



MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

A REVISION BY THE MENTAL
HEALTH TASK GROUP

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About this document

This document is a revised version of Tabor's original Mental Health Strategy and Implementation Plan, which was published by our registrar, Peter Gray in 2018. The revision process was conducted between June and November 2021 and was facilitated by the Dean of Students who called together a task group for this purpose. The task group comprised the two chairs of our respective campus Student Leadership Teams: Joshua Griffiths (Perth) and Tanya Bobin (Adelaide); the two Campus Wellbeing Officers: June Stankowski (Perth) and Michelle Krieg (Adelaide); and our Perth campus Administrator: Dayna Staszewski-Hose.

The review group wished to modify the document in the following ways:

1. Customise it to the actual culture of Tabor, in particular referencing the resources of Christian spirituality that are part of the life of our institute.
2. Ensure that claims of support were backed up with actual staff mental health training and accessible online resources.
3. Update and ensure the relevance of online resources and contacts.

Introduction to Mental Health and Tabor's Approach

The World Health Organization (2018) defines mental health as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises their potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and can contribute to their community.

Tabor's Mental Health Strategy acknowledges that mental health is not only influenced by individual attributes and behaviours, but by wider social, economic, cultural, geographical, and political contexts that can contribute to protecting or diminishing an individual's mental health.

Good mental health is not merely the absence of mental illness but is the capacity of individuals and groups to interact with one another and the environment, in ways that promote subjective wellbeing, optimal development and the use of cognitive, affective, and relational abilities (Australian Government Department of Health, 2013).

Tabor aspires to create a supportive and inclusive culture that acknowledges the positive contribution that mental health has on creating the conditions necessary for the pursuit of personal and professional success.

As a Christian organisation we note the biblical essence of mental health sits within a theological framework, namely a compassionate and transformational experience of and belief in God's presence as Holy Spirit:

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV).

Pastorally, Tabor draws on proven principles of community health and wellbeing as well as its rich spiritual tradition and resources in the promotion of a holistic environment for good mental health.

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework

Tabor's response to mental health in student life is guided by the three pillars from the "Framework for Post-Secondary Student Mental Health" as developed by the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services in conjunction with the Canadian Mental Health Association (2013).

- an all-inclusive institutional approach
- tailored assistance for students and staff with identified coping concerns
- individual-specific intervention for students and staff with immediate mental health concerns

The way in which these pillars are supported and implemented is explained in the following sections of this document.

An organisational culture of mental health awareness

By embedding mental health awareness within the living culture of our college, Tabor creates an organic framework of sensitivity and support across its full operations in teaching, learning, student services, support, and campus life. Tabor enables such awareness through the recurring professional development of all staff via its ELMO human relations management software and by ensuring that over 30% of its current staff are fully trained and qualified in Mental Health First Aid. Students are also made aware of mental health through orientation activities, regular electronic communications such as our 'how are you?' campaigns in weeks 4-5 of each semester, and via our wellbeing web-based portal.

A hospitable and nurturing learning environment

Tabor promotes and protects the mental health of our student community by nurturing an organisational culture of welcome, hospitality, inclusion, support, and positive and scaffolded expectation in learning. A core value of the college is in its relational practice which is ubiquitous across all aspects of college life and draws its inspiration and meaning from the pastoral model of Jesus and the Trinitarian phenomena of the inter-related persons of the godhead (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). In plain language, students often use the language of belonging, and of feeling included and respected when speaking of their participation and experience in college life.

Mental health awareness and well-being in the online and curriculum space

Tabor increases knowledge and understanding of mental health issues, especially their nature, determinants, impact, management, and prevention via our wellbeing online portal which collates mental health resources and the visibility of available initiatives, services, and self-directed practices. Tabor includes within its curriculum core subjects that promote spiritual awareness, self-awareness, and emotional intelligence, in this way our formal process of higher education also supports holistic flourishing and personal formation as well as intellectual and professional knowledge and skills. The college also supports students in practices of individual and corporate worship and prayer, thus enabling a spiritual experience and frame of reference that contributes to resilience, calm, optimism, and the feeling of belonging to faith community and to God.

Early recognition of students requiring support and crisis management

Tabor ensures that every staff member of our institute is aware of mental health as a factor in wellbeing. The high percentage of staff (35%) who are qualified to offer mental health first aid are spread across a variety of roles and locations in campus life. Tabor staff are visible and accessible to

students and are trained to notice and respond to signs of emotional and mental stress which indicate the possibility of a mental health issue and/or crisis.

Provision of mental health support services

Through its Counselling faculty Tabor provides the *Life Design* counselling service which enables professional help at a nominal cost (\$15 per session) or for free in the case of students who face financial difficulty. Life Design Counselling is promoted throughout the college and many Tabor staff regularly refer students to its services. Students are also able to self-refer and make appointments online or face-to-face if on campus through our reception services. Tabor students who study at a distance from our geographic campuses may choose to meet with a counsellor through the zoom video platform. The following is an excerpt from the information to students found within the *Life Design Counselling* tile on the Student Wellbeing page of Tabor Online:

On both campuses as well as for online students, assistance is available through the **Life Design Counselling** Centres which function as a campus and community outreach of the Counselling faculty and the Master of Counselling Practice Degree.

Life Design Offices are located at 181 Goodwood Rd, Millswood SA 5034 and 45 Berkshire Road, Forrestfield WA 6058.

Telephone and email contacts are: (08) 8373 8707 and lifedesign@tabor.edu.au .

Student fees for counselling are nominally \$15 a session, depending on the student's circumstances this fee may be reduced or waved altogether.

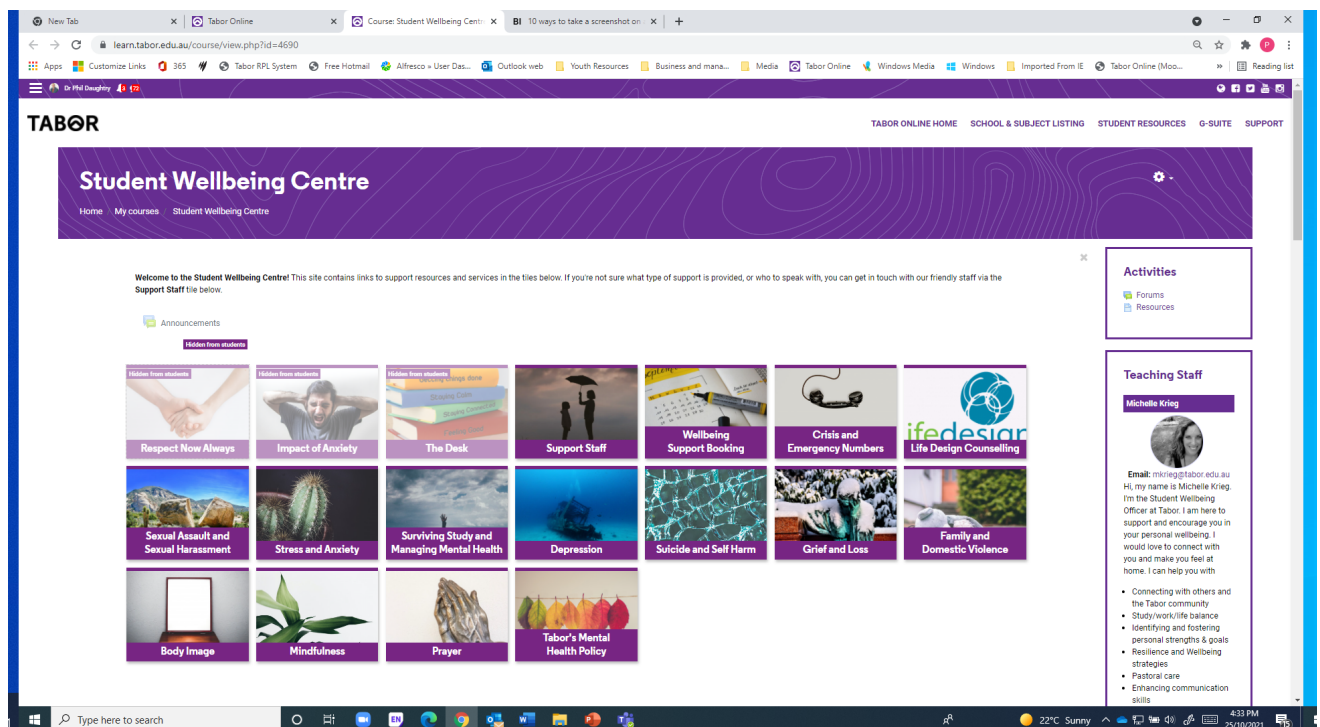
Counselling appointments are available in face-to-face form (subject to current health restrictions) at either of the geographical sites mentioned and/or online via the zoom video-conferencing platform.

In addition to our counselling service students may access personal support by making a time to meet with one of our student support staff who are present and accessible on both campuses and are also contactable through our online wellbeing portal in Tabor Online via an electronic ticket system.

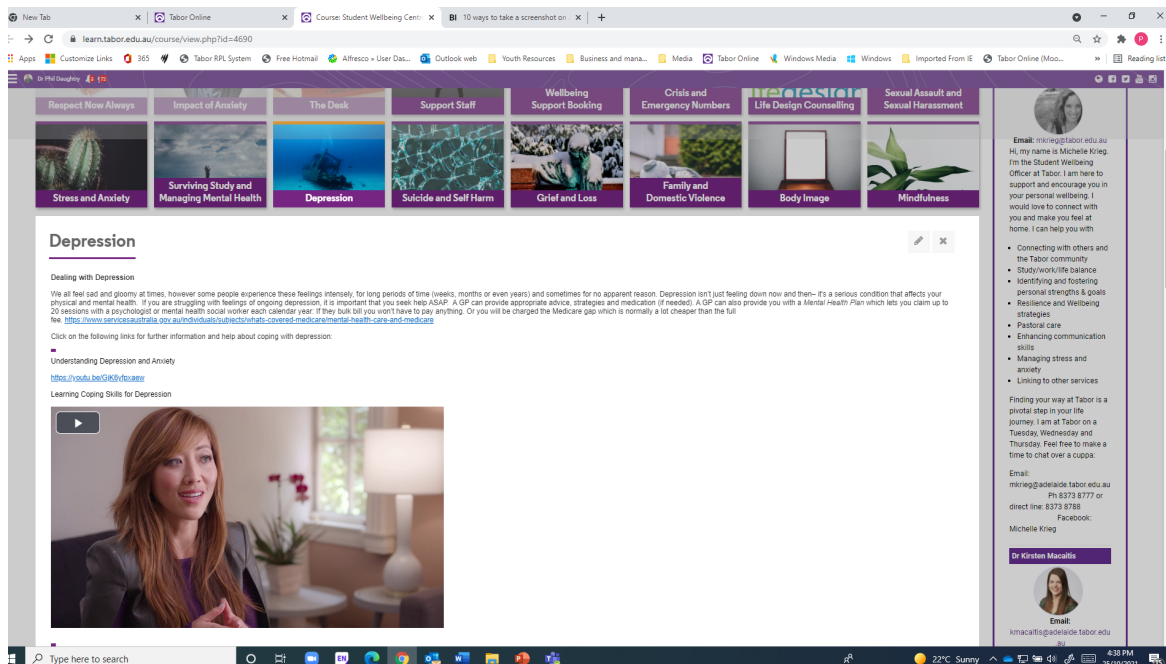
Life Design counsellors and Tabor support staff can and do refer students to a variety of external and complementary services relevant to mental health.

Helpful information and presentation format to students

Feedback from the Student Leadership representatives on the mental health task group who reviewed Tabor's strategy and implementation plan emphasised the importance of not overloading students with too much information and of providing information in an accessible format. Members of the task group therefore researched a wide variety of possible information sources, many of which are listed in the appendices to this document. However, care was taken to work with Tabor's Digital Learning and Innovations Team to present a selection of resources through the wellbeing portal of Tabor Online. The screenshot below offers a glimpse of what this looks like in the online Student Wellbeing Centre.



Within each labelled tile students will find a range of links with an emphasis given to sharp video materials that do not require laborious reading. An example is in the screenshot of the tile on 'depression'. As well as the video presentation on 'coping skills' students will find links to reputable information and support services.



Conclusion

Tabor makes every effort to promote a culture of mental health awareness and support amongst its staff and student body. As a Christian organisation, Tabor is inclined towards a pastoral and holistic approach which includes spiritual resources such as worship and prayer as well as the tools of professional counselling, mental health first aid and various support and information services.

At all times our institute seeks to be sensitive, hospitable, professional, and ready to respond to incidences of mental health as well as a more general approach to promoting wellbeing.

Our strategy and implementation are structured around the following key aspects of our approach:

- A high level of staff trained and qualified in Mental Health First Aid
- Life Design Counselling Service available and accessible to all students
- Student support staff mingling with students and available on request for one-to-one care and referral
- Clear and helpful mental health and wellbeing information and links to services in one dedicated online space as part of the main Tabor learning platform

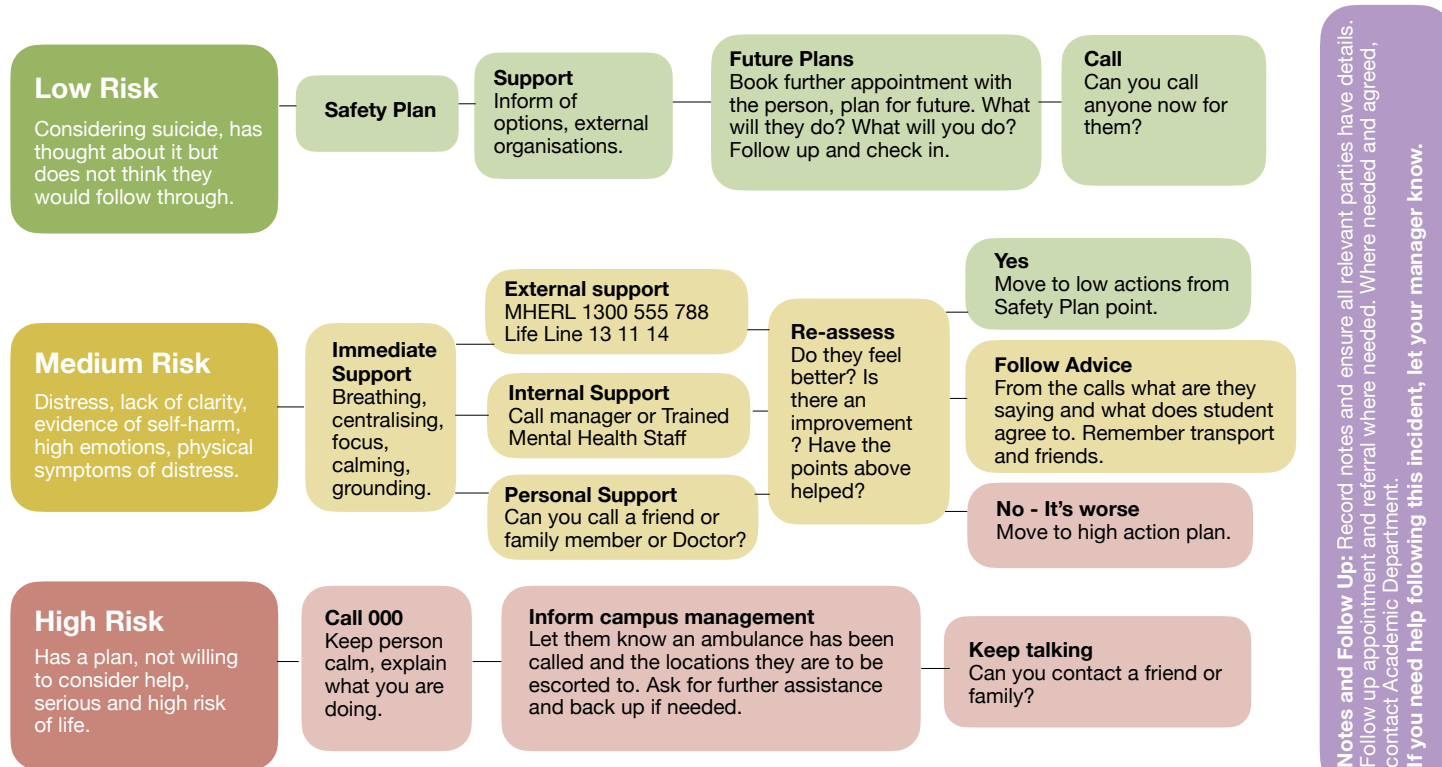
The two appendices attached to this document are two internal resources compiled by the mental health task group to assist Tabor staff in supporting students who may present as suffering a mental health issue or crisis.

Appendix A – Flowchart for Working with Students in Crisis

Flowchart for Working with Students in Crisis:

Suicidal thoughts/ideology/in danger

Assessment: Who, what is wrong, why, have they felt like this before, what helped, do they have a plan. STAY CALM yourself and do not panic. Do they have external support?



This material was adapted from training materials collaboratively developed by Public Health Teams in Bolton, Manchester and Stockport.

Appendix B – Emergency and Support Numbers

Emergency and Support Numbers - SA and WA

Ambulance, Fire and Police (National)	Triple 0
Mental Health Triage Services (SA) Run by South Australian Mental Health Services. Provides a 24-hour assessment and crisis intervention service to people over 18 with a suspected mental illness.	13 14 65 www.sahelath.sa.gov.au
Crisis Care (SA) Provides an after-hours, state-wide professional social work service to individuals and families in crisis in the metropolitan area and telephone counselling to country residents.	13 16 11
Police (SA and WA)	13 14 44
Yarrow Place Rape and Sexual Assault Services (SA)	1800 817 421
SA Victim Support Service (SA) Victims of crime	1800 842 846
Child Abuse Report Line	131 478
Information and Services for South Australians (SA)	www.sa.gov.au
Crime Stoppers (WA) Report crime anonymously	18000 333 000
Lifeline (WA)	13 11 14
Sexual Assault Resources Centre and Support (WA)	1800 199 888
Department for Child Protection and Family Support (WA)	(08) 9222 2555
Crisis Care (WA)	1800 199 008
Mental Health Emergency Response Line (MHERL)	1300 555 788 (Metro) or 1800 676 822 (Peel) or 1800 522 002 (Rural Link)
Beyond Blue	1300 224 636
Suicide Call Back Services	1300 659 467

Reference List

Australian Government Department of Health. (2013). *The Department of Health Glossary*. Retrieved from <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/mental-pubs-n-wkstd13-toc~mental-pubs-n-wkstd13-glo>

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World Health Organisation. (2018). *Mental health: strengthening our response*. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>