

Learning from the Diversity of Students: Strengthening our Community.

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The University Western Sydney (UWS) Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2012-2015, aims to promote and support student diversity, while avoiding stigmatising, discriminating or indeed pathologising student issues within a mental health framework. The Transcultural Working Group was established May 2013 to develop partnerships, share resources, knowledge and good practice standards within Student Support Services (SSS). Utilising the Mental Health in Multicultural Australia Cultural Competence Framework (National Cultural Competence Toolkit) cultural responsive practice was mapped within SSS, identifying key deficits in service responsiveness, and opportunities to create a culturally responsive best practice service involving networking with Equity and Diversity, International Student Services, and Badanami- the centre for Indigenous education and support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The Transcultural Working Group has also built community partnerships with Transcultural Mental Health Centre, and NSW Population Health. The next stage of the Transcultural Working Group is developing a research agenda focussing on international students, cultural diversity, and transcultural perspectives around accessing support services, help seeking behaviour, and transcultural notions of wellbeing. Through community engagement, SSS is recognising, respecting and learning to understand our diverse community to develop the cultural competence and responsiveness of student support services and promote inclusiveness for our diverse student population within the UWS community.

Key Words

Diversity, Mental Health, Wellbeing, Transcultural, International, Students, Community Engagement, Inclusion.