Developing an Australian University Mental Health Framework

Penny Carlson & Aranya Chankaoprom, Orygen, the National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health

Orygen, The National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health is leading the development of an Australian University Mental Health Framework. The Framework will take a whole-of-university approach to support the mental health and wellbeing of university students, providing evidence informed strategies for universities to assist in meeting student needs.

More than half of tertiary students aged 16-25 years report high or very high psychological distress, while 35.4% have thoughts of self-harm or suicide. Current student counselling and disability services within universities are struggling to meet the escalating demand for services and the increasing complexity and severity of presentation. Failing to act now to address the needs of young people will see increasing personal, social and economic costs to society – estimates suggest it may double the impact of cancer, potentially wiping $16 trillion from the world economy in the next 20 years.

An Australian University Mental Health Framework will provide guidelines to support Australian universities to evolve and develop a system-level approach to meet the needs of students across all stages of mental ill-health. Development of the Framework is being informed by national consultation and workshop participants will be asked to provide feedback on current progress.

This presentation will provide an overview of the current progress in developing an Australian University Mental Health Framework, using storytelling to explore opportunities for change.

Learning outcomes

- Recognise current progress toward the development of an Australian University Mental Health Framework
- Assess current progress on the Framework and provide feedback
- Identify opportunities to change the narrative in own setting through applying the Framework

Presenters

Penny Carlson, Orygen, the National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health

Penny Carlson, Senior Program Manager | Orygen, The National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health

On behalf of Orygen, Penny is leading development of an Australian University Mental Health Framework. With a background in education, Penny has experience managing national projects, and strategically engaging stakeholders to support program implementation. Prior to joining Orygen, Penny worked at the Australian Sports Commission in a role uniting the sport, education and health systems in demonstrating the value of physical activity to holistic child development.

Aranya Chankaoprom, Orygen, the National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health

Aranya Changkaoprom, Project Officer | Orygen, The National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health

Aranya is supporting the development of an Australian University Mental Health Framework. She has 5 years’ experience working in public health and health promotion, coordinating small to large-scale projects and delivering services across different community settings. She is a Registered Nutritionist and has a keen interest in the link between healthy eating and good mental health.