**HEA Healthy Campus**  **Case Study**

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| **HEALTHY CAMPUS CASE STUDY** | |
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| **Name of Institution/ Organisation** | Trinity College Dublin |
| **Who led the initiative?** | Partnership between the Student Counselling Service and the Students’ Union |
| **Date and timeframe of the initiative** | Academic Year 2024 and ongoing. |
| **What was the reach of the initiative?** | This initiative targeted all students in Trinity who identify as being part of an ethnic minority, including Irish Travellers. |
| **Initiative title** | Ethnic Minorities Support Group |
| **Aims / objectives** | To provide an open, safe, space for Trinity students who identify as being from cultural and ethnic minorities to engage in group psychological support with a therapist who shares their lived experience. |
| **The rationale for the action, including any identified health needs** | * The alleviation of psychological suffering and distress for ethnic minority students * An increased referral rate among ethnic minority students to the SCS as they will hopefully see the Service as welcoming and responsive to their needs. * Build a safe and shared space for ethnic minority students to meet with the psychological support of the group facilitators. |
| **Identify all frameworks, policies, or strategies this initiative aligns to**  **(internal, local or national)** | * Equality, diversity, and inclusion in higher education in Ireland and Northern Ireland * HEA - Race Equality in the Higher Education Sector * National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework for Ireland |
| **Summary** | The Trinity Student Counselling Service believes in the importance of highlighting the needs of students from ethnic minorities, especially given the increased divisiveness in society, the recent riots in Dublin and the growing anxieties of students from ethnic minorities. The experience of being “othered,” both within wider society and within college campuses, can be a source of significant mental health stress for these students. This initiative is a plus-one step to offer support and advocate for change. We hope that this much needed support can continue to be offered to Trinity students from ethnic minorities.  The first pilot of this support group took place between March – May 2024. The group ran weekly on Monday evenings, for a total of 10 sessions. The group was facilitated by a white therapist from the Student Counselling Service and a therapist from Black Therapist Ireland. The Ethnic Minorities Officer in the Students’ Union also attended weekly and was very involved in the running of the group.  Themes explored included:   * Being a member of an ethnic minority group * Integration into Irish culture and its difficulties * Desire for space to be their authentic selves. * The intersectionality and additional minority stress of being part of an ethnic minority and being a member of the LGBTQ+ community. * Dealing with micro racism, explicit racism, how to navigate this, and the internalisation of these aggressions. * Impact of acculturative stress and feeling that you don't fit in with either culture. * Self-Care. |
| **Did you collaborate with internal and/or external stakeholders to deliver?** | * TCD Students’ Union * Black Therapists Ireland |
| **How was the initiative organised?** | * Ethnic Minority Officer in SU advocated for this group. * Collaboration between Student Counselling and SU * Survey of the student body to seek information on interest in an ethnic minority support group. * Funding for external therapist from Black Therapists Ireland was provided by Trinity Inc (Inclusive Trinity Project). * Group was advertised widely across campus. * The Group is run weekly as a drop-in support group for 1 hour. |
| **What resources did you need?** | * Funding provided by Trinity Inc to pay for a co-facilitator from Black Therapists Ireland |
| **Has it been evaluated? How successful has it been?** | 8 students attended the group over a 10-week period from March – May 2024  5 attendees provided feedback:   * Indicating they found the group very helpful, and * Showing strong agreement that they felt supported to talk about their own experiences. * A desire for more group sessions was a common theme.   Qualitative Feedback Comments:  “*Not everyone has a group of friends, community of colour and/or the space to talk about racism and ethnic minority issues and space to process racial incidents in their life. This group is essential to support students dealing with POC specific issues.”*  *“Shared exposure to others’ vulnerabilities and issues has left me feeling very educated and better able to deal with issues.”*  *“This group has been very useful in my journey as an international student. I think it should keep going in further years.”*  *“I found this group to be incredibly supportive and affirming. This group allowed me to work through some personal issues and have my voice heard and understood for the first time in a long time."* |
| **Any future plans, including the sustainability of the initiative?** | We aim to establish this group as an ongoing support for students from ethnic minorities in Trinity. We plan to run this group again in both the first and second semester of the coming academic year 2024-2025.  We would like to embed this group as a routinely available option to students, particularly as students have voiced the need for such support to be available. Further funding is being sought from the University to sustain this group. |
| **Key Learning Points** | * Partnership between the Students’ Union and the Student Counselling Service in developing, advertising, and running the group has been key to its initial success. * It was vital to have a facilitator from within the ethnic minority community. Students voiced that having a co-facilitator who they could identify with and who could understand their lived experiences was a key element for attending the group. * Participants felt safe, heard, and able to share their own experiences of being a member of an ethnic minority group with other members in this shared space. * The drop-in format of the group enabled students to be flexible in trying the group, and in building the membership over the 10 weeks. |

**Healthy Campus Framework Categories (please tick all that apply)**

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| **Healthy Campus Process** | **Whole Campus Approach** | **Topic** | **Population Group** |
| Commit | Leadership, Strategy & Governance | Alcohol | Students |
| Coordinate | Campus Environment (Facilities & Services) | Substance Misuse | Staff |
| Consult | Campus Culture & Communications | Healthy Eating / Food | Wider community |
| Create | Personal & Professional Development | Mental Health & Wellbeing | Other |
| Celebrate & Continue |  | Sexual Health & Wellbeing |  |
|  |  | Tobacco Free Campus |  |
|  |  | Physical Activity / Active Transport |  |
|  |  | Wellbeing on the Curriculum (can also fall under ‘Personal & Professional Development) |  |
|  |  | Health & Sustainability |  |
|  |  | Other |  |

**Contact Details**

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