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# A Framework for Postgraduate Mental Health and Wellbeing: Building Solid Ground

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# Project Overview - Motivation



- Mental health and wellbeing issues have increased exponentially
- Emphasis has been on interventions to support undergraduate students
- MDHS predominantly postgraduate students
  
- MMS and MSPGH have Health and Wellbeing Practitioners (HWPs)
- In 2023, 16% of Medical students utilized this service
  
- 2022 MDHS LTI grant funded focus groups with postgraduate students
- HWPs recognized as having a positive impact

# Project Overview - Motivation



- Develop an evidence-based framework to support postgraduate students' mental health and wellbeing with a focus on level HWP and CoP
- First iteration to focus on postgraduate students preparing for a career in health

Framework informed by:

- Consultation with student mental health and wellbeing experts
- Review of existing literature
- Co-design with existing HWP and students who have/have not engaged with HWP



# Literature Review

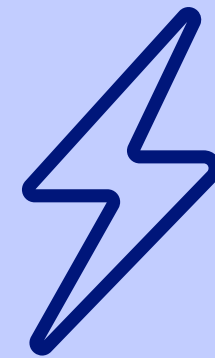
## Eight Studies

### Need



Alberts, 2025  
Chadha et al., 2020  
Chadha et al., 2022  
Nestor et al., 2023

### Efficacy



Cole & Reid, 2024  
Cole & Reid 2025  
Suckley et al., 2025

### Approach



Doslea, 2024

# Identifies a Need for Wellbeing Practitioners

## Four Studies



All four studies recommended establishment of a dedicated and professionally trained wellbeing provider role (advisor or coach).

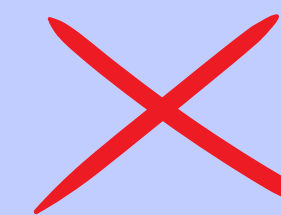
## Problems



- Student workload and distress
- Confusion over where to receive help and lack of wellbeing integration
- Senior tutors performing pastoral care
- Peer mentoring good but not robust enough
- Overuse of the deficit model
- Lack of codesign opportunities

Alberts, 2025; Chadha et al., 2020;  
Chadha et al., 2022; Nestor et al., 2023

Two studies provided models for institutional or curriculum reform



But did not indicate scope, governance, guidelines

# Analyses Efficacy of Wellbeing Provision

## Three Studies

### Peer Support Advisor (Students)



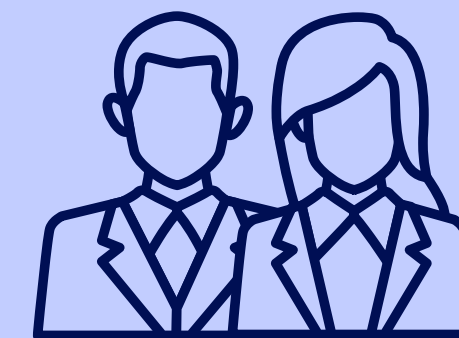
#### Training Program (Cole & Reid, 2024)

- PSAs are student advisors who are hired to provide frontline triage service for student wellbeing
- Significant increases in knowledge and confidence for wellbeing service provision

#### Descriptive Trends (Cole & Reid, 2025)

- Preliminary data collection (15 weeks into the program) of descriptive trends in help-seeking and engagement of students using the PSA service.

### Student Success and Wellbeing Advisors (Professionals)



#### Analysis of Efficacy (Suckley et al., 2025)

- SSWAs are professionally trained staff who can resolve wellbeing and academic issues but also provide triage services and ongoing support for student wellbeing.
- Data suggests the service has a significantly positive effect (95% students gave 5/5) and improve academic outcomes for students (76%)

# Recommended Care Approach

## One Study



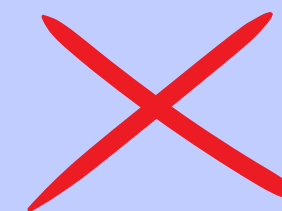
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## Wellbeing Coach

### Theoretical Rationale (Doslea, 2024)

- Recommends the widespread establishment of Wellbeing Coaches in Higher Education settings.
- Describes a rationale for integrating trauma-informed care for wellbeing provision services and providers

**Recommends an  
approach**



**Is not an empirical study**

# Gaps: A profound lack of literature

- Most studies overlook the graduate population.
- Studies that provide models for reform:
  - Embed within broader pastoral care models;
  - Offer no specific role framework, guidance or analysis.
- Very few peer-reviewed evidence-based studies:
  - Grey literature, conference presentations.
- Evaluation studies:
  - Focus on student role as replacement or supported by professional role.

# Where to from here?

Create an evidence-based, best-practice framework to support postgraduate student mental health and wellbeing:

- Work with an expert advisory group
- Consult with students and staff
- Conduct workshops
- Develop framework of best practice

→ MDHS Wellbeing Strategy?

→ MDHS Wellbeing Community of Practice?

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# Discussion