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# **ALISS** Quarterly

*Association of Librarians and Information professionals in the Social Sciences*

## **Special issue: Wellbeing and Libraries**

Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace;

Animals in Middlesex University;

Teeside University reading festival;

Exam plus Keele University.

## **Disability**

searchBOX launch

Disability higher education, libraries,

teaching and learning bibliography

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PROOF

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**Disability higher education, libraries, teaching and learning bibliography**

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**PROOF**

## Editorial

Welcome to the latest edition of ALISS Quarterly. It has been published by ALISS (Association of Librarians and Information Professionals in the Social Sciences).

The main focus of this issue is the Xmas 2018 event a half day workshop on promoting mental health and well-being among library users and staff which was held in London on 13th December 2018. Further details and links to the presentations can be found on our website: <https://alissnet.com/promoting-well-being-in-library-services/>

The importance of this theme was stressed by Claire Smith, Principal Library Assistant at Keele University. Her article gives background on a number of key reports which have emphasised the role colleges should play in encouraging health and well-being amongst their student populations. She then covered the Exam Plus initiative introduced at Keele giving insight into its development from an initial project with limited funds to a fully-fledged regular event which forms part of the annual calendar. Its real strength is cross sector team based collaboration based on use of the library premises and the benefits it has delivered with limited input of funds.

The theme of student well-being was taken up by Kerstin Treder, Information Specialist, Aston University who described the evolution of a Library Study Night as a regular event to support students at the university by offering an evening of sessions on mindfulness, yoga and other relaxation based activities. It was based on an idea pioneered in USA and Germany and aimed to involve a cross campus collaboration of library staff, learning advisors, catering and chaplaincy personnel as well as the support of the student union. Activities included yoga, inspiring study skills talks plus the distribution of free food and snacks. Students were encouraged to bring friends and share the experience. One aspect emphasised was the need to target publicity as it could be hard to reach students by flyers and some pre-bookers did not appear. The choice of location was also important as multiple locations in the library seemed to decrease turnout. The final key factor in success was timing as experience showed events scheduled after 8pm achieved less attendance than those between 6-8pm.

The third speaker Paul Dockerty, Learning and Wellbeing Partner, Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) focussed on support for staff mental health in the workplace. His article provides more detail on the range of schemes offered as part of a wider work-life balance programme in his organisation. He also offered advice on how best to promote these amongst senior management in order to encourage take up as part of a well-being supportive culture.

The issue also contains an article from Ruth Houghton which returns again to the theme of well-being describing the use of animals in programmes at Middlesex University and the article by Fran Porritt describes a successful reading for pleasure group which arose from the Festival of Wellbeing at Teeside University.

Finally the issue ends with regular features on disability and information literacy. It includes our disability bibliography of recent articles and reports which is now being posted monthly on the ALISS website. <http://librarychampionsfordisabilityaccess.blogspot.co.uk>.

It also features an article about the launch of searchBox a new website which aims to assist libraries and information specialists in getting information and obtaining accessible copies of texts from individual publishers. I have personally found it very useful already and I hope that you will too.

We hope you enjoy the issue.

Keep up to date with our website at <http://www.alissnet.com> (note the new URL) and twitter channel [http://twitter.com/aliss\\_info](http://twitter.com/aliss_info) and by subscribing to our free electronic mailing list LIS\_SOCIAL SCIENCE at <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/LIS-SOCIALSCIENCE.html>.

*Heather Dawson.*  
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## **Exam Plus: A collaborative approach to promoting well-being at Keele**

*Claire Smith, Principal Library Assistant (Customer Services), Keele University*

### **The wellbeing agenda**

The subject of student wellbeing within Higher Education has never been as prominent as it is now. The previous Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, Sam Gyimah, wrote to all Vice Chancellors at the start of this academic year (Department for Education, 2018) calling on them to prioritise student mental health within their institutions. Alongside this, Student Minds are currently developing a University Mental Health Charter with backing from across the and an implementation aim of the academic year 2019/20.

This issue has been gaining momentum for the last few years; Universities UK (2015) published a paper providing good practice for universities when implementing their own mental health and wellbeing policies. They note that mental health difficulties are not always related to university life but particular aspects of the higher education experience can cause stress for students, particularly transition points. The positive is, more students with mental health issues are attending university, plus engaging in higher education can also improve mental wellbeing. Universities should be helping students to capitalise on the positive mental health benefits of higher education while providing appropriate support to those more vulnerable to its pressures.

IPPR (2017) made the following recommendations; the HE sector should adopt mental health and wellbeing as a strategic priority and increase funding to promote and support these needs. Over the last decade there has been a fivefold increase in the proportion of student's disclosing a mental health condition to their university. This has impacted upon the mental health support services available, which are not necessarily consistent across the sector. This will provide a focus that the upcoming Charter should look to address.

### **Where do libraries fit into the process?**

Sam Gyimah's expectation was that any new policies should be delivered institution wide, enabling each University department to give their support to this agenda. There is increasing demand on libraries to be a 24/7 service during semester and especially at exam times; often being the only building open to students outside of core office hours when students are feeling at their most vulnerable. Front line staff may be tasked with dealing with a number of issues, not all necessarily of a traditional library nature and are perhaps unequipped to handle these effectively. The Campus Library at Keele operates extensive opening hours (24/7 in semester) closing only for five days each year and so is often the service that students are most likely to use outside of the core hours.

Keele's founding ethos was "the pursuit of truth in the company of friends", creating a community and this ethos is still the driving force for our institutional vision – including the valuing of the health and wellbeing of the people at the very heart of our community. Our Library service still strives to support this today.

Our team identify transition periods as the main areas of stress and anxiety impacting on wellbeing, alongside the lead up to and during the exam period. Our own experiences in dealing with students on the frontline showed that stress levels and behavioural issues were more apparent at this point. This is why we wanted to develop a programme of events to support students, encourage them to take breaks and give them the opportunity to relax and remain productive.

### **Planning an effective campaign**

There was no budget for this campaign so we needed to utilise services that we already had available. A small working group from the main departments involved came together to discuss what provisions they were able to offer to this project. Under the tagline “stay calm, keep healthy and achieve your potential” a series of events were created, including revision skills, mock exam sessions, mindfulness, massage, yoga, free fruit and water, study spaces and a Library safety bus. The key thing to note is that most of these were services that we already offered at Keele, just not under a single campaign. There were just some small outlays to increase some service provisions and the Library committed to funding half of the fruit and providing space for the campaign events in the foyer and Library Training Room.

Advertisement of the campaign included posters and flyers, which were distributed across campus. There was a webpage with the calendar of events and links to booking pages. The Library advertised on the plasma screens around the building and promoted the events using departmental social media. A display was created for promotion in the Library foyer, alongside signage for the entrance of the building, which was updated daily to direct students to the various activities.

The first campaign ran for three weeks and many of the activities were popular, although it was a learning experience for us. We received over 2000 hits on the webpage and interest in many of the events was high. However, some events did not receive the anticipated engagement, so they were removed from the schedule. The important thing was that we were keen to debrief on the event and learn from the feedback we had received. This feedback has informed the future events, such as addition of services and input from student societies.

With regards to the Library commitment, by providing our space, we help to facilitate more unconventional activities, such as massage, mindfulness and the safety bus. The feedback we have received is very pleasing; many of the activities hosted in the Library are among the most popular of the whole scheme, and that is in part due to the visibility and accessibility of our service. Although we do not fund all of these sessions, we are associated with the positivity, which is great for our service.

### **Evolution of the project**

The initial campaign was considered successful and it was agreed that Exam Plus could become a Student Services core campaign with associated budget. The expectation was that other departments continue to offer support and that although under the remit of Student Support, it would continue to be a collaborative project across the university; the Library still remains very much at the heart of it. We have now successfully produced

eight Exam Plus events, in January and May of each year.

The campaign continues to evolve, with more events added each year. If we look at the scope of what we provide now (Figure 1), compared to those few sessions that we started with back in 2015, it really has grown beyond all expectations. Decisions on activities are based on feedback and also within the scope of supporting wellbeing.



Figure 1: Current campaign events

Publicity for the event has also changed; originally we were printing over 150 posters and distributing 2000 postcards to advertise the event. We now favour social media rather than printed publicity, which is a much greener alternative, with the main promotion through the Keele “Welcome and What’s On” app. This helps students to build a calendar straight to their devices, navigating each event and location.

Two meetings are held ahead of each campaign and one debrief, totalling six each academic year. In between, a Google Team Drive is used to discuss the services and locations available; this then feeds into the online calendar and app for students to view. Ahead of the campaign, the Library team create all the in-house directional and promotional signage and provide staff with briefings on the events and room set up requirements. During the campaign, the team sets up rooms, orders the fruit provision and takes bookings for the safety bus. Considering the positive impact it has on our service, it takes up a relatively small amount of planning time across the academic year.

Much of the success of the campaign has been the ability of various departments involved to work together effectively (Figure 2).

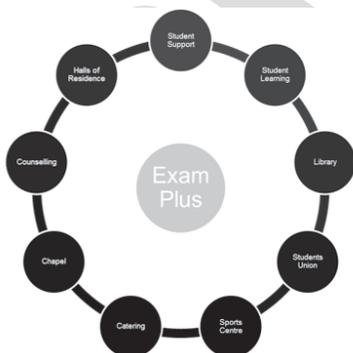


Figure 2: Teams delivering Exam Plus

This continues to grow, as under the umbrella of Exam Plus, we are able to promote other university initiatives, such as Keele Active Lives and Minds, which supports students in meeting people and staying active through sport. The challenges of working on a university wide programme are that each department has their own priorities and workloads, not necessarily mirroring each others. By ensuring that you open up those channels of communication and being mindful of your colleagues it is much easier to be supportive and create good working relationships. This can help bring opportunities to collaborate with staff on other projects to help progress and streamline services further.

### **Impact on the Library service**

An outcome of this collaboration has been that other departments have seen the benefit of advertising their services within the Library; we often have drop-in sessions in the Foyer for Student Support and SU initiatives, because they have realised the significant engagement opportunities of being in the Library. The Sports Centre shuts for the Christmas period, but there are still a number of students who would happily use the space so now our ground floor Refreshment Area becomes a “pop up gym” for that period, housing rowing machines, exercise bikes and a table tennis table. This would not have occurred had we not worked together on Exam Plus and ran sporting activities from our building.

As we are supporting things by holding sessions in our building, we really have become the heart of the initiative for students, who will come and ask when particular events are running. We are a familiar service to them, open 24/7 and the place where so much is happening – it helps to build their confidence in us and therefore feel more able to ask for advice. As feedback from the event has shown, holding events in our space works well as the students are already studying in the Library and can pop into our Training Room for a quick yoga session or massage.

### **Next Steps**

As we look to develop the Library building and see other redevelopments across the sector, it is obvious to us that more is being done to create reflective spaces in library buildings and that there is certainly demand for within our service. Providing that space for students would show that we are concerned for their welfare and we understand the changing needs of a twenty-first century library space.

We are also assessing book chat initiatives; in a change to the traditional reading group, there is no specific reading. The format allows students to attend and talk about what they have been reading recently, what they enjoy or dislike reading. It was found that a key element turning students away from joining a traditional book club was the stress of the deadline of reading a set book, thus negating the wellbeing benefits of reading. The MMU scheme is run in collaboration with the Counselling and Mental Health team and we would like to look at the potential of facilitating something similar within our service.

### **Conclusion**

Anyone interested in taking on such a project within the Library shouldn't be deterred by

money alone; you don't need an enormous budget to be successful. Customers genuinely appreciate the smallest gestures. Our monetary outlay is no more than providing half the budget for the fruit that we give away. Other than this our contribution is to promote the activities within our building and provide the space for these activities to take place – but this provides great opportunity for us to interact with not only the students but also other departments which can pave the way for other initiatives and closer working relationships. Even the least obvious of collaborations can bring some really interesting prospects to the forefront. Speak to other departments within your organisations; it is likely that they are trying to achieve similar things for your customers, but will have a fresh outlook on how a common goal can be achieved.

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IPPR (2017) *Not By Degrees*. Available from: <https://www.ippr.org/publications/not-by-degrees> [Accessed 28 November 2018].

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## Further Reading

Galante, J. et al. (2018) A mindfulness-based intervention to increase resilience to stress in university students (the Mindful Student Study): a pragmatic randomised controlled trial, *The Lancet Public Health*, 3(2), pp. e72–e81

Manchester Metropolitan University (2018) Book Chats, *MMU Library Blog*, 31 January. Available at: <https://medium.com/@mmulibrary/book-chats-35c4e5770424> [Accessed 28 November 2018].

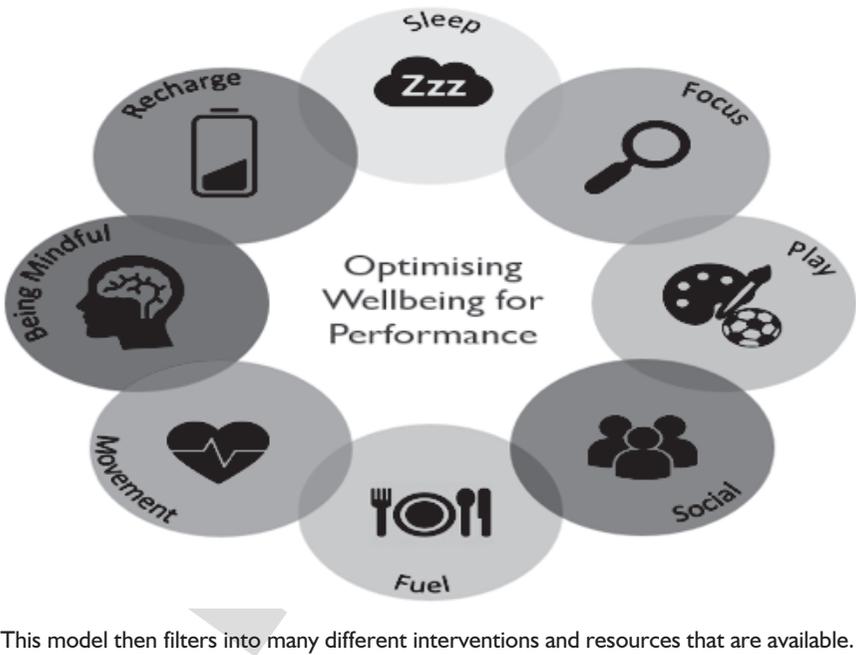
## Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace

*Paul Dockerty – Learning and Wellbeing Partner - Cafcass*

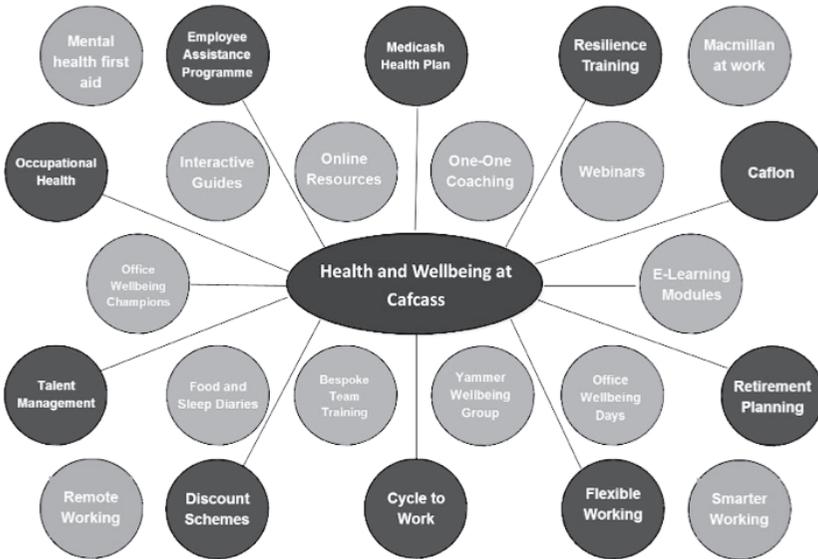
People are our greatest asset at Cafcass and we are committed to creating an environment which empowers and enables employees to achieve positive levels of physical and mental wellbeing. And this is only possible by ensuring that the health and wellbeing of all our staff remains one of our key priorities.

Our aim is to offer a wide range of resources that allows staff to take ownership of their wellbeing as we strive to continually improve our services for the children and families we work with.

To ensure a holistic approach that can adapt to the workforce and changing demands we have created a health and wellbeing model that is informed by the latest research in areas such as physiology, psychology and neuroscience. It captures eight key elements that contribute to health, wellbeing and performance; Sleep; Focus; Play; Social; Fuel; Movement; Being Mindful; Recharge. The relationship between these elements combine as a great foundation upon which to build a positive life balance for our staff.



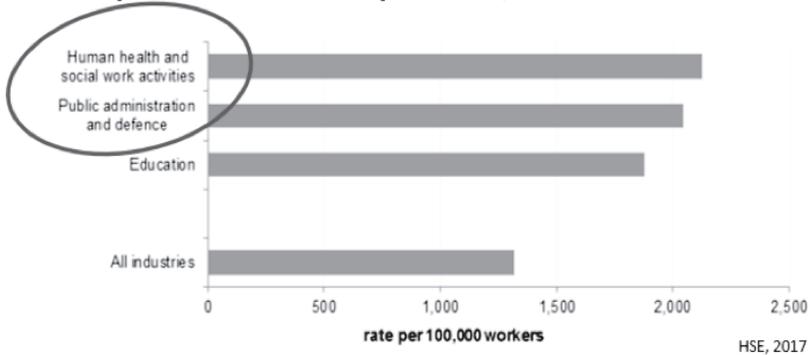
This model then filters into many different interventions and resources that are available.



**Why we focus on wellbeing**

Data from the Health and Safety Executive 2017 shows that social workers are at higher risk of suffering from poor mental health than people working in most other industries, with stress, depression and anxiety being the most reported conditions. Closely followed by public administration, and so we approach wellbeing proactively aiming to remove stigma and any labels associated. Ensuring our staff feel they are listened to and supported in a time of crisis.

**Industries with higher than average rates of stress, depression or anxiety – 2014/15-2016-2017**



## **How we support mental health**

To help protect the mental health and wellbeing of the workforce, a key part of our approach has been to develop a multifaceted network of mental health champions. This is network made up of Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAiders), Mental Health Allies (MHAs), Time to Change Champions and The Mental Health Diversity Network. To note all these champions are staff volunteers who dedicate their time to support our mental health agenda, helping to ensure that we use positive messages to understand and recognise symptoms of poor mental health. As well as sharing information of where and how to access support and communicating the positive impact this support can have.

To create an atmosphere in which mental health can be discussed in a positive and non-judgmental way we wanted to challenge the stigma around mental ill health and for staff to feel safe and comfortable to ask for help. Becoming involved in the Time to Change movement and Mindful Employer Charter we have been able to further our knowledge and awareness bringing mental health into day-to-day conversation.

\*Both employers and employees can support the Time to Change movement for free. In 2016 our Corporate Management Team signed the pledge and we have since had more than 30 staff register as champions, offering a wealth of information to support mental health in the workplace and the wider community.

In 2017 the introduction of the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) initiative, bringing an ethos that we all have a personal responsibility to look after our own mental wellbeing and that of those around us, which includes the people we work with as colleagues, clients and friends. Through a partnership with MHFA England, Cafcass trained 18 staff members to become MHFAiders.

The training raised awareness of common mental health issues including anxiety, depression, eating disorders and psychosis, and the signs and symptoms of these. Our MHFAiders received guidance on how to approach, assess and assist someone who might be developing or experiencing the worsening of these mental health issues. The main aim is to empower colleagues to access the help that best suits their needs and MHFAiders will signpost to specialist services where appropriate.

Furthermore in 2018 Cafcass joined the MHAs Network and initiative spearheaded by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), that provides confidential support to staff and managers within other organisations across the country who may not have an internal mental health support service in a time of need. To date we have trained 13 MHAs allowing us to widen our reach within the organisation and support other government bodies. The role of an ally is to; listen, empathise and help a person realise they were not alone in facing anxiety or depression or any other associated mental health condition and signpost them to relevant services for support.

## **Identify the barriers.**

Over the past 3 years, the mental health network has worked hard to raise the profile of mental health and reduce stigma that sadly still surrounds the topic. However, in a review of the mental health support in Cafcass, the champions felt that there have been several challenges that have hindered their messages having the greatest positive impact. The

main challenge faced is **time**, finding the opportunity to have constructive conversations and share relevant information face to face with peers. This can be put down to the fast-paced and demanding environment which we work in and with many of our staff working both flexibly and remotely.

This feedback led to further engaging our managers and asking them to work together with their local of mental health champions to widen the reach. We asked them three questions

1. What can you do to support the mental health champions and raise the profile of mental health within your teams?
2. What can you do to increase awareness of the mental health support on offer?
3. How can you encourage those who may need support to reach out for help?

Encouraging them to use their platform as a manager not only helps to increase the visibility of the mental health champions within the organisation, and the support services on offer, but increasing the weight to the messages being portrayed, which can help to encourage staff to speak out and speak up about their experiences of mental health.

Our three questions were followed up by four actions and this is something that all businesses/sectors can adopt both locally and nationally.

1. Allocate time in meetings. Allow a small amount of time for the mental health champion to address the group in a team meeting to encourage positive conversation around mental health.
2. Forward or share mental health related information within your teams.
3. Endorse and promote mental health awareness events. e.g. World Mental Health Day, Mental Health Week.
4. Encourage staff to engage in brave and positive conversations.

At Cafcass we will continue to engage our staff with open conversation and relevant resources focusing health and wellbeing. However, it must be taken into consideration and worth noting that our health and wellbeing is not solely impacted on by our employer or manager and we must take some responsibility for the choices that we make and our actions. We all have physical and mental health and it can be impacted daily both positively and negatively, and so I have pulled together some easy to implement top tips to help you manage your health and wellbeing in a more positive way:

**Breathe**, the breath can keep your awareness tuned into the moment. Think of the breath as a mindfulness tool you have on hand always. Tune into your breath when moving from one to task to another, simply stopping for a moment to concentrate on the breath allowing it to flow effortlessly, in its own comfortable rhythm. Feel your lungs expand and contract, your belly rising and falling, and the sensations of your breath as it passes in through the nostrils. Allow yourself a few moments each day where you just stop and pay attention to your breath. This could be waiting for your computer to load up in the morning, standing in a queue at the shops or waiting for dinner to cook.

**Take a walk**. Movement is a great way to block physical, and emotional, pain so take a 10 minute walk any time you are feeling overwhelmed is a great ally. Note that exercise

doesn't have to involve a gym membership or even getting out of breath. Building walking into our day will provide almost all the health benefits you would get from more intense forms of exercise. Try looking for ways to walk more often – getting off public transport a stop early is a great way to start. You'll get some exercise and you'll feel more relaxed and upbeat too.

**Speak to someone you trust.** The old adage of 'a problem shared is a problem halved' is very true. When you are feeling low explain why to someone, it'll help you work out how best to tackle it.

**Write it down.** If there's no one around to share with try writing down all your thoughts. Journaling is a great technique for dealing with stress as well as a host of other health and performance areas. The simplest format is just to commit your thoughts to paper every morning and evening. It doesn't have to make sense and you don't need to show it to anyone. This practice can help you deal with intrusive and nagging thoughts and stresses, leaving your mind clearer through the day.

**Meditate.** Take 10 minutes out and use an app like Headspace or Calm to do a short meditation which will help relax you. Meditation or mindfulness is a skill and, like all skills, takes practice. Repeating daily for 10 minutes will quickly give you tangible benefits for your health, happiness and performance. Commit and identify specific moments in the day to practice, maybe first thing in the morning when you wake to prepare yourself for the day, at lunch time or coffee breaks to calm a busy mind, or even as part of your nighttime routine to help prepare you for a deep sleep. Experiment and enjoy the process. If you would like support on your journey, then I recommend Headspace as a great place to start.

**Change your posture.** Whilst we all know that our mood affects how we carry ourselves few of us realise that this relationship works both ways – how we hold ourselves affects our mood and emotions. Standing up tall is one of the easiest stress busters I've come across, so start assessing your current posture. This TED talk by Amy Cuddy has more on this intriguing area of research. [https://www.ted.com/talks/amy\\_cuddy\\_your\\_body\\_language\\_shapes\\_who\\_you\\_are?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are?language=en)

**Take control.** When feeling low or stressed take a second to consider what is the most impactful thing you can do to reduce these feelings and focus on completing that. If you have greater control and understanding over your thoughts, you will be in a stronger position to navigate those moments in life with purpose.

**Distract and Combat.** If negative thoughts enter your mind adopt these two key strategies 'distract and combat'. This will give you the chance to catch your thoughts and defeat them before they can impact on your day. Positive Psychology Coach Derrick Carpenter explains in more detail here: <https://www.happify.com/hd/how-to-fight-negative-thinking-with-distraction/>

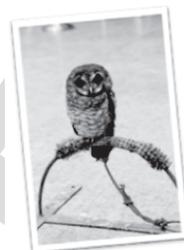
Thank you for taking the time to read this write up, I thoroughly enjoyed my time with Aliss members at the wellbeing event. I think it's great how you have a focus on creating positive environments for your service users but do spare a moment to consider the impact your environment has on your wellbeing. And if you haven't done already start the conversation about mental health with your leaders and colleagues.

## Owl About That? The use of animals to engage students with library services

*Ruth Houghton, Subject Liaison Librarian and Disability Liaison Librarian, Middlesex University*

### Background

Since 2015, Middlesex University holds a biannual Student Success Festival (SSF) that seeks to showcase support services from across the university in a fun and engaging way. The “festival” lasts a week and uses a variety of games, competitions and free gifts to engage with students and let them know where they can go to ask for help on a whole range of topics, from academic writing to wellbeing or employment issues. The event is popular and helps create a sense of community at the university. It takes place in the main University building, outside the library, to reach the largest number of students.



The SSF is an important event as it gives an opportunity for library services to step outside the confines of the library building and become embedded within the cultural life of the university. It demonstrates that the institution values the support services and reinforces the message that the library is an important service the students should engage with. Leach & Zepke perspective on student engagement outlines ‘Engaged, proactive academic libraries that play a vital role on campuses are strong signals of an institution’s commitment to student engagement’ (cited by Schlak, T. 2018).

Each year the librarians take part in the SSF and used several activities, from speed meets to code cracking, to engage with students. This paper will focus on the first animal event held during the 2017 SSF, where owls were the centerpiece of the festival, it will also discuss the use of therapeutic dogs during the 2018 SSF.

### Why owls?

The use of animals to promote feelings of health and wellbeing has been written about extensively in the literature (Phillips, J. & Hazelby, D. 2018). Student interactions with animals can help to create a sense of belonging and breaks down social inhibitions, creating a space for students to ask questions. The aim of the event was to help students feel confident enough to ask for help and feel engaged as part of a wider university community.

The initial idea to use owls arose after reading a post by Coventry University, who used owls as part of their “You Choose” campaign (Whitbourn, T. 2017). Previous animal themed events at Middlesex University (visits from reindeer organised by the Student Union at Christmas) had also proved popular, so we were confident that owls should at least draw attention.

We wanted to create an event that was fun, and would help the library reach students who may not have engaged with the services within the library. It was important to hold the event after the initial welcome week activities and just before the first assignments of the year. The SSF gave us the opportunity to fulfil these aims, as it took place in November.

Owls were also the perfect animal for the campaign Wise Owl, and #WiseOwl was used on all marketing material, including our online presence. The librarians themselves were promoted as subject Wise Owls, and students were encouraged that they too could become a Wise Owl by following study tips, such as attending library workshops, making 121 appointments with their subject librarian or coming to the drop in, Ask a Librarian, desk to ask for help. The key message focused on Wise Owls know when and where to ask for help.

### **Preparing for an event using animals**

Running an event using animals involves a great deal of preparation. The first task was to source owls from a reputable company ensuring all necessary paperwork had been completed. The welfare of the animals was of the greatest importance and the event was tailored to meet their needs, which were discussed with their handlers before the events (the handlers were also present throughout the day). The main requirement for the animals was space, the owls were not handled and needed to be kept behind a cordoned off area. The dogs were to be petted by our students, but we had to limit the number by allocating timed slots. The dogs could also be removed by their handlers at any point should they need a comfort break or time to themselves.

Because of this, the events were staff intensive. Student assistants were used to ensure plenty of staff cover for crowd control and to hand out the accompanying activities (quizzes, colouring masks).

The final consideration was signage, not only to advertise the event to the students (we had banners and leaflets), but to explain the event and the use of animals. Feedback from the first event highlighted that some students were disappointed that they could not handle the birds, and a few comments raised concern about the animals' welfare. These questions were answered on the day, but during our next event, we were careful to include posters outlining the animal welfare considerations and the reasons around why numbers were limited. Good signage also enables those students who do not like animals to avoid the area.

### **On the day**

Events using animals proved extremely popular and attracted a large crowd. The focus of the Wise Owl event was to engage students and advertise support services. To achieve this, and to encourage students to stay and talk to the librarians, we set up a colouring in station, where students coloured in an owl mask, posting their results online. Students were also encouraged to enter our #WiseOwl competition to win an iPad. During the SSF week, any student asking a library related question, either in person on the day, at the Ask a Librarian desk, or using one of our online platforms (raising a ticket, using Twitter or Facebook) using #WiseOwl were entered into a prize draw, making students aware of the different ways they can ask for help.

The following events using the dogs shifted focus to student welfare, however the librarians also took the opportunity to start discussions with students and let them know other ways they can reduce stress such as using the support services. Quizzes were used to help initiate conversations and entertain them whilst they waited in line.

## Measuring Impact

Whilst no formal evidence has been gathered to measure impact, we gathered anecdotal positive feedback during the SSF week from both students and Deans. Students greatly enjoyed seeing the animals and posted many pictures online. Some of these pictures made it on to Snapchat, as the library does not have an official Snapchat account, it was the students who created this advertising for us.

There are no attendance figures for the Wise Owl event, however all 600 owl badges were handed out by the librarians on the day, each with a conversation about the library. We had over 50 entrants to our competition and both Facebook and Twitter saw a peak in page views. One student commented, "I didn't realise the Library could help me with so many things – I'm definitely going to use it more!" Our competition winner was also delighted and had already made a one to one appointment with her librarian.

The event using dogs also proved very popular, although there was a smaller footfall, due to fewer students on campus that week. The dogs were a more relaxed event enabling librarians a longer time to chat with students. Dogs have since been used by other services across the university and hold a weekly drop in at Student Welfare and Support.

## Lessons learnt

Events using animals have proved to be very popular and promote a space for students to ask questions in a relaxed atmosphere. However, more information needed to be circulated beforehand to highlight animal welfare priorities, both in the form of leaflets and online material. Due to the queuing system for the dogs, some students were not able to wait as they had to leave for lectures, this led to some disappointment. Also, the dogs had to leave early as they began to tire, again this was disappointing, but the welfare of the animals had to come first, and more information would have helped manage expectations from the start.

Future events would also focus on gathering feedback from students, whilst we believe it was a successful event that fulfilled our initial aims, the next step will be to evidence this and capture feedback from the students.

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## Festival of Wellbeing at Teesside University

*Fran Porritt: Academic Librarian: Social Sciences, Humanities and Law, Teesside University*



Each November, a Festival of Wellbeing has taken place at the University with a varied programme of activities for students and staff to take part in. Library and Information Services merged with Student Services in 2017, to become Student and Library Services. We began to find ways to integrate the department and work together more closely, and the Festival was an ideal opportunity to do this. Many of the sessions for the Festival were held in the Library; enabling students to see a continuum between study and other activities that would benefit themselves and their learning.

The programme of events includes mindfulness, tai chi, yoga and relaxation; talks on the link between food and mental health, taster sport and fitness sessions such as soccercise. In this year's Festival we had a session on Mindful Eating, where we were invited to listen to a raisin! The point was to use all of your senses to experience food, but possibility not for the whole meal as your food would be cold by the time you finished!

One of the sessions I was involved with was themed on reading for pleasure. During the major refurbishment of our Library in the summer of 2017, it was decided to establish a fiction collection, so students could have a break from reading dry academic texts. The collection signalled that the Library was a student space and is not just an academic work zone but also somewhere comfortable to come and read for enjoyment and feel relaxed and positive.

There were two sessions on reading for pleasure during the Festival. One focussed on the therapeutic potential of reading, and another where we highlighted the fiction collection and discussed the potential direction of the group.

Our monthly Reading Group has emanated from this and is now well established, and continues to attract new members. Meetings are informal, with coffee and cake. We

emphasise to members that they don't have to have finished the book, and don't have to come to every meeting. The selection of texts has been collaborative, and we have rotated the role of facilitator. A positive indication of its success is that it rarely finishes at the designated time, as we are still chatting.

Another popular session we held during the Festival was on Writing for Wellbeing, which focussed on the potential of creative writing to help in many areas of life and study.

"Writing invites us to connect with our thoughts and feelings on a deeper level; we are encouraged to learn more about ourselves and the way we interact with others, whilst doing something fun" (Natalie Scott, 2016).

Moving forward, we are hoping to run such initiatives during peak assessment periods and that they will become part of mainstream university culture.

### Reference

Scott, N. (2016) *Pen power*. Available at: <http://www.penpower.org.uk/home/4591640580>. (Accessed: 4 January 2018).

## searchBOX: simplifying accessible content search

Caroline Desrosiers, CEO, textBOX; Huw Alexander, COO, textBOX

### Introduction

searchBOX<sup>1</sup> is a new database of publisher contact information created by textBOX to help the library and disability office community source accessible content. searchBOX is a free tool designed to streamline search queries, promote positive communication between universities and publishers and expedite the process of sourcing accessible content for print disabled students. The primary focus of this article is to explain the inspiration for searchBOX and the journey from inception to launch and beyond.

### Identifying the Challenges

In a time of limited resources and budgetary pressures, librarians and disability service officers are faced with the ever-growing challenge of effectively delivering course materials to print disabled students. The fundamental issues for those tasked with sourcing accessible content are:

- Finding the right publisher contact to fulfil a request
- Identifying the correct parent publisher for an imprint
- Slow response times after a request is submitted

searchBOX is designed to address these challenges.

### What is searchBOX and why build a database?

searchBOX is a database of over 3,500 publishers and imprints and has been created to help librarians and disability officers source content from publishers. All relevant data is housed within a single platform and the ownership of each imprint is thoroughly traced to connect users directly to the publisher information they need.

searchBOX was inspired by a similar service called Publisher Lookup. The US version of Publisher Lookup<sup>2</sup> still exists but the UK service was retired in 2016. These services paved the way for creating a centralised location for accessible contact information online. However, their localised nature and closure of the UK site have not fully addressed the need to search for content on a global basis.

Sourcing accessible content should not require rarefied detective skills and endless patience. The search process should be swift, straightforward and comprehensive. This, however, did not exist, so textBOX decided to rescue the search.

### The ASPIRE project and searchBOX

The ASPIRE project<sup>3</sup> launched in 2018 to assess publisher accessibility information against numerous metrics. The project reviewed 87 key content providers and 54 platform providers. The results across the publishing industry were poor – with a median score for publishers of 3.3 out of a possible 35. Accessibility information was not discoverable on 63% of publisher websites and 81% made no mention of their affiliation to services such as RNIB Bookshare. 95% of publishers failed to provide estimated response times and 61% provided no point of contact at all for accessible queries<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> searchBOX home page: <https://www.textboxdigital.com/searchboxhome>

<sup>2</sup> Publisher Lookup: <http://publisherlookup.org/>

<sup>3</sup> ASPIRE project: [https://www.learningapps.co.uk/moodle/xertetoolkits/play.php?template\\_id=1856#page7section1](https://www.learningapps.co.uk/moodle/xertetoolkits/play.php?template_id=1856#page7section1)

<sup>4</sup> ASPIRE: The Findings: [https://www.learningapps.co.uk/moodle/xertetoolkits/play.php?template\\_id=1856#page7section1](https://www.learningapps.co.uk/moodle/xertetoolkits/play.php?template_id=1856#page7section1)

textBOX's research broadened this review across publishers and imprints collected for the searchBOX project and the results deteriorated even further. Only 5% of publishers provided dedicated accessible information on their web pages. This is not to say publishers are not providing accessible content; they are just not advertising their services or content effectively. textBOX's results further support the need for a service to centralise and display publisher accessibility information.

### **Why is searchBOX different?**

The primary difference that searchBOX offers is scale. searchBOX is a single source of information and over double the size of existing databases. The database contains over 3,500 publishers and imprints and is the first to be internationally focused rather than confined to local publishers. The geographical reach of searchBOX encompasses publishers from the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Canada and English-language publishers from further afield. From global academic publishing conglomerates to small poetry presses. The richness and variety of the publishing industry is represented in all its forms in a continually growing and evolving database.

One of the innovative ways in which searchBOX supplies information to the library community is the inclusion of publisher affiliation with RNIB Bookshare<sup>5</sup> and Benetech<sup>6</sup>. The RNIB Bookshare service in the UK provides access to a catalogue of over 170,000 books and the Benetech Bookshare service in the US has over 650,000 titles available. They are an invaluable source of support for the library community and, as previously mentioned, 81% of publishers did not report on their involvement with these services.

### **Building searchBOX**

#### **Data Capture**

searchBOX data was captured during an intensive six-week period through extensive web research and data collection. searchBOX was not created by automated web scraping. It was built through identifying lists of publishers from a variety of sources (for instance, every relevant publisher listed on Wikipedia) and sourcing the required data by manual search of each publisher's web presence. The data will inevitably change over time but the initial research and data capture was necessary to create an accurate baseline and solid foundation for development.

#### **Website Design**

searchBOX is hosted on the textBOX website and powered by a vast database containing over 70,000 data points. The searchBOX tool was designed and built by textBOX with an emphasis on simplicity, functionality and speed.

A single search box has been coded to allow the user to search across all publishers and imprints using a keyword search that populates an interactive list of results. Previous versions of publisher contact databases have relied on a static alphabetical list of publishers. searchBOX is dynamic and intuitive and draws inspiration from keyword search techniques used for popular search engines, such as Google.

#### **Imprint Mapping**

The most time-consuming yet fascinating aspect of the searchBOX build was mapping

<sup>5</sup> RNIB Bookshare: <https://www.rnibbookshare.org/cms/>

<sup>6</sup> Bookshare: <https://www.bookshare.org/cms/>

the imprints to their respective parent publishers. The publishing industry has evolved considerably over time and many smaller publishers and imprints have coalesced into larger entities. Copyright pages printed in books capture a moment in time and do not reflect the evolving nature of publishing. This presents difficulties for a user searching for the parent publisher. Who is the current copyright holder of a book published in 1982 by Publisher X?

If we take Heinemann as an example, we can trace the radical changes the company has undergone since 1978. The UK/Australian education imprint is now owned by Pearson, the UK trade arm is owned by Penguin Random House, the US education imprint by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and the medical publishing unit by Elsevier. Heinemann has essentially become a labyrinth of lost librarians seeking content. The journey of mapping imprints to parent entities was fascinating and resulted in the creation of a unique, up-to-date and comprehensive database of publishers and imprints.

### **Testing the beta**

Beta testing was integral to developing the searchBOX interface. textBOX invited a group of librarians to beta test the tool one month prior to launch. The testers completed a survey about their impressions and recommendations. The feedback was very positive, and several comments alerted us to potential issues. For example, requests made for data already present in the search results led us to redevelop the interface and deliver results in a cleaner, more intuitive way. The invaluable feedback from librarians ultimately helped textBOX create a more useful and efficient tool.

### **Support for searchBOX**

textBOX received fantastic support for searchBOX from a variety of sources. The RNIB Bookshare and Benetech Bookshare services delivered lists of their partner publishers and DAISY, Inclusive Publishing and Jisc advertised searchBOX through their marketing.

### **searchBOX 1.0**

The first iteration of searchBOX launched on 22 October 2018 with 20 data points per publisher and imprint, including:

- Imprint
- Parent Publisher
- Full Address
- Website URL
- URL for Accessible information
- General and direct email contacts
- General and direct telephone contacts
- Request form for accessible queries (if required)
- Accessible service affiliations with RNIB Bookshare, Bookshare, AccessText and Bibliovault

A simple keyword search, such as the one below, returns all related publisher and imprint results for that search term. Each result has a country of origin, allowing the user a way to distinguish between parent publishers before clicking through to more detailed information.

QsearchBOX

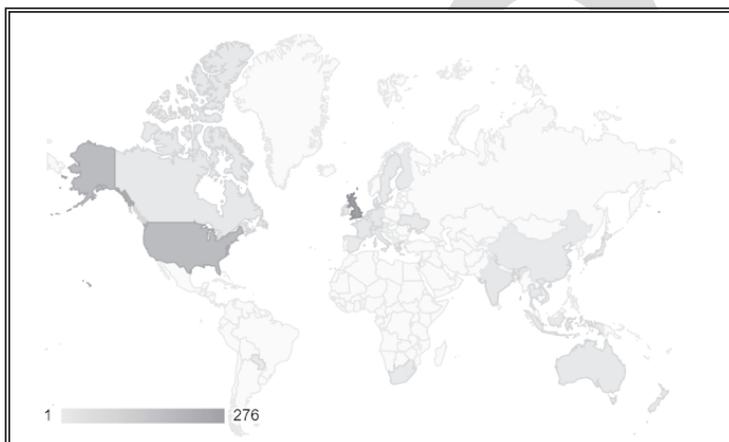
To use searchBOX enter the publisher or imprint you are searching for in the searchbox below.

Click on a result in the table below to access the full contact details for the publisher/imprint

Imprint	Publisher	Country
A&C Black	Bloomsbury	UK
AVA Publishing	Bloomsbury	UK
Absolute Press	Bloomsbury	UK
Actors & Performers	Bloomsbury	UK
Adlard Coles Nautical	Bloomsbury	UK
Andrew Brodie Publications	Bloomsbury	UK
Arden Shakespeare	Bloomsbury	UK

The searchBOX interface. Source: <https://www.textboxdigital.com/searchbox>

## Reception + Engagement from Librarians and Publishers



searchBOX usage by country. Source: Google Analytics

Although usage has been strongest in the US and UK markets, users from a further 27 countries have accessed the service. Over 100 librarians signed up to the service with 421 usage sessions since launch and an average session duration of 1 minutes 33 seconds. This relative brevity of session length is encouraging as it indicates that the tool is working efficiently and providing librarians with quick, useful answers to their queries.

The feedback has been universally positive. The University of Kent have stated:

*“searchBOX is a fantastic resource which has helped to streamline our Alternative Formats service. By providing a single point of truth, searchBOX has removed the time-consuming process of identifying the channels for obtaining accessible formats from publishers. It is particularly useful for discovering the contact details of imprints and whether the publishers are a RNIB Bookshare affiliate.”*

## Maintaining searchBOX

We built the structural framework and baseline data of searchBOX and the continued maintenance will be a collaboration between textBOX and the library and publishing communities. This crowd-sourcing of data will ensure the continued relevance and accuracy of the service.

We encourage publishers to provide feedback as a way to increase transparency and earn trust from the library community. So far, Leeds Beckett University, University of Birmingham, Swansea University and Sheffield Hallam University have been very active in providing new publisher data for searchBOX. Pearson, Springer Nature and Intellect Books have been proactive at checking and updating their own details.

## Funding searchBOX

textBOX specialises in providing image description services to the media industry. Both founders worked in academic publishing and witnessed the challenges librarians and disability service officers have faced in sourcing content. Our dedication to creating a level playing field for all users has driven the development of searchBOX.

searchBOX is a free service for the library and publishing community. There are no sign-up or subscription fees. textBOX launched the service to help facilitate better communication between users and publishers and make a positive difference for learning outcomes. We view searchBOX as a vehicle for change that should always remain free to our users.

## The future of searchBOX

The positive reception of searchBOX promises a bright future. We will continue to raise the profile of the service among the library and publishing communities and grow our membership numbers.

And this is only searchBOX 1.0. textBOX is making plans for future improvements, such as more sophisticated search techniques, as well as the inclusion of further data layers for accessibility accreditation schemes such as Benetech's Global Certification programme<sup>7</sup> and the ASPIRE project. We will also provide a facility for ISBN search to determine copyright holder. As we move into a new accessible age under the Marrakesh Treaty<sup>8</sup>, searchBOX will be a community hub for accessibility data that promotes co-operation across the industry.

## Conclusion

searchBOX seeks to be the gateway to accessibility information. Our vision is to save time and resources for librarians and disability service officers, expose helpful information about accessibility, promote communication and bring the accessibility community closer together. We are greatly encouraged by the positive response to the newly launched service and we hope it will continue to make a difference throughout the industry.

<sup>7</sup> Bookshare's Global Certified Accessible: <https://benetech.org/our-work/born-accessible/certification/>

<sup>8</sup> The Marrakesh Treaty: [https://www.wipo.int/marrakesh\\_treaty/en/](https://www.wipo.int/marrakesh_treaty/en/)

## Disability - higher education, libraries, teaching and learning. Bibliography

Heather Dawson

### Teaching and Learning

#### **Brown, S. (2018)**

Chronicle How Colleges Are 'Setting Up a Generation for Failure'.

*Chronicle of Higher Education*. 65 (2) 1

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/How-Colleges-Are-Setting-Up/244466>

#### **Oliver, M. (2018)**

Kicking Down the Doors: From Borstal Boy to University Professor.

[Youtube] Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NMfvoh-j9qw&feature=youtu.be>

Abstract: Professor Mike Oliver (who was a student at the University of Kent in the 1970s) documenting his career and the paths that led him to help develop the idea of the social model of disability.

#### **Vlachou, Anastasia; Papananou, Ioanna (2018)**

Experiences and Perspectives of Greek Higher Education Students with Disabilities

*Educational Research*. 2018, 60 (2) 206-221.

10.1080/00131881.2018.1453752.

Abstract: In Higher Education, inclusion and the enhancement of equality of opportunities and practices appeal as imperative, in most Western societies' laws. Inclusive education literature, however, reveals that despite inclusion's strong advocacy, delivery remains problematic, as beyond the surface of institutional policy, the reality of university life for students with disabilities may be one of continued exclusion and barriers to learning. Furthermore, in many countries, including Greece, the voices of students with disabilities appear significantly under-represented, not only in policy-making processes and practices, but also in the area of research. Purpose: In the light of the above, this paper aims to explore the experiences and perspectives of 32 students with disabilities on: education in Higher Education Institutions in Greece, the impending transition to paid employment and future aspirations. Method: The paper is based on a qualitative study where data were collected through semi-structured interviews with university students with disabilities. Data were analysed according to the principles of interpretative phenomenological analysis. Findings: Complex and rich accounts divulged specific issues, such as physical access and access to academic knowledge, quality of available support, interactions with tutors and fellow students, as well as perceived factors that may hinder the transition into the labour market. The results of the study also confirmed that students with disabilities are capable of asserting their needs, challenging institutional discrimination issues and proposing more inclusive alternatives. Conclusion: The findings indicate the need for reconsidering and refining institutional policies and practices in relation to issues of disability and education.

## Stigma

### Hao, k (2018, November 28)

Can you make an AI that isn't ableist? [web blog]

<https://www.technologyreview.com/s/612489/can-you-make-an-ai-that-isnt-ableist/>

IBM researcher Shari Trewin on why bias against disability is much harder to squash than discrimination based on gender or race.

## Assistive Technology

### Christopherson, R (2018, December, 18)

'Web Accessibility Guidelines' turn 10 but still less than 10% of sites are accessible [web blog]

Retrieved from <https://www.abilitynet.org.uk/news-blogs/web-accessibility-guidelines-turn-10-still-less-10-sites-are-accessible>

Abstract: On 11 December 2008, the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) published an important update to their guidelines aimed at making the internet a more accessible place for people with disabilities. Ten years on and we've not seen much of an impact. Let's look at why and what can be done to speed things up.

### Inclusive Privacy Project

<http://inclusiveprivacy.org/>

Abstract: Privacy or security mechanisms are usually designed with the generic population in mind. As such, they often fall short of supporting many under-studied or marginalized sub-populations, such as children, older adults, people with disabilities, activists, journalists, victims of crimes or domestic violence, and people from non-western or developing countries. The goal of this project is to design effective privacy mechanisms for people with disabilities, focusing on visual impairments. More broadly, this project aims to pave the way towards "Inclusive Privacy," a vision of designing effective privacy mechanism for the widest range of people possible.

### W3C (2018, November 9)

*The Business Case for Digital Accessibility*

Retrieved from <https://www.w3.org/WAI/business-case/>

Abstract: This article examines the rationale for organizations to address accessibility. It includes tangible and intangible benefits, and the risks of not addressing accessibility adequately. It explores how accessibility can:

- Drive Innovation: Accessibility features in products and services often solve unanticipated problems.
- Enhance Your Brand: Diversity and inclusion efforts so important to business success are accelerated with a clear, well-integrated accessibility commitment.
- Extend Market Reach: The global market of people with disabilities is over 1 billion people with a spending power of more than \$6 trillion. Accessibility often improves the online experience for all users.
- Minimize Legal Risk: Many countries have laws requiring digital accessibility, and the issue is of increased legal concern.

## ADHD

### **Cruger, Matthew; Weder, Natalie (2018)**

Difficulty Transitioning to College for ADHD and Learning Disabled Students

*Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*. 57 (10), s92

[https://www.jaacap.org/article/S0890-8567\(18\)30744-5/fulltext](https://www.jaacap.org/article/S0890-8567(18)30744-5/fulltext)

Abstract: The National Center for Educational Statistics indicated that in 2007 and 2008, only 55% of students who started a college program completed that program within 6 years. In contrast, students who were diagnosed with specific learning disorders (SLD) and ADHD complete college at a rate of only 41%. Only 17% receive accommodations and support, even though 94% received support in high school. Furthermore, despite the vast financial benefits of college, 92% of students with SLD have incomes of less than \$50,000 within 8 years of graduating from high school.

### **Maxman, Sherri (2018)**

Preventing Failure in Learning Disabled and ADHD Students by Careful College Selection

*Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*. 57 (10), s93

[https://www.jaacap.org/article/S0890-8567\(18\)30746-9/fulltext](https://www.jaacap.org/article/S0890-8567(18)30746-9/fulltext)

Abstract: Students with learning disabilities and ADHD are entering college in increasing numbers. However, their dropout/failure rates are much higher than those of peers with no learning issues. This happens when as follows: 1) families are unaware of what students will need to succeed academically; 2) families do not know what kinds of support are offered at colleges; 3) families do not understand that students do not always receive the same accommodations in college as they do in high school; 4) families do not acknowledge that students will need support to do well in college; and 5) families are concerned about the “stigma” of having a learning disability (LD)/ADHD.

### **Soutra, Marcus (2018)**

On-Campus Support, Accommodations, and Mentorship for Learning Disabled and ADHD Students

*Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*. 57 (10), s93

[https://www.jaacap.org/article/S0890-8567\(18\)30747-0/fulltext](https://www.jaacap.org/article/S0890-8567(18)30747-0/fulltext)

Abstract: Many college students with ADHD and specific learning disabilities (SLDs) leave for school with fewer supports than they had in high school and are less likely to seek out supports. Although more than 90% of those individuals use accommodations in high school, only 17% use them in college; many no longer identify as having SLD/ADHD. Nonetheless, self-awareness, self-advocacy, and connection to a supportive community are essential to successful outcomes in college. Mentoring programs of K–12 school-age children with SLD/ADHD are helping college students with SLD/ADHD access services in college and to self-advocate.

## Autism

### Anderson A. H. (2018)

A systematic literature review of empirical research on postsecondary students with autism spectrum disorder

*Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* First Online December 8 , 2018. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10803-018-3840->

Abstract: The findings from a systematic literature review of 24 empirical studies of interventions for post-secondary students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are reported in this study. A diverse range of interventions were examined, many of which appeared feasible and high rates of participant satisfaction were also reported. Differing responses within and among interventions may point to the possible need for individualised supports. Few studies analysed a specific academic support despite many students with ASD indicating they prefer these supports and that they find them useful. This may highlight the need for participant preferences to be given more consideration when designing supports. Most studies were of poor quality, however, so any conclusions are tentative. Directions for future research were discussed.

## Wellbeing/ Mental Health

### Goldman, Zachary W.. (2018)

Responding to mental health issues in the college classroom.

*Communication Education*, 67 (3,)

399-404 ; DOI: 10.1080/03634523.2018.1465191

Abstract: The article discusses how to respond to mental health issues in the college classroom. It explores the prevalence of mental health issues among college students and stigmas they experienced. The role of instructors in influencing mental health discussions and subsequent stigmas in their classroom is discussed, as well as the need to encourage self-regulation and metacognitive awareness in students

### Prothero, A. (2018)

What Principals Can Do About a 'Brewing Crisis' of Student Mental Health.

*Education Week* 38 (9), 12-14

<https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2018/10/17/why-principals-need-to-make-student-mental.html>

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