk of mental health conditions.



Wellbeing and self-care ideas

Want to try new things? Try relaxing or focusing on different areas of your body. Why not choose something from the list below? It includes a wide range of activities you can do for yourself!

Select each item to learn more.

Physical

Mental

Social

Emotional

New students

Isolation and homesickness

Being a new student on campus or studying online can bring a sense of isolation.

Some reasons you might feel lonely or isolated may stem from what is happening in your life, especially if you've experienced major changes. These include:

- Living away from home for the first time
- Facing a language or cultural barrier or being away from your culture of origin
- Living alone or lacking close family around you
- Grieving for a friend, a spouse or your partner
- Going through a [separation, divorce or family breakup](#)
- Retiring from work, changing schools or jobs, or being unemployed

Other reasons to feel lonely or isolated include:

- Feeling unsure about your [sexuality](#)
- Feeling worried or [stressed](#)
- Being [bullied](#)
- Having a [mental health problem](#), such as [depression](#) or [anxiety](#)
- Having a [physical disability](#)

*you can click on the links above to go to external sites for more detailed support in these areas



Time management

As a new student, time management is crucial for succeeding in your studies and maintaining positive mental health and well-being. Here is a list that might be helpful:

- Prioritise tasks.
- Set daily goals.
- Create a study schedule.

Most importantly, look after yourself and take some breaks.

Below is a short (2.04min) video explaining how to effectively manage your time.



Weekly Study planner:

Writing down and seeing all your tasks in one specific area can help you manage your time effectively. Below is a Charles Sturt weekly study planner that we encourage you to download and utilise.



[Click here to download a Study Planner](#)

First Nations

Building a supportive network and a strong sense of culture while navigating academic life is key to success. By connecting to these deep roots and sharing experiences, you can access valuable resources and emotional support for your well-being throughout your educational journey.

1. [First Nations Students empowerment programs](#)

Study, exams and assignment stress

Studying, exams and assignments can be significant trigger for stress and anxiety for new students. The university has many teams that can support you during these high stress periods. Below are a few short videos on exam study tips and how to conquer exam stress.

These short videos provide helpful tips and hints for managing exam stress and effective study strategies.



Working on your mental and emotional health while studying

It's very important to stay mentally and emotionally healthy while you are studying so that you have the best learning experience, making the most of your abilities. Click below to view some strategies you can try to help you during peak study times:

Select each item to learn more.

Social strategies

Physical strategies

Emotional strategies

Cognitive strategies

Motivation strategies

Work integrated learning

Work integrated learning can take different shapes and may look different between courses. It may be referred to as:

- Work Integrated Learning
- Workplace Learning
- Clinical placement
- Internship
- Placement

If you're required to undertake work integrated learning as part of your studies, you'll need to plan ahead.

Workplace learning can vary in length, and you may be required to travel further than you do to attend classes or your job. You might also be away from family and friends or need to reduce the amount of paid work you usually do. Check your course site, course handbook, and subject outlines to find out if you are required to undertake workplace learning.

Tips for budgeting during work integrated learning

Questions to ask yourself when planning ahead:

- Will I need to buy a uniform or equipment?
- Will I need to pay for vaccinations or first aid training?
- How far will I need to travel, and how much will this cost?
- Will I need to take leave or cut back my hours of paid work?
- What impact will this have on my budget?
- How much do I need to save or budget for during this period?
- Am I entitled to any financial support to help cover these costs?

Where can you get help with costs?

There are scholarships available to students specifically for work integrated learning activities. You may be eligible to apply for these.

Some common scholarships include:

- [NPILF Career Ready Grant](#)
- [Professional Placement Equity Grant](#)
- [CSU give - Work Placement Scholarship](#)

Some other areas where you may ask for help include:

- Speak with your subject coordinator to find out if there is any financial assistance available from your school or faculty.
- If you are living in residences and need to attend placement in another location, you can [apply for a rent reduction](#) for the period you are away.

Community and Industry Partners



Karen Bates



Executive Director, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Programs

Mental Health First Aid International

Karen is a proud Barkindji woman, originally from the far west of NSW. Karen has over 25 years' experience working across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and social and emotional wellbeing in both clinical, community and education settings.



Jules Jamieson



Community Engagement Officer

headspace, Port Macquarie

Jules is a yoga teacher and passionate mental health advocate and has called Port Macquarie home for the past 17 years.

Jules's vibrant personality, compassion and care for others is showcased in her daily life as Head of Community Engagement at headspace Port Macquarie (Youth Mental Health Foundation), Co-Founder for community group Port Macquarie Women Connect and Chair of the Hasting's Community Drug Action Team (HCDAT). Between yoga teaching, youth and community work Jules looks after her own mental health by doing the things she loves most- bush walking, yoga and riding her Vespa.



Dr Claire Kelly



Senior Advisor in Research Translation and Impact

Mental Health First Aid

Claire has over twenty years of experience with Mental Health First Aid, in a variety of roles across research, curriculum, training and program development, in Australia and around the world. She has lived experience of mental illness, which heavily informs her work.

“Wonderful to see young people really proactive and really caring about their communities. And honestly it's just a privilege to be working with them, it was so amazing.”

- Emily Lawson, Headspace



Lizz Hills



Environmental Educator and Counsellor

Trek2Reconnect

Lizz is a psychotherapist and environmental educator who connects people with nature. Known for the Trek2Reconnect—a 6000-kilometer walk across Australia in 2023—she addresses mental health and environmental issues through community engagement. Her work has earned her the Citizen of the Year Award in 2024 and the CSIRO Future Shapers Award in 2023. Featured on ABC TV's "I Was Actually There - Boxing Day Tsunami," Lizz's ongoing advocacy and research in Ecological Grief highlight her dedication to bridging mental health and ecological awareness.



Emily Lawson



Community Engagement Officer

headspace, Port Macquarie

Emily works to improve young people's wellbeing through mental health education and awareness, social activities, and community partnerships. A secondary teacher by trade, Emily studied at Newcastle University where she earned a Bachelor of Music. Having the opportunity to extend her music studies in London she then completed a Master of Education at Deakin University and began her teaching career. She is also a passionate advocate for girl's access to education, being a member of the global advocate organisation, Graduate Women International (GWI). In 2019, Emily wrote the GWI anthem and was invited as an honorary delegate to perform at the 100th GWI Forum in Geneva, Switzerland. Seeking a change in professional scenery, Emily entered the youth mental health space, studying counselling before taking on her role with headspace. Working and being a performing artist in this space, Emily co-founded the Hive Mind Collective, a music and art organisation focused on providing all ages gigs in Port Macquarie where she has been able to combine her love of music and event management with her outreach work.

Intern Interview with Emily Lawson

Community Engagement Officer at Headspace Port Macquarie

1. Can you tell us about your current role?

I work as the Community Engagement Officer at Headspace Port Macquarie. Within this role I work with community organisations, schools, and universities to promote the mental health and wellbeing of young people and their families.

2. Could you share a little about your current role and what led you to this role?

Community Engagement aims to raise awareness of youth mental health and normalise mental health challenges. I inform the community about Headspace services and make young people feel comfortable seeking help. Previously a high school teacher, I was interested in supporting youth wellbeing. I realised that good mental health is essential for learning and feeling part of a community. After studying Counselling, I transferred my skills to Headspace, where I run psychoeducation workshops, host social events, and speak to organisations, community groups, and the media about youth mental health trends. I also run the Youth Gambling Program, addressing issues and the rise of youth gambling. I attend schools, tertiary settings, and venues, and discussing how to minimise harm around youth and family gambling. My role is to support young people to thrive by providing education and resources to the community.

3. What does mental health and wellbeing mean to you personally?

Growing up, mental health wasn't discussed in school or the community. Although young people today have more language to talk about it, it's still a tough topic to address and seek help for. Today's youth face unique challenges from social media, bullying, and perfectionism, which affect their self-image. The constant exposure to harmful content and online issues impacts their mental health, learning, and connections. I envision a world where young people can thrive, feel connected, and explore the world comfortably as themselves.

4. What are some of the key mental health issues you and your team are noticing among university students?

Key mental health issues we are currently seeing among youth include anxiety, depression, and stress from environmental concerns, study pressure, cost of living, and isolation due to university relocation. Rising issues also include body image problems, disordered eating, self-harm, domestic violence, sexual assaults, and substance misuse. These challenges are often worsened by the pressures of moving to a new town and navigating adulthood alone. In Port Macquarie, the housing and cost-of-living crisis significantly hinders student success.



5. Can you share an example of a successful initiative developed towards university aged students?

The Headspace Youth Reference Group wanted to address this issue commonly faced by youth of isolation, by hosting free social trivia nights. These events were alcohol, drug and gambling free and open to all students from Charles Sturt, TAFE and senior high school. They were able to get community sponsorship for transport and prizes where the group hosted three separate sold out nights. Young people were able to connect with each other in a fun and safe space boosting the overall moods of students especially those who are currently facing exam season. Social initiatives like these are crucial for students, especially those in residence, to make connections without focusing on alcohol or drugs. We have seen a decline in social activities on campus after Covid-19 that are meaningful and interesting for the students where they feel a sense of community, so we are very proud of this one!

6. What advice would you give to new advocates looking to make a difference in the mental health and wellbeing space?

Ok – there are lots of things you can do! Your voice matters, no matter how small the issue seems. If you're struggling, others likely are too. Find like-minded people to create change together or join groups like the Headspace Youth Reference Group, Council Youth Advisory Group, or Student Representative Committees (SRC). These groups aim to improve youth mental health and support. On campus, talk to staff, fill out feedback surveys, email the Director, and follow up persistently. Show that your concerns matter. Use your strengths to rally others and highlight student issues. Most organisations want to hear from young people, so share your experiences. You can also approach local government members with your concerns. Change can be slow, especially in large organisations, but it's possible. Just because it hasn't been done before doesn't mean it can't be done.

Intern Team

“Great work teams – stand tall and be proud. Thank you to all at Charles Sturt University and our awesome Industry Partners who made this possible. WOW.

- Kylie Gumleton, Course Director, Charles Sturt University



Kimberley Brunner
Team Leader

I am completing the Bachelor of Accounting part-time via distance learning. I was intrigued by the Mental Health Social Impact Project as a way to gain a better understanding of mental health. I often hear about people's struggles, and it seems that mental health issues are on the rise while awareness is increasing, which is great. However, there still appears to be a lack of services or awareness about the available resources. As the team leader of this project, I had the opportunity to collaborate with other students from diverse degree backgrounds, as well as learn from advisors in various fields. This project has raised my awareness of mental health and the impact that cultural backgrounds can have on perceptions of mental health and self-care.



Olivia McLaren
Stakeholder Management

I am completing a Bachelor of Arts with a Major in Humanities Pathway to Teaching, full-time externally, and intend to complete a Master in Teaching – Primary to become a primary school teacher. I chose this subject because I see it as a way to increase my knowledge to help and support students regarding their mental health and wellbeing. Mental health is a complex issue to discuss, and this project has helped normalise the need for these difficult conversations to occur more frequently. This project has personally introduced me to new perspectives and ideas around mental health and wellbeing that can be applied consistently in everyday life and workplace settings. The professional relationships and feedback from industry partners have been crucial throughout the design process of our final product.



Brianna Winner
Media, Marketing and
Communications

Hi, my name is Brianna! I'm currently an online student pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree while working as a graphic designer. I also oversee media, marketing, and communications for our mental health project, where I played a key role in shaping our brand's voice and visual identity. By developing engaging content and innovative marketing strategies, I've helped elevate our outreach and connection to our audience. This project holds particular significance for me, as I believe that mental wellbeing is essential for creativity and overall happiness. Through my contribution, I aim to raise awareness and positively contribute to discussions surrounding mental health, utilising my design skills to effectively communicate these vital messages.



Anita Thakuri
Research and Policy

I am currently in my second year of study, completing a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Human Service. Coming from an international background where mental health issues are not often discussed, I joined this project to learn more about mental health and the issues related to mental health problems. Through this learning process, I have come to understand that mental health affects how we think, feel, and behave, which in turn impacts our relationships, work, and overall wellbeing. Understanding mental health allows us to better recognise symptoms, eliminate stigma, and promote early intervention. The most important lesson I have learnt from this project is to ask for help and not hesitate to seek support, we are all in a learning process.

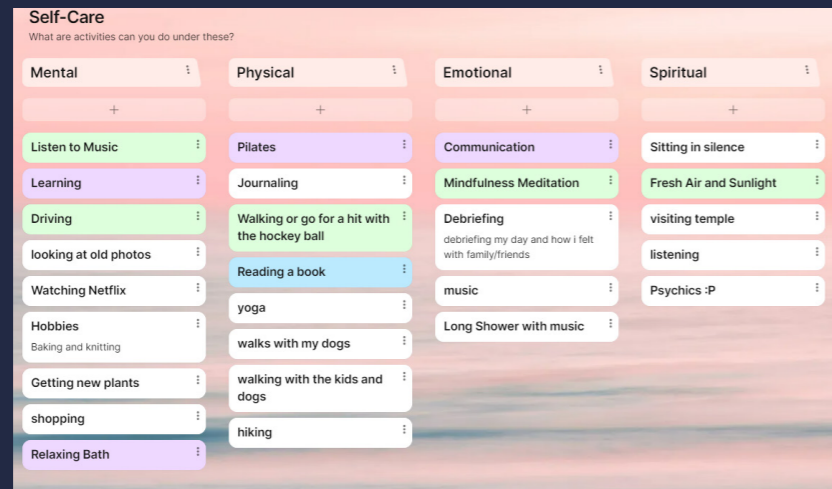


Carla Arden
Research and Budget

I am a part-time distance education student completing Bachelor of Accounting degree. and I live in Central West, NSW. I chose to participate in this Social Impact Project because I have a good understanding of the challenges of rural living while studying and how these challenges affect mental health and wellbeing. As the external information gatherer, I have the opportunity to engage with and create networks with wonderful organisations that provide valuable mental health and wellbeing services.

Mental Health Check-in

To enhance the delivery of the Social Impact Project Internships, we aimed to integrate sustainable and healthy work practices throughout the program. Interns were consistently encouraged to take breaks, stretch, stay hydrated, and reflect on their progress. Each sprint featured dedicated time for morning check-ins and afternoon mindfulness sessions. These sessions provided an opportunity to pause, learn about mental health literacy, and practice various self-care routines. Creating a safe space for student interns to reflect on the complex issues discussed during the sprints and reminding them of the available support services was crucial to the project's success.



“As a psychotherapist and environmental educator, I have shared mindfulness techniques with students and clients over the years, and many have reported feeling more relaxed, creative, and open after these sessions. Offering this kind of emotional space, particularly at the end of a student’s day spent in online learning, allows time for synthesis and processing. This time is essential not only for memory retention but also for fostering imagination and new ideas.

After sessions in which students were invited to participate in a gentle, self-guided framework, I received positive feedback, with many expressing that they genuinely enjoyed the experience. One student, part of a group I worked with more than once, shared that the sessions not only improved her wellbeing but also motivated her to commit to taking positive actions outside of the sessions for her mental health.

I’m thrilled to have supported our future leaders in developing essential self-care and wellbeing tools”.

- Lizz Hills, Trek2Reconnect

Sprint 1

Exploring diverse perspectives

Olivia McLaren

In sprint 1, the interns had a busy day as they navigated the challenges of technology, discussed who we are, and outlined the day’s schedule along with some basic internship requirements to prepare us for the work ahead.

During the second half of the morning session, the interns participated in a panel session where they were introduced to the Keynote Speaker and Industry Partners. The Keynote Speaker Amy-Ruth from the Black Dog Institute shared her personal journey of living with Bipolar Disorder.

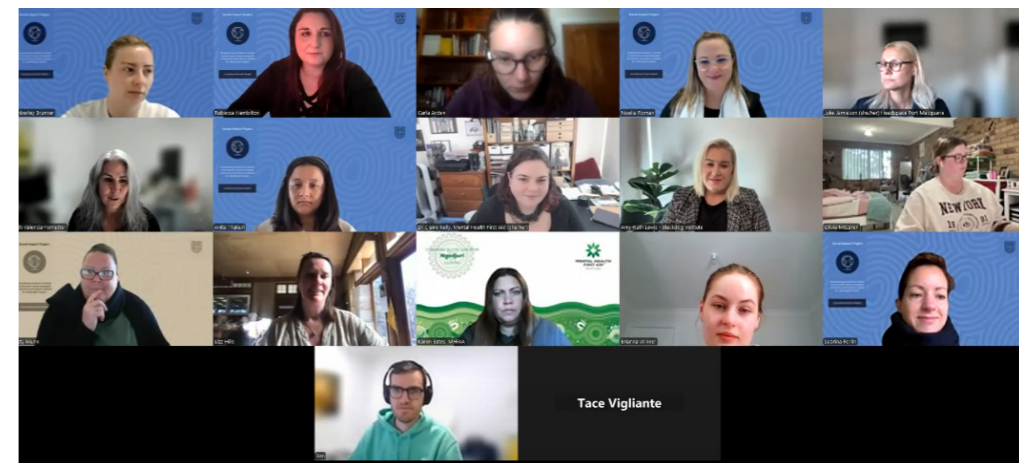
Following Amy-Ruth’s presentation, the students were introduced to the members on the Industry Panel, which included Julie Jamieson, Community Engagement Officer at Headspace; Lizz Hills, Environmental Educator and Speaker at Wild Mountains; Dr. Claire Kelly, Director of International Programs and Curriculum Developer at Mental Health First Aid; and Karen Bates, Executive Director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program at Mental Health First Aid.

Each panelist took time to introduce themselves and explain their role in relation to the complex topic of Mental Health.

Throughout the panel session, the students were encouraged to take individual notes on what they considered were key trends, and any information they believed could spark further conversation about mental health and wellbeing with their peers.

At the conclusion of the session, students were given the opportunity to ask questions they had gathered during the discussion. The discussion was very in-depth with the industry partners and the keynote speaker, further deepening the discussion around mental health and wellbeing.

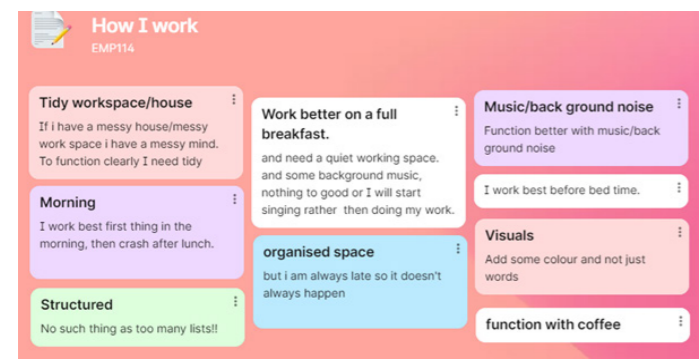
After the panel session, the students gathered for a discussion to share their immediate thoughts, feelings and opinions on the information presented. A key point of discussion was Amy-Ruth’s personal story, which resonated deeply with the group. The students collectively agreed on the importance of sharing lived experiences from those who have faced mental health and wellbeing challenges, like Amy-Ruth, was a powerful way to foster understanding and connection.



The interns then took time to get to know each other within the group and discussed how they plan to work together. Using Padlet, they individually shared their preferred working styles, highlighting what does and doesn't work for their learning preferences. Following this discussion, the students were prompted to list available resources for use throughout the project and its development phases. Students collaboratively created a rough to-do list of tasks considered necessary for the project's progress.

The second half of the afternoon session involved a more in-depth discussion among the students about the information presented during the panel session. The main points of conversation in this brainstorming session were the lack of family support and acceptance that the keynote speaker, Amy-Ruth, had experienced, along with the personal and financial hurdles she ultimately had to overcome on her own.

Seeking help wasn't cheap, and this became a significant issue within the group. Feedback from Emily Lawson, the Community Engagement Officer at Headspace, became an important consideration when discussing potential project ideas.



The flexibility and the care given that when every single time industry partners joined the interns, they were so open to learn. Every time I said something one week, the next week it was just completed and thought about even more.

- Emily Lawson, Headspace

She informed the internship team that the top three reasons students seek support from Headspace services are domestic violence, eating disorders, and depression and anxiety related struggles.

This reflection was collaboratively compiled in the OneNote notebook, allowing everyone to contribute for future discussion.

The internship team then engaged in extensive brainstorming and issue identification, where they discovered a recurring point of discussion: the lack of education and awareness surrounding mental health and wellbeing in day-to-day life.

The ideas led the group to collaborate, unpack the issue, and document their thoughts and ideas to help shape what the project could look like.

We ended our day with a mindfulness session ran by our WIL Coordinator, Noelia Roman.

Sprint 2

Working with complexity, embracing diversity

Anita Thakuri

The morning session focused on the design frameworks we used to develop the sprints.

We discussed Wise Action Framework and compared it based on:

- Best practice
- First Nations knowledge-sharing methods
- Universal Design for Learning

We then moved on to discussing the Cynefin Framework and the Breath Method, with a focus on the co-design process.

After the morning session, we had a group discussion about the project, early intervention support, and links related to wellbeing support. This includes quiz questions and scoring guides, as well as referrals to professional support members. The Calming Platform offers a space for individuals struggling to calm down using various methods, such as music, meditation, books, and paint by numbers.

Students identified that the module could be integrated into the existing PULSE app utilised by students at the university.

After our morning session, we were joined by our guest speaker, Dr. Hugh Breakey, Senior Research Fellow in Moral Philosophy at Griffith University's Institute for Ethics, Governance, and Law. In this session, we focused on ethics, its perspective, and the importance of exploring the ethical thinking process we should employ when working on our project.

Dr Hugh emphasised that there is no one correct ethical process, and it is easy for things to go wrong, even if people try to do the right thing. Dr Hugh advised that we need to be aware of this.

He also said that we should consider five key aspects when working on projects: awareness, fact-finding, judgment, action and review. We gained a deeper understanding of how crucial it is to consider ethical aspects that promote respect, justice and integrity. We explored several ethical theories and their various areas of ethical significance. Dr. Hugh was very pleased with our team's app design for students and suggested we make it both realistic and timely.

After our break, our team began the process of designing the module. As a group, we discussed ideas, issues, and focal points related to mental health to incorporate into our project.

We ended our day with a mindfulness session ran by our WIL Coordinator, Noelia Roman.

The module looks amazing. There is something to be said for not reinventing the wheel, but to make sure people know that you already have a wheel. You want it to be right there in front them rather than them having to look for it.

- Dr Claire Kelly, Mental Health First Aid

Sprint 3

Co-design in action

Brianna Winner

Our team started the day by designing the Wiser Action Canvas and establishing the foundation for our mental health module project. After our discussion, we had a productive meeting with Emily Lawson, the Community Engagement Officer at Headspace, where we pitched our idea and explored past challenges, emphasising the necessity for a mandatory mental health module at Charles Sturt.

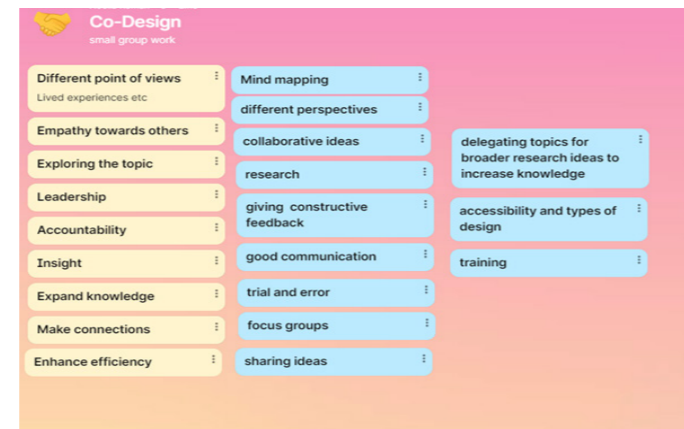
Our key strategies included:

- Relocating information about support services to a designated tab on Brightspace for easier access.
- Creating an open communications platform and developing a comprehensive marketing plan to promote awareness.
- We also examined potential challenges such as budget constraints.

Later in the day, we spoke with Melinda Green, Manager of Student Counselling at Charles Sturt, about incorporating homesickness and support network for students who have moved away from home.

By the end of the day, our team had established the foundation for the mental health module.

We ended our day with a mindfulness session ran by our WIL Coordinator, Noelia Roman.



Sprint 4

Co-design in action

Kimberley Brunner & Anita Thakuri

We broke down all ideas into sections on how we would like the information to be presented, ensuring it is user-friendly and not overwhelming.

We divided the content into six modules:

- Module 1: Introduction and Welcome
- Module 2: Mental Health
- Module 3: Wellbeing
- Module 4: Available services (Charles Sturt internal for all students, including distance students)
- Module 5: Student Journey
- Module 6: Directory

In the first hour of the session, our team leader divided the work among each team member. As a group, we began working on sample designs for each section to present to Emily Lawson, the Community Engagement Officer at Headspace. At 10am, we joined a meeting with Emily and shared our project designs. Emily was pleased with our work and suggested adding topics such as isolation, new community, cultural safety, burnout etc.

After our session with Emily, we gathered different ideas and suggestions related to the project and began collecting data and resources

We ended our day with a mindfulness session ran by Lizz Hills, Environmental Educator and Counsellor at Trek2Reconnect.

Sprint 5

Ready for impact

Brianna Winner

We started the day by viewing the module where our information had been built by Noelia Roman. We had to refine the module, this involves several key steps to enhance its clarity and effectiveness. In the last sprint, we refined our module by proofreading the content to identify and correct any spelling or grammatical errors, ensuring a polished presentation.

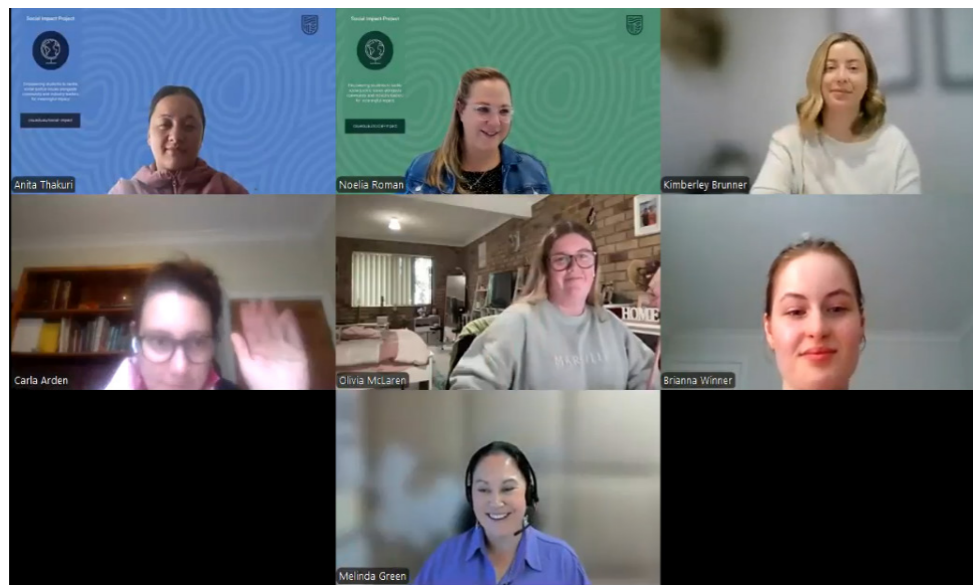
Next, we gathered comprehensive information relevant to the subject, which included sourcing research studies and educational resources. Additionally, compiling engaging multimedia content, such as videos, images, graphs, and data visualisations, to support and enhance our material.

Our team also considered re-organising the modules into tabs, allowing users to easily navigate between different sections, thereby improving user experience and accessibility to the information.

This structured approach facilitates a more interactive and informative learning experience.

During lunch, our team focused on finalising the module for our project report and preparing for the final PowerPoint presentation to our partners.

We ended our day with a mindfulness session ran by our WIL Coordinator, Noelia Roman.



A big thank you to the entire team for the love and attention you give to helping shape our future leaders, a joy to watch. Also, my gratitude for including me in this round of Social Impact Projects.

- Lizz Hills, Trek2Reconnect

Thank You

Project outcomes

The mental health module aims to be a comprehensive resource for students at Charles Sturt University, providing information that empowers them to better understand mental health issues and seek support when needed.

The module will feature interactive support services and recommendations to help manage mental health, enhance learning, and promote engagement. Additionally, it will include a directory of internal and external services and resources, catering specifically to the diverse needs of both campus-based and online students.

Project impact

This module is expected to foster a culture of mental health awareness and support within the university community, helping students feel less isolated during challenging times.

By facilitating access to crucial services and educational content, we aim to significantly improve overall student wellbeing, leading to enhanced academic performance and a reduction in mental health stigma across the campus.

Project recommendations

We propose that the module be adopted as a mandatory component of the Charles Sturt University curriculum, ensuring that all students, both online and on-campus, complete it as part of their academic journey.

By making this module compulsory, we believe it will not only enhance students' understanding of mental health but also cultivate a supportive environment where seeking help is normalised.

Research

To inform our project, we conducted thorough research into existing mental health resources and initiatives at Charles Sturt University, including consultations with key stakeholders such as Headspace and the Black Dog Institute.

We also engaged with students and industry professionals through forums and panels to gather insights on common mental health challenges in student life and effective support mechanisms. This multifaceted approach ensured that our module was well-rounded, evidence-based, and responsive to the needs of the student body.

Thank you to the following staff from Charles Sturt for their assistance throughout the project.



Rachel Cavallaro

Student Wellbeing Advisor
Division of Safety, Security and Wellbeing



Matthew Olsen

Digital Media Technologist
Division of Learning and Teaching



Melinda Green

Manager, Student Counselling
Division of Safety, Security and Wellbeing

Thank you to our guest lecturer, Dr. Hugh Breakey.



Senior Research Fellow in Moral Philosophy
Griffith University's Institute for Ethics, Governance, and Law
Hugh is Deputy Director and Senior Research Fellow in moral philosophy at Griffith University's Institute for Ethics, Governance and Law. He has extensive experience in the application of ethical, legal, and political philosophy to a wide array of challenging practical fields.

A final thank you to all the partners who participated and supported the student interns throughout the Social Impact Project: Mental Health and Wellbeing.



There are so many great things about this internship, learning from some great organisations and leaders, getting to know some peers from various courses and locations, and a sense of achievement that you have contributed and made an impact for the future students of Charles Sturt University.

- Kimberley Brunner, Team Leader, Mental Health and Wellbeing Project



1800 275 278 (free call within Australia)
+61 1800 275 278 (callers outside Australia)



csu.edu.au



insight.csu.edu.au



[charlessturtuni](https://www.facebook.com/charlessturtuni)



[charlessturtuni](https://www.instagram.com/charlessturtuni)



[charlessturtuni](https://www.tiktok.com/@charlessturtuni)



[charlessturtuni](https://www.youtube.com/charlessturtuni)



[charlessturtuni](https://twitter.com/charlessturtuni)



[CharlesSturtUniversity](https://www.linkedin.com/company/CharlesSturtUniversity)



**Charles Sturt
University**

© 2024 Charles Sturt University - TEQSA Provider Identification: PRV12018
(Australian University). CRICOS Provider: 00005F.