

What are clinical educator tip sheets?

The contribution of clinical educators to a student's learning and development while on placement is fundamental to the success of the placement and the overall outcomes for the student. This series of tip sheets aim to equip clinical educators with knowledge, information, processes and tools on key topics related to placement organisation and student learning.

Why is this topic relevant?

During a placement the clinical educator has a responsibility for the students conduct and performance. They also have a responsibility to consider the student's health and wellbeing which may include their emotional, mental and physical state. Student wellbeing may be defined as the student's satisfaction with their health and relationships; their sense of achievement and safety; as well as, their connection to community for future security (Australian Unity, 2015). Health is "a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease" (WHO, 2006).

If a particular problem is identified or an issue arises it is appropriate to contact the clinical education support officer (CESO) for support and/or to contact and direct the student to support from the University placement staff. However, the following information may be helpful for clinical educators when promoting a healthy working environment, conducive to learning.

Ways to address student's wellbeing needs

- Provide a sense of belonging and offer reassurance, this may involve clarifying expectations at the commencement of placement regarding the appropriate sharing of information to enable placement support and ongoing engagement.
- Find times to give the student your focussed attention (for example within supervision)
- Enable the student to develop a sense of autonomy and control
- Facilitate emotional connections with others, this may involve linking up with other students or new graduates in the work area
- Enable students to feel part of the team, introduce them to others at lunch times and invite them along to events in the department/ with the team
- Provide opportunities to complete verbal and/or written reflections
- Offer feedback to enable the student to develop a sense of competence and achievement

Ways to monitor a student's health and wellbeing

- Be mindful of any other demands students have regarding paid employment, family or other commitments alongside the placement
- Check if they are worried about anything and offer opportunity for discussion
- Ask about social activities and offer ideas if they are new to the area
- Discuss strategies they use to deal with stressful situations

- Establish the impact of client related care on them such as whether they are thinking about work in non-work hours
- Ask them about general health during placement, eating and sleeping, tiredness etc.

What to do if a student's wellbeing is impacting on placement

Complex situations may arise on placements that can lead to the student feeling overwhelmed and this can significantly impact on their ability to cope. The following actions will be necessary to protect the student's wellbeing;

- Enlist the clinical education support officer (CESO) and University placement support staff as soon as possible for guidance
- Ensure the student has the opportunity to respectfully and confidentially debrief letting them know that you have been in touch with placement support staff within the HHS and at the university
- Negotiate actions with the student, university placement support staff and CESO in accordance with the Student Placement Deed governing placements within Queensland Health
- In collaboration with the student and support staff consider accommodations within the placement if appropriate.
- Suggest they contact student support services available through their University

Further resources

A resource booklet [When the cowpat hits the windmill](#). It is a guide to staying mentally fit written by students on placement in rural areas. The OTCEP [Resource Index for Mental Health Clinical Education Placements](#) has section on student's wellbeing and self-care.

If a Clinical Educator would like to pass on information to a student, an OTCEP tip sheet has been written for students. *Self-Care Tips for Clinical Placement* is available by request from Clinical Education Support Officers or from OTCEP@health.qld.gov.au.

[Resilience and Energy Management: Burning brightly without burning out](#) was a topic of the OTCEP new graduate video conference series in June 2017 and may provide some information for reflections and future management of student wellbeing.

The Allied Health Professions Office Queensland [Inter-professional clinical educator videoconference series](#) includes a range of recorded presentations including ones on the following topics:

- *Impacts of student stress and anxiety on student performance and strategies for students and CEs*
- *Student mental health and wellbeing – the national context and university response.*

References:

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Douglass, L., & Islam, M. R. (2009, June). Emotional wellbeing of first year university students: Critical for determining future academic success. *Paper presented at the QUT first year in higher education conference*, Townsville, QLD. Retrieved from : http://fyhe.com.au/past_papers/papers09/content/pdf/8A.pdf

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