

Building Sustainable Belonging: inclusive approaches to Block design and delivery to foster wellbeing and belonging in and across student and staff communities

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The numbers of students declaring mental health conditions within England in the UK, has more than doubled in the last 5 years (Lewis & Bolton, 2023). Confidential student surveys put rates much higher, with a recent survey showing that 57% of respondents self-reported a mental health issue (Student Minds, 2023). One of the developing themes relating to mental health and wellbeing of students is the concept of ‘belonging’; when students feel like they do not ‘belong’ to their peer groups, wider learning communities and to the university at large, this can impact not only academic achievement but overall wellbeing (Hughes & Spanner, 2019). This concept was widely explored in research by WonkHE (2022).

This workshop will use the student belonging model (WonkHE, 2022) as a framework for intentional block programme design. It will provide participants with the opportunity to consider the WonkHE model as a theoretical framework, reflecting on how this manifests in the lived academic experience of staff and students in their own universities. Participants will be given an opportunity to hear the lived experience of students from Suffolk, gathered during student listening room and survey research during 2024. Barriers to belonging within Block will be discussed, to explore strategies for addressing barriers using case studies and best practice examples to enable participants to develop and implement strategies in their own institutions.

References

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