

92 The 10 wellness spheres to support student and staff health and wellbeing in a modern post 1992 university

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Research Domains

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Abstract

Wellness spheres are an established concept and used in business, industry, health and education designed to improve the wellbeing of the individual and society. The number can range from anything from five to ten. 'Poverty' can occur in each of them and happens when someone does not have the personal attributes and capabilities that help or sustain one in adverse circumstances which include knowledge, skills and experience.

Poverty can be reduced and mental health and wellbeing improved Through the provision of relevant and timely advice, support and guidance.

This paper will provide a rationale for why the specific 10 wellness spheres were adopted at UEL; how they map to the study life cycle and the University Mental Health Charter; and the practical and interactive 'one stop shop' versions for students and for staff that have been created to help them access information, advice and support that is in one place.

Full paper

When we discuss poverty in higher education, which is prevalent at the moment due to the cost of living crisis, financial poverty is often focused on and the impact it has on other areas such as accommodation, food and social activities.

However, 'poverty' can be experienced in many more areas that contribute to ones health and wellbeing. These areas are wellness spheres (also known as dimensions) that include for example, emotional, physical and social wellness. Poverty within these spheres can occur for a range of reasons including not having the resources due to background and life experiences, which is important for individuals, to navigate the wellness spheres successfully.

The Joseph Rowntree Trust define poverty when 'a person's resources are not sufficient to meet their minimum needs' (Joseph Rowntree Trust, 2014). There are many different definitions for what constitutes a resource but for simplicity, I will refer to them as personal attributes and capabilities that help or sustain one in adverse circumstances which include knowledge, skills and experience.

Poverty experienced across a range of spheres can impact on mental health and wellbeing. To maximise wellness and help reduce the poverty in higher education of students and staff, it is important to provide key advice, support and guidance to increase an individual's knowledge, skill and experience to help assist them succeed in all areas of their life.

Wellness spheres are an established concept and used in business, industry, health and education. They are designed to improve the wellbeing of the individual and society. The number of spheres can range from anything from five to ten. The common spheres incorporated into most models include emotional, environmental, financial and physical. They can also include spiritual and intellectual.

At the University of East London, using my Student Experience Transitions Model (Morgan 2011) that I developed 18 years ago, I have mapped the wellness spheres across the core areas of university life that students and staff engage in and that are part of the University's vision to help create wellness awareness amongst students, staff and graduates to help them maximise their potential and contribute to society (see Diagram 1). The wellness spheres reflect and are respectful of equality, inclusion and diversity in a multicultural community environment.

Diagram 1 10 Wellness Spheres



In universities, we produce a lot of helpful information, support and advice but it can often feel silo' d and overwhelming because there is so much and it can be hard to access. So a core aim at UEL in enabling students and staff to be able to access and engage with the key information, advice and support available in one place, was to create a practical and interactive one-stop-shop navigation page for the wellness spheres. Working with colleagues from across the institution, we populated each wellness sphere with core information. One was created for students and another for staff.

This model was part of our University Mental Health Charter submission, awarded in late 2022 by Students Minds and the spheres have also been mapped to the UMHC Themes. This model is incorporated in the Kickstarter, Pre-arrival and course welcome university events for new students, and reorientation and induction activities to remind students of what they need to consider in the upcoming year in order to stay well, fit and healthy. If we can explain clearly what wellness is, what the benefits are, and provide accessible information, it is easier to encourage students and colleagues to engage with it.

This presentation will provide a rationale for why the 10 wellness spheres were adopted at UEL; how they map to the study life cycle and the University Mental Health Charter; and the practical and interactive 'one stop shop' versions for students and for staff that has been created to help them access information, advice and support that is in one place.

References

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