



# Some light on a dark topic – International Students' mental health

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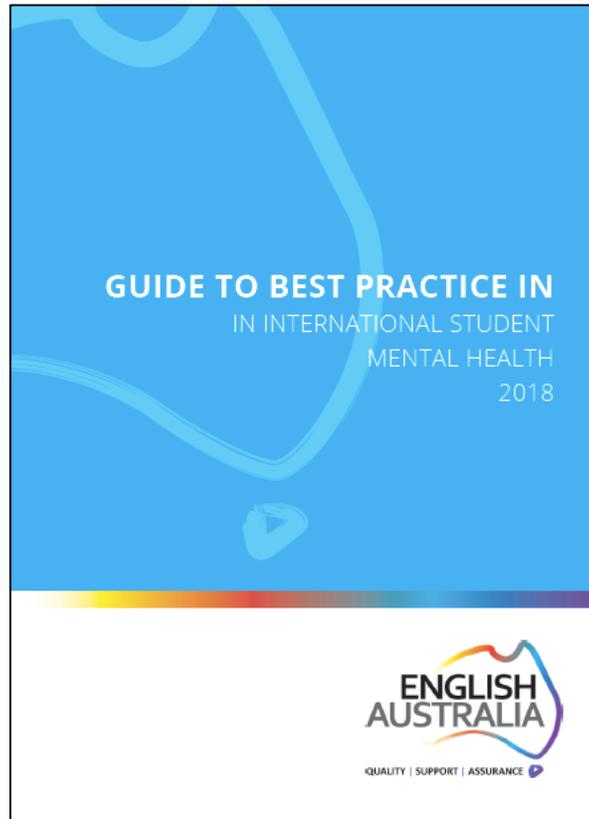
**&**

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## Presentation Overview

- ‘Guide to Best Practice in International Student Mental Health’
- Challenges in providing student mental health support
- Breaking down barriers

# Guide to Best Practice in International Student Mental Health



English Australia Guides to Best Practice

[www.englishaustralia.com.au/professional-development/best-practice-guides](http://www.englishaustralia.com.au/professional-development/best-practice-guides)



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Thanks to our Guide funding partners.



## Challenges for education providers



What are the **main challenges** your institution faces in providing support to students experiencing mental health difficulties?

## Top challenges for ELICOS centres



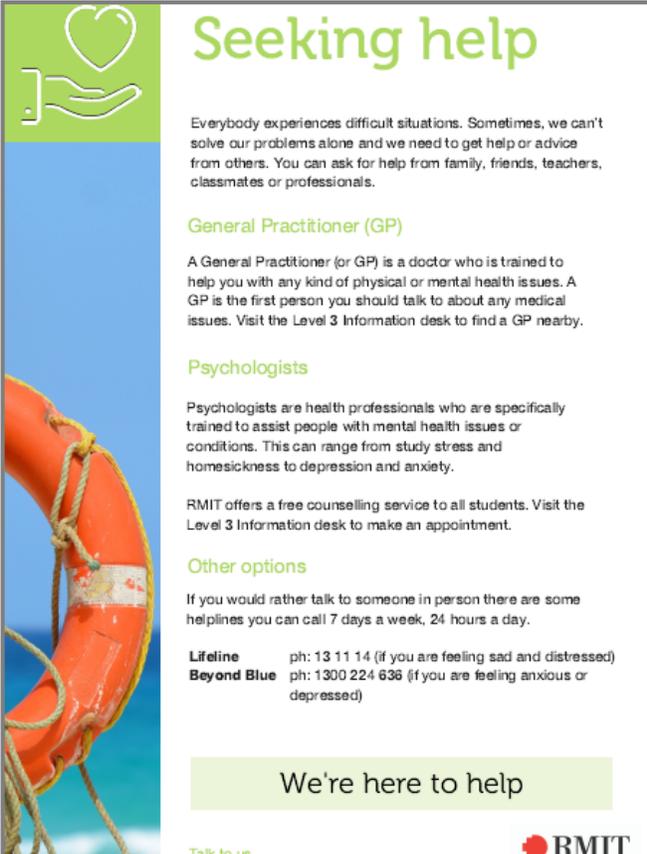
- Stigma & barriers to seeking help
- Early intervention/identification of students
- Non-disclosure before arrival
- Lack of staff expertise & training
- High demand for counselling staff & limited human resources
- Language barriers
- Confidentiality

## Breaking down barriers

- Raise awareness
- Support and train our front-line staff
- Re-assess confidentiality and pre-disclosure issues

# How can we raise awareness?

1



## Seeking help

Everybody experiences difficult situations. Sometimes, we can't solve our problems alone and we need to get help or advice from others. You can ask for help from family, friends, teachers, classmates or professionals.

### General Practitioner (GP)

A General Practitioner (or GP) is a doctor who is trained to help you with any kind of physical or mental health issues. A GP is the first person you should talk to about any medical issues. Visit the Level 3 Information desk to find a GP nearby.

### Psychologists

Psychologists are health professionals who are specifically trained to assist people with mental health issues or conditions. This can range from study stress and homesickness to depression and anxiety.

RMIT offers a free counselling service to all students. Visit the Level 3 Information desk to make an appointment.

### Other options

If you would rather talk to someone in person there are some helplines you can call 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.

**Lifeline** ph: 13 11 14 (if you are feeling sad and distressed)  
**Beyond Blue** ph: 1300 224 636 (if you are feeling anxious or depressed)

We're here to help

Talk to us 

2

Macquarie University English Language Centre

***Mental Health Workshop***



3

***Leadership and Internship Programs Leaders***

DUELI, Deakin University

## 4 'Curtin Life' at Curtin English



'Curtin LIFE' at Curtin English:

- For all new Ss
- Includes MH and well-being outcomes.

E.g. 'Students can understand the terms depression and anxiety and ID signs of these in themselves and their peers.'

## Support our front-line staff

- *I do not think there is a clear rise in numbers. There is a rise in awareness and accountability however. I feel there are greater expectations of me now as a teacher.*
- *Constantly trying to engage a student who is unwilling to engage is highly exhausting. It's stressful.*
- *I would like to know more about how to deal with critical cases, in that first meeting when I often feel overwhelmed myself.*
- *I don't know exactly how much I should be doing to help students with mental health issues. Where should I draw the line?*

## Why is there a need for support?

- Responsibility to our front-line staff
- Opportunity for early intervention
- Student awareness

## How do we give support?



# Policies and procedures

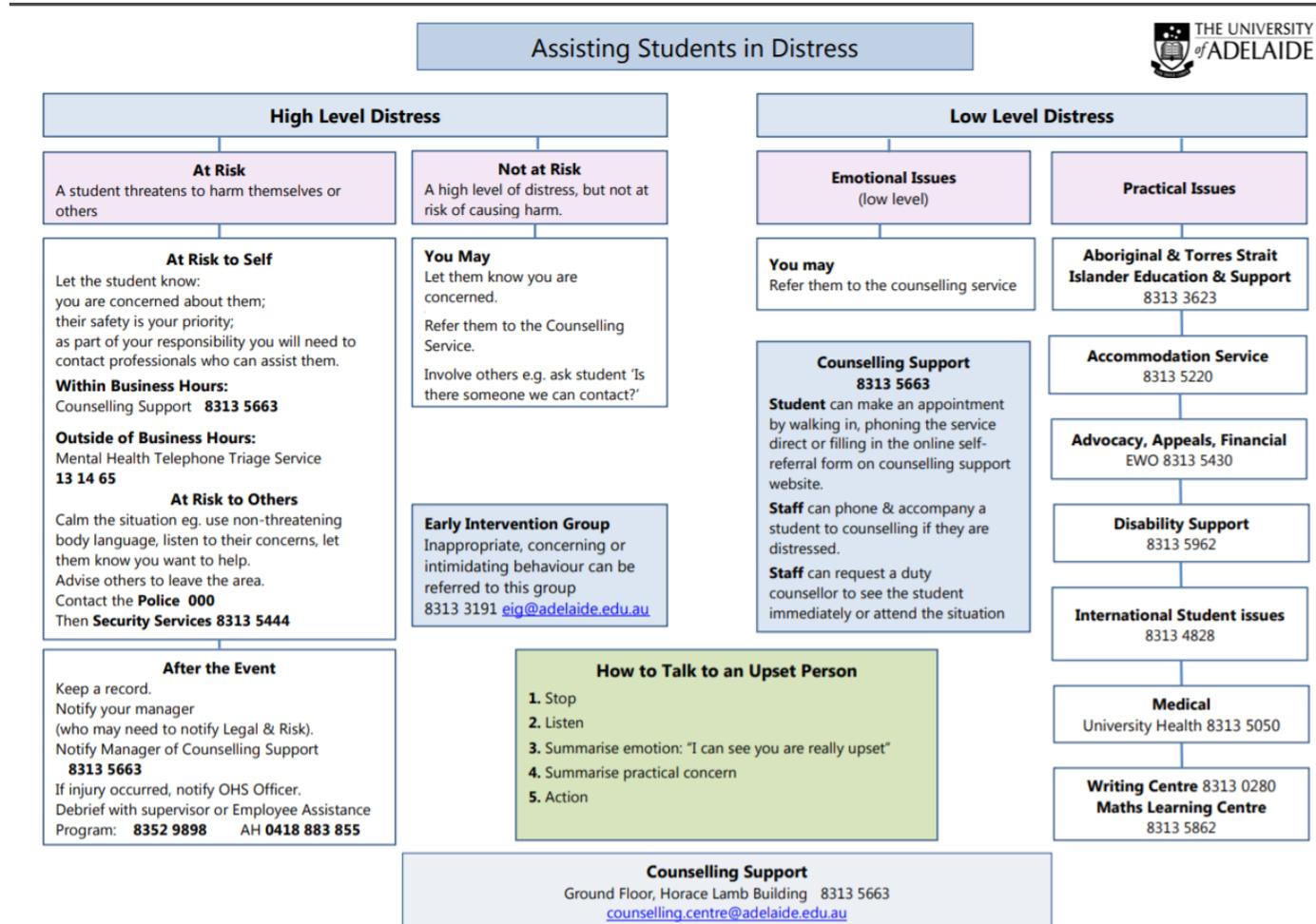
*Teacher: Clear reporting lines are important. If I knew these, I would feel so much more confident when faced with a student with mental health issues.*

Reflection: in your workplace do you have...?

- Clearly written policies
- Policy and Procedure training
- Visible procedural flowcharts



# Distress flowchart



## Staff training: identifying vs. dealing with...

*Teacher: I think teachers need to know the line between identifying a mental health issue and dealing with it.*

Reflection: in your workplace do you...?

- provide basic information on types of mental health issues  
(range of mental illnesses, warning signs, dispelling myths...)
- have adequate training for all professional staff (mental health first aid)
- have readily available reading material for front-line staff
- have regular support meetings for advisors and counsellors



## Confidentiality and informed consent

English Australia Mental Health Survey (2017):

- 33% of colleges said they had ***no firm policy*** around confidentiality and student consent.
- 50% of colleges said ***written or verbal consent is required*** for a counsellor to share info. about a student.

## Confidentiality recommendations

- Students must understand meaning of consent and sign a written document (taking language proficiency into consideration).
- Train *all* staff in confidentiality policies and procedures.
- Confidentiality must extend to record keeping.



## Pre-disclosure of issues

English Australia Mental Health Survey (2017):

- ✓ 67% colleges said their enrolment forms gave students an opportunity to pre-disclose pre-existing mental health issues.
- ? 64% colleges said ‘very few students with pre-existing issues disclose them.’

## Disclosure questions on enrolment forms

‘Do you have a medical condition that may require additional equipment or support?’

versus

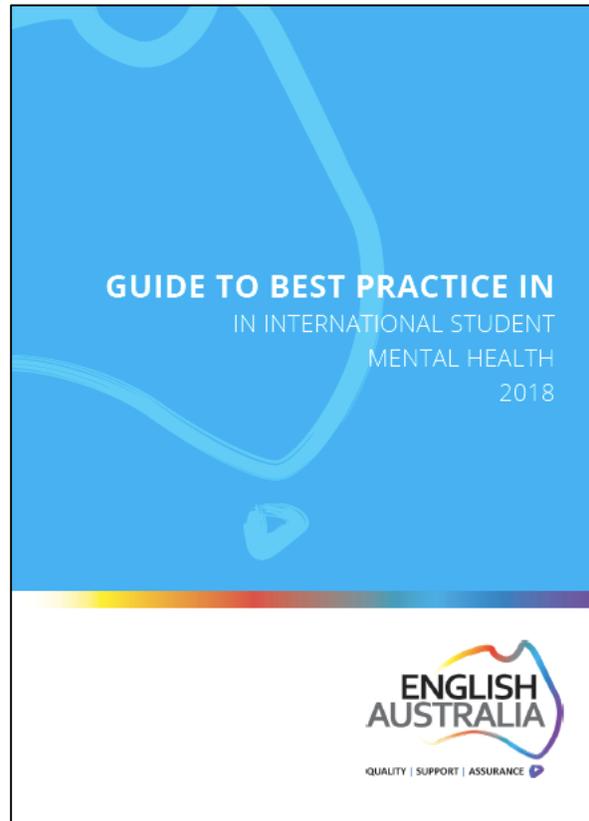
Do you have a learning difficulty or health condition that may impact on the way you study, attend class or sit assessment?

Telling us about your disability will not prejudice your application. The earlier you tell us, the better we are able to work with UNSW and others to assist you to make adjustments to your teaching and assessment program. If you choose not to tell us, we may not be able to make adjustments in time and this could affect your ability to progress in your UNSW Global program ...

If you disclose a disability to us, please indicate that you consent to our use of this information only for the purposes above by ticking this box.

*UNSW Global enrolment form*

# Guide to Best Practice in International Student Mental Health



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