



Newsletter - February 2026



Welcome to the first MindGuard newsletter!

MindGuard is a European project that focuses on mental health and wellbeing in higher education. Universities are places of learning, growth and opportunity, but they can also be environments of high pressure, stress and emotional challenge for students, academic staff and administrative personnel.

MindGuard aims to support higher education communities by strengthening awareness, skills and practical responses related to mental health. The project promotes a shared responsibility for wellbeing and encourages institutions to create more supportive, inclusive and mentally healthy learning environments.

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Meeting in Dublin



Last November the MindGuard partners convened at **University College Dublin** for a transnational meeting that brought together representatives from the full consortium. Over two days of constructive discussions, partners reviewed progress on the project's key results, including the Guide for Staff and Educators, the

structure of the upcoming training programme, and advances in the immersive virtual reality scenarios that will support mental health first aid training.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to plan outreach activities and strengthen collaboration as the project enters its next phase. To find out more about the meeting and the topics discussed, [read the article](#).

Empowering Academia: The MindGuard Guide to Mental Health Prevention



A Roadmap for Institutional Change

The guide introduces a **Five-Step Framework** designed to help staff and educators embed prevention into the fabric of university life:

- **Build Awareness:** Normalising conversations and promoting early help-seeking through accessible educational campaigns.
- **Train Staff:** Equipping non-clinical personnel with Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) skills to recognise early signs of distress.
- **Establish Systems:** Defining clear referral pathways and departmental Mental Health Action Plans.
- **Normalise Dialogue:** Using storytelling and inclusive teaching to reduce stigma and build empathy.
- **Sustain Efforts:** Integrating mental health indicators into long-term institutional planning and KPIs.

Real-World Scenarios: From Theory to Action

To ensure practical impact, the guide provides detailed case studies and "First Aid Checklists" for **26 specific mental health issues** common in academia:

- **Performance Pressure:** Navigating Burnout, Perfectionism, and Imposter Syndrome.
- **Identity & Belonging:** Supporting those facing Gender Dysphoria, Loneliness, and Discrimination-related stress.
- **Acute & Life Challenges:** Managing Grief, PTSD, Eating Disorders, and Suicidal Ideation.
- **Structural Barriers:** Addressing ADHD, Financial Stress, and Career Anxiety.

Validated Innovation and Next Steps

This guide is the result of a rigorous co-creation process involving students, faculty, and experts. It has been evaluated by expert teams who shared overwhelmingly positive and encouraging feedback, praising the guide's **innovative approach** and its **practical utility** for the academic sector. A core innovation is the integration of Virtual Reality (VR) platforms, allowing staff to practice sensitive interventions in a psychologically safe, immersive environment.

Latest posts from our blog

Discover a selection of recent articles from the MindGuard project website, sharing insights on mental health and wellbeing in higher education.

Explore ongoing developments and join the conversation on how to create more supportive and inclusive learning environments!

The Erasmus+ MindGuard Project Continues to Grow!

The MindGuard project continues to expand, strengthening its commitment to mental health and wellbeing in higher education. This article highlights recent progress, growing engagement within the partnership, and the next steps planned for the project.

[Read more](#)



Advancing Immersive Mental Health Training: UCD Leads the Development of the MindGuard VR Platform

The article explores how the VR environment is being designed to enhance Mental Health First Aid training through realistic and impactful learning experiences.

[Read more](#)



Meet our partners!



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Our project consortium consists of 6 organisations including universities and NGOs, from Netherlands, Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, and Ireland.

[Read more about our partners](#)

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