



## Membership Capability and Conduct Framework for Practitioners and Managers



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## About the UMHAN Capability and Conduct Framework

This framework broadly encompasses the skills, knowledge and attitudes required by mental health practitioners working in the Higher Education sector and the conduct expected of UMHAN members. 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 the HE sector who provide practical support to people with mental health difficulties.
- To identify specialist capabilities linked to the Higher Education sector.
- 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, staff working in student mental health will deliver support which is cumulative of these values, knowledge and interventions in the HE sector. 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 the Department of Education), 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 and Conduct 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 conditions, acknowledging power differentials and minimising them whenever possible.
- Providing support and guidance that is accountable to those receiving it (obtaining consent), 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.
- Ensuring that ethical practice is maintained by engaging in regular clinical supervision and continual professional development (CPD) as outlined by the relevant UMHAN policies/guidance.

### 2. Challenging Inequality

- Addressing the causes and consequences of stigma, discrimination, social inequality and exclusion for people with mental health conditions, in particular those related to access to education.

### 3. Working in Partnership

- Developing and maintaining initiatives and constructive working relationships with people with mental health conditions, 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 conditions. Influencing and seeking the means to achieve these goals and clarifying the responsibilities of the people who will provide any help that is needed.
- Seeking frequent feedback from students with mental health conditions on both day to day activity, but also to inform service development. Working in co-production with students

where possible. Ensuring that the voice and experiences of even the most unwell students is factored into reviews and strategic discussions.

- Facilitating an evidence-based approach to both existing practices and the future development of services.

## 6. Promoting Recovery

- Working in partnership to provide support that enables people with mental health conditions to tackle mental ill health 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 ill health.

## 7. Making a Difference

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

## 8. Respecting Diversity

- Working in partnership with people with mental health conditions to provide support that makes a positive difference.
- Doing 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.
- Advocating for safety – for students and practitioners. This might include supporting peers, or enabling/attending appropriate supervision.
- 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.
- Enabling transparency and clarity within role boundaries, ensuring that you and others are clear on your own role and that of other professionals working with a student. Ensuring clear communication with students about these roles.
- 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; seeking support or professional advice and guidance in the instance of physical or mental health conditions, or personal circumstances which may impair professional practice. Reducing or halting practice if practice is compromised.

## 10. Personal Development, Learning and Conduct

- Keeping up-to-date with changes in practice and participating in life-long learning, personal and professional development.
- If in a management role, you should be committed to supporting colleagues through supervision, appraisal and reflective practice, and suitable Continuing Professional Development (CPD), as per current UMHAN requirements and/or the requirements of any other professional bodies staff may be affiliated with.
- Keep high standards of personal conduct, behaving with honesty and integrity to ensure your behaviour does not damage public perception of your own practice, your employing organisation or UMHAN.
- Provide timely information to UMHAN about any issues related to your conduct or competence that would result in your not being able to meet the Capability and Conduct Framework outlined and would affect your current membership/prevent your membership from being renewed.



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