



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Trinity SHAPE Study

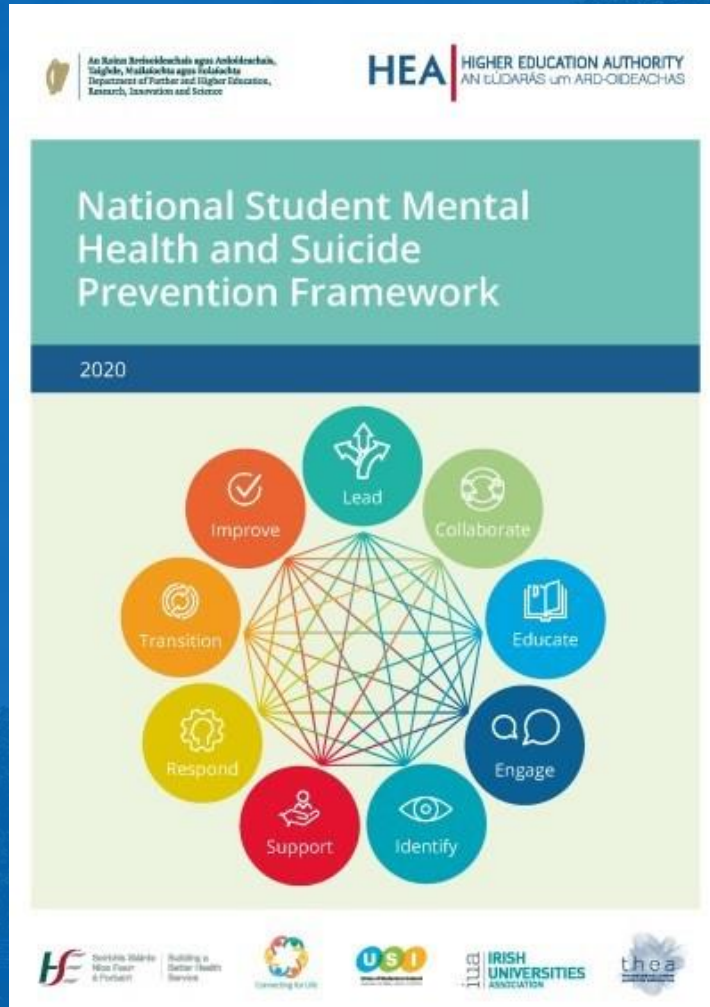
Suicide, Help-seeking and Prevention

Key Findings Report

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Background



HEIs need to take action to identify students who are at risk of mental health problems as well as promote mental health awareness for all students and staff.



Collect and analyse data to inform measures to improve student mental health

Timeline

- 2021-22: Research partner discussions & questionnaire development
Stakeholder Support & Ethics approval
(Faculty of Health Sciences)
- Oct/Nov 2022: Email invites (x2) to whole student body
(convenience sample)
- 2nd term 2023: Analysis & report write-up

Methodology

39-item survey:

- Demographics (age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, UG/PG, Faculty, EU/NEU)
- Frequency and contextual factors re: (1) Self-harm behaviour(s), (2) Suicidal Thoughts, and (3) Suicide Attempt(s)
- Self-ratings of alcohol & drug use, activity levels, satisfaction with social support, use of TCD services, impact of Covid-19 on mental health
- Help-seeking preferences and motivations following self-harm, SI, and suicide attempts
- Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

Sample

DEMOGRAPHICS

1,329

students fully
completed the survey.



86% were between
18 and 26 years.



86%

68%

were female,
27% male.



33%

identified
as LGBTQ+.



70%



were Irish, 15% were from
another EU country and 15%
were international students.

70% of students
reported their ethnicity
as White Irish.

70%



STUDENT PROFILE

76%

were
undergraduates.



43% were students in Arts,
Humanities and Social
Sciences, 28% in STEM, and
25% in Health Sciences.

43%



50%



50% of students were
satisfied/very satisfied with
their academic performance,
30% were neutral, and 20%
dissatisfied/very dissatisfied.

6% of student body fully completed survey

Sample

Survey Question	Sample Breakdown
Registered with Disability Service	21% (of which 32% for Mental Health, 21% with multiple disabilities)
Have used TCD Student Services	72% (Sport 32%, Tutor 29%, SCS 22%, CHS 22%)
Satisfaction with Social Support	52% v satisfied, 19% dissatisfied or v dissatisfied
Alcohol Use	23% do not drink Drinks per week: 1-5 = 54%, 6-10 = 15%, >11 = 8%
Drug Use	70% do not find it difficult to cope without drugs 23% sometimes do 7% often/nearly always do
Physical Activity	35% Exercise often, 44% Sometimes, 21% Almost Never
Impact of Covid-19 on MH	61% reported their MH worsened or significantly worsened

Self-Harm: Prevalence

50% reported having self-harmed. Of those:

21%

self-harmed
6 or more times.

53% self-harmed within
the previous year.

53%

72%



72% were female, 21%
were male, 5% were 'other',
2% preferred not to say.

46% were
LGBTQ+.

46%



81%

81% were
undergraduates.



92% were not under the
influence of alcohol, and
99% not under the influence
of drugs at the time.

92%



85% - "I wanted to get relief from a terrible state of mind."

64% - thought about it for less than a day

Self-Harm: Help-Seeking

- **71% did not seek help**

<i>"It wasn't too bad, I was used to feeling this way."</i>	58%
<i>"I wanted to manage my own feelings."</i>	53%
<i>"It was too difficult to access supports."</i>	15%

Of those that did seek help:

Informal	Friends	47%
	Family	43%
Formal	External MH	40%
	External GPs	30%
	SCS	17%
	CHS	5%

Self-Harm: Associations

Statistically significant associations were found between self-harm and:

Variable	Group(s) More Likely to Report Self-Harm
Age	18-26 yrs
Gender	Females, Other, and Prefer not to answer
Sexual Orientation/Identity	LGBTQ+
Registered Disability	Mental Health or Multiple Disabilities
Graduate Status	Undergraduates
Satisfaction with Academic Performance	Those with low satisfaction of their performance
Drug Use	Those who often/nearly always find it hard to cope without drugs
Taking Exercise	Those who 'almost never' exercise
Perceived Social Support	'Neutral,' 'Dissatisfied,' & 'Very Dissatisfied' with social support
Perceived impact of Covid-19 on MH	Those reporting Covid-19 'significantly worsened' their MH

Suicidal Thoughts: Prevalence

48% reported having seriously thought of ending their life. Of those:

67%

67% were female,
26% were male,
5% were 'other',
2% preferred
not to say.



68% reported
having these
thoughts in the
past year.

68%

46%

46% were
LGBTQ+.



79% were
undergraduates.

79%

Suicidal Thoughts: Help-Seeking

- **60% did not seek help**

<i>"It wasn't too bad, I was used to feeling this way."</i>	51%
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<i>"It was too difficult to access supports."</i>	21%
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Of those that did seek help:

Informal	Family	42%
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Friends	41%
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Formal	External MH	48%
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SCS	24%
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College Health Service	6%
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Suicidal Thoughts: Associations

Statistically significant associations were found between suicidal thoughts and:

Variable	Group(s) More Likely to Report Suicidal Thoughts
Faculty	AHSS students
Gender	Other and Prefer not to answer
Sexual Orientation/Identity	LGBTQ+
Registered Disability	Mental Health or Multiple Disabilities
Graduate Status	Undergraduates
Satisfaction with Academic Performance	Those 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied'
Drug Use	Those who often/nearly always find it hard to cope without drugs
Taking Exercise	Those who 'almost never' exercise
Perceived Social Support	'Neutral,' 'Dissatisfied,' & 'Very Dissatisfied' with social support
Perceived impact of Covid-19 on MH	Those reporting Covid-19 'significantly worsened' their MH

Suicide “Attempt”: Prevalence

14% made a suicide attempt. Of those:

25%



25% made the suicide attempt in the past year.

64% were female, 25% were male, 8% were ‘other’, 3% ‘preferred not to say’.

64%



51%

51% were LGBTQ+.



81% were undergraduates.



81%

59%



59% had thought about it for more than a month with only 12% thinking about it for less than a day.

Suicide “Attempt”: Help-Seeking

- 52% sought help

Informal	Family	50%
	External MH Service	51%
	External GP	46%
Formal	SCS	11%
	College Health Service	3%

Of those that did NOT seek help:

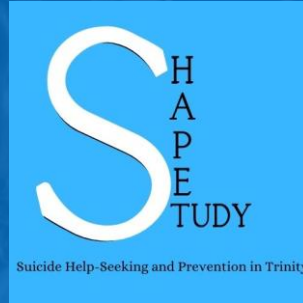
<i>“I needed to keep it to myself...”</i>	58%
<i>“I didn’t trust the supports available or think they would help me.”</i>	54%
<i>“It was too difficult to access supports.”</i>	29%

Suicide “Attempt”: Associations

Statistically significant associations were found between suicide attempt and:

Variable	Group(s) More Likely to Report Suicide Attempt
Gender	Other and Prefer not to answer
Sexual Orientation/Identity	LGBTQ+
Registered Disability	Mental Health or Multiple Disabilities
Alcohol Consumption	Those drinking > 20 drinks per week
Satisfaction with Academic Performance	Those ‘dissatisfied’ with performance
Drug Use	Those who often/nearly always find it hard to cope without drugs
Perceived Social Support	‘Neutral,’ ‘Dissatisfied,’ & ‘Very Dissatisfied’ with social support
Perceived impact of Covid-19 on MH	Those reporting Covid-19 ‘significantly worsened’ their MH

SHAPE areas vs. MW2



my world.

Self-Harm	50%	38%
Suicidal Thoughts	48%	63%
Suicide Attempt	14%	10%



A blue-tinted photograph of a group of students walking down a modern staircase with glass railings. The students are in motion, and the image is used as a background for the slide.

Key Findings & Recommendations

Finding:

The most common reasons for not seeking help were *It wasn't too bad, I was used to feeling this way, and I wanted to keep it to myself.*

Recommendations:

Encourage and Increase help-seeking behaviour through stigma-reduction and service-promotion campaigns.

Teach students about the broad range of available supports inside / outside College.

Finding:

Participants who are LGBTQ+ or registered with a disability endorsed higher levels of self-harm, suicide thoughts, and suicide attempts.

Recommendations:

Reach out to and partner with LGBTQ+ & students with disabilities to inform inclusive mental health campaigns and services.

Enhance the visibility of Trinity's student services as LGBTQ+ & disability friendly.

Finding:

Students with lower perceived social support are more likely to engage in suicidal behaviour.

Recommendation:

**Continue to collaborate across
College to promote social
connection and inclusion.**

Finding:

**Students who self-harm
are more likely to seek help
from informal sources, e.g.
peers, than professional
services.**

Recommendations:

Leverage the power of peer and family supports by engaging with both groups.

Educate students on how to refer peers to services.

Roll-out online identifying & responding training to all TCD staff.

Findings:

There were significant associations between:

Higher drug use and both suicide thoughts & self-harm, and higher drug and alcohol use & suicide attempt.

Lower physical activity and both suicide thoughts & self-harm.

Poorer satisfaction with academic performance and self-harm, suicide thoughts & suicide attempt.

Recommendations:

Expand and market programmes that get students physically active such as those provided by Sport

Widely promote online programmes for teaching skills supportive of mental health

Continue & increase the embedding of mental health literacy and coping skills into the curriculum.

Continue to increase the visibility of supports for academic success such as in Disability Service and Learning Support.