



WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY

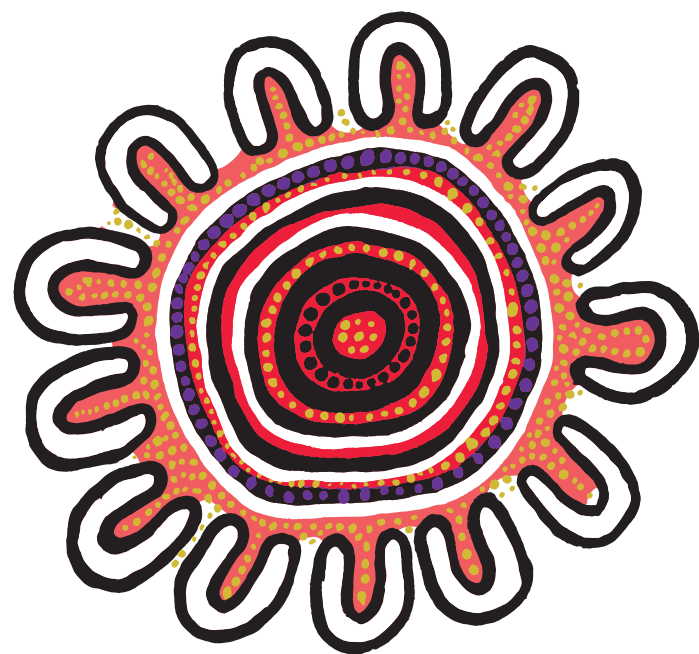


WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH **STRATEGY** *2022 – 2026*

Table of Contents



1	Acknowledgement of Country.....	4
2	Preamble / Background.....	5
3	Mission.....	6
4	Guiding Principles to Achieve Our Mission	6
5	Key Strategic Areas.....	7
	→ <i>Promotion</i>	8
	→ <i>Prevention</i>	8
	→ <i>Early Intervention</i>	8
	→ <i>Systemic Response</i>	9
6	Strategic Alignments.....	10
7	Addendum – <i>Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategic Directions Focus 2022 - 2026</i>	11



With respect for Aboriginal cultural protocol and out of recognition that its campuses occupy their traditional lands, Western Sydney University acknowledges the Darug, Eora, Dharawal (also referred to as Tharawal) and Wiradjuri peoples and thanks them for their support of its work in their lands (Greater Western Sydney and beyond).

Preamble / Background

Western Sydney University is a culturally and socially diverse health-promoting university. We promote health and wellbeing by providing a safe, supportive and healthy environment to enable all university community members to flourish.

As a health promoting university, this strategy promotes university-wide education, growth and change to generate learning and working environments that are safe, stimulating, satisfying and enjoyable. The Ottawa Charter (WHO, 1986) was influential in shifting health promotion away from problem-oriented individual interventions to a holistic approach.

Western Sydney University is grounded in a normalising philosophy of health and wellbeing and uses a dynamic and strengths-based support model that recognises and responds to distress and supports those with illnesses.

Western proudly celebrates this third revised version of the original Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy launched in 2012. The strategy seeks to build on previous strategies through an approach which embeds student and staff mental health and wellbeing responses across the whole university. Strong leadership, appropriate partnerships and a long-term commitment are needed to facilitate this unified approach to continuing innovation and evolving responses to student and staff mental health and wellbeing.

The 2022–2026 Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy identifies systemic opportunities where staff and students can co-create strategies and plans to:

- recognise the innate resilience of community members
- promote safety
- promote wellbeing
- prevent illness
- support those with illnesses
- respond appropriately when people are distressed

Health promoting universities and colleges infuse health into everyday operations, business practices and academic mandates. By doing so, health promoting universities and colleges enhance the success of our institutions; create campus cultures of compassion, wellbeing, equity and social justice; improve the health of the people who live, learn, work, play and love on our campuses; and strengthen the ecological, social and economic sustainability of our communities and wider society.

– Okanagan Charter: An International Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges (2015)

Mission

Our Strategy aims to maintain a mentally healthy university for our people, to enable successful learning and working.

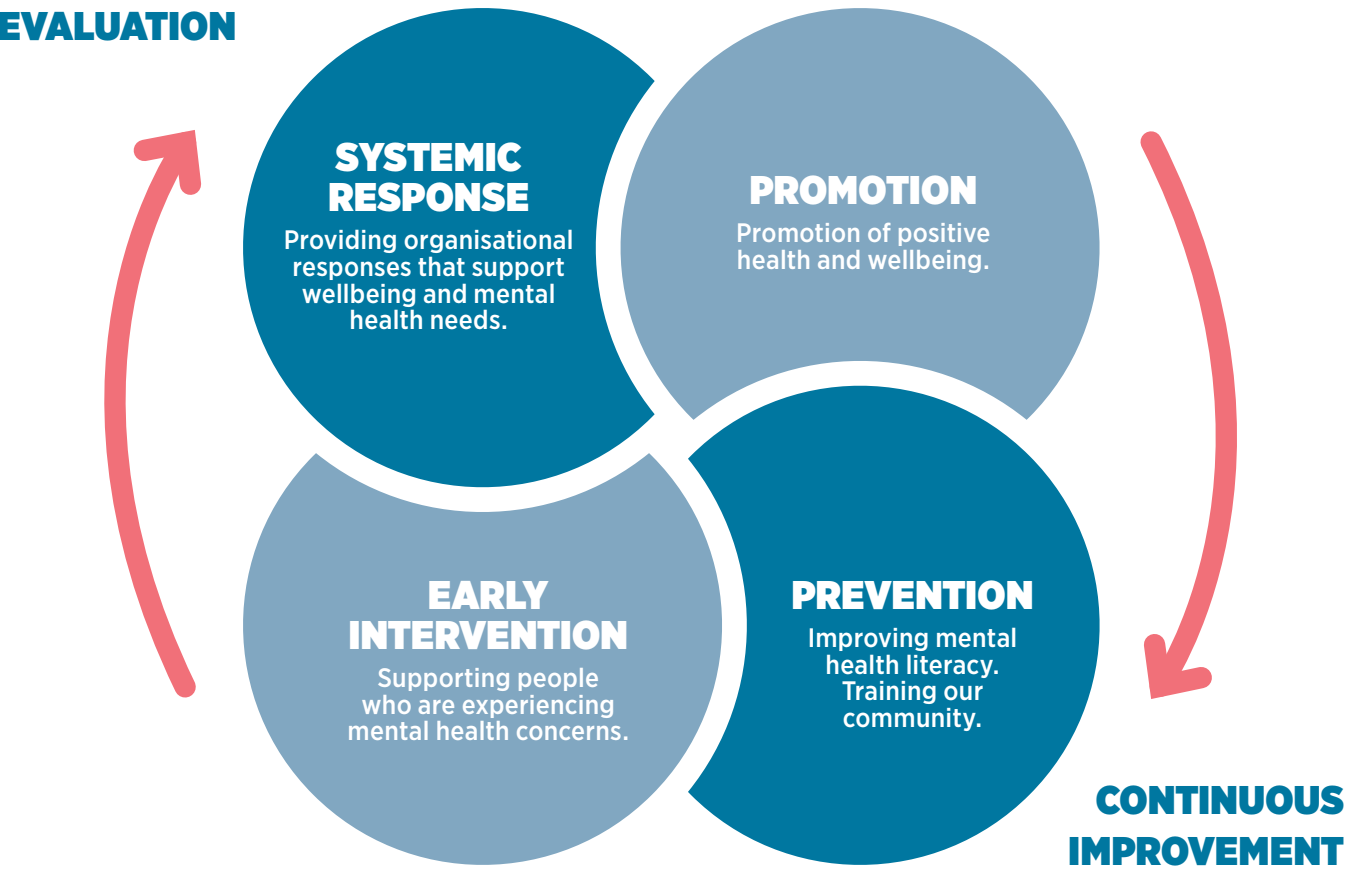
Guiding Principles to Achieve Our Mission

WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY (WMHS) 2022-2026:

- Adopts a whole-system approach to support individual and community capability to achieve the university's goals. The strategy aims to embed wellbeing and health in our organisational culture, policy and planning.
- Our strategy recognises our staff and students - that is, our people. Person-centred care refers to services that meet the needs of the individual accessing help and is recognised in language, goals and actions. Person-centred care provides support, rather than manages people.
- Values strengths-based practice. A strengths-based approach recognises the resilience of individuals and communities. It acknowledges that individuals and our community have diverse life experiences. Resilience is the ability to bounce back after adversity, to participate in our university community and to support each other.
- Emotional health and wellbeing are referenced interchangeably with mental health and wellbeing in recognition that not all cultures refer to wellbeing as a spectrum of mental health and mental illness, rather it may be recognised as emotional health and emotional wellbeing.
- Promotes wellbeing, health and safety through evidence-based health promotion, support, and community partnerships with a strong emphasis on co-creation and collaboration to ensure a coordinated approach to supporting staff and students' needs.
- Utilises evidence and data through various tools of research and evaluation to inform practice and create continuous improvement. Evaluation focuses on the degree to which the person's needs were met, not how well the provider did.

Key Strategic Areas

→ *Components of the Strategy*



Research and evaluation are a continual process to ensure action plans are evidence-based, relevant and systemic through co-design and collaboration, enabling a coordinated approach to strengthening our community's health, wellbeing and safety.

ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA/MEASURES:

What we will do and how will we measure?

For each key focus area (prevention, promotion, early intervention and systemic response) – the system of services and programs will work on evidence-based actions and outcomes across the Western community ecosystem.

Key Strategic Areas

- Promotion
- Prevention and Support
- Recognition and Early Intervention
- Response

PROMOTION

Promote a healthy and safe working and learning culture that supports people to achieve optimal wellbeing, learning and work success.

Promote health and wellbeing through:

- Ensuring policies and processes promote healthy and safe environments (physical, social, learning, economic)
- Embedding strategies that foster a sense of belonging for all staff and students
- Normalising and increasing literacy about unpleasant emotions and coping and help-seeking
- Encouraging healthy choices and behaviours to increase people's perception of their own resilience
- Working collaboratively with external community partners

MEASURE 1: PROMOTION

- Policies and processes are easy to follow, are implemented, use inclusive language and a strengths-based approach. The Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy aligns with the Western Sydney University Mental Health Policy
- Staff and students report increased understanding in the area of wellness, mental health and safety
- Grow our partnerships, existing and new, to leverage off each other's strengths and resources and build innovation

PREVENTION

Build community capacity to prevent ill health, to enable options to enhance wellbeing and academic progress, and to increase awareness of support opportunities.

Prevention Strategies and Support Pathways:

- Provide training to destigmatise distress and promote coping, which may include help-seeking
- Provide training to the students and staff to increase awareness of those around them, the environment and to ensure pathways to access appropriate prevention and support opportunities are known
- Develop procedures that provide clear processes for frontline staff to connect staff and students with additional professional support when needed
- Support managers and academics to model care and contribute to healthy environments

MEASURE 2: PREVENTION

- Support is accessible and timely
- Education, training and Information is co-created, available and regularly reviewed and updated in order to promote healthy coping and destigmatise distress
- Procedures are simple to follow and decrease barriers to individual and university community wellbeing, health and safety

EARLY INTERVENTION

Promote recognition and early self-identification of needs, specifically around health, wellbeing and safety.

- Offer a range of opportunities for staff and students to engage in early identification of needs. Examples include workshops, campaigns, events and wellbeing plans, which raise awareness and increase insight
- Offer access to a range of professional support services for staff and students
- Maintain community partnerships to enable appropriate referrals for assessment, treatment and response options for health, wellbeing and safety needs
- Work collaboratively with staff and students and their treatment providers where appropriate to minimise the impact of illness on work or study

MEASURE 3: EARLY INTERVENTION

- Support is accessible and timely, and options both internal and external are provided, to increase student and staff choice and agency
- Collaboration with treatment and other providers occurs to ensure early intervention
- Pro-active action is taken to minimise impact of emerging ill health and safety issues on study, work and the University community
- Solidify partnerships to enable appropriate third party and community referrals and discussions

SYSTEMIC RESPONSE

Provide organisational responses offering consistent and coordinated processes and relevant support to promote positive mental health, wellbeing and safety.

- Develop a culture of inclusion and diversity and strengths-based approaches for those with health, wellbeing and safety needs
- Continue to develop emotionally and physically safe environments to create a positive culture and to encourage help seeking and support for those with specific needs
- Development of concise policies, procedures and access to services and pathways to support Western students and staff health, wellbeing and safety needs

MEASURE 4: SYSTEMIC RESPONSE

- Creation of an inclusive and safe environment is understood to be everyone's responsibility. Response is timely and efficacious
- Ensure we meet the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Association (TEQSA) standards and good practice guidelines
- Compliance with policy, procedural, legislative and industrial instruments in the areas of health, wellbeing and safety



Strategic Alignments



THE WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY ALIGNS WITH THE FOLLOWING WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY STRATEGIES:

- Sustaining Success 2021-2026 Strategic Plan
- Securing Success 2018-2020 Strategic Plan
- Accessibility Action Plan 2018-2020

OTHER ALIGNMENTS:

- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, TEQSA
- Legislative and other instruments pertaining to health, wellbeing and safety and Western Policies
- Australian University Mental Health Framework, 2020, Orygen

These strategic alignments ensure the provision of an effective contemporary organisational health, wellbeing and safety strategy that is relevant, research-based and leads the way in best practice principles.

Addendum

→ *Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategic Directions Focus 2022-2026*

The focus of the Strategy and the prioritisation of issues and concerns for focus, have been determined through an iterative process of stakeholder engagement and consultation, data analysis and needs based enquiry obtained through various sources.

The outcomes of this process have determined the mental health and wellbeing themes and issues that the strategy will aim to address.

STUDENT ISSUES	STAFF ISSUES
1 Exhaustion / Fatigue	1 Stress / Pressure
2 Isolation / Loneliness	2 Work-Life Balance
3 Financial Distress / Hardship	3 Burnout / Fatigue
4 Stress / Pressure	4 Connection / Isolation
5 Awareness of Support	5 Managing Change
6 Motivation	6 Appropriate Support
7 Stigma	7 Complex Life Issues
8 Adapting to Change / Transitioning to University	8 Grief and Loss



WESTERNSYDNEY.EDU.AU