



## Capability Framework



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## About The UMHAN Capability Framework

This framework broadly encompasses the skills, knowledge and attitudes required by mental health practitioners working in Higher Education settings. These are based on the [10 Essential Shared Capabilities for the Mental Health Workforce](#), which enables this framework to reflect a wide range of member qualifications and experience, but modified to focus more on the specific [context-based approach of supporting students with mental health difficulties in Higher Education](#), and [UMHAN's aims](#) (in particular the practical approach to citizenship, the disability agenda, and participation in society). The framework aims to provide sufficient detail:

- For valuing the existing skills and professionalism of people working in HE-settings who provide practical support to people with mental health difficulties.
- To identify specialist capabilities linked to the Higher Education setting.
- For managers of HE-specific mental health services in creating work environments that foster best practice, including a framework for appraisal and performance review.
- For members in assessing needs in relation to continued professional development.
- To guide training consortia when reviewing and developing training.

The framework creates artificial subdivisions and it is recognised that, in practice, mental health advisers and mental health mentors will deliver support which is cumulative of these values, knowledge and interventions in the HE setting. The framework suggests a focus on work with individuals which, while appropriate, is not the exclusive focus; HE-specific mental health work at population, policy or sector level is also included.

This framework will require further development if performance indicators (such as those specified by [Disabled Students Allowance Quality Assurance Framework](#)), role boundaries, or different levels of capability need to be incorporated or required. It is the responsibility of individual practitioners to remain updated with regards changes to the UMHAN Capability Framework, amendments to which will be published on the UMHAN website.

## The 10 Essential Shared Capabilities (ESC)

### 1) Practising Ethically

Recognising the rights and aspirations of people with mental health difficulties, acknowledging power differentials and minimising them whenever possible. Providing support and guidance that is accountable to those receiving it, within the boundaries prescribed by national (professional), legal and local codes of ethical practice. Maintaining appropriate records and professional standards of confidentiality, breaching privacy only under exceptional circumstances in order to promote and protect individual and public safety.

### 2) Challenging Inequality

Addressing the causes and consequences of stigma, discrimination, social inequality and exclusion for people with mental health difficulties, in particular those related to access to education. A commitment to the social model of disability as it applies to people with mental health difficulties. Creating, developing or maintaining valued social roles for people in the community.

### 3) Working in Partnership

Developing and maintaining initiatives and constructive working relationships with people with mental health difficulties, colleagues, and wider community networks. Working positively with any tensions created by conflicts of interest or aspiration that may arise between the partners.

### 4) Identifying People's Needs and Strengths

Working in partnership to gather information to agree needs, strengths and aspirations in the context of mental health and Higher Education, and ensure these are informing, and informed by, other health and social work being undertaken by other agencies.

### 5) Providing Meaningful Support

Negotiating achievable and meaningful goals, primarily from the perspective of people with mental health difficulties. Influencing and seeking the means to achieve these goals and clarifying the responsibilities of the people who will provide any help that is needed.

### 6) Promoting Recovery

Working in partnership to provide support that enables people with mental health difficulties to tackle mental health problems with hope and optimism, in the context in which they live, and to work towards a valued lifestyle within and beyond the limits of any mental health problem.

## 7) Making a Difference

Implementing practical steps to challenge inequality and promote recovery, facilitating access to health and social care interventions, and delivering the best quality self-management strategies in the Higher Education context, to meet the needs and aspirations of people with mental health difficulties.

## 8) Respecting Diversity

Working in partnership with people with mental health difficulties to provide support that not only makes a positive difference but also do so in ways that respect and value diversity including age, race, culture, disability, gender, spirituality and sexuality.

## 9) Promoting Health, Safety and Positive Risk Taking

Monitoring changes in symptomology, assessing risk and ensuring that individual and public safety is promoted and protected. Taking appropriate action in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of individuals and the broader community. At all times working within the limits of role, knowledge and competence, raising and addressing any cause for concern in a timely and appropriate manner, seeking specialist advice and guidance where necessary.

Empowering people to decide the level of risk they are prepared to take with their lifestyle, health and safety. This includes working with the tension between promoting healthy choices, safety and positive risk taking, ensuring that assessment of possible risks has been undertaken by appropriate services, taking into account the particular context-specific issues of Higher Education, and local action taken.

Reflecting on and monitoring personal wellbeing and seeking support or professional advice and guidance in the instance of physical or mental health difficulties, or personal circumstances which may impair professional practice. Reducing or halting practice if practice is compromised.

## 10) Personal Development and Learning

Keeping up-to-date with changes in practice and participating in life-long learning, personal and professional development for one's self and colleagues through supervision, appraisal and reflective practice and continued professional development.

## Bibliography

Below is a list of webpages and articles cited in this document.

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