

**Increasing Anxiety awareness
in higher education during (post)
Covid-19 pandemic**



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WP4: Connecting and Experience Sharing

Piloting Report – Spectrum Research Centre,
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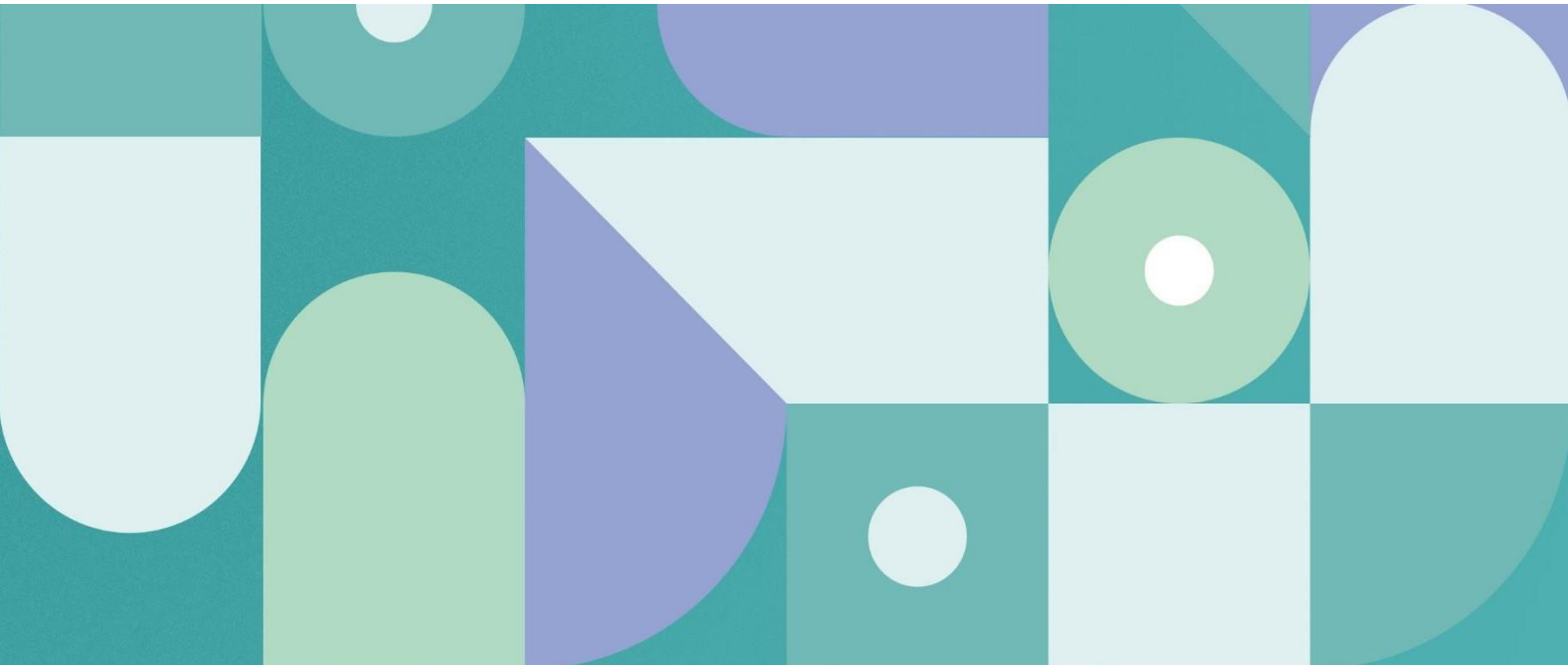


Pilot Implementation Report

Partner/ Country:	Spectrum Research Centre - Ireland	
Dates of the training:	HEI Staff: September 4 th and 6 th 2024	Students: 26 th September 2024
No. of participants:	HEI Staff: 20 participants	Students: 30 Students
Profile of participants (Knowledge, experience, gender and diversity profile)	HEI Staff: The staff in both Cavan Institute and Monaghan Institute were full-time in-service educators. There was a mixture of both male and female professionals with a wide variety of ages ranging from those in their late 20s to those in their 60's. The majority of HEI staff were white Irish.	
	Students: There was a very diverse mix of students participating in the piloting of WP4. Both male and female students were engaged in the testing and we had students from 17 to 55 years of age, however the majority of students were between 17 and 20 years of age. The ethnicity of students was mixed and were drawn from the following courses: social care, pre-service teaching, graphic design, culinary skills, mechanics and creative media.	
How were participants recruited and selected?	<p>The two HEIs were selected and invited to take part in the AWARE project as they are the main providers of further and higher education in the region where SRC operates. We have worked with both Institutes on previous projects and initiatives and therefore had an existing working relationship that facilitated the piloting with both staff and students.</p> <p>In terms of planning the piloting, we hosted the piloting with HEI staff in early September and once they were satisfied with the quality of the training and resources, they supported SRC in the piloting with students. The student piloting was organised for the end of September in advance of the Multiplier Event and was delivered over three sessions on campus on the same date.</p>	
How was/were the session(s) planned and organized?	<p>In order to reach the target group and numbers, the staff at SRC hosted two face-to-face pilot sessions with HEI staff on the 4th and 6th of September 2024. At the first session in Cavan on 4th September, 7 HEI staff were in attendance and on 6th September we held the second session in Monaghan with 13 staff.</p> <p>The majority of HEI staff in Cavan were also part of the Institute's Wellness Committee and were therefore keenly interested in the topic and the AWARE resources. Both sessions followed the same structure and agenda. We commenced with an overview of the AWARE project, its aims and objectives and then we proceeded to demonstrate the MOOC and examine the 5 core modules. At the end of the session we also highlighted the availability of the AWARE Handbook and provided all staff with an e-copy of the Handbook. We also allowed time for the self-exploration of the platform and to complete the evaluation survey.</p> <p>As a result of the piloting with the HEI staff, two educators from Cavan Institute invited us into their Social Care classes to test and pilot the ePlatform with their students as they explained Mental Health and Anxiety would be a common factor with students and believed the resources would be of benefit. We also organised a third testing session with a mix of</p>	

	<p>students from a number of other subjects for the same date. In total 30 students participated in the piloting of the ePlatform.</p> <p>Again for the students we introduced the project, highlighted the aims and objectives and we gave a brief overview of mental health and anxiety and described the signs and symptoms. With the students, we focused on how to promote self-awareness and self-care drawing from the Handbook as well as skills and strategies for managing anxiety on the ePlatform. This led to a positive open discussion among the students, followed by questions and feedback. We had time in all three sessions with students to allow and support them to explore the ePlatform and we encouraged them to complete the survey and test out the activities.</p>	
<p>Which modules were covered in the piloting activities?</p>	<p>HEI Staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Aware Project • Awareness Raising Handbook Briefing • ePlatform Demonstration – all 5 modules covered • Self-Directed learning time • Q&A and evaluation • Close 	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to AWARE Project and positive mental health • ePlatform Demonstration – all five modules covered • Self-Directed learning time • Questions and reflection • Close
<p>Highlights and positive aspects of the training implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEI staff were eager to use the materials with their students and class groups. • We received excellent feedback on the quality of the content in both the Handbook and ePlatform courses • The AWARE resources were shared to over 500 students in the HEIs through their intranet • Student engagement was high and positive – and we have rich discussions on what effect poor mental health can have on students in terms of their academic performance and career choices • Students studying in fields that will lead to emotionally high pressured roles gained vital information, skills and resources for themselves and people they may care for in the future. 	
<p>Challenges, if any, experienced during the implementation and how they were managed</p>	<p>No challenges were experienced. We needed to be flexible to fit the schedules of the HEI staff, but once the dates were agreed, the training ran smoothly.</p>	
<p>Summary of feedback (please emphasize the impact of the training)</p>	<p>The AWARE piloting of WP4 with HEI staff and students focussed on developing mental health awareness with the two institutions. The feedback collected from participants highlights the significant impact of the training on various aspects of their learning experience, from subject knowledge to user experience. Further evaluation details are below.</p> <p>Overall the feedback from the HEI staff was very positive. They were eager to continue to use the AWARE resources both personally and with their students. The staff highlighted on a number of occasions throughout the piloting that the topic was very important and the tools in the handbook could make a big difference in supporting students' mental health. The open access of the platform was also appreciated and both HEI's have linked it to their internal intranets and resources areas for staff and students.</p> <p>There was also positive feedback from the students, Many of the students took the time to share their own experiences in regard to struggling with mental health and anxiety and they related to how they would find some of</p>	

	the tools supportive. They expressed how they liked that accessing the modules online was a private way of learning in a person's own time and in private if they don't want others to know to keep it confidential.	
Quote(s) from participants (if available)	<p>HEI Staff:</p> <p>"I look forward to using some of the handbook as content for my social science classes"</p> <p>"It is great how they are accessible at all times online; we would be able to share them with the whole college through their student emails"</p>	<p>Students:</p> <p>"I feel it's very important to do self-care. I always find taking time to look after myself makes me feel so much better when I'm stressed. It gives me a break from everything"</p> <p>"I don't suffer from anxiety myself, but I can see how these tools would be so helpful for my friend"</p>
Photographs/Screen shots of pilot implementation	<i>Photographs of the implementation are available on request.</i>	
For the training with HEI Staff please include screenshot of participants' attendance	<i>Photographs of the implementation are available on request.</i>	



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