

## **Mental Health Awareness – Responding to Students (MHARTS)**

Keywords: Mental health awareness, online resource, health, safety and wellbeing

**Jane Turner Goldsmith**<sup>1</sup>, Colleen J Lewig<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The University of Adelaide, Adelaide SA 5005, [jane.turnergoldsmith@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:jane.turnergoldsmith@adelaide.edu.au)

The Mental Health Awareness – Responding to Students (MHARTS) has been developed as an interactive on-line training module to support staff in promoting student well-being, and in turn, a culture of care, respect and safety at the University of Adelaide.

According to recent studies, university students show elevated distress levels relative to the general population, justifying the focus on mental health interventions to decrease risk and improve psychological wellbeing. Staff members at the University of Adelaide can play a key role in this mission. The right word, the right referral at the right time can critically influence the well-being of a student in need of support. Staff members are not expected to diagnose mental health disorders, but they are critically placed to respond appropriately to signs of distress or emotional instability. The University of Adelaide has a number of dedicated support services available to students, but effectively connecting students with them is the challenge. MHARTS explicitly covers sections on dealing with suicide threats and safety concerns, and managing students in distress or who show concerning or challenging behaviours. It lists clear steps to be taken and ways to refer appropriately. Although it is a stand-alone e-learning module within MyUni (online blackboard teaching environment), it also serves as a resource for staff to support them in dealing with the many complex interactions which can arise in the context of their role with students. Information about common mental health presentations at university, descriptions of support services and links to external sources of information and support are also provided within the module.