

Weathering the storm.

WORK, F. and the RGU INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE PROJECT GROUP

2022

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ENHANCING FOR IMPACT

RGU'S ANNUAL LEARNING AND TEACHING CONFERENCE

Weathering the Storm

Dr Fiona Work (TEF) and the RGU Institutional Resilience Project Group:

WORK, F., students' voices, DOWNIE, M., WADDELL, J., DAVIDSON, A., ZARB, M., MCGREGOR, T.,
HENDERSON, L., HENDERSON, S., JUMAILY, A, A., ABOLLE-OKOYEAGU, J., BEVAN, W., LAWRIE, A.,
SMITH, F., STOREY, L., STEWART, V. and CULLEN, A.

Objectives for today

- *Recall the QAA Scotland's Enhancement theme: resilient learning communities*
- *Critique the opportunities and challenges in co-creating a resource to foster student resilience*
- *Appraise the RGU Resilience Toolkit*

Background

Setting the Scene

Teaching Excellence Fellow (TEF) Project on Resilience
QAA Strengthening resilience, supporting learning communities (QAA 2020)



QAA
Scotland

SCOTLAND'S ENHANCEMENT THEME: RESILIENT LEARNING COMMUNITIES

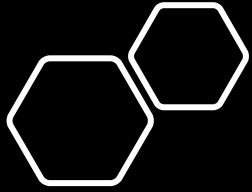


The original TEF Resilience project objectives

1.1 The objectives for the group.

Following 12 calendar months of meeting, the cross-RGU group will:

- Define resilience, which will be utilised by the RGU Institutional Resilience Project Group.
- Critique, through an audit process, the existing resources across RGU via identified contacts such as Inclusion Champions in each School and Department.
- Formulate a digital repository of resources, to support resilience for staff and students within RGU (based on a pedagogical model).
- Appraise the literature, to provide an evidence-based approach to the RGU Institutional Project on Resilience.



Some messages from the literature

Lots of definitions of resilience.... 😞

Resilience interventions can potentially build resilience and reduce depressive and stress symptoms among higher education students. Interventions were more effective when they focused on building students' social competency, used synchronous communication, and were **delivered through a mixture of didactic and dialectic approaches** (Ang et al. 2022).

Multicomponent interventions that include information sharing, skill application, and reflective learning are effective in helping students manage stress and increase resilience (Diffley and Duddle 2022).

Areas of agreement include recognition that resilience is (1) not a trait, although several traits may be important predictors of positive adaptation after adversity, (2) dynamic, in that it changes over time, and (3) multisystemic, in that it develops transactionally across persons and social systems (Miller-Gaff 2022).

Defining Resilience

The quandary



“Resilience may be defined as a skill set to develop the capacity to successfully adapt by supporting the maintenance of mental agility involving flexibility and adjustment to challenges and change.”

The 7 audit questions explored

Questions for students and staff were based around:

- Which School or support service?
- Facilitating student resilience: supporting materials and processes
- Barriers to promoting resilience and preventing using resources
- Share thoughts and comments around what may facilitate resilience
- Asked to outline the process to access support for mental distress within RGU



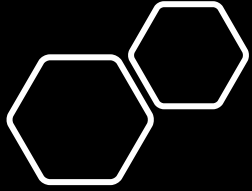
A word cloud visualization of barriers to resilience support. The words are arranged in a circular pattern around the central words 'Time' and 'Lack'. The words are in various shades of teal and blue. The central words are 'Time' and 'Lack'. Other words include 'Mental health', 'personal tutor', 'Students', 'right words', 'worst time', 'time degree', 'work', 'support', 'accessing', 'assessment time', 'number of times', 'contacting', 'difficult', 'need', 'people', 'help', 'free time', and 'Lack of knowledge'.

Mental health personal tutor Students right words
people help Time Lack work worst time
need difficult support time degree
free time Lack of knowledge contacting accessing assessment time
number of times

The staff audit: 23
(one from each
school and service)

Barriers:

“There is no time to support resilience due to a severe staff shortage within the School. Additionally, in the discipline of *****, discussions on resilience and wellbeing are challenging”



The student audit: 56 respondents across all schools recruited via RGU Bulletin.

“Shame and guilt, I struggle approaching people to ask for help as I feel like I’m being a ‘burden’. Having to reach out first and finding the right words to communicate what is going on, it might be nice to have some sort of standardised format to get in touch with staff with when I’m not in the right head space to communicate clearly but still signal that I’m struggling but maybe not yet in a place to share.”

“My particular personal tutor is no help at all, when you try and contact them and ask for help it is like slamming your head against a brick wall”.

Barriers



The backbone of the resilience toolkit

EMBEDDING MENTAL WELLBEING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

18 MONTHS

1366

TOTAL INPUTS

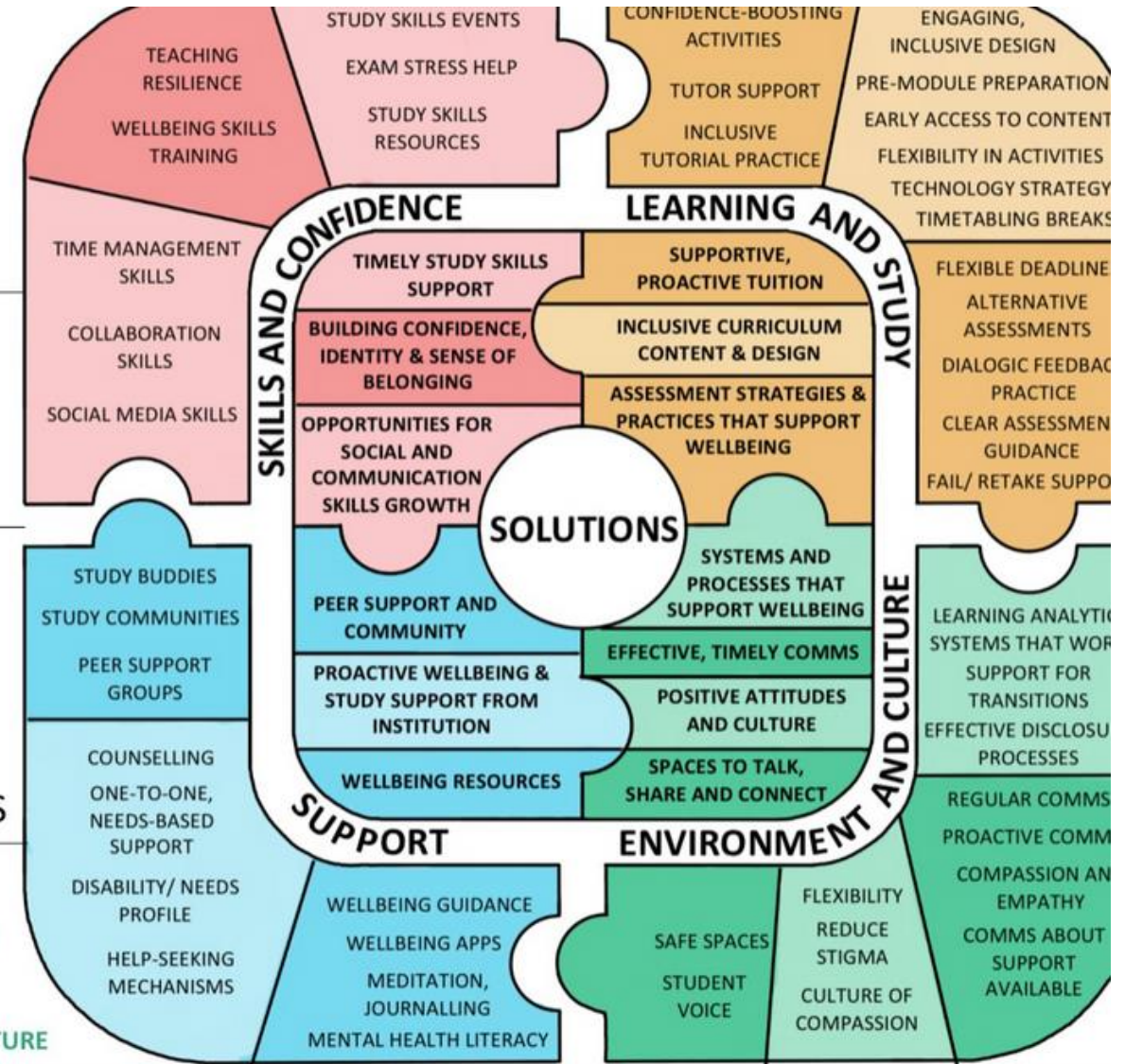
773

593

STAFF STUDENTS

4 SOLUTION DOMAINS IDENTIFIED:

1. **SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE**
2. **LEARNING AND STUDY**
3. **SUPPORT**
4. **ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE**



(Lister 2021)

Thanks to Dr Mark Zarb, School of Computing



Questions

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