Navigating Success: Drawing on a support program for care leavers to examine and challenge ideas about success
Emily Fuller, University of Newcastle

The University of Newcastle’s Live, Learn, Grow program supports people with a prior out-of-home care (OOHC) experience to access and engage in higher education. The program supports students through the innovative use of the Navigator role, which provides flexible, individualized support by ‘walking alongside’ first year university students with a previous care experience. This unique way of working has allowed the Navigator to develop relationships with students, and to follow their journey, and their stories, as students move through university.

Drawing on these stories, and the experiences of working closely with students, this presentation will challenge traditional views of ‘student success’, which are often framed around measures such as grades, retention and graduation. We will highlight the potential risks of making assumptions about students’ perceptions of success, particularly in widening participation work, and when working with students from equity backgrounds. As an alternative, we will examine theories of ‘transformative learning’ and ‘positive attrition’, drawing on examples from our own work and the students we are working with, to consider what role the narratives and perspectives of individual students could or should play in defining ‘success’ at university.

Learning outcomes
- Learn about the unique and innovative Navigator role, which has capacity to be adapted for supporting students from a variety of backgrounds.
- Be respectfully invited to challenge assumptions about the educational capability and experiences of people with an experience of care.
- Learn practical ways to engage with the OOHC support sector, in order to support better access to and engagement with higher education.

Presenter
Emily Fuller, University of Newcastle

Emily Fuller works with the Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education at the University of Newcastle. As program facilitator for the Live, Learn, Grow program, Emily works closely with the out-of-home care sector to support students with a care experience to find out about, access and engage in higher education. Emily has worked in a variety of roles in the out-of-home care sector and has a deep commitment to working within this community to support access to lifelong learning.