



Mental Health<sup>+</sup>

# MENTAL HEALTH CHAMPION SKILLS PROFILE



## Why a Mental Health Champion Skills Profile

Although the topic of mental health of young people and those working with them has always been seriously discussed, the COVID-19 pandemic, and associated lockdowns and distance learning requirements, has highlighted the importance of mental health and wellbeing and the extent to which it impacts young people (as well as teachers).

The main purpose of this tool is to support VET organizations (and other educational organizations) to develop the role of Mental Health Champion.

A Mental Health Champion is someone who takes action to raise awareness, normalise the conversation around mental health and challenge stigma. Mental health champions aren't expected to be experts in mental health, or to diagnose mental health problems. Instead, their role is to both promote positive mental health and address mental ill health and to signpost to relevant support and help, where appropriate.

Creating Mental Health Champions is one way to help create a mentally healthy school.

Examining the existing good practices and the opinions of mental health and education professionals, the Mental Health + project partnership created a Skills Profile for VET organizations (and other educational organizations) to serve as a basis for the selection and development of the position of Mental Health Champion.

The Skills Profile points out the skills and responsibilities needed to develop a successful role of Mental Health Champion within VET organisations, in line with the ESCO classification. It is presented by highlighting the essential tasks of the role and comparing these to the skills needed to successfully carry them out. The skills pillar of ESCO contains 13,485 concepts structured in an hierarchy which contains four sub-classifications. The same categorisation is used for this elaboration: Knowledge; Skills; Attitudes and values; Language skills and knowledge. Hence, starting from the field research results, skills are ranked (core, important, optional) in a weighted way in order to help organisations understand the skills essential from the outset and those that can be developed as part of an ongoing process (either through training or the organic growth of the role as it becomes more established).

The main skills in the table are colored in green and they are the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that the person chosen to take on the role of Mental Health Champion is really important to possess and demonstrate in order to fully fulfill the goals and objectives of this position. Important skills are highlighted in orange, and optional skills are highlighted in blue and are knowledge and skills that can be further developed over time.

The skills and responsibilities described in this Skills Profile can be included in a self-assessment questionnaire, be part of the interview for choosing a person in the organization that will take on this role or be part of a role description. They will help the role of Mental Health Champion to be understood and developed in its entirety.

## Mental Health Champion Skills Profile

TASKS	SKILLS CLASSIFICATION			
	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes and values	Language skills and knowledge
<b>To raise awareness of Mental health</b>	<p>Know about mental health and emotions</p> <p>Know and understand of the major issues affecting poor emotional health in schools. Such as anxiety, stress, depression, bereavement, and loss, eating disorders, self-harm, substance misuse etc.</p> <p>Know different methods and channels for disseminating information</p> <p>Know how to leverage social media</p>	<p>Organise mental health and well-being working groups, themes, events, materials, and training, in collaboration with both internal and external networks</p> <p>Deliver group tutorials/ assemblies around mental health and invite external organisations to come in and speak</p> <p>Provide information to staff and students about mental health and wellbeing and actively promote emotional health and</p>	<p>Believing in people</p> <p>Inspiring hope</p> <p>Patience</p> <p>Proactiveness and sense of initiative</p> <p>Personal charisma</p> <p>Open-mindedness</p> <p>Constructive thinking</p>	<p>Awareness of mental health terminology.</p> <p>Use accurate terms when talking about mental health challenges</p>

		<p>wellbeing in the school</p> <p>Race awareness in the organisation about initiatives, events, services, relevant health messages and ways to promote mental health</p> <p>Promote the psychological and physical wellbeing of learners and teachers by working on self-esteem, personal skills, confidence, motivation, commitment, coping strategies, limits and obstacles, desires, expectations, and abilities</p> <p>Promote the development of knowledge and awareness of the risks that certain behaviours may entail such as smoking, alcohol and drug use, bullying and cyberbullying, excessive and incorrect use of technology</p> <p>Signpost people to appropriate places for information and advice</p> <p>Talk about mental health openly</p>		
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		Use accurate terms when talking about mental health challenges		
<b>To promote the positive mental health and inclusive working environment</b>	<p>Understand the impact of stigma on people with mental health challenges</p> <p>Know the fundamentals of human rights protection and advocacy</p> <p>Understand the human growth and challenges</p> <p>Know the fundamentals for building trusting relationships with young people</p> <p>Aware how mental health issues can present differently in different people</p> <p>Know of diversity and how gender, race, sexual orientation, disability status etc. can impact and influence mental health</p>	<p>Encourage open discussions on specific mental health topics, usually defined as taboo</p> <p>Contribute to a positive environment by reducing conflict among teachers and between teachers and parents, acting as a mediator and helping to understand difficulties and find functional solutions</p> <p>Discuss difficult topics dispassionately</p> <p>Encourage colleagues and students to participate in organisational' mental health and wellbeing initiatives/challenges</p> <p>Act as a contact for all issues concerning the promotion of emotional health and the provision of related services</p> <p>Help ensure that the organisation makes optimum use of the support and guidance</p>	<p>Unprejudiced thinking, respectfulness, and tolerance towards all people despite their characteristics</p> <p>Sensitivity and capacity to relate to a diverse range of people in a non-judgemental and unbiased way</p> <p>Acceptance of diversity</p> <p>A positive forward-thinking attitude</p> <p>Creativity in methods and approaches</p> <p>Humanistic and holistic conception of people</p> <p>Capacity to be influential and persuasive</p> <p>Responsible leadership</p> <p>Willingness to take risks</p>	<p>Appropriate and inclusive language that does not discriminate or stereotype</p>

		<p>provision available from the network and agencies that support it</p> <p>Act as a role model by encouraging a culture that respects diversity, values inclusiveness and reduces stigma and discrimination</p>		
<p><b>To create and monitoring mental health policies and procedures to be shared with all staff, students and parents</b></p>	<p>Know and practice on how to embed mental health inclusion concepts within processes and practices</p> <p>Understanding the human psyche, healthcare and working capacity management</p> <p>Understand of the occupational protection and occupational healthcare legislation</p> <p>Know the basic task and operation of the organisation (staff and students)</p>	<p>Develop strategies and policies to support students and staff mental health</p> <p>Identify the needs to change the policies and procedures</p> <p>Ensure that policies and strategies are regularly updated</p> <p>Clearly express ideas orally and in writing</p> <p>Effectively Present the information in front of the audience.</p> <p>Organise and deliver group work</p>	<p>Capacity for individual and team work</p> <p>Capacity to be influential and persuasive</p> <p>Innovative thinking</p> <p>Openness to change</p> <p>Loyal</p> <p>Ethical</p>	<p>Write concise instructions in appropriate language</p>

	<p>Understand the connection between learning and mental health and their construction / support together with the rest of the network and service system</p>	<p>Diverse skills in networking and cooperation</p> <p>Adapt work and knowledge of the organisation practices</p>		
<p><b>To organise educational events</b></p>	<p>Inform and know the innovations in the field of mental health</p> <p>Knows different methods to assess training needs</p>	<p>Research training needs</p> <p>Deliver / organise training for teachers around mental health</p> <p>Promote relevant internal training events or campaigns</p> <p>Use interpersonal and organisational skills</p>	<p>Interest in personal development</p>	<p>Equip the members of staff being trained in mental health related issues with skills and strategies to recognise and overcome unconscious language biases.</p>
<p><b>To support people with mental health challenges</b></p>	<p>Understand the elements that can impact mental health and wellbeing and know how to reduce them (e.g., stress, body image, bullying etc.)</p> <p>Know how to deal with a</p>	<p>Having a passion for supporting people with their mental health</p> <p>Creating a sense of security and trust Listen actively and effectively asks questions</p> <p>Cope with emotionally</p>	<p>Empathetic, care, compassion</p> <p>Be a good listener</p> <p>Be observing</p> <p>Be approachable and willing to help</p>	<p>Use the language of emotional intelligence.</p>

	<p>mental health crisis/ knowledge of mental health first aid.</p> <p>Know and understand mental health diagnosis; their signs, symptoms, and treatments; and how they can differ from person to person</p>	<p>demanding situations</p> <p>Take notice of anybody who may be struggling with their mental health and offer them support</p> <p>Assess risk when someone should be referred to an external professional and refer staff and students to mental health support services as needed (e.g., counselling, or mental health services/)</p> <p>Offer a person-centric approach – treating each person individually</p> <p>Work with a range of staff in school to help identify students who need universal, targeted, and high needs mental health support</p>	<p>Discretion and respect for the privacy of people seeking support and information</p> <p>Desire to make a positive impact on the lives of others</p> <p>Lived experience of mental health challenges</p>	
<p><b>To communicate and be in touch with mental health organisations and professionals</b></p>	<p>Aware of external mental health organisations that can offer support to young people and staff</p> <p>Aware of the value in integrating mental health care in all levels of the</p>	<p>Communicate and keep connections with different external mental health organisations and professionals</p>	<p>Sociability</p>	<p>Keep formal oral and written dialogs</p>





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**Legend/How to read the table:**

Core skills

Important skills

Optional skills

