Ulster University

CIAT

Changing attitudes towards the mental wellbeing of early career **ARCHITECTURAL TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS**

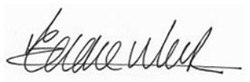
Background and guidance for employers, industry professionals, academics and students

Written by David Comiskey MCIAT

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Mental health or neurological conditions and differences are not new and many of us within the profession will be affected at some point over the course of our lives and careers. We need to spread the message that no one is alone and raise awareness of the help which is available. This comprehensive assessment of the current issues surrounding a very real problem is both instructive and useful to those experiencing mental health issues and to employers or mentors in positions of responsibility. We hope this demystifying of perceptions goes some way to improving workplace and study environments and contributes to reducing the stigma of an issue which affects many people, promoting a help-seeking mindset. We would strongly encourage all employers to read this report and pledge the commitment to adopting three of the principles outlined to recognise the mindfulness PatHWAY.



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This work has been developed by the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists, alongside Ulster University, and is supported by The Architects Benevolent Society

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report has been written to help fill the void around the needs and expectations of young and early career professionals, to provide advice on how to broach the subject of mental wellbeing and act as a mechanism to begin conversations with the aim of promoting a healthy and happy workforce and workplace. The content identifies graduates of today as being of a generation which have a high potential for mental health issues, especially true in the architecture subject area, and are entering an industry with a poor track record when it comes to mental wellbeing. Some of the key statistics shown within the report, taken from a national University Student Mental Health Survey (The Insight Network, 2019), include:

33.9%	experiencing a serious personal, emotional, behavioural or mental health problem for which they needed professional help.
21.5%	having received a mental health diagnosis
42.8%	outlining they were often or always worried
50.3%	reporting some thoughts of self-harm
75.6%	concealing their symptoms for fear of stigmatisation

In addition, research undertaken at Ulster University as part of the cross-national World Health Organisation (WHO) World Mental Health Surveys International College Student Project highlighted that over 50% of new entry students participating in a survey stated they had experienced a mental health issue at some point in their life. Almost a quarter of students screened positively for a mood condition, and over a fifth of students had an anxiety condition (McLafferty et al. 2017). Nearly a third of students reported having suicidal thoughts, whilst almost 20% of students said that they had made a suicide plan and a similar percentage engaged in self-harm (O'Neill et al. 2018).

This does not mean that young professionals should be treated differently in practice or given less responsibility. Rather, the guidance provided within this report is simply aimed at ensuring that there is an awareness of the importance of mental wellbeing within the workplace and a supportive culture where individuals feel they will not be stigmatised if they face such personal challenges.

A model of support is presented which is divided into three areas: university support, readiness for professional practice (including self-care) and practice support. The third strand (presented on pages 24 and 25) is aimed at managers, employers and mentors within the workplace and provides guidance and good practice tips in relation to making small changes within the workplace which can make a big difference to the lives of young and early career professionals.

The conclusion challenges employers to study the good practice suggestions presented on pages 24 and 25 and contribute to reducing the stigma around mental health, as well as making small changes in their organisations, by recognising the mindfulness **PatHWAY** (Promoting Health & Wellbeing Among Young & Early Career Architectural Technology Professionals).

That is, selecting a minimum of three of the suggestions from the list provided and incorporating them within the workplace. Whilst recognising that every practice is different, regardless of the size of the organisation, there are at least three things, three small changes which everyone can make which can make a difference.

PatHWAY

To pledge the commitment of your organisation to **PatHWAY**, either scan the QR code or click on the **PatHWAY** link.

To view the growing list of organisations that have already pledged their commitment to **PatHWAY**, either scan the QR code or click on the **PatHWAY** link.

PREFACE

The purpose of this report is to raise awareness of the importance of mental wellbeing, to highlight the pressures faced by students, and to provide a model of support for young and early career professionals and their mentors, both in an academic and professional context. This work has also presented an opportunity to discuss the diverse nature of the architectural technology profession. If the content, guidance and good practice makes a difference to even one individual, helping or inspiring them to make small changes to their own lives or the lives of others, then it will have achieved its aim and been worthwhile. Throughout the report reference is made to a range of supporting resources and websites, links to these can be found on page 31. Special thanks are extended to each of the following individuals and groupings who contributed to the development of this report through informal discussions, conversations and written feedback.

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INTRODUCTION

Architectural Technologists by nature think holistically, considering the health and wellbeing of those occupying the spaces they design. This can include investigating concepts such as biophilic design and benchmarking schemes against the WELL Building Standard. However, it is sadly ironic that the health and mental wellbeing of young or early career architectural technology professionals new into the industry, and often tasked with designing such spaces, is sometimes neglected. It has been stated that "Individuals are prone to mental health problems during life transitions, such as the progression through from teenage years into early adulthood (i.e. 18–25 years), which for many corresponds with their time at Higher Education (i.e. university or college)" (Shannon et al. 2019 citing McLafferty et al. 2017) and transition to the workplace.

It is important for anyone acting in a leadership or mentor capacity to a young or early career architectural technology professional to be aware of this and have a basic understanding of the potential reasons why instances of issues with mental wellbeing are on the rise, the difference they can make and have an awareness of the help and supporting resources and organisations which are available.

To use a metaphor, let's take an example of a defective building detail. A minor construction defect (such as a bridged cavity or incorrectly installed wall-tie), if ignored, can lead to more serious issues requiring specialist remedial treatment. It is like small worries and concerns in our own lives, if left to linger and develop. Unless we know and learn how to deal with them, they can build and build into something more serious. The longer we leave it the more difficult it is to fix.

The focus of much of the research undertaken in this area to date has been on the construction industry holistically, concentrating on those regularly working on or visiting sites. However, it can be easy to overlook the needs of placement students and graduates entering professional roles, such as in the architectural technology profession, and the challenges they face, both socially and professionally, as they make the transition from academia. Such challenges are wide ranging but can include integration issues, especially true for female placement students or graduates working in primarily male environments, managing busy workloads on live projects and the responsibility and accountability or working on real as opposed to hypothetical university projects. There are also challenges in terms of meeting the demands of employers, with some having expectations for promising staff to prove themselves by working, often unpaid, in excess of their contracted hours.

This report is intended to help fill the void around the needs and expectations of young or early career professionals, provide advice on how to broach the subject of mental wellbeing and act as a mechanism to begin conversations with the aim of promoting a healthy and happy workforce and workplace. Whilst aimed primarily at industry professionals, it also contains guidance to benefit early career architectural technologists and academics. In producing this report, it is important to acknowledge the work of the Architects Benevolent Society who offer mental health support to students on architectural technology programmes and the Architects' Mental Wellbeing Forum (2019) who have produced an excellent Architects' Mental Wellbeing Toolkit (AMWT, 2019). The content within this report is intended to supplement the aforementioned publication by providing a background narrative in terms of the pressures faced by young and early career professionals as they make the transition from education to professional practice and providing additional guidance to key stakeholders to promote wellbeing during this transition.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE ARCHITECTURAL TECHNOLOGY DISCIPLINE

The purpose of this section is to familiarise those offering placement positions or employing architectural technology graduates with current education trends and curricula. With many employers either not from the discipline or having received their education some time ago, it is useful to provide some background information as a context for the discussion which follows.

Typically, the natural progression route for a graduate from an architectural technology programme was to move into architectural practice or work for a statutory body as a specialist in technical design. However, the evolution of the architectural technology discipline has seen it become more diverse, with graduates now specialising in a range of sectors, including but not limited to; traditional architectural practice, off-site construction, project management and fit-out, building performance assessment, specialist conservation, digital construction, education and specialist health and safety roles. Looking to the future, more graduates will end up establishing their own company. These companies may not necessarily be what we would classify today as 'a traditional practice'. Rather, as the sectors of computing, architectural and technical design become more interwoven, they may be bespoke consultancies offering services in human augmentation, generative design and computational architecture. This is not future gazing; such companies already exist.

The diverse nature of both current and future professional roles, coupled with an acknowledgement that the design of built assets has become more complex, has meant that the architectural technology education sector has had to reinvent itself to produce well rounded young professionals who are competent and have a skillset which allows them to flourish in whichever area they choose to specialise. As with any degree, it is not a training programme aimed at preparation for one specific job role, as may have been the case in the past. Rather, it is aimed at providing students with the requisite knowledge and a skillset that will enable them to be adaptable to whatever roles they find themselves undertaking throughout their professional career. This is now more important than ever due to global mega-trends impacting on all industries and job roles. Young professionals need to be equipped with the skills to prepare for the future work challenges, and employers are often reliant on placement students and graduates to provide these solutions.

This change is already apparent in the built environment sector and impacting the architectural technology profession in the form of digital disruption. In the last number of years, we have witnessed the emergence of human augmentation in the form of artificial intelligence, augmented and virtual reality in the construction sector. As outlined by EY (2018), "These breakthroughs are in turn generating new products and services, such as AVs (autonomous vehicles), drones, robots and wearables." This essentially describes the evolution of the construction sector over the last number of years.

Whilst this change is exciting, it does mean that the content and delivery of architectural technology programmes today is very different to what would have been experienced previously, and very different to what many in industry would have experienced. There needs to be a realisation that, whilst the traditional core aspects of architectural technologists' education still exist, a growing focus must be placed on making young professionals adaptable and resilient to the future challenges they will face over the course of their career. Having the technical capabilities and digital skills to transition to remote working, as illustrated with the COVID-19 pandemic, is an example of such adaptability and resilience.

The development of programme content is driven by each individual institution, by what is happening within the industry and by the standards set out by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in their Subject Benchmark Statement for Architectural Technology (2019) along with the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists (CIAT) by way of their professional body accreditation requirements (CIAT, 2019). Such rigour has raised standards and helps ensure graduates have the skills expected of a modern-day architectural technologist. As already alluded to, the diverse nature of the discipline has meant that as well as the core competencies of technical design and detailing, designing sustainably and with inclusivity in mind and having an awareness of relevant building control and planning legislation, graduates are generally expected to have an understanding of:

- Building Information Modelling (BIM) authoring software, implementation processes and associated standards and protocols.
- Information management platforms and their operation.
- How to interrogate the robustness of details from a building performance perspective using appropriate software platforms.
- Different building typologies, materials and construction methods.
- Methods of procurement and contract management.

They are expected to be innovators, model makers, problem solvers, researchers writing with academic rigour and effective communicators. Additionally, employers are now explicitly highlighting the importance of soft skills which include resilience, adaptability, organisation, good interpersonal skills and the ability to work in a team (QS, 2020). There is also an expectation for young and early career professionals to manage their own career and be life-long learners.

This is not meant to be a definitive list of topic areas or personal traits, rather, it is aimed at demonstrating the broad range of topic areas covered and soft skills developed in architectural technology degree programmes. Neither is it a criticism, as the programmes today are simply reflecting what an architectural technologist has become. The education sector is exciting, full of innovation and pushing the boundaries year on year, but in parallel it is placing increased pressure and expectations on students. In short, successfully completing a degree in architectural technology is challenging in terms of workload and the time commitment expected. Increasingly, this academic challenge is faced alongside growing external and social pressures.

"Look for something POSITIVE in each day, even if some days you have to look a little harder."

Original source unknown

STUDENT LIFE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

When reading this there may well be a tendency to reminisce about your own educational experience, but it is important not to make comparisons. At a macro level there are many similarities such as a studio culture along with late nights and long hours required to complete assessment tasks. Whilst the set assessment tasks may now be more focused, these traits still exist. However, at a micro level, young and early career professionals today have an educational experience which is very different to what has gone before for a variety of reasons.

Rising tuition fees, accommodation costs and general subsistence mean many **need** to work more hours than they study just to maintain their existence, leading to an unhealthy work / life balance which can result in stress and illness. This has been compounded in recent years due to cuts to grants and financial support in general, with the state of the economy linked to student wellbeing issues (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2011). Increasing tuition fees have made students more aware of the value of their degree, with added pressure from parents and employers to achieve a high award classification. More and more have caring responsibilities to consider outside of their studies, for parents and grandparents, this is now more prevalent than ever due to an ageing population (ONS, 2019). Many young and early career professionals juggle their academic studies with fledgling sporting careers, the time commitments of which due to increased levels of professionalism have increased exponentially in recent years. The age of social media has also brought about its own pressures to conform, as well as the endeavours to live up to the perception of 'student life' which can impact on mental health. As described in an article, "This is a generation born with a phone in their hand. Bombarded with filtered images, pretend lives...and it's 24/7, there is no day off, no relief from it." (Morris, 2020). Interestingly, a recent study showed that individuals who deactivated Facebook for a set time period increased subjective well-being (Allcott et al. 2019).

Today's students live in a society where illicit substances are more readily available than ever before, which comes with increasing peer and social pressures. A study (focusing on student drug use) highlighted that over half of the respondents had used drugs at some point, with around one third using drugs as a mechanism to help deal with stress (NUS, 2018). This stress, potentially resulting from increased degree classifications expectations and financial pressures as already outlined, could perhaps be a reason why 20% of respondents who indicated they had used drugs, had tried so called 'study drugs' at some point (NUS, 2018). The ambition for widening access to third level education has seen more individuals in general and more from disadvantaged families with low socio-economic status entering university which has brought about its own challenges. There has also been a rise in the number of students presenting with diagnosed disabilities or long-term medical conditions. For example, the number of students in higher education with a form of autism spectrum disorder is increasing (Hillier et al. 2017), with these students reporting more mental health concerns (Gurbuz et al. 2019), and at greater risk of dropping out of university compared to their peers (Ratcliffe, 2014).

"One small POSITIVE THOUGHT in the morning can change your whole day."

Original source unknown

An increasing number of mature students face time and financial stresses as they struggle to juggle their studies with work to provide for their families. A high number of these students choose to commute to university which can result in them feeling less connected to student life and their peers, resulting in added stress and feelings of isolation. There has also been a drive towards more self-directed learning in third-level education over recent years which exacerbates feelings of isolation and increases stress on those who find time management and workload prioritisation difficult. In equipping graduates with skills to prepare them for future work challenges, employers often turn to them to provide solutions which in turn places more pressure on their shoulders. In summary, today's students are different to those who have gone before and are a community with complex needs. All of this can have an impact on young professionals as they move into professional roles post-graduation.

MENTAL WELLBEING

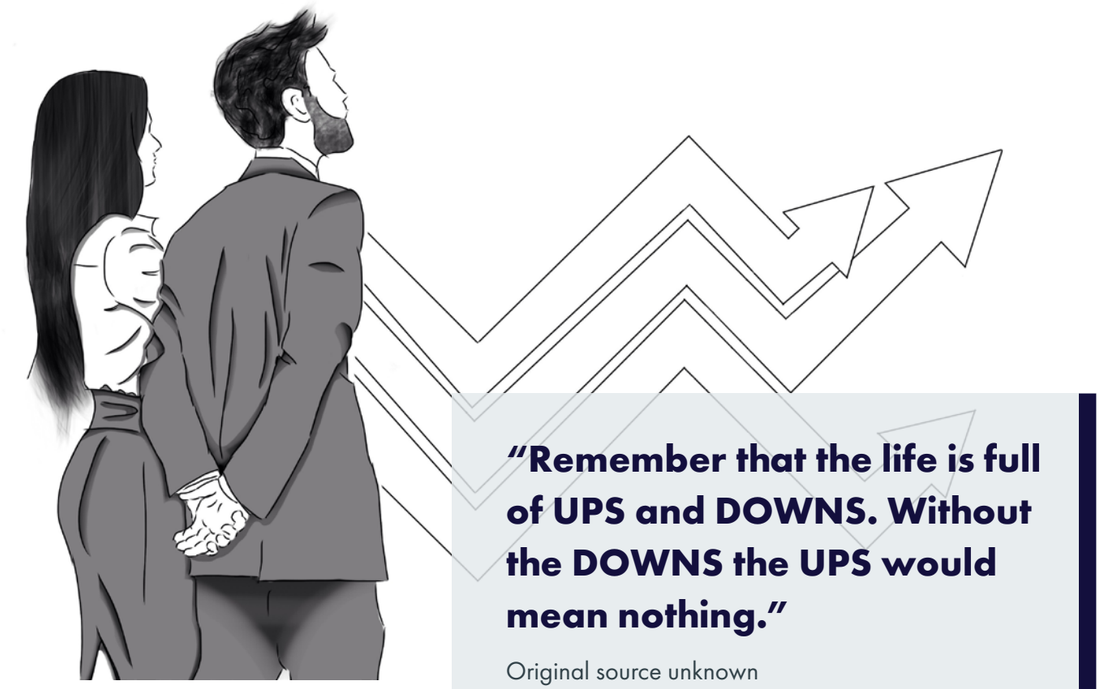
A driver for the development of this work was the sobering statistics relating to the mental wellbeing of the next generation of young and early career professionals, especially when considered alongside the statistics relating to the construction sector. To be clear on what is meant by mental health, The WHO define mental health as "a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to her or his community" (World Health Organisation, 2020).

The pressures faced by today's young and early career professionals, both during and after university, coupled with social and personal pressures, means that more and more are struggling to cope with the "normal stresses of life" as per the definition. Whilst stress or anxiety can be normal in some situations, especially in architectural practice, "it can be debilitating to those who frequently experience severe levels of it" (Hardy & Castonguay, 2018).

As a responsible professional it is important to be aware of social trends and to ensure anyone acting in a leadership or mentor capacity is similarly aware. In work as in life, everyone has different trigger points and stress holding capacity and it is important to keep this in mind in our dealings with others. This does not mean that young professionals should be treated differently in practice or given less responsibility. Rather, this guidance is simply suggesting that there is an awareness of the importance of mental wellbeing within the workplace and a supportive culture where individuals feel they will not be stigmatised if they face such personal challenges. The area of mental wellbeing has been brought into sharp focus recently due to the levels of reported mental illness and wellbeing issues among UK students (The Insight Network, 2019). The 2018 national University Mental Health Survey, which had over 37,500 responses, presented some sobering statistics:

33.9%	experiencing a serious personal, emotional, behavioural or mental health problem for which they needed professional help.
21.5%	having received a mental health diagnosis
42.8%	outlining they were often or always worried
50.3%	reporting some thoughts of self-harm
75.6%	concealing their symptoms for fear of stigmatisation

In addition, research undertaken at Ulster University as part of the cross-national WHO World Mental Health Surveys International College Student Project has shown that over 50% of new entry students participating in a survey stated they had experienced a mental health issue at some point in their life. For example, almost a quarter of students screened positively for a mood disorder, and over a fifth of students had an anxiety disorder (McLafferty et al. 2017). Nearly a third of students reported having suicidal thoughts, whilst almost 20% of students said that they had made a suicide plan and a similar percentage engaged in self-harm (O'Neill et al. 2018). As psychological issues are likely to increase during their time at university, the fact that many students are commencing university with elevated rates of mental illness is of great concern. A report by Student Minds (Smithies and Byrom, n.d.) highlighted that "Young LGBTQ+ people have higher rates of poor mental health, self-harm and suicide than their non-LGBTQ+ counterparts."



"Remember that the life is full of UPS and DOWNS. Without the DOWNS the UPS would mean nothing."

Original source unknown

Whilst there hasn't been a study which has focused specifically on young or early career professionals within the architectural technology discipline area, findings from the closely related architecture subject area are noteworthy. They illustrated that 33% of architecture students responding to a survey believed they had a mental health problem, higher than the rate within the UK general population, with students studying this discipline more likely to experience mental distress when compared to the 'typical' student (Kirkpatrick, 2018 citing other studies).

Research undertaken in the United States identified architecture as a high-risk area in relation to suicide, with potential reasons being the high personal standards individuals in the discipline set themselves as well as being overly self-critical (arch20, 2020). It was stated "Often, they (architects) believe it's their parents, bosses, or spouses who expect them to be perfect. Sometimes, they impose their high standards on everyone else and so develop unrealistic expectations of other people." Employers or mentors having unrealistic expectations and unsolicited opinions of employees can result in low self-esteem and be a trigger for mental health issues. It is important to be aware of the perils of judging others as no one is fully aware of another individual's personal circumstances.

All of this must be considered against the backdrop of the construction sector already having a poor track record when it comes to mental health and wellbeing, with figures from the Office for National Statistics (in England between 2011-2015) showing a higher suicide rate in skilled construction and building trades than in any other sub-major occupation listed (ONS, 2017). A 2019 study identified stress, depression or anxiety as accounting for just over one fifth of work-related ill health in the construction sector in Great Britain (HSE, 2019a).

Whilst there are excellent initiatives aimed at raising awareness and providing support such as Mates in Mind and the Architects' Mental Wellbeing Toolkit, there has tended to be a focus on those already established within the industry as opposed to young and early career professionals recently making the transition from the university environment. A holistic approach is required which places an equal focus on the new talent about to enter the industry. This new talent, having completed a degree, will largely secure a professional role, something which brings its own challenges considering findings suggesting those in professional occupations have significantly higher levels of work-related stress, depression or anxiety (HSE, 2019b).

To bring about meaningful change a bottom up approach is required which ensures those entering the industry have an awareness of and know how to deal with mental health and wellbeing issues. Likewise, there is a responsibility on employers and academics to provide support and nurture a supporting environment. Combined, this could help break the cyclic culture that occurs when tutors, or people further along in their education, influence younger students to think that unhealthy practices are the norm, or a necessary part of training. The suggestions included within this report are not ground-breaking, indeed many will already be routinely undertaking such practice. The guidance provided is simply acting as a reminder of good workplace practice which should make for a happy working environment.

PROMOTING A HEALTHY AND HAPPY WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

The background summary has identified graduates of today as being from a generation which have a high potential for mental health issues. This is especially true in the architecture subject area, as evidenced, and are entering an industry with a poor track record in relation to mental wellbeing, usually in a professional role which research has shown to be high risk. It could be described as a 'perfect storm' and it would be remiss not to acknowledge, raise awareness and act upon the research statistics.

Unfortunately, many young professionals are reluctant to seek help. An Ulster University Student Wellbeing Study found that only 10% of students who screened positively for a mental health problem received professional help (McLafferty et al. 2017). Large gender differences were revealed with only 5.3% of male students seeking help, in comparison to 13.8% of female students. It is therefore of utmost importance to encourage help-seeking behaviour and reduce the stigma attached to having a mental health problem. Not only will this make for a healthier and happier workforce, but also a more productive one, considering that 91 million workdays are lost per annum in the UK due to mental illness symptoms at a cost of £70 billion (Sime, 2019). It makes good business sense to invest in the mental wellbeing of employees, with research showing that every £1 invested by businesses in mental health training can see a return of up to £10 (Sime, 2019).

> **"Sometimes we're tested NOT to show our weaknesses, but to discover our STRENGTHS."**
>
> Original source unknown

Case Study - Stride Treglown

Click on this **link** or scan the QR Code to learn about how Stride Treglown implement fun activities within the workplace to promote mental wellbeing.

MODEL OF SUPPORT

In an editorial piece for the Journal of Mental Health, Brown (2018) adapted a WHO model of informal and formal help to produce a new model which focused on providing support for students. This report further adapts the model presented by Brown (2018) to focus on young and early career professionals in their progression from university to the workplace, outlining how interaction with those acting in a leadership or mentor capacity can help. It recognises the importance of self-care for those holding management or mentor positions, as it is difficult, if not impossible, to support others' self-care if individuals are not capable of managing their own. The model (**FIGURE 1**) is designed to illustrate the overarching principles, with detailed examples of good practice and support found on pages 20 - 25. The suggestions shown are a combination of original ideas by the contributors to this report and existing ideas, which in some cases have been built upon, outlined in the AMWT (2019) and in a publication by the TUC (2015). In addition to what is included for each of the three areas, a common area of good practice includes having a level of compassion when dealing with young professionals, and indeed workers of all ages, as no one is aware of the challenges that others are facing on a daily basis.

FIGURE 1 Model of Support, adapted from Brown (2018)

LEVEL 1

University Support

Support which can be provided at University

Institutional level support for academics

- From an institutional perspective it is important that staff receive adequate training and that, in turn, students are made aware of wellbeing ambassadors or champions.
- It should be the responsibility of both the institution and individual staff members to keep up to date with industry and social trends related to health and wellbeing.
- At an institutional level there should be a 'wellbeing promoting approach', refer to the work of the Universities UK Step change Framework.
- It is important that staff are committed to wellbeing and that any visiting speakers or guest lecturers for seminars or critiques are properly briefed, with specific mention of wellbeing.
- Ensure both students and staff are aware of the process of applying for additional study needs support, and the help and support available.

Day to Day Activities and Preparation for the world of work

- Academics should look out for small details, perhaps changes in personality or engagement in class, or other signs of distress.
- Promote initiatives such as 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing' and the support offered by the Architects Benevolent Society.
- Integrate mental wellbeing into curriculum design, adopting a proactive rather than reactive approach. Refer to the work of the Higher Education Academy and their Embedding Mental Wellbeing in the Curriculum publication (Houghton & Anderson, 2017). This should be introduced from the outset, before unhealthy practices gain a foothold.
- Embed resilience building into all modules, facilitating opportunities for personal assessment and reflection of this important skill.
- Ensure the curriculum includes opportunities for active learning, group activities and problem-based learning. This builds the capacity to think creatively and find solutions both professionally and personally.
- Promote wellbeing within the classroom environment i.e. scheduling classes to start 1 minute later than usual to promote reflection and taking a minute to think about mental wellbeing.
- Ensure student support services are promoted on Virtual Learning Environments.
- For students seeking placement, require that they have a clear understanding of working hours and salary to allow for financial planning and time management.
- Ensure students are familiar with career department to aid planning of placement and graduate positions, especially international positions.
- Provide clear expectations of placement/graduate etiquette.
- Ensure students/graduates have realistic expectations of what to expect.
- Arrange sessions with recent placement students and graduates.
- Ensure students are aware of policies in relation to health and safety and bullying and harassment and know the mechanisms for reporting should the need occur.
- Remind students that if they have a disability or a long-term medical condition, they should schedule a meeting with their tutor to discuss any reasonable adjustments that a placement provider may need to undertake prior to the commencement of the placement.

Working with employers and placement providers

- Providing mentoring and support to employers new to recruiting students/graduates.
- Ensure employers are aware of university policies in relation to health and safety and bullying and harassment.
- Build in recall days as part of the placement module to allow connections with peers and conversations to take place, review ongoing support and evaluate the impact of the learning experience.
- Ensure employers are aware of support offered by the Architects Benevolent Society.

LEVEL 2
Readiness for Professional Practice (including self-care)

Examples of what young professionals can do to help prepare themselves

Early stage university life

- Develop an early career network, achieved for example by having a professional LinkedIn presence and attending regional CIAT events.
- Engage with employers as early as possible during guest lectures and at networking events. Seek short internship opportunities during holiday times to prepare and set realistic expectations for placement and graduate positions.
- Sign up for alumni-mentoring and peer support programmes.
- Set early career goals; short, medium and long term.
- Undertake regular self-assessment exercises, such as skills analysis, to identify your strengths and opportunities for development.
- Sign up for university sports clubs and societies. This will help develop your networking and teamworking skills.
- Be aware of and get involved in university initiatives supporting mental wellbeing and any ambassador opportunities.
- Sign up for extra-curricular activities, volunteer with societies or charities or become involved in activities which will build your confidence.
- Embrace collaborative coursework tasks and become comfortable with working as part of a team.
- Ensure that if you have a disability or a long-term medical condition, you have a needs assessment undertaken at your institution. This is to identify any support required to address difficulties experienced when studying and in preparation for placement or a graduate role. Institutions should have support mechanisms available for students with long-term medical conditions or a diagnosed disability.

Pre-Placement or in preparation for a graduate role

- Engage in any placement and/or graduate preparation sessions arranged by the career development centre at your university.
- Ensure you have realistic expectations of work. This will be aided by any internship experience you can gain.
- Make use of the career development centre in your institution.
- Speak with a specialist recruitment consultant for free impartial advice on finding a role that suits your strengths, interests, location and remuneration expectations. They can also provide feedback on your CV and give advice and tips on how to prepare and conduct yourself at face to face or virtual interview.
- Before accepting a position ensure you have remuneration and working hours confirmed and your income covers your expenses. If you work an additional part-time job, ensure you plan for this.
- At the interview stage try to get a feel for the staff morale and workplace environment. If possible, speak with some of the current staff or connect with them via LinkedIn.
- If seeking an international placement or graduate position ensure adequate planning has taken place and key aspects such as accommodation, salary, holidays, cost of living etc. has been considered.
- Identify key employers you would like to work for to ensure you secure a role you will enjoy. Do your research!
- Use resources such as the NHS 'Get Your Mind Plan' to take a quiz and get a personal plan.
- If you have a disability or a long-term medical condition, you should schedule a meeting with your tutor to discuss any reasonable adjustments that a placement provider may need to undertake prior to the commencement of the placement.

Whilst on placement or upon commencing a graduate role

- Whilst on placement remain in contact with peers and be proactive in doing this. If anyone works in close proximity arrange to meet for coffee to discuss your placement experiences.
- Set and know your own limitations whilst in work and be aware of your stress holding capacity.
- Ensure you schedule time to do the things you enjoy outside of work.
- Set daily or weekly goals, small in nature, and celebrate achieving these. They could be as simple as becoming familiar with a new detail or building regulation, or researching a specific material being used on a project.
- Mindfulness practice is good for general wellbeing which some individuals may find beneficial, see information and advice from NHS (2018).
- Learn when to say 'No' and explain your actions if you feel under stress.

LEVEL 3
Practice Support

Support which can be provided whilst on placement or when starting a graduate position

- Ensure mental wellbeing is addressed in recruitment and selection processes.
- Mental wellbeing should be included as part of onboarding experience for both placement and graduate recruitment.
- Schedule a clear induction session which discusses the importance of mental wellbeing and an environment which is LGBTQ+ friendly.
- Have an induction buddy scheme who can reach out prior to the start date.
- Consider a placement overlap period between existing and new students. This could continue as a mentor or buddy scheme.
- Ensure an early training needs analysis takes place for young professionals and that there are regular reviews in the first six months.
- Consider scheduling workplace resilience programmes during lunchtimes or after work.
- Have an office mental wellbeing ambassador or an Architects Benevolent Society ambassador.
- Facilitate training for anyone wanting to be an ambassador.
- Having a trained Mental Health First Aider is also a very good way to ensure the mental wellbeing of staff is being protected.
- Promote and mark World Mental Health Day on 10th October each year.
- Have a visual presence in the office promoting health and wellbeing and support mechanisms. This could include posters and/or literature promoting the support offered by the Architects Benevolent Society or Mates in Mind.
- Promote initiatives such as 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing'.
- Having inspiring quotes displayed in the office can set the correct tone and make new employees feel at ease in a new environment.
- Consider organising staff teambuilding exercises which can build a rapport within an office environment. These could be inclusive physical activities which also promote physical wellbeing.
- Plan lunchtime CPD sessions which focus on mental wellbeing and physical health.
- CPD sessions could also cover aspects such as financial planning and advice, especially useful for young professionals, and signpost individuals to relevant support services if required such as Citizens Advice.
- Ensure there is an encouraging atmosphere within the practice and young professionals have a mentor they can trust and approach in confidence.
- Keep up to date with industry and social trends related to health and wellbeing.
- Consider having a social media policy and training on appropriate use, warning of dangers etc. This could be incorporated as a CPD.
- Whilst acknowledging flexi-working will not be a possibility for all organisations, could this be something which could be trialled i.e. offering the possibility of working 8am – 4pm as well as 9am – 5pm.
- Promote and encourage initiatives such as the CIAT Mentor Match Me which will both act as a form of CPD and help for young professionals working towards Chartered membership of CIAT.
- Staff members could attend university events such as careers days or guest presentations to develop a relationship with students and be a familiar face for those applying for placement and/or graduate positions.
- Senior staff members could speak with universities/academics to ensure they are aware of how best to integrate new graduates and/or placement students within organisations.
- Ensure clear information is provided to new employees on working hours and salary prior to starting to allow young professionals to make adequate provision for financial planning and time management.
- Have specific protocols in place for international students to ensure a smooth transition into the workplace.
- Take advantage of free mental health first aid training courses which are offered on a regular basis.
- As a responsible mentor or manager ensure you set employees goals which are attainable.
- Consider having an office email policy to reduce the stress which can be felt when numerous unnecessary emails are received which could be better dealt with by having a short face to face meeting or telephone conversation.
- Enforce office working hours.
- Be mindful of students or graduates with autistic spectrum disorder as, whilst very capable, they can potentially take longer to settle into the organisation because of their social interaction skills.

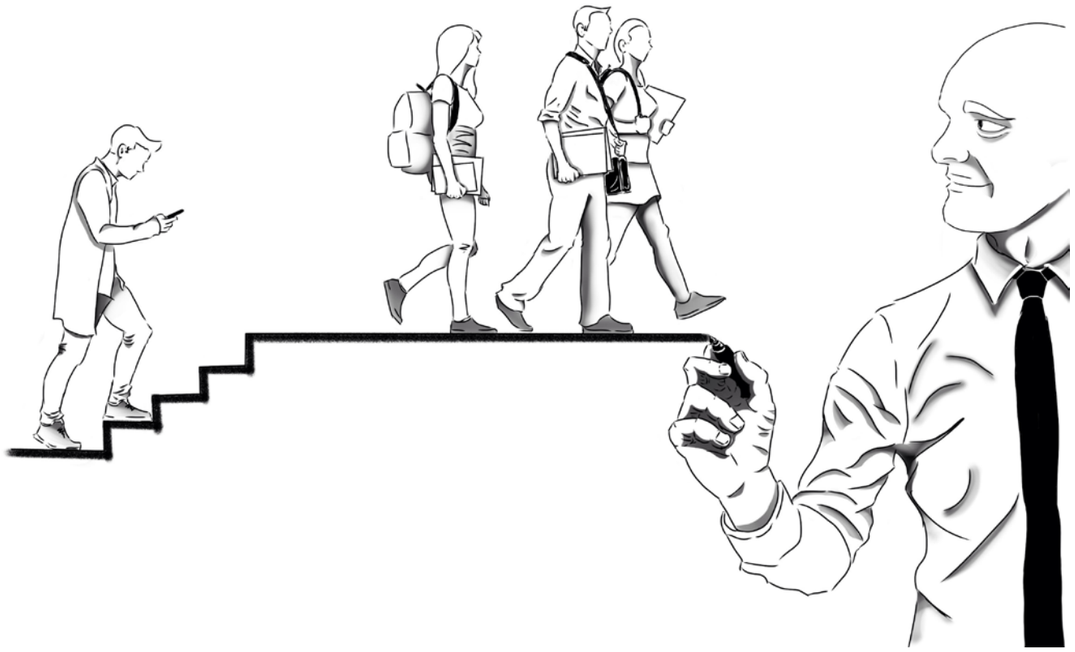
Self-Care for Management

- Set your own limitations as a manager.
- Reduce email overload by only checking emails a maximum of twice daily.
- Celebrate successes of both the company and the employees.
- Remember that physical self-care is important.
- Schedule meetings with friends, colleagues or business acquaintances to spend some time out of the office.

SUMMARY

This report has been written to help fill the void around the needs and expectations of young and early career professionals, to provide advice on how to broach the subject of mental wellbeing and act as a mechanism to begin conversations with the aim of promoting a healthy and happy workforce and workplace. It has provided an insight into how the architectural technology education sector is evolving as well as highlighting some of the social pressures encountered by today's students. The suggestions included within the three distinct areas provided in the model (**FIGURE 1**) are designed to help individuals make small changes which can make a big difference to their own lives or the lives of others.

Focusing specifically on employers, you are challenged to contribute to reducing the stigma around mental health by making small changes in your organisations. This can be achieved by recognising the mindfulness **PatHWAY** (Promoting Health & Wellbeing Among Young & Early Career Architectural Technology Professionals). That is, selecting a minimum of three of the suggestions from the list provided on pages 24 and 25 and incorporating them within your own workplace. We recognise that every practice is different but feel that regardless of the size of the organisation, there are at least three things, three small changes which everyone can make which can make a difference. Anyone wanting to go further can explore initiatives such as Time to Change and Mindful Employer.



PatHWAY

To pledge the commitment of your organisation to **PatHWAY**, either scan the QR code or click on the **PatHWAY** link.

To view the growing list of organisations that have already pledged their commitment to **PatHWAY**, either scan the QR code or click on the **PatHWAY** link.

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USEFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

Action Mental Health - https://www.amh.org.uk/about/
Anxiety UK - https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/
Architects Benevolent Society - https://www.absnet.org.uk/
Architects' Mental Wellbeing Forum - https://www.amwf.co.uk/
Architects' Mental Wellbeing Toolkit - https://4efa479e-a68f-4327-a38f-07f6761a62ea.filesusr.com/ugd/fb91f8_33c556b0fe9b4855824da571826586d6.pdf
Calm - https://www.thecalmzone.net/
Centre for mental health - https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/
CIAT Mentor Match Me - https://ciat.org.uk/resource/menmame.html
Citizens Advice - https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/
Heads Together - https://www.headstogether.org.uk/
Mates in Mind - https://www.matesinmind.org/
Mental Health Foundation - https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/
Mindful Employer - https://www.dpt.nhs.uk/mindful-employer
Mindwise - http://www.mindwisenv.org/
NHS Every Mind Matters - https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/
NHS Get Your Mind Plan - https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/your-mind-plan-quiz/
NHS, Mental Health and Wellbeing - https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/
Rethink Mental Illness - https://www.rethink.org/
Samaritans - https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/workplace/wellbeing-workplace/
Student Minds - https://www.studentminds.org.uk/
Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing - http://www.setrust.hscni.net/healthyliving/3172.htm
Time to Change - https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/
Universities UK, Stepchange - https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/stepchange
Young Minds - https://youngminds.org.uk/


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