Developing a new narrative for student counselling from first engagement
JH Venter, University of New South Wales

There has been an increase in demand for mental health support in the University student population over the last decade. In contrast, the staffing of these services has had minimal changes despite increasing numbers of local and international students attending University. It has become clear from student feedback that our current intake model has become defunct and does not help the student experience of our service. The premises of this talk are to explore effectively engaging students and other stakeholders in developing and implementing a new intake process at Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS) that addresses the above concerns.

This presentation will focus on our goal of effective engagement with students from first contact. Working towards a new narrative from first contact of easier access to the right student support services for their presentations.

This intake system is being implemented against a backdrop of increasing demand for mental health support, rising student numbers and inadequate staffing of services. An efficient triage framework is required to provide timely and equitable access to appropriate mental health services in a consistent manner. This intake process has been designed to integrate with technology to ensure a responsive service where different therapeutic levels of care are offered.

Learning outcomes
- What has worked and not worked in setting up a new intake service for counselling and psychological services at UNSW.
- Review of challenges in dealing with increasing demand and deceasing resources, focussing on building positive narratives with students coming for counselling.
- Examining the interplay of stepped-care, a whole of university approach and a student centred approach to allow the appropriate services to be easily accessed in a timely manner.

Presenter
JH Venter, University of New South Wales

JH Venter is the Clinical Lead for the Counselling and Psychological Service (CAPS) at the University of New South Wales. He trained and worked in South Africa, the UK and Australia. He has extensive training and experience in using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Mindfulness and Systemic family work. He worked as Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Lead at Complex Care Psychology in South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, before resettling in Australia. He is part of the Mind Smart team and steering group to develop and evaluate E-mental health and self-management services at CAPS.

He is also involved with training and supervising Clinician Psychologists in training. JH is a member of the Australian Psychological Society and Associate Fellow of the British Psychology Society (AFBPsS).