Barriers and Enablers to International Students and Minoritised Ethnic Students Accessing Wellbeing Services at the University of Exeter

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The academic environment, social pressures, and life transitions can significantly and often adversely impact student mental health. This can be especially so for international students and students from ethnically minoritised backgrounds who, in addition to adjusting to new routines, academic expectations, and social dynamics may have to navigate cultural/transitional shock, financial pressures, communication difficulties, isolation and/or a lack of a sense of connection (Newsome and Cooper 2016). Experiences of racism and discrimination on UK campuses are also widely recognised as recurrent traumatic stressors for these population groups (McKenna *et al.* 2017).

Recognising the importance of supporting good student mental health, universities have established counselling services and support mechanisms to assist students in managing stress and emotional challenges. However, disparities exist in the experiences of students from diverse ethnic, cultural, and international backgrounds when accessing and utilising these mental health resources. Understanding the broader context of mental health in the university setting is crucial in addressing the specific challenges faced by international and ethnic-minoritised students. By recognising the unique stressors associated with their backgrounds, universities can tailor their support services to ensure inclusivity and effectiveness in promoting the mental wellbeing of all students.

In attempting to identify barriers and enablers to international and ethnic-minoritised students accessing wellbeing services at the University of Exeter, 20 students were engaged in semi-structured interviews and focus groups during Term 1 of the 2023-2024 academic year. These students were mainly recruited through international student societies in the Guild and variously self-identified as African, African Caribbean, South East Asian, Muslim, International, and British Ethnic-Minority. Six staff members across different parts of wellbeing support in the university (wellbeing service; education and welfare HUBs; chaplaincy; international café staff) and two representatives from external organisations hired by the university to offer bespoke mental health support for selected ethnic groups were also interviewed. Research questions were open-ended and primarily exploratory in nature. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Thematic analysis of the data-set was used to identify the following key areas of significance:

(a) An awareness of diverse cross-cultural resonances of 'wellbeing' language, and particular cultural narratives associated with poor mental health;

(b) A need to engage students in the co-creation of culturally competent communications and delivery of service provision, and the promotion of cross-cultural 'wellbeing literacy' among diverse students and the staff who serve them;

(c) The critical importance of assurances of confidentiality to international and minoritised ethnic students accessing services;

(d) The importance of amplifying and scaling particular and personalised wellbeing offerings for international and minoritised ethnic students, and helping these students navigate a complex and unfamiliar system;

(e) Recognition of the potential gains of engaging with existing international and minoritised ethnic student peer support networks;

(f) The need for wellbeing service personnel to be more representative of the diverse student body.

Limitations of the study need to be acknowledged at the outset: this was a small-scale qualitative study, with self-selecting participants who cannot be assumed to be representative of wider populations, though recent research does acknowledge the important insights to be gained through small-scale, deep dive projects of this sort (Crockford 2023). Recent research conducted by Student Minds also acknowledges challenges and limitations in researching mental health within the context of the student population explaining a risk of self-selection bias where participants may have a personal interest or experience in mental health which could overemphasise negative mental health experiences or misrepresent the overall population (Frampton *et al.*, 2022). Potential self-selection by participants based on a prior interest in 'mental health' services however, were circumvented to an extent here by engaging students through international societies rather than through 'wellbeing' or 'mental health' services or support. Indeed, very few students interviewed had engaged directly with wellbeing services at Exeter despite admitting to experiencing loneliness, anxiety, and stress throughout their time at the institution. Viewpoints surfaced here in the University of Exeter study, do concord with recognisable trends in extant literature.

1. Literature Review

A recent analysis by TASO reveals a significant increase in reported mental health problems among university students in the UK. Ethnicity surfaces in TASO's study as a crucial factor shaping student wellbeing as well as decision making over support: students identifying as White or Chinese for example, are reported as more likely to experience high levels of wellbeing, whilst male students and those from 'BAME' backgrounds were found to be less likely to declare a mental health issue (Robertson, Mulcahy and Baars 2022). The report underscores the importance of considering ethnicity in crafting targeted interventions to address wellbeing disparities.

The broader research literature also attests to a number of barriers posing significant challenges for international and ethnic-minoritised students seeking mental health support in UK universities:

(a) **Language**: the nuanced nature of mental health language, including 'wellbeing' nomenclature, may be challenging to articulate in a non-native language, potentially leading to misunderstandings about the purpose of the service, who it is for, and the methods it employs during support/therapy/counselling sessions (Marbley *et al*. 2016; Clough *et al*. 2019). Translating 'wellbeing' into Chinese serves as a case in point, several words and phrases defining nuances within the concept,

> 'According to the English Chinese dictionary, wellbeing has been understood as a combination of happiness, peace, and physical and mental health . . . This idea mirrors the Confucian value of Wu Chang, in which social norms with virtues regulate behaviours for collective welfare, such as humanity, righteousness, ritual, knowledge and integrity. Instead of mundane happiness, another critical idea relating to ideal personal status is Jun Zi (Chinese translation; "perfect man"), which refers to a perfect person, a combination of saint, scholar, and gentleman who ideally serves as a moral model for others.' (Huang *et al.* 2020)

(b) **Familial Expectations and Cultural Stigma**: those students from collectivist contexts linking family recognition with success, often experience pressures in meeting kin expectations and are aware of the enormous sacrifices of kin networks to raise the finances to support their study abroad (Kyunghee *et al*. 2020). Stigma surrounding mental health within specific cultural communities may also prevent students from openly discussing their struggles or seeking professional assistance. Fear of judgment or

discrimination can create a reluctance to disclose mental health concerns, exacerbating the difficulties in accessing appropriate support. Cultural stigma related to mental health in some contexts also went beyond an individual's reputation and their own perceived diminished social identity: kin and relational networks could also be perceived to share the stigma (Arday 2018). As a result, students may seek to shield/protect kin from cultural stigma associated with poor mental health,

'In China, relationships, or *guanxi,* are key to success. The family can experience *'loss of face'* and be completely isolated from their network, or *loss of guanxi* if someone has a mental illness. . . .Consequently, people have an interest in keeping their mental illness a secret, and this can make help-seeking very difficult' (Magnusdottir *et al*. 2022).

(c) Navigating Unfamiliar Systems: Students often arrive at university unaware of how to navigate the various systems on offer, including those related to health and wellbeing e.g. the NHS and university wellbeing services. As such, they might find themselves frustrated and confused, and sometimes give up seeking help entirely. International students in particular may not be fully informed about the services offered or how to access them, further impeding their ability to seek timely assistance (Ecochard and Fotheringham 2017). Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach, including increased cultural competency training for mental health professionals, targeted outreach and awareness campaigns, and the development of more accessible university mental health services. Creating a welcoming and inclusive environment where students feel comfortable seeking help is essential to ensuring the wellbeing of all students, regardless of their cultural or international background.

(d) Financial and Legal Constraints: Finance can be a barrier to accessing mental health support beyond university settings, especially for international students who may not be able to freely access all NHS services. The high cost of private mental health services and limited coverage by insurance providers, as well as concerns around visas and legal status requirements, may also discourage some students from seeking help (Minutillo *et al.* 2020).

The research literature also identifies constructive and positive actions to address the above inequalities and cultural differences. The Student Minds report 'Understanding Student Mental Health Inequalities: International Students' (Frampton, Smith and Smithies 2022) for example, argues for specific, tailored support to address the distinct mental health needs of international students, and the need to carefully consider language when addressing this population's mental health and wellbeing. Key recommendations of the report can be summarised as follows:

- Loneliness among international students is highlighted as a critical issue, with a recommendation to enhance feelings of belonging. The report advocates for proactive measures to support students in making friends through activities, societies, and events, fostering connections and a sense of welcome and belonging within the university community.

- In terms of academic readiness, the report calls for a review and redevelopment of induction programs, ensuring that all students, including international students, are equipped with the necessary tools and information before and during the course. Accessibility to ongoing academic support throughout their studies is also emphasised.

- The report recommends improving the accessibility of the support services offered to international students. It stresses the importance of co-production with international students to ensure effective communication of available services and how they can be utilised.

- Confidentiality policies are underscored as crucial, with a recommendation for universities to establish clear and transparent policies that are easily accessible and understandable for international students.

- The report calls for a proactive stance in identifying and responding to global events that may impact international students. Universities are urged to offer support to affected students promptly.

- Lastly, the report emphasises the importance of universities being vocal in celebrating the value of the international student community and actively challenging racism, discrimination, and xenophobia. It encourages utilising existing initiatives and toolkits while prioritising co-production with student communities to better understand and meet their needs at the local level.

(Student Minds: Frampton, Smith, and Simthies 2022)

Other research highlights the potential benefits of institutional (cross-cultural) 'Wellbeing literacy programmes' which include consideration of the language of 'wellbeing' and how this can be more effectively and sensitively conveyed across diverse student groups (Huang *et al*. 2020; Oades and Johnston 2017). Such interventions are seen to be effective in enhancing conscientization/cultural competence for both international and ethnic minoritised students, and those service providers who seek to support them.

It is in the context of these findings, that this small-scale qualitative research project was initiated at the University of Exeter to better understand the barriers and enablers that international and ethnic minoritized students experience seeking and benefiting from wellbeing support.

2. Methodology

The author's previous research on student mental health found that simply sending out emails to potential participants was unlikely to be an effective recruitment strategy. Therefore, messages were sent to various societies of minoritised students using Instagram. Additionally, during the Freshers week, the author visited multiple students' stands to talk with students. She understood that the busy schedule of students might mean that she may not have the opportunity to schedule interviews with these students. Instead, more informal discussions were held to get their thoughts and views about the wellbeing services at Exeter University and recommendations for improvement.

Through her initial contact with the Afro-Caribbean Society via Instagram, the author was invited to one of the events they had organised for Fresher's week, in turn allowing her to speak to more students. Interviews or discussions were undertaken with 1 Chinese student, 3 Muslim students, 4 international students, and 12 British students from ethnic minoritised groups, with broadly equal representation of genders. The author found that she had recruited more student participants from Afro-Caribbean backgrounds than from other backgrounds. Reflecting on this, she concluded that her identity as an African student may have played a significant role where students felt they identified with her, and felt more comfortable opening up to her (on influence of ethnicity of researcher in research process see Egharevba 2001). At the same time, she experienced some difficulty reaching

students from outside this demographic within the limited time constrains of the study. This is something to be considered in future research to ensure that the needs and priorities of students representative of the cultural diversity of the University of Exeter are included.

3. Key Findings

When conducting qualitative research, it is crucial to highlight the voices of the participants. While the author has provided her interpretation of their perspectives, she has also included direct quotes below to amplify student and staff voices and experiences.

Finding traction with diverse student groups

As has been found in the broader literature, it was clear that students and wellbeing staff at Exeter felt that notions of wellbeing did not translate neatly across diverse cultural contexts.

'We realised recently that the word wellbeing does not actually exist as a word in Chinese, so there's no translation for that. So, for us, 'wellbeing services' doesn't actually mean anything. So what we're finding with Chinese students in particular is that if they're invited to meet with our wellbeing services, there's no direct understanding of what that looks like and what that means.'
–Exeter Staff Member

This in turn could exacerbate the lack of awareness around the support offer available to students at Exeter,

'I didn't really know anything [about Exeter's wellbeing support], I know this is bad but I've heard like a couple of news story where like students have like committed suicide at Exeter so that's really the only impression I had. I knew nothing about wellbeing and what Exeter had to offer. In our high school we didn't have anything like that so it was very new to me. I mean I come from an African background and mental health isn't really a thing to be honest. It's either you pray or you pray, there's no other option. It's a new concept for me'
– Exeter Student

'You don't know it's [wellbeing support] there. Actually, you're told too late. You need to know about it before the problem so you can stop the problem as opposed to like solving the problem as it's ongoing'
– Exeter Student

Students commented on the need for better awareness raising around the role of the wellbeing services available and a clear outline of what help students could expect to receive from them, particularly when they may be approaching wellbeing support at the height of their anxieties. One student for example, described feeling let down when their first counselling session felt like a repeat of what they already knew. Students felt that clearer information that was targeted towards diverse student group might help manage expectations and help ensure they were not dissatisfied with the support available.

Students and staff at Exeter felt that wellbeing support should be promoted within existing international and minoritised ethnic peer support networks. The international café was lauded as a good and impactful example of curating an informal space for international students to talk about their issues which others could signpost to. Some of the activities that have been organised in the past year include activities to celebrate various cultural events like Diwali and Chinese New Year, to name but a

few. Another event highlighted by the wellbeing team that effectively created communication links with students involved students writing their goals for the year and hanging them on a tree provided by the team. These social activities have proven to be a good way of engaging with students and initiating conversations. The staff who run the international café highlighted that they found that speaking to students about their own experiences with navigating mental health has helped in getting students to open up.

Recognising the need to better support students from diverse backgrounds, Exeter University now works with external organizations who are able to provide more culturally relevant support, namely Nilaari, 'a black-led charity that offers talking therapies and advice to adults from Black, Asian, and Minoritized Communities in Bristol and surrounding areas', and the Chinese Wellbeing Society. The services offered by these external organizations fall within the restrictions of the services provided by the wellbeing team, meaning that students can only access six therapy sessions per academic year. Nilaari's services are not limited to students from Black backgrounds but encompass other races, sexuality, and disability, thanks to the diversity of their counsellors. As one staff member explained.

I think individuals say that they want to give it a try because it is delivered by people of colour… that's what our unique selling point is if you like, that our therapists comes from a range of backgrounds and specialities… so I think individuals - just that connecting with someone who is of colour who might understand and what we find is that a lot of international students really get a lot of benefit from it because they just feel that they really can't even begin to raise some of the issues that they're facing or experiencing. But they don't want to start that conversation with a white person because actually what I'm doing is giving you almost like a free training on my issues and not receiving any therapy.'

—External Organisation Staff

Similarly, the Chinese Wellbeing Society (based in Bristol) supports Exeter's students from Chinese and Asian backgrounds.

Representatives from these external organisations noted that students can self-refer to their services, which can benefit students who are worried about confidentiality because they can directly engage with the external organisation without worrying that it would be disclosed to the university. However, none of the students interviewed were aware of the external organisations the wellbeing team was collaborating with. Nilaari later confirmed that the number of ethnic minoritised students from Exeter that have accessed therapy since the start of the academic year was low. There is a need therefore, for better awareness raising of this service and how beneficial it may be for students from international and ethnic minoritised backgrounds who feel uncomfortable with 'documented' information being held by the university.

Better awareness raising would also make the students aware that they would not be penalised for seeking mental health support when needed. It is important that the University's wellbeing team engage in targeted awareness campaigns that address cultural misconceptions and emphasise the value of seeking help and confidentiality via the offered services. Creating safe spaces for open dialogue about mental health within these communities can contribute to breaking down stigmas and encouraging students to prioritise their wellbeing.

Recommendations:
- Greater awareness is needed of the diverse cross-cultural resonances of 'wellbeing' language, and cultural narratives associated with poor mental health.

- Initiatives are needed to proactively engage students in the co-creation of culturally competent communications and delivery of service provision, and promotion of cross-cultural 'wellbeing literacy' among diverse students and staff who served them.

- Existing support networks for international and minoritised ethnic students should be considered as avenues for awareness raising and more informal support

Ensuring confidentiality

For some students, the issue of confidentiality was described as a real barrier to full and authentic engagement with wellbeing and other support services on offer at Exeter University, as is typified in the following quotes:

'[What's important?'] I guess it's being anonymous because when I'm talking about like a personal subject, I don't want it on my student record that I was very sad on a Tuesday'
– Exeter Student

'Ideally, I wouldn't want them [wellbeing services] to tell anyone. I feel like especially with the African community mental health is kind of taboo and you're quickly labelled crazy. Especially if I'm opening up about something, I would probably want it to just be between me and the person that I'm speaking to.
– Exeter Student

'We need a greater emphasis on the confidentiality of the services that we offer. Which maybe is not always seen . . . I suspect sometimes a slightly more informal approach . . . . like chaplaincy or some of these other drop in services have a real strength.'
– Exeter Staff Member

'I guess it's partly because we've been working in a situation where confidentiality has been a huge issue with the student who does not want his family back home informed of what's going on. And some of it has been very serious and you know… with one student there was a time when I had to break confidentiality and I think it took the student two months to kind of forgive me . . . We have written protocols or what we do and written protocols on when you know, when we might break confidentiality […] but I don't know whether some internationals maybe need reassurance in that area, and particularly if they've not come from a situation where that kind of service has been available to them […]. I think we just assume that people will know that if they talk to us, it's confidential. But perhaps we need to be a bit more of you know, making that known.'

– Exeter Staff Member

Although the mental health and wellbeing services are confidential (within existing protocols which determine when this can be broken), students interviewed felt that this was not well known and that this then acted as a deterrent to using the service. Students interviewed described how the possibility of their information being shared left them feeling that they did not have a safe space to discuss their struggles – a perception worsened when they feared that their families (who had often invested heavily in their education) may be informed of their situation. Concern that their issues may also be divulged to course coordinators and impact negatively on their grades was also raised as a concern.

Recommendation:

- It is vital that all students are aware and assured of the confidential nature of wellbeing services and the circumstances under which confidentiality may need to be broken.

Targeted and Personalised Wellbeing Support

A perceived lack of personalised support was raised by some students who had engaged with wellbeing services at Exeter,

To be honest they didn't really say anything else apart from email or call us [wellbeing services] *. . . I mean that's not gonna do anything for me. Maybe if it was more personalised like I think, I dunno . . . having something more like accessible I guess.*

–Exeter Student

Some students also commented that they did not feel that the wellbeing team at Exeter always understood the broader socio-economic and legal pressures they were under, and that this could impact negatively on their willingness to seek support. One student for example, reflected on a conversation they had had with a counsellor in which the counsellor made frequent reference to the possibility of the student withdrawing from their studies because it did not seem like they were well equipped for University life,

'Then she said the most infamous line I've ever heard, I quote ' if you really think about it maybe university isn't for you'. She said that sentence twice… First, she did it once I'm like 'oh no, no, no. University is fine. It's because I personally struggle with my mental health.' I didn't get through the whole sentence before she repeated herself. Again, I'm like OK. Whatever that meant and then that was the end of it'

Although this message could have been misinterpreted by the student (perhaps an interruption to study was proposed?), it was perceived negatively by the student who felt their academic ability was in question, and troubled by the financial implications and potential shame to their family if they were to leave their studies. When making recommendations and giving advice to students, it is important that messages are conveyed in a way that does not leave room for misinterpretation. Ensuring mental health professionals understand and appreciate the student's broader circumstances and the diverse cultural perspectives and pressures at play is crucial in establishing a trusting relationship between the students and their counsellors.

Recommendation:

- Greater recognition of the background and potential pressures facing students may help inform more personalised mental health support.

Student follow up
The wellbeing team at Exeter collaborates with different offices to promote their services to students. Welfare, chaplaincy, and wellbeing team members highlighted their joint efforts to guide students towards the appropriate service they require. For example, a welfare officer mentioned that in some cases when students approach them to report specific challenges, they discover that it falls under the purview of the wellbeing team, and so they redirect them accordingly. This process goes both ways, and they share data with the wellbeing team. However, when asked if they follow up with the students to ensure that they receive the right care from the wellbeing team, the staff noted that they do not, but the wellbeing team can request feedback from the students. Upon further inquiry with the

wellbeing staff, it was revealed that it is often challenging to obtain feedback from students because they are usually struggling with poor mental wellbeing when they use the services. As a result, they are often not in the right state of mind to offer feedback, and most do not return to give feedback once their issues have been resolved. Due to the wellbeing team's busy schedule, they are unable to chase up students for feedback. The wellbeing team has reported that they attend to approximately seventy thousand students every academic session. Although there were breaks in sessions during the holiday periods amidst COVID-19, students now continue to access their services even during holiday breaks. One staff member explained how they had attempted to get feedback from students by reaching out through peer groups, noting that for this to be effective, it needed to be done on a more regular basis,

'There were about 15 student groups that we reached out to and we did that in conjunction with the student guild in the previous academic year. The challenge for us with that was getting buy in . . . We felt that people may be more comfortable telling their peers what their thinking is around wellbeing services. And then we would ask them to bring that back to us so that we could then adjust what we were doing and try and create a bit of a - 'You've told us this, so we've done'. This sort of approach. I think some student groups automatically felt more comfortable engaging in that than others. . . . So I think we may need to rethink how we do that and look at maybe smaller cohorts of students or less regularly. And then if students would like to meet with us more regularly, then offer that as a separate offering.'

– Exeter Staff Member

Recommendation:
* Work with diverse student groups to establish appropriate and feasible ways of following-up with students.

Increasing the diversity of the workforce

Context matters a lot and I feel like some people won't be able to empathise with you in some situations so having someone from a similar background will be more helpful… especially being in Exeter where being a minority - like there's only so many of us, when you're speaking about your problem to someone you don't relate to, it's pointless essentially.

– Exeter Student

I feel like a lot of mental health workers I don't really resonate with them, the ones I see anyway… maybe more people of colour because I'm gonna be honest, if I was speaking to someone about maybe family issues that I've had, they're gonna be like speak to family, you're gonna be fine, that wouldn't work for me.

– Exeter Student

Representation matters in mental health services. When asked what influenced their decision to seek support for their mental health and wellbeing, the majority of the students interviewed highlighted representation as a factor that would attract or deter them from using the wellbeing services. This was also cited by external organisations such as Nilaari as a key reason why students sought their help rather than use the university wellbeing service.

The scarcity of professionals from diverse backgrounds within the field can create a sense of isolation for students. Universities should actively recruit a diverse pool of mental health professionals (and language speakers) and ensure ongoing cultural competency training to enhance their ability to understand and address the unique needs of international and ethnic minority students. Whilst some students from racially minoritised backgrounds had no preference for therapists other than one be provided when they needed it, others emphasised that they would prefer to speak to therapists from

racially minoritised groups as that would bridge the gap that can often be experienced in sessions with therapists from the non-minoritised demographic. Those who showed an affinity for speaking with people from similar demographics stressed that the shared culture would significantly impact how they express themselves and receive much-needed help.

Certain challenges faced by international students were highlighted during the interviews with various stakeholders. For example, they mentioned international students' experiences with plagiarism, including cases where international students faced disciplinary measures. It was felt by some students interviewed that staff from diverse demographics would be better placed to understand that this might have occurred because of the difference in learning and education styles of various nations; and therefore, that they would be better equipped to help students navigate that hurdle. They also felt that they might be more inclined to put measures in place to highlight to lecturers and course coordinators the importance of stressing to new students the difference in learning styles and ensure they are aware of what counts as plagiarism in the UK education system and how they can navigate that process.

Another challenge that arose was in relation to advising students who were struggling with their mental health to take a break from their studies. Whilst this may be of benefit to some home students, international student felt that this was not an option for them when it could negatively impact on their visas. In cases like this, it may be beneficial for the wellbeing staff to liaise with the international students support team and visa compliance office to fully understand what such advice may mean in relation to visa and immigration rules.

Some students may also experience adverse financial implications if they take a break from their studies. Those students who are on various forms of scholarship for example, may not always be able to recoup time lost from taking a study break. On the other hand, students who are self-funded may also struggle with the financial impact of a break both in relation to travel costs home, the need to pay rent and the possibility of losing tenancy.

Recommendations:
- There is a need for wellbeing support staff to be more representative of the diverse student body at Exeter University.
- There is a need for greater awareness of the legal factors that impact on student education experience e.g. visa rules and requirements around attendance.

Recommendations

1. The wellbeing team and associated support services at Exeter should consider the language used to advertise mental health and wellbeing, acknowledging the difference in how students from different communities receive the message.
2. The University of Exeter is advised to make provisions (cross-cultural/culturally competent 'wellbeing literacy') for staff focusing on bridging the gap between the organisation's support structures and students from ethnically minoritised backgrounds.
3. Highlight the confidentiality of wellbeing services to students in their various communities.
4. Improving access to mental health resources requires comprehensive outreach efforts. Enhanced communication channels could ensure that international and ethnic minoritised students are more informed about available services. This may involve using culturally sensitive communication strategies, leveraging social media, and collaborating with existent

student organisations to disseminate information effectively. Students need to be well-informed about services and suitably equipped to navigate a complex and unfamiliar system.

5. Diversifying the wellbeing team so students can see themselves reflected in the team they receive support from was seen as a positive way forward. In the meantime, highlighting, promoting, and raising awareness of external organisations which bridge the diversity gap are critical.

6. Broader contexts (economic, social etc.) of international students should be borne in mind when offering wellbeing support (visa compliance; financial implications etc.) Collaborations with the international students support team, visa compliance office, and student's guild could help ensure the whole student experience is part of their care.

7. Co-creation of dedicated resources for international students and students from ethnically-minoritised backgrounds accessing existing schemes like peer support groups, mentoring, and buddy systems, could enhance engagement from these populations.

In conclusion, addressing the challenges faced by international and ethnic minority students in accessing mental health support at the University of Exeter demands a holistic and culturally informed approach. By fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment, the University of Exeter can play a crucial role in promoting the mental wellbeing of all its students, irrespective of their cultural or international background.

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