

What Saints is Doing for our Students' Mental Health

I will start by listing some of the strategies we are using to address mental health needs of our young people.

1. We have a health and wellbeing team consisting of a registered nurse, a clinical counsellor, with another counsellor of 0.6 FTE soon to be appointed. The team is accommodated in the centre of the College in its own purpose-built space accessible to all students. Contact can be made directly by parents by email or phone, by students by email or presentation or by referral by staff. This team is readily available, totally approachable and highly skilled to deal with the spectrum of adolescent wellbeing presentations.
2. We have a staff highly trained in youth mental health first aid: over 70% of our staff, teachers, administrative, maintenance, cleaning and catering staff are trained in this national program. This includes homeroom teachers who have an initial overall role in care of their students. This program has been celebrated by Mental Health Australia in a case study:



3. Heads of year and heads of residence have additional training in the care of young people.
4. Heads of year fortnightly meetings have a standing agenda item of students' mental health and wellbeing.
5. Heads of residence fortnightly meetings have a standing agenda item of boarders' mental health and wellbeing.
6. We run a significant R U OK? Day program annually with opportunities for parents to be included and upskilled.
7. Each year level has a fortnightly pastoral program to address mental health and wellbeing which is high on the agenda.
8. Timely responses to expressed concerns and/or reports of mental health concerns. These responses include swift access to a trained college counsellor, access to diocesan services that include - psychologists for critical incidents, statutory reporting, that ensures appropriate people are informed, and evidence-based responses are employed.
9. Camps and retreats that focus on the wellbeing of the whole person.

10. Counsellors can offer links to headspace, external services of psychologists, paediatricians and psychiatrists (with GP referral), dieticians and other health providers.
11. A program of displaying helpful posters around the College and in homerooms advocate positive messages of wellbeing.
12. Each term a Parents-in-Touch evening is held to discuss mental health and wellbeing concerns.
13. Participation in CES wellbeing events, including the annual WellBeing survey by students in Years 7 to 12 in third term – this year it is in week 6.
14. Discussion in year-level staff meetings of Saints reported outcomes of the WellBeing survey and appropriate actions initiated by heads of year.
15. Ongoing professional development of staff in mental health concerns and targeted counsellor PD according to students' presenting needs. Potential and helpful professional development opportunities are circulated to staff.
16. Provision of unobtrusive interventions eg Delta Therapy dog visits each week.
17. And these fortnightly articles, aimed at parents, in the College newsletter.