

To whom it may concern

'Mental Awareness and Wellbeing Conference' 24 October 2018.

In October 2018 the Annual Collaborative Provision Conference held by the University of Hull had a theme of 'Mental Awareness and Wellbeing', designed to raise awareness and look at potential ways of supporting Higher Education students to cope with the demands placed on them throughout higher Education and into their first employment.

Universities and colleges are charged by the Government through the Office for Students to prioritise student mental health support for all of their students with implications for University practice, for staff and students. This includes the proposed development of a University Mental Health Charter.

Compared to just ten years ago, five times more students in Higher Education seek help for mental health 'issues' every year – reflecting their prior educational experiences, general loss of optimism about the future, compounded by possible limited job prospects, student debt, unaffordable housing and other matters. Getting help at an early stage is very important, but the recognition of issues and availability of support can vary greatly through organisations, including from Health Services in different areas.

Alan Searle, Performance Psychologist Mental Toughness Practitioner provided the key note speech at the Conference. Alan used a range of approaches to illustrate the issues students can bring to their student experience, including personal experience and aspects of his studies. He also included ideas on how to deal with issues raised and to develop resilience in the students themselves to encourage self-support and coping strategies which would last throughout their studies and into employment.

The presentation was pertinent and relevant to the audience of college and University lecturers, as well as student support colleagues, providing questions and direction of thought for the rest of the day where partners provided good practice sessions on their approaches to working with their students and staff.

Colleagues found the presentation to be thoughtful interesting and with practical approaches which they could use both in their workplace and in the teacher training programmes delivered by all partners and the University.

Colleagues across the Collaborative Provision Partnership report that they are taking forward ideas from the event.

I commend Alan Searle to you as an engaging and inspirational speaker in support of the promotion of a positive mental attitude, resilience and self-belief required by young people today.

Viv Parker

15 January 2019