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STRATEGIC AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICE: HEARING ALL VOICES

A guide for further education and skills leaders and managers

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hearing all voices
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MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES AND TRAUMA

A brief overview

Further education (FE) and skills providers serve a wide range of diverse communities, many of which include marginalised groups whose voices often go unheard. Addressing the mental health needs of these communities is vital, as they frequently face trauma linked to systemic inequalities, social exclusion, and discrimination.

Staff development for inclusivity

Equipping staff with the skills and confidence to understand and identify the lived experience of diverse staff and learner communities, recognising the added complex effects of intersectionality, is crucial. This refers to how different social identities such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status overlap, creating unique experiences of marginalisation and trauma. Understanding these intersections will help create new approaches and practices to mental health that promote genuine inclusivity and ensure all learners are supported with their mental health and wellbeing.

Whole organisation approach to mental health

A whole organisation approach to mental health and wellbeing is essential. By embedding accessibility and inclusion at every level, organisations can ensure that their practices are not only authentic but also sustainable. Prioritising staff training helps foster an environment where all voices are heard, supported, and respected.

Marginalisation beyond demographics

Marginalisation often extends beyond demographics like race, gender, disability, or immigration status. Many forms of exclusion are rooted in less obvious factors that aren't immediately apparent. Individuals can experience marginalisation based on aspects that may not be visible or known unless they are revealed through conversations or examples such as staff surveys revealing exclusion among part-time or remote workers, paperwork favouring certain educational or cultural backgrounds, or induction processes that assume prior workplace knowledge, disadvantaging those from non-traditional paths. These subtle barriers often go unnoticed without conscious efforts to address them.

Examples include:

− **Mental health issues**: Individuals with conditions like anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) may feel disconnected or struggle with social and professional engagement, often leading to isolation even when their challenges are not visible.

− **Financial hardship**: Those facing economic difficulties might experience shame or social isolation, as they are unable to participate in certain social activities or afford basic opportunities, contributing to feelings of exclusion.

− **Cultural differences** or language barriers, making individuals feel out of place, or misunderstood can also result in a sense of exclusion, even in an inclusive setting.

These invisible factors often go unacknowledged, but they can be just as marginalising as visible traits, contributing to a sense of exclusion in environments that may appear welcoming on the surface.

STRATEGIC AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICE: HEARING ALL VOICES

Defining marginalisation in FE and skills

Marginalisation extends beyond demographic categories like ethnicity, disability, or immigration status. It also includes individual circumstances such as socioeconomic challenges, mental health issues, and personal trauma, which can contribute to feelings of exclusion. For example, a learner experiencing anxiety or trauma might struggle to connect with peers and access support systems, even if they don't fit into a commonly recognised marginalised group.

In the context of FE and skills, genuinely understanding marginalisation means acknowledging how learners' lived experiences interact with their educational journey. These experiences whether financial hardship, caring responsibilities, or emotional health struggles can create unseen or unspoken barriers that hinder their ability to fully engage in their learning environment.

Organisations must develop a sensitivity to these complex, often hidden challenges, ensuring that all learners, regardless of background or circumstance, are seen and heard to be able to receive the support they need to succeed.

Organisations must adopt a proactive approach for inclusive practice: combatting loneliness with inclusion

Inclusion is the opposite of loneliness. Providers must take proactive steps to ensure that no learner is left behind, particularly those who have experienced trauma. The most vulnerable to exclusion are often the learners whose voices go unheard due to cultural, emotional, or mental health barriers.

Who's at risk?

Note that this is not an exhaustive list. All protected characteristics could potentially face barriers of loneliness exclusion, not being heard, in addition to those who have experienced trauma. Some of the quieter voices in FE and skills are noted below:

- **Asylum seekers** may face exclusion due to language barriers, making it difficult to integrate into the learning environment.

- **Disabled learners**: Many disabled learners encounter both physical and institutional barriers that limit their access to education, resources, or participation. This includes those with invisible disabilities like mental health conditions, dyslexia, or chronic illnesses, which can go unrecognised and unsupported.

- **Learners from ethnic minority backgrounds** might face racial microaggressions that alienate them, contributing to feelings of exclusion.

- **LGBTQIA+ learners** may feel excluded or unsafe, especially if they face misgendering, homophobia, or lack of support in expressing their identity. This can contribute to increased mental health challenges, such as anxiety or depression.

- **Mature learners** may feel isolated due to age differences with younger peers. They might also face challenges balancing education with family, work, or caregiving responsibilities, which can limit their ability to fully engage in the FE and skills community.

- **Impact of 14-16 Provision**: An increase in 14-16 provision within organisations may present integration challenges, as younger learners join settings traditionally designed for older students. This can create tensions and require adaptations to ensure inclusivity for all age groups.

- **Learners impacted by cultural expectations**
  Those navigating family or cultural expectations, such as restrictions on social activities or career choices, may feel unsupported in pursuing their aspirations.

- **Learners facing digital exclusion**
  Learners without consistent access to technology or internet connectivity may struggle to keep up in increasingly digital educational environments.

- **First-generation learners** who are the first in their family to pursue further education often face unique pressures. They may feel overwhelmed by the academic system, lack family direction, and struggle with imposter syndrome, leading to feelings of isolation.

- **Learners from financially disadvantaged backgrounds** may face barriers related to affordability (e.g., textbooks, technology, transportation), limiting their participation in both academic and extracurricular activities. This can lead to feelings of shame, exclusion, and isolation.

- **International learners** may struggle with cultural differences, language barriers, and homesickness, making it difficult to fully integrate into FE and skills life. They may also face visa-related stress or financial difficulties, contributing to mental health challenges.

- **Learners dealing with mental health issues** like anxiety, depression, or PTSD may experience feelings of disconnection and exclusion, particularly if these conditions are not visible or understood by peers and staff. Accessing appropriate support can also be challenging.

- **Young carers** who are also primary carers for family members may face unique challenges balancing academic life with their care responsibilities. This can lead to fatigue, isolation and lack of engagement in organisation activities.

- **Neurodiverse learners with** traits or profiles of Autism, ADHD, ADD, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Dyspraxia, may struggle with an education system not fully personalised to their needs, leading to feelings of frustration and alienation. Their needs may be overlooked if these difficulties are not properly acknowledged or supported.

- **Learners from religious minorities** may face exclusion due to cultural or religious practices not being recognised or accommodated (e.g., prayer times, religious holidays). This can lead to feelings of being misunderstood or isolated from the wider organisation community.

- **Homeless learners or those in temporary housing** experiencing unstable living conditions can add significant stress, limiting their ability to participate fully in education.

- **Young parents:** Learners balancing education while raising children often face financial pressures, time constraints, and limited support, which can hinder their academic progress.

- **Learners who attend part-time** may feel disconnected from full-time learners, as they have less time to engage in organisation social life. They may also juggle education with work or family commitments, which can contribute to loneliness and a lack of support.

There is a well-documented correlation between trauma and NEET (not in education, employment, or Training), particularly among young people from marginalised backgrounds. Trauma can disrupt education, leading to higher risks of disengagement and exclusion.

Listening and acting

To combat this, providers must actively seek and respond to feedback from these learners. Meeting learners in their space, rather than expecting learners to come to the provider with feedback, can help break down accessibility barriers. To do this effectively, providers need to know *who* and *where* their learners are. Anonymous surveys, student councils and learner focus groups can give marginalised learners a platform to express their needs without fear of judgement. As well as targeted interactions, informal conversations and interactions can foster trusted relationships that make learners feel valued and provide opportunities to learn about lived experiences. The insights gained from these processes and conversations should guide the development of policies and services aimed at fostering safer, more inclusive learning environments.

By listening to and acting on feedback, FE and skills providers can ensure that their strategies address the unique challenges faced by marginalised learners, ultimately reducing the risk of exclusion and fostering a sense of belonging.

Encouraging conversations about inclusion

Before we can speak up for inclusion, we must speak about inclusion. This means fostering open conversations that allow both staff and learners to discuss their experiences, raise concerns, and challenge assumptions. Open dialogue is essential for creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels heard, respected, and supported.

Key strategies to encourage conversations about mental health and inclusion:

− **Active listening:** A culture of active listening ensures everyone feels understood. This involves giving people the time and space to share their stories without interruption or dismissal. Active listening shows respect and validates individual experiences, allowing people to feel valued.

− **Preparing for uncomfortable conversations:** Inclusion often requires stepping outside our comfort zones. By embracing uncomfortable conversations about topics like race, gender, privilege, and bias, we can foster deeper understanding and drive more meaningful inclusion. These discussions might be challenging, but they are crucial for real progress.

− **Ask questions:** Encourage leaders, staff and learners to ask questions, even if they feel uncomfortable. For instance, asking how to pronounce someone's name demonstrates respect and shows a genuine desire to understand and value others' identities. Asking questions especially about different experiences, cultures and backgrounds helps foster a more inclusive environment where differences are acknowledged and appreciated.

Practical steps toward mental health & inclusion

1. Talk about it

Regular discussions about mental health should be an integral part of the organisation's culture. Staff meetings, workshops, and learner focus groups should provide inclusive spaces with opportunities for everyone to contribute to the conversation.

2. Do something different

Reflect on ways in which the organisation can support diverse learning communities to come together to actively engage in activities and conversations to promote healthy living and challenge the stigma of mental health. Encourage staff and learners to try something new and learn from colleagues and learners whose experiences are different from their own. This can break down barriers and build empathy and understanding.

3. Learn about it

Promote continuous learning on issues of mental health, diversity, inclusion, and intersectionality. This might include reading about lived experiences, attending talks, or completing training on topics such as unconscious bias and cultural competency. Learning creates a foundation for change.

4. Open your mind

Encourage both staff and learners to question their assumptions and broaden their perspectives regarding mental health and wellbeing. Being open-minded allows individuals to recognise and challenge bias within themselves and in their environments, making way for more authentic inclusion.

Embedding learner voice

Embedding learner voice in FE and skills organisations is essential for creating a truly inclusive

environment where the needs and experiences of all learners, especially those from marginalised backgrounds, are heard and considered. Often, learners from these groups face barriers to speaking out, resulting in their voices being underrepresented in the development of organisations policies and services, such as mental health support. By proactively engaging and involving learners in decision-making, organisations can ensure that all perspectives are represented, ultimately fostering a more equitable and supportive learning environment, with relevant services that support all learners' needs.

Engagement tools

1. Learner-led panels

Aim: To give learners a formal platform to discuss their experiences, challenges, and ideas for improving inclusion and diversity within mental health services, support and activities.

Implementation: Panels include a range of learners from various forums, from different ethnic minority backgrounds, disabled, LGBTQIA+, international, young parents, homeless, neurodiverse, refugees, care-experienced, working-class, and immigrant learners.

Regular meetings with senior leaders in which panel members present their thoughts on mental health support and inclusion.

Provide mentorship and leadership development to ensure these learners feel empowered in their roles.

2. Cultural inclusion workshops

Aim: To raise awareness about the diverse cultural backgrounds and encourage dialogue between learners and staff to understand the experience and impact of mental health and wellbeing across diverse learning communities.

Implementation: Organise workshops where learners can share their cultural experiences and traditions.

Involve both learners and staff in discussions about how the organisation can become more culturally inclusive, both in terms of curriculum, support services and organisation activities.

Use workshops to highlight and address cultural biases, gaps or barriers to accessing mental health services.

3. Mental health ambassadors

Aim: To create peer support networks that enable learners to discuss mental health issues, particularly for those from marginalised communities who may feel uncomfortable seeking help from staff.

Implementation: Recruit learners to serve as mental health ambassadors, trained to support their provider to raise awareness of mental health and champion the voice of learners in the development of mental health policies and practice.

Ensure ambassadors represent a diverse cross-section of the learner body, including learners from different ethnic minority backgrounds, LGBTQIA+, disabled and other marginalised groups.

Host mental health awareness events in different spaces across the organisation, both online and in person, to reach the breadth and diversity of the learning community.

Provide resources tailored to the needs of underrepresented groups.

4. Digital platforms and anonymous feedback systems

Aim: To offer learners a safe space to voice their experience and concerns regarding mental health and wellbeing, particularly those who may be uncomfortable speaking out in public forums.

Implementation: Use online platforms, such as anonymous feedback forms, discussion boards, or apps, to allow learners to express their needs and experiences without fear of judgment or retaliation.

Ensure feedback is regularly reviewed by the organisation's leadership and acted upon. Provide transparency by sharing with learners the outcomes or changes made based on their feedback.

Involvement in decision-making for mental health and wellbeing
1. Representation in curriculum development

Aim: To ensure that marginalised voices are included in shaping the learning experience, around mental health and wellbeing making the curriculum more inclusive and representative.

Implementation: Invite learners from different ethnic minority backgrounds, disabled and other marginalised communities to participate in curriculum review committees.

Include learner input in the selection of course materials, ensuring that diverse viewpoints on mental health and wellbeing are being represented.

Engage learners in discussions about culturally relevant learning materials and the integration of social justice topics into the curriculum, ensuring representation of their lived experiences.

2. Involvement in support services

Aim: Ensure that mental health, financial aid, and disability services meet the needs of all learners, especially those facing systemic barriers. Understand how mental health and wellbeing impact different learning communities.

Implementation: Establish advisory groups that include marginalised learners to review the accessibility and inclusivity of existing support services.

Collaborate with learners to co-create or adapt services that reflect the mental health experiences and needs of diverse communities.

Use learner feedback to develop tailored mental health, financial, and academic support services, addressing the unique challenges faced by marginalised learners.

3. Influence on organisation culture around mental health and inclusion

Aim: Ensure that the organisation's culture reflects the diversity of the learning community and fosters inclusivity for all, particularly in relation to mental health and wellbeing.

Implementation: Involve marginalised learners in planning and organising campus events, cultural celebrations, mental health and diversity awareness campaigns.

Conduct workshops to address cultural biases, barriers, and gaps in accessing mental health services.

Provide platforms for learner voices to be heard on issues of campus safety, mental health and

wellbeing, inclusivity, and diversity (e.g., open forums).

Encourage learner participation in decisions about organisation policies, such as codes of conduct, anti-discrimination policies and procedures for handling complaints of bias or harassment.

Summary

By embedding the learner voice in decision-making processes around mental health and wellbeing ensures that marginalised communities are fully represented in curriculum development, support services, and organisational culture. This not only fosters a sense of belonging, but peer-to-peer learning is also a powerful tool for breaking down barriers between learners, fostering relationships, and building a more inclusive environment. Structured opportunities for group work, mentoring schemes, or learner-led workshops can help learners develop a sense of community and belonging. These interactions allow learners to learn from one another's experiences, address misconceptions, and challenge biases. For marginalised learners, peer support can provide much-needed validation and confidence in their abilities.

The Learner voice framework is a useful tool that providers can use to self-reflect on whole-organisational practice.

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN EMPOWERING MARGINALISED VOICES

Education plays a crucial part in creating an inclusive society by ensuring that the voices of marginalised communities are heard, empowered, and championed. In learning environments, it is not enough to provide access to education; organisations must actively work to break down barriers, amplify underrepresented voices, and create a platform for learners from all backgrounds to thrive, which includes the provision of accessible and relevant support services.

Education is not just about imparting knowledge it is a powerful tool for social change. By listening to, empowering and championing marginalised voices, educational organisations can play a transformative role in breaking down systemic barriers and creating a more just and inclusive society. To be trauma-informed and actively learn from the lived experiences of diverse learning communities ensures everyone has a voice which shapes inclusive and accessible mental health services.

By fostering environments where all learners feel heard, valued, and supported, FE and skills providers contribute to a future where diversity is celebrated, and equity is a reality for all. For this to happen, FE and skills providers must not only listen to these voices but also act as champions for them.

− **Advocacy and representation:** Organisations must commit to incorporating diverse voices and perspectives into curricula and organisational life. Incorporating inclusive content such as literature by authors of different ethnicities or historical accounts of marginalised groups allows learners to see themselves represented in their education.

− **Empowerment through support services:** Providing access to meaningful mental health support, career counselling, and mentorship specifically tailored for marginalised groups can empower learners to succeed in their academic journey and beyond.

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES IN EDUCATION: HOW THEY CAN BE APPLIED

Understanding the impact of intersectionality is crucial when supporting learners' mental health, especially those belonging to more than one marginalised group. Intersectionality is like sitting at the centre of a Venn diagram, where multiple layers of identity overlap, creating a unique set of challenges and experiences.

For example:
− I am a woman (one layer)
− I am a disabled Asian learner (two more layers)
− I have a strong northern accent (4th layer), ...and the list continues. I am the sum of these different identities, but I don't identify with just one of them in isolation.

Learners who face multiple forms of discrimination often endure heightened stress and unique mental health challenges. For instance, a disabled black Caribbean learner might experience a blend of racial discrimination, accessibility issues, and mental health struggles, all of which intensify their sense of marginalisation.

Supporting these learners requires an approach that acknowledges and addresses the interconnected nature of their identities, ensuring they receive the mental health support that recognises their diverse and overlapping experiences.

Key principles for trauma-informed practices in FE and skills:

1. Create a safe environment

Why it's important: Marginalised learners who have experienced trauma need both physical and emotional safety.

How to apply: Foster inclusive, welcoming spaces free of judgment or discrimination; ensure clear rules for a sense of security.

2. Foster trust and transparency

Why it's important: Trauma erodes trust, especially in authority figures or organisations.

How to apply: Be transparent about expectations, boundaries, and support systems; build respectful relationships by actively listening to learners.

3. Recognise and respond to trauma triggers

Why it's important: Triggers, like loud noises or stressful situations, can exacerbate trauma responses.

How to apply: Train staff to recognise trauma responses and provide flexible, calm support (e.g., time-outs or quiet spaces).

4. Promote empowerment and choice

Why it's important: Trauma often strips individuals of control, making it vital to empower marginalised learners.

How to apply: Offer flexible participation options (e.g., group work, essays) and learner-led initiatives that support inclusion.

5. Integrate cultural sensitivity and awareness

Why it's important: Trauma is often tied to cultural, racial, or gendered experiences.

How to apply: Incorporate diverse, culturally relevant materials into the curriculum; provide cultural competence training for staff.

6. Build strong support networks

Why it's important: Marginalised learners benefit from support systems that understand their unique challenges.

How to apply: Collaborate with mental health services, community organisations, and mentors to support learners and individuals.

7. Promote emotional regulation and self-care (healthy mind platter)

Why it's important: Marginalised learners may struggle with emotional regulation due to trauma and exclusion.

How to apply: Integrate mindfulness, creative expression, and self-care workshops to support mental health.

8. Provide staff development and training

Why it's important: Staff are often the first line of support for learners and need training to handle trauma effectively.

How to apply: Offer ongoing trauma-informed training and encourage reflective teaching practices that consider intersectionality.

9. Commit to long-term change

Why it's important: Addressing trauma in marginalised groups requires sustained, systemic efforts.

How to apply: Regularly assess trauma-informed practices and advocate for inclusive policies that support long-term institutional change.

For the FE and skills sector to truly support its diverse learner body, adopting trauma-informed, culturally sensitive approaches is essential. By prioritising staff development, creating inclusive environments, and fostering strong support systems, FE and skills providers can empower learners from all backgrounds to thrive both academically and personally.

HOW CAN WE SHOW ACTIVE SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT

Active allyship in education: supporting mental health and inclusion
Active allyship in education plays a crucial role in fostering mental health support and inclusion for

marginalised learners. The examples provided highlight how allyship can transform the educational experience by reducing barriers and promoting mental wellbeing.

Allyship for disabled learners experiencing physical or institutional barriers
Scenario: *A learner with an invisible disability, such as chronic pain or dyslexia, struggles with institutional barriers like insufficient accommodations or inaccessible classroom materials. This can lead to frustration, exhaustion, and a sense of exclusion, contributing to mental health issues like stress and burnout.*

− Checking in. A fellow learner notices their classmate is struggling and privately offers support, asking, "is there anything I can do to help with the course materials?"

− The ally takes action by championing for better accommodations. This could involve speaking to the tutor about ensuring potential recordings, providing accessible formats for assignments, or making sure the learner has adequate time extensions.

− The impact of such efforts significantly reduces the stigma surrounding invisible disabilities, creating a more inclusive environment. It allows learners with these disabilities to focus on their learning rather than constantly engaging in self-advocacy, ensuring they receive the support and understanding they deserve without additional pressure.

Allyship for international learners facing cultural and language barriers
Scenario: *An international learner feels isolated due to language barriers and cultural differences, making it difficult to integrate into social and academic life. This often leads to homesickness, anxiety, or loneliness.*

− The ally goes out of their way to include the international learner in group discussions, ensuring they are given time to speak and that their contributions are valued.

− Offering language support. The ally could find out about study group sessions where international learners get help with language challenges, or they might advocate for language-support programmes within the organisation.

− Celebrating cultural differences. Allies can work with their organisation to hold cultural events or create mentorship programs that connect international learners with others from similar backgrounds, making them feel more included and supported.

Why allyship matters
Active allyship not only addresses immediate challenges faced by marginalised learners but also advocates for long-term, systemic changes. These actions promote mental and emotional wellbeing by creating inclusive, supportive spaces where all learners feel understood and valued. This reduces the stress of navigating educational barriers and enhances the overall learning experience.

CASE STUDY: POSITIVE IMPACT WITH LIMITED INNOVATION AND INVESTMENT

Even in resource-constrained environments, FE and skills providers can demonstrate meaningful improvements in the mental health and wellbeing of marginalised learners. Below are a couple examples of how organisations have achieved significant positive outcomes despite limited resources:

Learner voice at Derwen College

Effective and meaningful learner involvement is central to providing an outstanding learning experience and a culture of continuous improvement across Derwen College. The effectiveness and impact of student involvement and learner voice is reviewed annually, and as part of curriculum area annual self-assessment learners are invited to give their views about what they enjoy and what could be improved. A Student Council representative sits on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee alongside senior staff and governors and with support from the Learner Voice Co-ordinator the representative has been able to take an active part in the work of the Committee and provides a comprehensive update on Student Council activities at each termly meeting.

We aim to promote a culture where:

− students are motivated and supported to give constructive feedback

− they see their feedback is taken seriously and results in appropriate change

− staff have the skills and resources to encourage and respond positively to feedback

− there are measurable outcomes that show the impact that student involvement has had on the life of the college.

The Student Council continues to be a thriving and increasingly inclusive body. This year, two members of the Student Council attended the Natspec manifesto launch at the Houses of Parliament with the Principal and Director of Learning and Curriculum Development. At the event they listened to students from other specialist colleges giving speeches and met with their local MP, Helen Morgan, and told her what Derwen College meant to them.

Members of the Student Council, including those from satellite sites, also visited the Senedd in Cardiff as part of our Welsh Culture Month. The visit focused on learning more about how Wales is governed.

This year, the college hosted the Midlands regional and national Natspec Learner Voice Forum and Student Parliament. Our students played a key role in the day, helping to host and taking part in topical debates.

Supporting students to be involved in their educational experience and to have a meaningful voice in the college, has led to:

− a more responsive, more engaging, higher quality offer

− the empowerment of students to help shape their own college experience

− improved outcomes for more students

− the development of specific expertise and independence e.g. self-advocacy skills, citizenship, teamwork

− students feeling more involved and motivated to put something back into the college either during their time as a student or in the future

The needs of our cohort continue to become more complex, and we are mindful that staff expertise must keep pace. The CPD planning group is instrumental in identifying areas for development and training. The college provides a wide range of additional and value-added CPD to meet the needs of specific individuals and groups.

Meryl Green, Principal
Derwen College

This case study highlights that, even with limited resources, providers can have a significant impact on the mental health and wellbeing of marginalised learners through creative, collaborative, and resourceful approaches. The key is to focus on community involvement, learner empowerment, and staff training to create a supportive environment that fosters resilience and inclusion.

SUPPORTING STAFF WITH DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Providing staff with targeted development opportunities is vital to ensuring that mental health support is authentic, sustainable, and effective. Continuous professional development should focus not only on academic and teaching skills but also on emotional intelligence, mental health awareness, and cultural competency.

Staff wellbeing is a foundation of any inclusive mental health strategy within educational institutions. When staff members are supported in their mental health and professional development, they are better equipped to create a positive, nurturing environment for learners.

Source: Reintroducing: The Healthy Mind Platter

The Healthy Mind Platter is a practical framework designed to promote mental wellness by encouraging a balanced approach to brain functioning through seven essential mental activities. Similar to how a balanced diet supports physical health, these activities contribute to optimal brain function and overall wellbeing. Maintaining a balance across these seven activities promotes holistic mental health. By consciously engaging in each of these areas, individuals can ensure they are supporting their brains in various ways whether through rest, creativity, social connection, or focus. This balanced approach helps prevent mental overload, reduces stress, and fosters a sense of fulfilment and wellbeing. In essence, the Healthy Mind Platter offers a guide to sustaining mental wellness, helping individuals thrive cognitively and emotionally.

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SUMMARY

Adopting a truly inclusive and supportive environment in organisations requires **speaking up, listening actively** and **taking action**. By training staff to understand the intersectional nature of marginalisation, encouraging open conversations, and embedding mental health and inclusion throughout, organisations can create a community where all voices are heard, supported, and respected.

Thank you

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