The role of triage in student counselling support
Vicky McCoy, University of Adelaide

The University of Adelaide Counselling Service established a Triage and Assessment Counselling role in 2016 in order to respond to an increased need for a flexible and targeted approach to counselling, particularly in relation to complex mental health presentations, and incidents of trauma.

Having a pivotal role in managing more complex mental health issues and, establishing good mechanisms for referral out and within the University, meant Counselling became the go to service for support in relation to any student mental health issue or crisis. This was both an appropriate development in our service role – and also welcome as a way to ensure we could support students holistically and appropriately.

The Triage role has evolved over the last 4 years - out of Counselling Duty and ‘drop in’ service roles- combining these roles with assessment, triage and complex case-management. This has allowed our service to meet need in a consistent, specialised and responsive way and has meant we can better establish risk and manage risk.

In developing this role we have encountered various challenges and have gradually nuanced a service model which suits our student population and current service structure.

Learning outcomes
- How a triage role can enhance the way Counselling is offered to students
- How to use a triage model to respond to increased demand for service
- Ways to nuance the model to fit within a Counselling service

Presenter
Vicky McCoy, University of Adelaide

Vicki McCoy has worked at the University of Adelaide for 20 years – starting in a role as a Welfare Officer in 1998 and most recently moving into the role of Counselling Support Manager 2 and half years ago. Vicki’s background and training is in Social work and prior to working at the University of Adelaide she had experience working in the government and non-government sector and in a range of settings.

The university community has always suited Vicki’s style of working communally and as part of a team. Vicki has a commitment to education and to promoting and supporting the mental health of young people and enjoys working with a student population. Her interests are in establishing sustainable models of service delivery that allow students to continue accessing the high-quality care they currently have through our Universities – but crucially linked to external supports.