



ROAD2EU SUMMER SCHOOL 2026 — LECTURE 7

Implementation Lab: Digital Health Literacy, Privacy, Ethics and Well-Being Interventions in Hybrid Settings

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WHAT THIS LECTURE COVERS



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01 Digital health literacy

02 Mental well-being

03 Hybrid environments

04 Privacy and ethics

05 Short interventions

06 Evaluation

EU MENTAL-HEALTH POLICY IS EXPANDING; WELL-BEING AFFECTS PARTICIPATION, RETENTION, AND SUSTAINABLE WORK

- The EU's **Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health** (2023) marks a significant expansion of EU-level mental health policy, with direct implications for higher education.
- **Student and staff well-being** directly influence participation rates, retention, and the sustainability of academic work.
- This lecture treats well-being as both a **student-support challenge and an institutional-culture issue** — requiring systemic, not just individual, responses.

A SYSTEMIC ISSUE

Well-being is not a welfare add-on. It is a core determinant of whether students and staff can participate, persist, and perform sustainably in higher education.



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THE POLICY BACKBONE: DIGITAL HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH, GDPR, AND THE EUROPEAN HEALTH DATA SPACE

FRAMEWORK 1

Digital Health and Care

EU strategy for digital transformation of health and care systems, including digital health literacy and patient empowerment.

FRAMEWORK 2

Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health

EU Communication (2023) establishing a comprehensive, cross-sectoral approach to mental health across the lifespan.

FRAMEWORK 3

GDPR

General Data Protection Regulation — governing all personal data processing in support services, including health-related data.

FRAMEWORK 4

European Health Data Space

EU framework for secure, interoperable, and trusted use of health data across the EU, with strong privacy protections.



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DIGITAL HEALTH LITERACY IS PART OF MODERN STUDENT-SUPPORT LITERACY

- Students and staff increasingly use **digital health information and digital support systems** — apps, online counselling, health portals, and AI-assisted tools.
- Universities need basic institutional competence in how such information is **found, critically evaluated, and appropriately used**.
- Digital health literacy is not a medical competence — it is a **critical information literacy** that belongs in student-support training.

A NEW LITERACY

As health information and support systems move online, the ability to find, evaluate, and use digital health resources becomes a core component of student and staff support literacy.



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WELL-BEING SUPPORT MUST BE VISIBLE AND EASY TO ACCESS TO AFFECT PERSISTENCE AND INCLUSION

- **Counselling, stress-management support, and peer-support structures** are evidence-based contributors to student persistence and academic inclusion.
- Support that is **hard to find, stigmatised, or bureaucratically complex** will not be used — even if it formally exists.
- Visibility and accessibility are design requirements: support services must be actively communicated and easy to reach for all student groups.

VISIBILITY IS A DESIGN REQUIREMENT

The most effective well-being support is the support that students actually use. Accessibility and visibility are not optional features — they are the primary design criteria.



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WHOLE-SYSTEM SUPPORT LOGIC: CONNECT ACADEMIC UNITS, SERVICES, COUNSELLING, AND COMMUNICATION

Academic Units

Lecturers and tutors are often the first to notice signs of student distress. They need clear referral routes.

Student Services

Administrative and welfare services that provide the first point of contact for students seeking support.

Counselling

Professional mental health and well-being support, including crisis response and ongoing counselling.

Referral Routes

Clear, documented pathways from first contact to specialist support, including external referral options.

Communication Channels

Active, multi-channel communication of support availability — not just a page on the university website.

Fragmented support systems create hidden barriers that disproportionately affect the most vulnerable students.



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HYBRID RISKS: OVERLOAD, ISOLATION, AND ALWAYS-ON EXPECTATIONS AFFECT STUDENTS AND STAFF

- **Digital intensity** in hybrid learning and working environments can increase cognitive overload, social isolation, and the expectation of constant availability.
- These risks affect **both students and staff** — and are often invisible until they manifest as burnout, disengagement, or dropout.
- Well-being support in hybrid settings must explicitly address **digital workload design**, not only individual coping strategies.

DESIGN THE ENVIRONMENT

Hybrid well-being challenges are primarily design problems, not individual resilience problems. Workload design, communication norms, and availability expectations must be addressed at the institutional level.



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POLAND AND DIGITAL WELL-BEING: A CONCRETE IMPLEMENTATION ENVIRONMENT

- Polish digital-transformation policy explicitly includes **digital well-being, cybersecurity awareness, and responsible AI use** as components of digital competence.
- The **Education and Training Monitor 2025** identifies mental health support and digital skills as priority areas for Polish higher education.
- This makes digital health literacy and well-being intervention design **directly relevant to the Polish institutional context** in which ROAD2EU operates.

THE POLISH CONTEXT

Poland's digital-transformation agenda explicitly includes well-being and responsible AI use. ROAD2EU institutions are implementing these priorities in a context where national policy already supports them.



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PRIVACY AND ETHICS: TRUST DEPENDS ON CLARITY, CONFIDENTIALITY, AND PROPORTIONATE DATA USE

- **Digital support services** — counselling platforms, health apps, peer-support tools — require careful handling of personal and sometimes sensitive data.
- **Trust in support services** depends on students and staff knowing that their data is handled with clarity, confidentiality, and proportionality.
- Privacy compliance is not just a legal obligation — it is a **service-design principle** that directly affects whether vulnerable users will engage with support.

PRIVACY AS SERVICE DESIGN

Students in distress will not use support services they do not trust. Privacy and confidentiality are not bureaucratic requirements — they are the foundation of effective support service design.



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GDPR BASICS FOR SUPPORT SERVICES: FIVE PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES



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1 **Collect Only Necessary Data**

Data minimisation: collect only the personal data strictly necessary for the support service purpose.

2 **Define Purpose Clearly**

Purpose limitation: specify in advance what the data will be used for, and do not use it for other purposes.

3 **Restrict Access**

Only staff with a legitimate need should have access to personal data from support services.

4 **Document Workflows**

Maintain records of data processing activities, consent mechanisms, and data-sharing arrangements.

5 **Protect Confidentiality**

Ensure that sensitive support data — especially mental health data — is protected with appropriate technical and organisational measures.

DESIGNING SHORT INTERVENTIONS: STRESS CYCLES, DIGITAL WELL-BEING MODULES, PEER SUPPORT

INTERVENTION TYPE 1

Stress-Management Cycles

Short, structured programmes (4–6 sessions) teaching evidence-based stress-management techniques. Easy to pilot, evaluate, and scale.

INTERVENTION TYPE 2

Digital Well-Being Modules

Short online or hybrid modules on screen time management, digital boundaries, and healthy hybrid work practices.

INTERVENTION TYPE 3

Peer-Support Formats

Trained peer supporters who provide first-contact support and signposting to professional services.

INTERVENTION TYPE 4

Signposting Sessions

Short orientation sessions that map available support services and teach students how to access them.



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LIGHT-TOUCH EVALUATION: TRACK TAKE-UP, AWARENESS, SATISFACTION, REFERRALS, AND FOLLOW-UP

- Track **take-up rates** — how many students and staff actually use the support services available.
- Monitor **awareness of support pathways** — do students and staff know what support exists and how to access it?
- Collect **satisfaction data, referral counts, and follow-up engagement rates** to assess whether interventions are reaching and helping their intended users.

MANAGEABLE EVALUATION

Light-touch evaluation is not a compromise — it is a realistic approach for small pilots. Five well-chosen indicators tracked consistently are more valuable than a comprehensive framework that is never used.



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SELECTED REFERENCES

- **European Commission.** *Communication on a Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health.* COM(2023) 298 final.
- **European Commission.** *Digital Health and Care Strategy.* COM(2022) 197 final.
- **European Parliament and Council.** *General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).* Regulation (EU) 2016/679.
- **European Commission.** *European Health Data Space Regulation.* COM(2022) 197 final.
- **European Commission.** *Education and Training Monitor 2025: Poland.* 2025.



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Questions & Discussion

Should your institution start with a support-flow redesign, a short intervention pilot, or a privacy protocol?

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