

Session Three. 1.30 – 2.00 pm

is to build a strategic response in relation to the above concerns and to increase supports for international students adjustment and transition so that their current distresses are minimised and their wellbeing is not affected.

The Power of Lived Experiences in Stigma Reduction and Help Seeking for Young People

Sam Refshauge, CEO, batyr

A principle barrier that prevents young people from seeking help is stigma (SANE, 2013). This presentation will demonstrate the significant results of the 2016 impact report regarding batyr's innovative university and school programs in increasing the intentions of young people to seek help and in improving attitudes relating to recovery and empowerment.

batyr's structured programs aim to engage, educate and empower young Australians to have positive conversations about mental health and to reach out for support if needed. batyr's programs are based on a peer to peer model where the audience hear stories from young speakers trained through batyr's Being Herd training program. The batyr@uni program is a long-term, multi-channel, distributed model which sees a large cross section of students educated, empowered and engaged through various strategic touch points within the University community.

Throughout 2016, a research program was conducted to gain a better understanding of batyr's programs' impact. After conducting a literature review of stigma reduction interventions, a survey was developed that measured help seeking behavioural intentions, stigma beliefs and satisfaction of batyr's program for a sample size of 513 young people. The survey was carried out at three time points for four schools and two universities that covered rural and metropolitan institutions. Key findings indicate that after the batyr program, 72% of students reported they would seek help. Importantly, after a three-month follow-up, students help-seeking behavioural intentions were sustained. Students also reported improved attitudes relating to recovery and empowerment. By type of institution, university students were the most engaged with the batyr@uni program, with 88.4% reporting high levels of engagement and 91.8% agreeing that they would recommend the program to a friend. This presentation will explore the implications and findings of this pilot study that demonstrate how as a community we can strengthen the resilience of young Australians.

Digital Health and Wellness in Higher Education

Margaret Anne Carter & Donna Goldie, James Cook University

The rapid online expansion of the Internet means students and teaching academics in higher education are increasingly engaging with synchronous and asynchronous digital learning environments. Correlating with this increase in engagement is the rise of ethical challenges and mental wellbeing difficulties associated with digital safety, digital reputation and digital citizenship.

Engaging students and staff in higher education with creating and leading safe spaces online has received minimal attention in the literature, in university policies and student engagement documents. It is this dearth of literature and policy direction that has driven the development of our innovative research project, a student informed website promoting positive digital presence, digital health and wellness. <http://www.preventcyberbullyingjcu.com.au>

Building a more resilient culture within higher education and the local community. A community development approach

Associate Professor Abraham Francis, James Cook University

Research suggest that Australian higher education students experience higher rates of psychological distress. A more close analysis reveal that rural students, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and those experiencing transitional and financial stress are at the increased risk of experiencing a mental health problem. While many students struggle to complete their university studies, only some students choose to seek help at various occasions. Anecdotal evidences and interactions with University Students provides variety of reasons for not seeking help early on which could have supported them in maintaining a positive work-life balance. In this presentation, Dr Francis will explore some of the myths and realities around this help seeking behaviour and present some strategies to build a strong resilient culture specially by discussing the relevance of developing University level policy that will not only address the issues on mental health but will promote a resilient culture with in the community.

Dr Francis argues that stronger partnerships with community sector, community mental health service systems, and an effective and timely student support services are required. By strengthening the already existing programs, incorporating evidence based intervention models and placing an increased focus on student well-being projects, universities can

play an important role in the wellbeing of students within their institutions. Similarly, Universities are in a better position to undertake research activities to understand more about the nature of mental ill-health in university students and develop the evidence base for effective interventions which can be implemented through community partnerships and collaborations; thus promoting a resilient culture in the sector.

Culturally Dynamic Partnerships in Mental Health

Dr Narayan Gopalkrishnan, James Cook University

Culture influences many aspects of mental health and cultural diversity in society raises a number of areas that need to be considered in terms of developing effective responses to mental health issues. Cultural competence, which is the most widely used framework for working across cultures in mental health, is critically examined in this paper and some of the major issues with using this framework are explored. An alternative to this framework, Culturally Dynamic Partnership (CDP), is presented as being a more equitable and inclusive way of working across cultures. This framework builds on the strengths of earlier frameworks and presents a way of moving forwards that empowers all the participants in collaborative partnerships.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Failing through the cracks. A lived experience perspective of mental distress at university

Mary O'Hagan, Mental Health International Speaker, Consultant and Writer

Tertiary students are at an age and stage of life where they are at an increased risk of experiencing disruptive mental distress. The speaker developed major mood swings during her first year at university in the late 1970s. The university was not at all set up to assist people in Mary's situation to continue with their studies. Mary will talk about her experiences of inadequate responses and low expectations for her future and then tell an alternative story of how the university could have responded in a more supportive way. Mary will finish with a vision for mental health responsiveness in higher education and in society as a whole.