

Students, AI and Wellbeing

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- With student wellbeing in higher education continuing to decline, the need for effective, scalable support interventions has become increasingly urgent. This session explores the potential of combining generative artificial intelligence (AI) with positive psychology interventions (PPIs) to enhance student mental wellbeing and support flourishing within higher education contexts.
- Drawing on initial survey data, the session will present insights into student attitudes toward generative AI, highlighting a notable sense of uncertainty and frustration linked to perceived impacts on future employability. Alongside these perspectives, the findings identify key stressors affecting student wellbeing, offering a clearer understanding of the challenges students currently face.
- The session will also introduce a range of accessible, evidence-informed positive psychology interventions that can be integrated into higher education practice to support student wellbeing. By bringing together student voice, emerging technological developments and practical interventions, this session aims to provide actionable insights for educators and practitioners seeking to respond effectively to evolving student needs.

Session Success factors

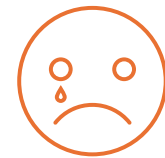
- Participants will:
 - Have better insight into students' mental wellbeing concerns
 - Have peeked behind the curtain of student's attitudes to AI
 - Have considered how they can better support students with simple techniques in the classroom

Background – Positive Psychology

- ‘Magazine’ wellbeing
 - Three good things
 - Journaling
 - Mindfulness
 - Green bathing
 - Exercise
 - Reframing
 - Imagine a positive outcome
 - Breathing exercises

Students vs Technology 1

- Original study (6 years ago)
 - “A systematic review was undertaken for PPI overall weighted average score of 0.31 was reported with the PPI’s having a small but non-trivial effect according to Cohen’s D (effect size measure)
 - Wellbeing exercises in a structured course on moodle
 - Analyse and then Profdoc ticked off



The Questionnaire

- 38 respondents – around a 5% ‘fill in’ ratio

2. What is your ethnicity?

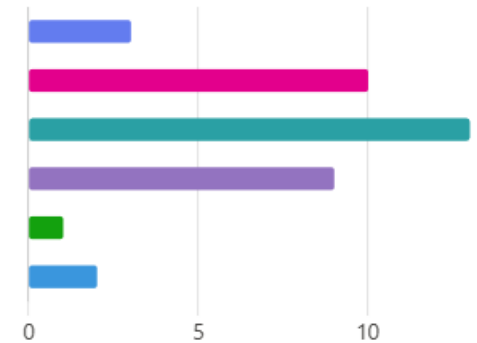
White – British	26
White – Other White background	5
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2
Mixed – Other Mixed background	0
Asian or Asian British	3
Black or Black British – African	1
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0
Black or Black British – Other Black background	0
Arab	0
Prefer not to say	0
Other	1

3. What is your gender?

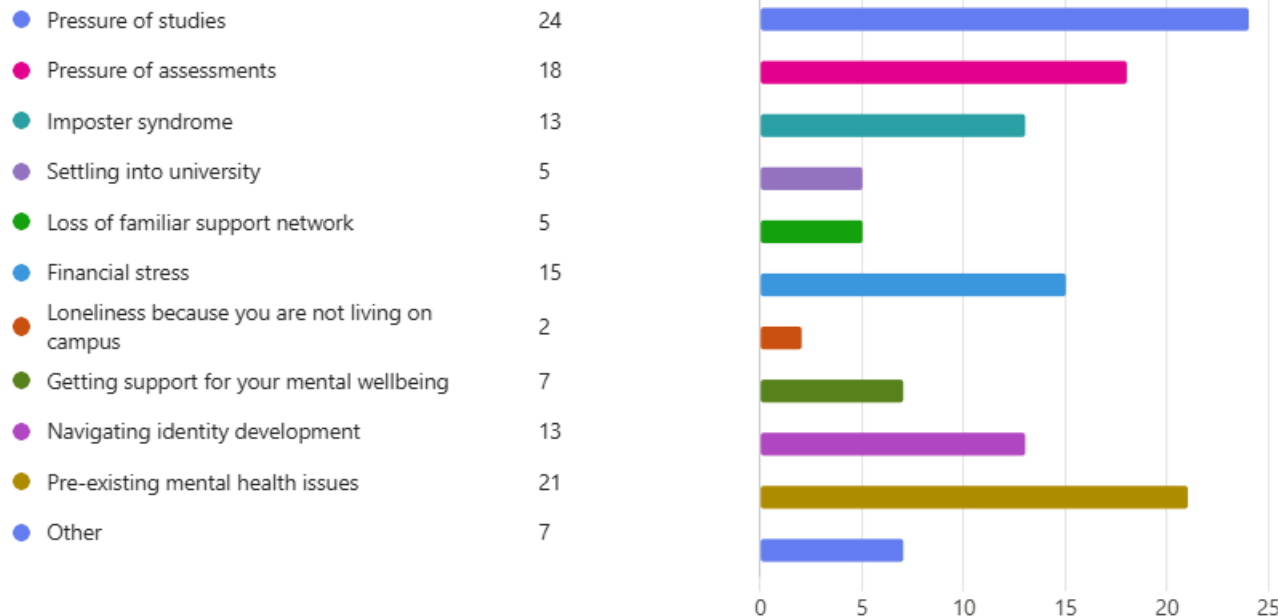
Female	14
Male	17
Non-binary	6
Prefer not to say	1
Other	0

4. How would you currently describe your overall mental wellbeing?

Very Good	3
Good	10
Fair	13
Poor	9
Very poor	1
Prefer not to say	2



Key Stressors Identified in Questionnaire



Other

- “Apathy”
- “Loneliness in flat”
- “Friends wellbeing”
- "future plan”
- “People advertising AI”
- “A distressing group of people advocating for the use of artificial intelligence to replace human creative work and critical thinking”

Good Mental Wellbeing

- I currently am signed up with Silverlake, an online service that helps with anxiety, depression and other mental health issues. I do also try and take walks, and take time for myself when I can.
- medication
- Go on walks, meet with friends and talk to them, talk regularly to family
- As a Christian I pray and read the bible but also occasionally I go on walks
- Keep busy with studies and some hobbies
- Nothing particularly
- Simple tasks such as easy games and music
- Think about doing stuff
- relaxing
- I'm still thinking to talk with someone about it
- Socialise with friends and journal
- the event I am joining with the people, the offline meeting with the other studnet, the meeting with the staff member
- Seeing a qualified professional who took years to study and develop their understanding.



Do you do anything specifically to help your mental wellbeing?

- Go out, paint, socialise with friends, watch movies
- go on walks, talk to and hang out with friends, do hobbies
- Sometimes I journal
- Being productive and feeling useful really helps.
- Play video games, watch films, watch TV, spend time with friends and family, eat food I like
- Being social and going outside
- arts, creative work
- To keep busy with many different, University work, part time work, social events, personal projects, cooking balanced meals,
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy & prescribed medications

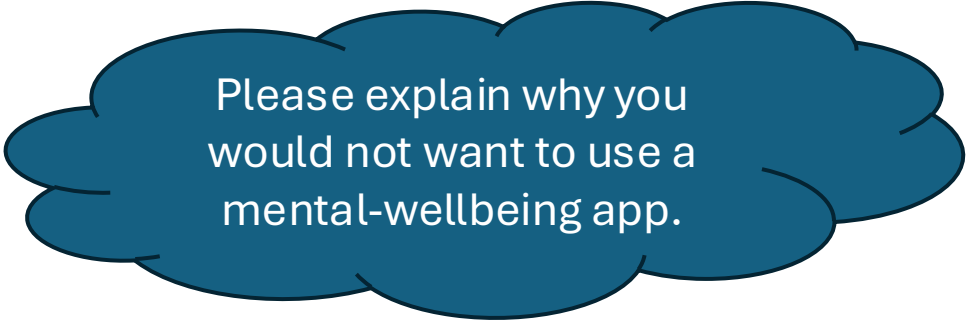
Poor Mental Wellbeing



Do you do anything
specifically to help your
mental wellbeing?

- I have gender dysphoria, being affirmed as my loved gender
- Medication and therapy
- not really. i dont quite have time to at the minute
- I go to NHS Talking Therapies for OCD, Generalised Anxiety, and Depression symptoms.
- Watch my little pony. take LOTS OF BREAKS!
- I used escapism via my favourite media e.g. games and art
- I play video games and listen to podcasts to defuse
- escapism like video games
- I have had on going issues with my flatmates which has caused me to not enter the kitchen anymore which has lead me to live off pot noodles, chocolates and crisps, i have no motivation to leave home, and have seen a significant decrease in my body weight, the issues have lead to me falling behind on my work and especially lose interest in coming to university, however i am trying. As for the question, i am eating chocolate that helps, and i have a long distance girlfriend who is supporting me the best she can

Students vs Technology 2



Please explain why you would not want to use a mental-wellbeing app.

- I would specifically not use an AI mental-wellbeing app. Real therapists and counsellors exist. 🔥
- I don't appreciate apps pretending to be human, consuming resources that destroy settlements, while promoting harmful behaviour such as suicide to vulnerable people
- If it connected me with real world professionals that would be great. But I would not use an app the uses AI
- AI based
- Never find them useful also you're planning on using AI which is nasty and really ethically questionable and won't really be useful mate

Students vs Technology 3

Do you have any other ideas or suggestions for how an app could best support students' mental wellbeing?

- Perhaps not use AI? 🔥
- how fxxxing tragic would a world be in which human beings with genuine emotions and feelings are forced to turn to corporate products offering harmful artificial advice instead of enabling them to foster direct social contact to another empathetic human being
- no AI features
- Real connection. Messages, video call. In person organisation. Don't use AI
- not AI
- Don't use AI
- no generative ai. thats so bad so so bad 🤖 would put me off an app

What features do they want to see in an app

● Mood tracking	7	● Pressure of studies	24
● Stress/anxiety management tools	19	● Pressure of assessments	18
● Links to professional support	15	● Imposter syndrome	13
● Peer support/community spaces	7	● Settling into university	5
● Personalised wellbeing tips	15	● Loss of familiar support network	5
● Goal setting and reminders	16	● Financial stress	15
● Crisis support	8	● Loneliness because you are not living on campus	2
● Other	0	● Getting support for your mental wellbeing	7
		● Navigating identity development	13
		● Pre-existing mental health issues	21
		● Other	7

Combatting Key Stressors