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Editorial

As we approach the end of the 2018 academic year, it is time to announce some changes on the horizon for the editorial team of JANZSSA. One of our joint authors, Cathy Stone, has made the decision to step down from this role at the end of this year, after working with Annie Andrews since 2010. While the Editor role is formally determined at the ANZSSA Annual General Meeting, we are fortunate in having one of our Assistant Editors, Cheryl Brugman, willing to take on an interim joint editor role in the meantime.

This issue of JANZSSA, Volume 26, Issue 2, offers fresh perspectives on ways to improve the experiences of students in higher education. One of the many challenges and opportunities facing the higher education sector globally is how to ensure that the health and wellbeing, including mental health, of students, is appropriately protected and, where possible, enhanced.

This is reflected in the three refereed papers featured in this issue; with Laura Burge's paper outlining an Australian online induction program for residential students; Du Vivier and co-authors' UK research on student engagement; and Cathcart and Inglis' research into online technologies within counselling services at Australian and New Zealand universities. Each of these papers offers very timely research indeed. Burge's and Duvier et al.'s papers may already be familiar to readers, having been available as early-release papers since July 2018.

This issue also features two Best Practice papers, one by Robyn Angus on financial counselling - also an early-release paper - and another by Meg Driscoll on crisis management within student residences. As our regular readers will know, Best Practice papers make a highly important contribution to JANZSSA through real-life illustrations of how to apply the findings from various research studies in practical ways that make a positive difference to students.

As always, our thanks go to the authors of these papers for sharing their research, their practices and initiatives with JANZSSA and all its readers. Our thanks again also go to our assistant editors and copy-editor, who do so much work to ensure that each issue of JANZSSA is of such high quality.

We encourage all our readers to share the online link with other interested potential readers and to consider submitting examples of your practice and research, so that others can benefit from your knowledge and experience. We welcome new authors and enjoy providing support and mentoring throughout the submission process.

Cathy Stone
Annie Andrews
Co-editors, JANZSSA

Special thanks and gratitude is extended by the JANZSSA editorial team to Cathy Stone for her expert and diligent contributions to each JANZSSA issue since 2010. JANZSSA has been much improved by her wisdom and guidance and the journal has moved further toward becoming a well-recognised publication because of the quality of her editorial contributions. Authors too have benefited from her editorial shepherding from first submission to published paper. Cathy, we thank you and we will do our best to maintain the quality of your contribution to JANZSSA publications going forward.

Supporting Student Transition and Early Engagement: An Online Induction Program

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Abstract

Students face a range of serious challenges when adjusting to university life, particularly those students who are required to move away from home in order to pursue their studies. Through a study of a newly introduced online resident induction program, facilitated by Deakin Residential Services (DRS) at Deakin University, this paper draws attention to the important role of pre-arrival induction programs. Induction programs, such as the one highlighted in this paper, play an important role in enhancing student awareness and understanding of key rules and guidelines applying to behaviour, espousing integral community values, and effectively supporting the transition of residents to their new living learning environment. This paper further highlights the underlying principles transferable to other student residential communities or wider university settings.

Introduction

Students face a range of serious challenges when adjusting to university life, particularly those who are required to move away from home in order to pursue their studies (Beasley & Pearson, 2006; Leese, 2010; McInnis, 2001; Nelson & Kift, 2005; Pittaway & Moss, 2006; Pittman & Richmond, 2010; Stevens & Walker, 1996; Wilcox, Winn & Fyvie-Gauld, 2005). Initial challenges abound in relation to the realities of a lifestyle involving greater autonomy, increased responsibilities, the development of new social networks, and the sometimes precarious balancing act of family commitments, part-time work, study and social life. Krause and Coates (2008) note that "…the transition to university is a complex and often difficult period of a young student's life" (p. 499). This initial rite of passage can not only be exciting, but also terrifying, with a student's ability to successfully adjust and overcome such challenges playing a key role in determining their future success at university.

Indeed, research highlights that the initial experience in higher education is pivotal in establishing attitudes, expectations, motivation and approaches to learning, and that forming positive social relationships, making connections, and developing a sense of 'fit' with an institution can be vital in aiding adjustment (Bowles, Dobson & Fisher, 2011; Briggs & Hall, 2012; Cheng, 2004; Coffman & Gilligan, 2002). Research further demonstrates that a supportive environment and an appropriate and stimulating induction can increase persistence and success, reduce attrition, and assist students to cope with demands of the higher education environment (Bowles et al., 2011; Coffman & Gilligan, 2002; Hultberg, Plos, Hendry, & Kjellgreen, 2008; Leese, 2010). Importantly as Bowles et al. (2011) argue, "the successful integration of first year students should occur in both social and academic domains, as it is believed to be highly likely that difficulties in adjusting to one will impact on the other" (p. 64).

As such, providing a variety of programs, services and other initiatives to appropriately and effectively support students' transition to university has become commonplace within universities across Australia and around the globe. Targeted transition programs, ranging from orientation and induction activities, first year seminars, buddy or peer mentoring,

advisory groups, and academic support initiatives, have emerged as playing a particularly key role in reducing attrition, fostering engagement and generally supporting student adjustment to university life (Bowles et al., 2011; Glaser, Hall & Halperin, 2006; Jacobi, 1991; Muldoon & Hollingworth, 2010; Quinn et al., 2010**;** Tinto, 1998; Treston, 2006; Wilcox, Winn & Fyvie-Gauld, 2005).

Through a study of a newly introduced online resident induction program facilitated by Deakin Residential Services at Deakin University, this paper draws attention to the important role that pre-arrival induction programs can play in enhancing student awareness and understanding of key rules and guidelines applying to behaviour, espousing integral community values, and effectively supporting student transition.

Deakin Residential Services context

Deakin Residential Services (DRS) was established in late 2013 and assumed ownership and responsibility for the operation and development of all new and existing student residential facilities at Deakin University. The residential community has expanded significantly since 2011, approximately tripling in capacity over a seven-year period, with the team currently managing over 2,700 student beds across four campuses: Waurn Ponds and Waterfront, Geelong (approximately 100km from Melbourne); Warrnambool (250km south west of Melbourne); and Burwood (located 15km from the city centre). Whilst each campus has a diversity of student cohorts and geographical communities, all operate under one set of operating policies, procedures, values and student experience frameworks.

DRS has a critical role to play in enhancing the experience of the students living on campus during their time studying at Deakin. It upholds the belief that residents, student residential leaders, and staff all share the responsibility of building and maintaining healthy and happy communities. In joining the on-campus community, all residents commit and agree to reading the DRS Resident Handbook and completing the Residential Agreement, which clearly outlines community values, and the standards and expectations of behaviour whilst living on campus.

Pre-arrival online resident induction

For many years DRS has provided a range of orientation and transition programs, services and activities to welcome new and returning students to on-campus accommodation, Within this, the DRS team saw an opportunity to proactively enhance resident awareness of the rules, values and community-living expectations of residential accommodation, whilst simultaneously offering a forum through which residents could connect, communicate and share their experiences prior to their arrival. The seven key values and expectations that students are required to uphold in residential accommodation are known by the acronym RESPECT, which stands for Responsive, Encouraging, Safe and Secure, Proactive, Enjoyable, Connected and Tolerant.

Working closely with the Deakin Future Learn team, a tailored online Residential Induction was introduced using Future Learn, a digital education platform, with all new and returning residents required to complete the induction before arriving on site. Incoming residents are to be provided with a link to the induction upon offer of a place within on-campus accommodation, generally one to three weeks prior to their check-in at each campus.

The induction, taking around twenty minutes for students to complete, involves five interactive sections covering rules applying to behaviour, consent, drugs, alcohol, safety and

security, and the RESPECT values, whilst also introducing students to the on-campus living environment and key members of the residential staffing team. Short and engaging videos are used throughout to cover content with the aim of sustaining student interest. Participants are further expected to respond to and engage with others on content-related questions as part of an interactive discussion board within each section, with moderation of any commentary by a DRS staff member. The program concludes with a final seven-question test assessing comprehension and requiring a mark of 70% or above to pass.

Residents who fail to achieve a pass mark are provided with one final opportunity to re-sit the same assessment, with the small number who fail a second time being required to meet with Campus Life staff to review induction materials before being signed off as compliant. Students new to the residential community are not permitted to check in or obtain access to their room without prior completion of the module. Returning residential students who fail to attempt or complete the induction program (less than 1% of the entire residential cohort) are issued with a disciplinary breach on their residential student account which, subject to further cumulative breaches (for example, relating to behaviour), will result in additional sanctions, including eviction.

Administratively, completion of the course during peak periods (January-February and June-July) is tracked on a daily basis, reducing to weekly frequency during non-peak arrival times. Student data are exported from the Future Learn system, and cross-checked in the internal student housing database (StarRez), which generates reports identifying non-compliant students. enabling follow-up. Whilst this process is largely manual, and as such time-consuming, the benefits to both staff and students have more than outweighed any administrative frustrations.

Since its introduction in January 2018, over 2000 residents have successfully completed the program, with an unanticipated 7,000 posted comments from those involved, collated from the discussion forums within each section of the induction. Themes that have emerged from these comments are described below. Many residents have remarked on the benefits of the induction program, noting that the coverage of residential rules, community values, fire safety and sexual consent in particular, have been of value in guiding their expectations of residential life, allaying nerves, and aiding transition to the on-campus community. As one first-year student commented, “the course was a great way to understand the policies, rules, what to expect when living on res and how to treat other people. The videos and readings were engaging and easy to understand!”

Importantly, access to the induction program will continue throughout the remainder of 2018, providing support to late or future trimester arrivals whilst ensuring a consistent transition experience for all. Based on the success of the program in its first year to date, content will be further reviewed in preparation for roll-out again in 2019.

Emerging themes: Consent, alcohol consumption and returning resident engagement

The nature of comments by residents engaged in the program has proven to be of interest, particularly in relation to areas such as alcohol consumption and sexual consent. Many students commented on their appreciation of the inclusion of consent**,** a topic of particular focus in recent years following the release of the Australian Human Rights Commission ‘Change the Course’ Report (2017), noting that they valued coverage and discussion of such an important issue at an early stage – providing a clear message regarding standards of acceptable behaviour.

An additional common theme emerged in relation to alcohol, and interestingly, student comments indicated a seemingly reduced interest in binge or heavy drinking, with many commenting on a preference towards more healthy lifestyles or a conscious decision not to drink at all. As one student commented:

> *I've experienced issues of peer pressure in the past when it involves drinking, and the most important thing to remember is you should never feel forced to drink if you don't feel like it! It is completely okay to say no and have a night in, just as it is equally okay to go out with friends and have some drinks!*

DRS was also impressed with the level of engagement from returning residents, who frequently responded to student questions on the discussion forum within the general introductory section of the induction. Questions and responses concerned matters such as what to pack or what to expect from the first few weeks; some also shared their own experiences of living on residence during the previous year. Returning students, in addition to the moderating staff member, also played a key role in redirecting any student questions not covered or answered in the induction to other information sources, including the DRS website.

Induction and platform satisfaction

As part of the induction program, residents were also asked to provide feedback on both the content and design of the course. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with students commenting on the interactivity of the induction, specifically the ability for students to engage in conversation and dialogue with both new and returning residents about what to expect from life on campus, what to bring, and other residents' thoughts on community values and behavioural expectations.

Many also commented on the engaging format of the platform with one student noting:

> *as a returning resident there wasn't really any new information here for me, but I thought the format was great! It was much better than just getting people to read some information and tick a checkbox at the end.*

Merits, drawbacks and potential transferability of the program

The residential induction program provides an opportunity for early engagement with students transitioning to higher education; in this case, those relocating to on-campus accommodation as part of their studies. Research demonstrates that contact with current university students and staff can positively influence prospective student aspirations, and furthermore, that engaged students are more likely to persist, achieve success and complete their qualifications (Briggs & Hall, 2012; Leach & Zepke, 2004; McKenzie & Schweizer, 2001). As Briggs and Hall (2012) argue,

> *The positive effect on applicants of interaction with school, college and university staff, students and others who are enthusiastic and encouraging cannot be underestimated. Students tell of one-off encounters with students or staff on university visit days, or of longer-standing relationships with subject teachers or guidance workers that have 'tipped the balance' and enabled them to imagine themselves as university students. (p. 12)*

Other evidence suggests that the interactive nature of the induction program, providing students with the opportunity to engage in conversations regarding their expectations, interests and any concerns, is likely to play a key role in aiding student transition, supporting students to develop early friendships, and establish commonalities with others prior to even

arriving on campus (Bowles et al., 2011; Lowe & Cook, 2011; Tinto, 1998; Urquhart & Pooley, 2007). Introducing students to key staff and student leaders within their campus precinct via short welcome videos is intended to develop student affiliation, a sense of belonging, and a level of comfort with their future university; and, in this case, new on-campus home (Pittman & Richmond, 2010). Research conducted by Wilcox, Winn and Fyvie-Gauld (2005) in particular, highlighted that social support and integration was "vital for successful adjustment to university life" (p. 709). Their study noted that providing students with opportunities to make friends early on in their university experience helped them to settle in, provided social support, enhanced students' general sense of wellbeing and belonging, and "provided a buffering effect when students experienced difficulties" (p. 716).

Finally, the essential content provided to students as part of the program - important information regarding rules, values, and expectations - arguably acts as a crucial enabler to transition. Research demonstrates that the availability of student support services, accessibility to information, the usefulness of resources, the relevance of study material and study skills support, enable a more effective transition to the higher education environment (Bowles et al., 2011). As would be expected, the converse has the opposite effect – resulting in added pressure, the formation of unrealistic expectations, and ultimately, disengagement from university life (Leese, 2010; Lowe & Cook, 2011). Authors Lowe and Cook (2003) argue, "when universities do not help incoming students form realistic expectations of themselves and of their institutions, the demands of the new environment can be overwhelming" (p. 55).

In considering its potential transferability, there are a number of elements of the DRS Resident Induction which have the potential to be utilised at other accommodation sites, and also perhaps within a broader university environment, to facilitate positive transition outcomes for students.

However, it is important to acknowledge that there are a number of specific elements which have facilitated the high level of student engagement, as demonstrated by the level of interaction and positive comments within the discussion forums.

In particular, the nature of the contract between students and DRS enables residential staff to mandate compliance by only permitting residents to have access to their room following successful completion of the induction. In cases of non-compliance, internal disciplinary action can be undertaken. It is possible that not all residential sites and certainly the broader university would have recourse to similar actions.

Additionally, the initial creation of the induction module, and subsequent monitoring and tracking of student compliance has proven to be administratively challenging and time-consuming at times, simply due to the manual processes involved, and it is worth considering the value of having a dedicated staffing resource to undertake, coordinate and lead the project to ensure its success.

It is also important to highlight that this induction program complements the existing orientation and transition activities facilitated by DRS, and does not, nor should not, replace the value of the face-to-face programming and compulsory briefings which take place following student arrival on-campus.

Conclusion

Student interaction and feedback has indicated that the implementation of this pre-arrival induction program within the Deakin residential context has raised awareness of critical rules, values and expectations. Comments from students indicate that it has offered an engaging forum for residential students to connect, communicate and share their experiences. By proactively reaching out to students with information, guidance, and an opportunity to connect with their peers at an early stage - before they have the opportunity to experience fear, failure, disappointment or confusion - this induction supports and enhances student transition, whilst contributing to a consistent and positive arrival experience for all.

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Refereed Paper

Surviving and Thriving at a University in the United Kingdom

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Abstract

While considerable research on college student surviving and thriving has been conducted in the United States, fewer studies exist that examine these phenomenon multinationally. This mixed methods study, conducted at a large multi-campus university in the United Kingdom, examines factors purported to contribute to college student retention and engagement in a British context. Data were collected and analysed in the five theme categories of belonging, student support services, academic engagement, decision-making and resilience. Significant differences were found in student engagement by metropolitan vs. suburban campus, and in levels of engagement in academic and student life by gender.

Keywords

Higher education, international education, college student retention, student engagement, student involvement, student success

Surviving and thriving at a university in the united kingdom

Surviving and thriving on any college campus is associated with a complex set of factors involving student mindsets, student decision making and student goal attainment. These factors consistently cluster around five predominant themes: a sense of belonging, student support, academic engagement, student decision making, and resilience. As attracting and retaining students continues to concern institutions of higher education, and funding has become more tied to student outcomes, it is only prudent for professionals to investigate the mitigating factors related to such outcome measures in order to create optimal conditions for student success.

To that end, seminal research by Vincent Tinto (1999) demonstrated that clarity of academic requirements, strong student support, connectivity with community and satisfaction with learning experiences are the factors that influence student attrition and student retention. As well, Krause and Coates (2010) studied Australian university student engagement and concluded that intellectual engagement, academic staff involvement with students, and extra-curricular peer interaction influenced students' feelings of belonging. Research suggests that as the composition of university students becomes more heterogenous, the need for campus based supportive services increases (Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea, 2008). In this study, the majority of students surveyed were aware of service offerings yet only about half stated that they always accessed them when they needed them. A study by Zumbrunn, McKim, Buhs, & Hawley (2014) found that interpersonal relationships among classmates contributed to students' overall sense of belonging while Hu (2011) reported that social engagement was positively correlated with student persistence. Conversely, students (such as part time students, commuters, minorities, and non-traditional students) who do not feel connected to the campus culture or who have experienced rejection from that culture, have a higher risk of non-completion (O'Keefe, 2013).

Focusing on academics, Richardson and Radloff (2014), using the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (ASSE) and the Staff Survey of Student Engagement (SSSE), reported that frequent interactions with lecturers led to higher engagement and satisfaction and lower student attrition

rates. They also identified electronic communication as the most common form of interaction between professor and student, although they felt that lecturers who rely on electronic communication with students are less likely to appreciate their needs. Natoli, Jackling, and Siddique (2015) found that lecturer friendliness, such as knowing students on a first-name basis, resulted in students feeling connected and engaged in the classroom. Their study also found that students felt less connected and were more likely to miss class if the instructor seemed unqualified, read directly from their presentations, or simply answered questions by restating textbook answers. Conversely, lecturer enthusiasm, passion, preparedness, and professionalism have been demonstrated to increase students' feeling of support in the classroom (Zumbrunn et al., 2014). As well, positive interactions with lecturers were also found to affect international students' sense of belonging in a study by Glass, Kociolek, Wongtrirat, Lynch, and Cong (2015). International students expressed greater satisfaction when lecturers showed interest by speaking to them individually before or after class, encouraging them to participate during class, and by creating social experience in the classroom.

Yet it is not only important to consider what the university does or provides when examining elements of retention and success, but also, colleges and universities must explore connections between student resilience, student retention and student success. Gray (2015) stated that "the lack of resilience in college students is interfering with the academic mission of the University and is thwarting the emotional and personal development of students". Miremadi (2015) asserted that college student resilience and healthy coping skills were critical to student well being. As well, Himmel (2015) concluded that resilience and optimism-focused education helps students foster better coping skills, not only to face the challenges of undergraduate life, but also to face challenges beyond higher education.

Moogan, Baron, and Harris (1999) found that prospective students made enrolment decisions after examining location and size of universities along with examining their academic reputations. Other variables that influenced decisions to attend or not attend a university included the opinions of teachers, peers, and family members, academic programs and courses available, enrolment choices of friends, student-lecturer ratios, course fees and living expenses (Moogan, et al., 1999). Cubillo, Sanchez, and Cervino (2006) suggested that international students consider many things when deciding to study abroad, including but not limited to: safety and security, international background, university environment, and entry requirements.

Conversely, Smith and Naylor (2001) reported that students predominantly decide to leave the university for personal, financial, or social reasons. Factors associated with age, family background, academic preparedness, commitment to college, and occupational aspirations influenced the students' decision making process (Smith & Naylor, 2001). Christie, Munro, and Fisher's research (2004) revealed that students' biggest reason for leaving was due to poor personal fit with the university itself and/or the course in which the student was enrolled. Similar findings were echoed by Johnes and McNabb (2004) who found that the extent to which a university suits an individual student greatly impacts the student's intent to stay or leave the university. However, Bradley (2017) discovered that many students refrained from dropping out because they had already invested too much time, effort, or money into their current education. Similarly, Xuereb (2014) found that students decided to persist in order to complete what they started and realise their educational goals.

Taken together, research suggests that universities play a sizable part in providing responsive, engaging, and nurturing academic and student support environments, while students have an important role in the decision making process that impacts their success. Unfortunately, these variables are often interrelated, so results of narrowly-focused research studies provide an incomplete picture of the dynamics of this complex interplay of variables. In order to investigate the phenomenon of surviving and thriving of students attending universities in the United Kingdom

(UK), this study aimed to build upon previous research by creating a more unified picture of all five identified themes from the perspective of the students.

Purpose of the study

In the UK, considerable emphasis is placed on student retention and student engagement at the course (program), faculties (college) and university levels. While many studies focus on either the impact of academics on student success or on the effects of student programming and support, this study sought to develop an integrated understanding of the totality of the student experience by examining what the research suggests are significant elements that contribute to student success. Specifically, the study was designed to examine issues surrounding academic engagement, co-curricular support, student decision-making, students' sense of belonging and student resiliency. The researchers sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What do students perceive are factors that promote university student persistence in the UK context?
2. What do students perceive are factors that promote university student engagement in the UK context?

Understanding phenomena around student success in UK universities can lead the greater higher education community to more targeted student facing interventions. This knowledge can help researchers bridge insights from studies largely conducted in the United States (US) with factors specific to the UK higher education environment.

Methodology

Instrument

In the UK, universities are required to survey students using the National Student Survey (NSS) and publish results. The NSS provides aggregate satisfaction data for the university, its faculties and by course, but interpretation of the root causes for student satisfaction with academics or services is lacking. In order to gain a better understanding of student views and in acknowledgement that widening participation yields more heterogeneity of viewpoints, a multi-factor student retention and engagement survey was designed. Items were included in accordance to their relevance to factors effecting student retention and student engagement as elucidated in US based research. The instrument was piloted, and items revised. The instrument was also reviewed by the UK university's student engagement office before use in this study.

Design

The researchers chose a mixed methods design that included concurrent quantitative and qualitative features. The study used a concurrent, nested research design (Creswell, 2009) in a survey format. The instrument included 26 close-ended quantitative items related to surviving and thriving at the university. Each item was supplemented by an open-ended prompt designed to draw out further description of the respondents' experiences. The quantitative portion was privileged and the qualitative expansion optional. Using this approach, the researchers examined broad participant response patterns in the quantitative data collection process, while gaining a deeper meaning of the data by reviewing the respondents' qualitative response patterns. This mixed methods design established a framework for examining the complementarity of quantitative and qualitative data.

Data collection

The researchers chose a convenience sample of participants at a large, multi-campus university serving students from a wide range of academic and social backgrounds. Students congregated in

public places across the university were invited to participate in the research study. Surveys were administered at two campuses of this university, over a four-day time frame, at varying times of day. Students in common areas were approached by research assistants, provided with background on the study's purpose and invited to participate. No declinations were received.

Participants

A total of 226 university students agreed to complete at least part of the survey. Of those, 140 were female, 81 male, and ten did not report a gender. They were situated on one of the university's two main campuses. One hundred thirty-four participants were from the metropolitan campus, 91 were from the suburban campus, and one participant went to both campuses. They were provided the opportunity to report their own race/ethnicity resulting in 49 unique descriptions. Looking at year in university, 76 participants reported being in Year One, 67 were in Year Two, 45 in Year Three, 18 reported being in graduate school, seven were in foundational courses, and 13 did not report the year or the year selection was unclear. Participants were grouped into five faculties (colleges). As such, 59 participants reported being in a course (program) in arts, law, and social sciences, 44 were in health, social care, and education, 31 were in business, 13 were in medical science, 60 were in science and technology, and 19 did not report. In addition, participants were asked to select all that applied in order for the researchers to classify student type demographics. Respondents reported themselves as such: 77 were traditional, 66 mature, 59 commuting, 12 clearing, 34 first generation, 19 had caring responsibilities, and 43 were international.

Data analysis

All quantitative data were analysed using SPSS (version 22) for Mac. Descriptive statistics, frequency distributions and chi-square tests were used to examine the research questions. Findings from quantitative data were compared with qualitative data and integrated into the analysis. No themes were found to be contradictory, thus no refutation occurred (Spiggle, 1994).

Steps were taken to ensure analytic rigor of analysis of qualitative responses. Member checks were used to triangulate the data. The qualitative survey information was transcribed onto Excel spreadsheets, then coded. Three team members identified key respondent themes from the free text commentary; two members conducted initial coding and the resultant codes were checked by the third member. The researchers developed content-rich, descriptive themes, highlighting areas of agreement and differences of perspectives by a priori category. Information between the team members was compared, and where discrepancies were noted, they were discussed and agreement reached. Inter-rater reliability among the team members was above .90.

Results

Belonging

Respondents were asked multiple questions related to the feeling of belonging at the university. When asked which statement fit them best, 112 (49.6%) participants reported feeling valued at the university by academics, staff and fellow students; 85 (37.6%) reported feeling valued at the university by some but not others, and 19 (8.4%) reported not getting the sense of being valued, with 10 students (4.4%) not responding. There were six additional Likert-type item questions (A= always, S= sometimes, N= never) on belonging, with results of those who responded reported in Table 1. Demographic variables (gender, year in school, and campus) were compared to ordinal categorical questions related to belonging. A chi-square test resulted in a significant association between the demographic variable for campus/location and usage of social media to connect with people around campus ($X^2(6)= 16.828$, $p = .01$), demonstrating that students at the metropolitan campus reported using social media more than expected.

Table 1: Frequencies and percentages for questions related to belonging

Question	A (n)	A (%)	S (n)	S (%)	N (n)	N (%)
Easy to Become Part of Campus Life	81	36.2	131	58.5	12	5.4
Belong on University's Campus	118	53.4	90	40.7	13	5.9
Social Media Connects to People on Campus	73	33.0	103	46.6	45	20.4
Broader Community Outside of University	36	16.5	114	52.3	68	31.2
Make Friends in my Classes	133	61.0	78	35.8	7	3.2
Make Friends Outside Class at University	72	32.4	104	46.8	46	20.7

The majority of free text respondents felt welcomed to the university both electronically and in-person. They made friends in classes and stayed connected to them online. Yet, another group of respondents expressed difficulty in establishing course related friendships. They characterised themselves as either shy and "stand-offish", or rushed and pressed for time. In addition, spending time on and off campus impacted their sense of belonging. Part time and commuter students expressed less connection to the university community when compared to responding full time or residential counterparts. In terms of feeling valued, respondents were evenly split. Those who felt valued believed they received support. Those who felt undervalued described the university as an entity, in impersonal terms.

Respondents were evenly split on the topic of "friend-making" outside of classes. Those who successfully made social connections outside of class described socialising, parties, and societies as mechanisms for forming connections. The other half reported that "friend-making" was either difficult or time consuming, thus they'd not had success. In addition, an overwhelmingly majority of free text respondents reported not feeling a part of a broader community outside of the university. They described limited off campus involvement, preferring to "keep to themselves" or "hang out with friends".

Student support services

Participants were asked about interactions with student support services. When asked about using campus resources when needed, 111 (49%) participants reported always, 114 (50.4%) sometimes, and one (0.4%) never. Results also indicated that individuals felt known and supported by student services staff always (n= 71, 31.4%), sometimes (n= 110, 48.7%), and never (n= 36, 15.9%), with nine students (4%) not responding to the question. Respondents' preferred and actual communication methods for contacting student services staff were explored and reported by percentage in Table 2. A chi-square test was completed comparing the distribution between demographic categories (gender, year in school, and campus) and each categorical student support question with no significant results.

Table 2: Percentage preferred and actual communication methods

Method	Preferred Student Services	Actual Student Services	Preferred Professor	Actual Professor
Email	50.0	49.8	85.1	81.1
Telephone	9.5	7.3	4.1	3.2
Social Media	3.2	1.8	N/A	N/A
Coming to Office or Office Hours	28.4	24.7	20.3	13.5
Before/After Class	N/A	N/A	20.7	19.8
More than One	5.0	3.2	14.0	12.6
Do not Communicate	21.2	26.9	1.8	2.3

In terms of describing accessibility to student support services two-thirds of free text respondents felt that service providers were accessible and one-third felt they were not. In terms of their use of and reaction to student support services, respondent's views can be evenly classified into three categories. Approximately one-third of respondents viewed Student Services staff as helpful, supportive and responsive. They were users of these services and were satisfied with the assistance they received. Another third had not used services but stated that they knew what services were offered and knew how to access them if they needed help. The final third viewed services as not helpful. They cited issues surrounding staff availability and access as primary concerns. They wanted to see wait time reduced and student access to staff increased.

When considering communication, the overwhelming number of free text comments indicated that respondents prefer to communicate with Student Services staff face to face. They acknowledged that email is a useful mechanism to employ to get answers to quick questions but they prefer to have the preponderance of their queries dealt with in person. A smaller number of respondents noted that while they prefer to interact with staff in person, that staff cannot always be seen. When offices are closed, staff are busy or for other reasons can't be seen, they use email to communicate. This group felt clearly that communicating their issues in person was preferable.

Looking at involvement in Student Life, the majority of free text respondents indicated they're not engaged. They referenced shyness and isolation and lack of available time and resource limitations as reasons for not engaging in campus life. Of the approximately one-fourth of the respondents who described themselves as engaged, they cited clubs, the Students' Union and volunteering as conduits for engagement.

Academic engagement

Participants were asked several questions related to academic engagement. Of those who responded to the question, 114 (52.3%) reported that professors always helped them succeed in class, while 96 (44%) noted help sometimes and eight (3.7%) never. When asked about engagement, 68 (30.8%) participants stated they were very active and engaged in academic activities, while 111 (50.2%) reported being sometimes active and engaged and 42 (19%) never. In addition, only 43 (19.5%) stated they were very active and engaged in student life activities, whereas 108 (48.9%) were active sometimes and 70 (31.7%) never. Respondents' preferred and actual communication methods for contacting professors were explored and are reported through percentage in Table 2.

When asked about what matters within the classroom, 33.8% of participants reported lecturer expertise, 60.3% reported lecturer enthusiasm and rapport with students, 48.8% course content and workload, and 16.4% reported rapport with other students in the class. Participants were also asked about how they felt when in class, resulting in 42.5% reported feeling confident, 19.6% hesitant, 42.9% accepted, 15.1% indifferent, 52.5% interested, and 18.3% bored. A chi-square test was completed comparing the distribution between demographic categories (gender, year in school, and campus) and each categorical academic engagment question with two significant associations illustrated. Men reported being very active and engaged in academic activities at higher rates while women reported at lower rates than what was expected ($X^2(6)= 12.972$, $p = .043$.). Similarly, men reported being very active and engaged in student life activities at higher rates than what was expected while women reported at lower rates ($X^2(6)= 15.757$, $p = .015$).

The majority of qualitative respondents reported that they communicated with professors via email. They described email as fast, convenient and effective. Some respondents referenced having interest in creating a record of responses they received from lecturers. A majority of these free text respondents described their professors as responsive, and stated that they provided feedback to them on work submissions and advice for success. The mechanisms cited how they showed

responsiveness as email, tutorials and by checking work. Another group of respondents stated that some professors were lacking in general interest in students and lacking in patience.

Respondents overwhelmingly reported that lecturer enthusiasm, a well-run learning environment and friendly interpersonal conditions mattered most to them. They reported they enjoyed classes most that kept their interest. These respondents stated that they disengaged when material was dull or not delivered interactively. A roughly equivalent number of students described themselves as "highly engaged" or "bored". Of the respondents who reported being engaged, their place of engagement was inside the classroom. The overwhelming majority of respondents reported being disengaged with the greater university community. This majority reported that they lacked time and interest to get involved beyond what was mandatory. A subset of this group reported that they lacked the requisite social skills and confidence to move beyond their comfort zones to more fully engage.

Decision making

Factors influencing participants' decision to initially choose the university in the study and ultimately stay at the university thus far were explored and are reported in Table 3. Participants also reported on their certainty in completing the current degree at this university with 177 (80.5%) being very certain, 35 (15.9%) somewhat certain, and eight (3.6%) uncertain. When asked what made the participants attend a non-mandatory college event, 45.8% reported that friends would be there, 32.2% that it was at a convenient time and place, 28.5% because it was free or affordably priced, 29.4% because it looked like fun, 46.3% as there was a perceived benefit to the participant's career, and 5.1% reported other. As well, participants were also asked what made them decide to get involved in some aspect of campus life. Participants reported that they got involved when they were passionate about the topic (67.3%), when they could see others contributing (17.8%), when someone the participant respected was leading (16.3%), when the involvement was perceived to look good on a CV (34.1%), or other (2.9%). A chi-square test was completed comparing the distribution between demographic categories (gender, year in school, and campus) and the one categorical decision making question with no significant results.

Table 3: Influencing factors for choosing and staying at university through percentage

Factors	Initial Choice	Choosing to Stay
Price	6.8	13.8
Course	59.5	67.4
Friends	6.4	35.8
Family	14.5	16.1
Location	57.3	42.7
Services and Activities	7.3	8.7
Other	10.9	8.7

Two predominant reasons to matriculate were reported by free text respondents. These were course and location. Many respondents reported that they enrolled to pursue a specific academic course or module. They had a particular academic interest and they chose a university that provided the education they were seeking. Another large group stated that they decided to attend based on the university's location. When describing location as a choice, the subset of commuter respondents described "distance from home" as key in their decision-making, while the residential respondent subset described the "reputation of the academic community" as driving their choices. A smaller, but cohesive group of respondents identified employment reasons for matriculating. A subset of this group cited employer funding as their reason for enrolling while another subset described their

interest in gaining an employment advantage in the form of promotion or higher pay as reasons for enrolment.

Overwhelmingly respondents reported that their reasons for staying in college were friends and family. They cited these groups as most influential in their decision-making. They cited family influence to "stay in school" and "encouragement" from friends as key factors in affecting their decision to stay the course. The second most frequently described factor that influenced decision to stay in the university was "desire for an education". In explaining their thoughts, respondents described such factors as perceived value of the degree, enjoyment of the course, and a desire to finish what was begun as reasons for their retention.

In terms of their beliefs regarding personal persistence, most respondents expressed certainty that they would complete their degrees. They cited goal attainment and progress to degree completion as reasons for their certainty. Yet a sizable minority of respondents were uncertain that they would graduate. They cited fleeting motivation, negative beliefs, lack of confidence, and the experience of struggling as reasons for their views.

With regard to attending university sponsored events, two-thirds of respondents reported that they made decisions based on perceived career relevance or potential for fun. They expressed interest in programs related to their course, with explicit professional relevance, and/or with the opportunity for building their CVs. The other third reported interest in "good fun". They reported making decisions to attend university sponsored programs based on the likelihood the program would be enjoyable, coupled with the likelihood they could attend with friends.

When explaining their response to questions surrounding "intent to stay", participants clustered into five categories. First, they reported caring about the schedule and wanting better timetables. Specifically, they disliked three- to five-hour classes. Second, they reported wanting more and better learning support. They wanted better study areas, more intensive study support, more support staff office hours and more accommodations to be provided for their learning needs. Third, they wanted more interesting courses, more interactive, shorter, and more frequent lectures, lessons that were more thought provoking, more practical activities, better equipped facilities and more labs. Fourth, they wanted more quality student engagement opportunities. They wanted more social involvement with others and better connections to clubs and societies. Fifth, they wanted a better price point. They wanted lower fees, discounts for graduate students, more access to books in the library and more attention from the university to reduce their costs.

Resilience

For resilience, participants were first asked if they experienced challenges at the university, with 67 (30.9%) reporting always, 141 (65%) sometimes, and nine (4.1%) never. Participants were also asked who they thought could help them overcome challenges at the university as well as who they actually spoke to when facing challenges (Table 4). A chi-square test was completed comparing the distribution between demographic categories (gender, year in school, and campus) and the one categorical resilence question with no significant results.

Table 4: Potential and actual avenues for assistance when facing challenges by percentage

Individuals to Contact	Potential Avenues	Actual Avenues
Friends	50.2	60.8
Family	34.1	36.0
Professors	55.8	49.5
Student Support Services/University Departments	30.4	20.6

The challenges experienced by free text respondents overwhelmingly surrounded their academic workloads. They viewed the magnitude of their academic responsibilities and the work needed to meet those responsibilities as their greatest challenge. Some reported that personal problems or disability issues also affected their ability to keep up with their academic obligations.

When faced with university challenges, the majority of respondents indicated that family and friends were where they turned in times of need for support, understanding and help. They reported having a support system outside of the university and they turned to it when they faced challenges. Another group of respondents reported contacting professors and Student Services staff when they encountered obstacles. These respondents specifically stated that they sought out those individuals in the employ of the university who they knew were both supportive and accessible.

Discussion

Overall, this study is consistent with related past research and provides a more complete picture of a campus climate around surviving and thriving. Consistent with research by Ghori (2016), respondents who made personal connections in class, outside of class and/or with university support services reported feeling they belonged at the university. Their connectedness with others within the university gave them a sense that they mattered and most frequently occurred between individuals with direct connection to the respondent's course of study. Respondents were far less connected to others outside of their courses or their university. Whatever the reported reasons, respondents who did not successfully engage with others, whether in person or online, on campus or off, reported a decreased sense of belonging to the university community.

Extending research by Kuh et al. (2008), open ended comments may explain the utilisation gap for students who reported needing student support services. Some free text respondents reported that support staff were, at times, not available or busy, resulting in their not being seen. With regard to reaching out for assistance, those who had communication method preferences utilised those preferred mechanisms. Although qualitative responses did not address why some students chose not to access services, they did, however, indicate that some respondents wanted more support from student services staff and greater access. For this group of respondents, an in-person conversation with a service provider was the best way to be helped.

Research suggests that engagement in and out of the classroom optimises student and graduate success (Sheffield, 2014). Unfortunately, the majority of respondents in this study did not see themselves as highly academically engaged nor were they engaged with student life. Results suggested that a segment of this population is not gregarious and may be overlooked. To the majority of participants, personalisation matters both in and out of the classroom. The energy and enthusiasm of professors and staff affected the interest level of the majority of respondents.

Although a past study found that students' social status and/or outside support impacted decisions to come, to stay, and to flourish (Reay, Crozier, & Clayton, 2010), the two primary reasons respondents in this study provided for enrolling at the university were course and location. The vast majority of these respondents were certain that they would complete their degrees at their chosen university. Free text comments suggested that family and friends influenced their decisions to stay as well as the value they placed on an education. Free text comments suggested that students less sure about meeting their goals struggled to stay motivated, lacked confidence and held negative beliefs. In terms of overall decision-making, academic, social, and career factors contributed to determinations made. Respondents reported wanting practical, thought provoking interactive courses, the support of university staff, family and friends, and co-curricular experiences that enhanced their careers and made decisions accordingly.

Considering challenges and the potential positive impact of resiliency (Luo, 2015), it is important to note that, of the 96% of participants who reported experiencing challenges, three times as many respondents reported reaching out to friends (60.8%) for help with challenges as compared to student support services staff (20.6%). Open ended responses indicated that most challenges participants faced related to academic workload with only half the respondents reporting that they contacted their professors in those situations. Though most respondents reported having faced challenges, those who sought help, whether from student services or academic staff or from members of their social networks, reported overcoming them and thriving.

This study revealed two noteworthy and unanticipated findings. First, the fact that respondents at the metropolitan campus established a greater sense of connection to the university through social media networks is an important result from this study. This may be attributable to respondent age or other characteristics of the metropolitan student body. The second unexpected finding involved gender differences in academic and co-curricular student engagement. In this study, male participants were significantly more engaged, both academically and socially, than their female counterparts. The lower reported engagement levels of female students across engagement opportunities warrants further consideration.

Limitations

Survey construction limitations were identified through the process of data analysis. The open ended nature of the ethnicity question made crisp ethnic classification impossible. With an ethnically diverse student population, a set of standard ethnicity groupings from which participants can choose should be offered. Asking for year of study proved misleading. Future UK studies should include foundational, undergraduate, and post-graduate as year of study options.

Conclusions and recommendations

This study has implications for higher education professionals tasked with fostering greater levels of student engagement, involvement, and student success. To increase student academic engagement, classroom learning environments should be interactive, inclusive and led by academics with a passion for their discipline. Lecturers should concentrate on insuring that students have regular opportunities for interaction with them, with classmates, and with the subject matter. To increase student involvement in co-curricular programs, student affairs staff should remember that the value proposition for attendance needs to be clear. Today's students have options and time constraints. They will plan or participate in programs or events if they see tangible benefit in doing so. Membership in clubs, organisations or societies is correlated with the perceived value of the relationship network and interest and/or belief in the group's affiliative purpose. Students value having peer relationships and will invest time and energy in areas that spark their passions. Lastly, to increase student access to supportive services, students want and need rapid access to caring staff who can provide meaningful guidance. Students have been acculturalised to receive real time responses. Student services delivery models should be re-envisioned to address the accessibility needs of a pluralistic, digital generation.

The researchers recommend that this study be replicated at multiple universities in the UK and abroad to determine generalisability of findings. Future investigations should examine the surviving and thriving patterns of underrepresented populations along with examining the views of students as they progress toward stages in their university education. The gender differences reported in this study involving academic and co-curricular engagement warrant further investigation, along with the reported differences of the effects of social media on urban campus student engagement.

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Refereed Paper

Online Counselling Support in Australian and New Zealand Universities

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Abstract

The higher education sector is currently undergoing a major shift towards increasing the amount of courses that are taught online, hence there is also a growing need to provide support services for online students. This paper reports on the results of a survey that aimed to gather information on the online presence of counselling services across Australian and New Zealand higher education facilities. It indicates that movement towards offering online counselling support for students is slow, with services and professionals showing some resistance to, and anxiety around, moving into this sphere. Where services have been offered, there is little consistency across the sector. A number of challenges around engagement, marketing, technology and clinician anxiety have hampered successful outcomes. There have been notable exceptions to this, with a few universities trialling different online platforms and engagement strategies with students, with varying levels of success. Overall there appears to be a need for counsellors to be offered training in providing online services to students; not only to increase their confidence in providing these services, but also to help to change attitudes about online mental health services. There is also a need for more research into the efficacy of those models which are operating successfully, in order to encourage change in clinician attitudes, which in turn may lead to further adoption of online services across the sector.

Introduction

This paper reports on the results of a survey that aimed to gather information on the online provision of counselling in Australian and New Zealand universities. In recent years universities have provided an increasing number of courses online and subsequently many students can now study their degree whilst spending very little time on campus. There have been many developments in the provision of online counselling support and mental health care in the public and private sectors more broadly, however very little has been reported on initiatives in universities.

For the purpose of the discussion within this paper, the term 'online counselling support' refers to a wide range of technologies used for the provision of therapy, information sharing and service promotion within university counselling services. These include use of email and video-conferencing software, social media platforms, interactive websites, and instant chat. Interventions vary by level of therapist support; from those which are entirely self-directed, where the participant can read, watch, and listen to information which they can independently implement in their lives; to those which are more clinician-directed, for example with weekly phone or email contact directing and supporting the client's involvement. Also, the structure of the work varies, including those interventions which follow a specified, often manualised, step-by-step process and those providing non-directive therapy or counselling.

The aims of the survey were to identify the prevalence of the use of online technologies within Australian and New Zealand university counselling services; also, to gain insight into the successes and difficulties in providing these methods of support, including consideration of practitioner and institutional perspectives.

Mental health support in Australia

The impact of mental distress on individual wellbeing and the functioning of society more generally, is being increasingly recognised (Trautmann, Rehm, & Wittchen, 2016; World Health Organisation, 2008). It is now well documented that a large proportion of the population will at some point meet criteria for the diagnosis of a mental disorder, with the highest prevalence rates in young adults (Slade et al., 2009). In Australia, direct costs of psychological support, medications, and hospital admissions, in addition to indirect costs in the form of decreased work productivity, absenteeism, and welfare payments, are estimated to cost over $28 billion per annum (OECD, 2015). Unfortunately, despite there being some increases in the availability of psychological support within the Australian healthcare system, information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in 2007 showed that only approximately 35% of people who experienced a mental disorder within Australia sought professional support. More recent overseas data shows similar rates for those with serious suicidal thoughts, with just under 40% seeking support (SAMSAH, 2012).

One way in which governments and non-government organisations have attempted to improve access to professional support has been the introduction of online support. National mental health services, Headspace, Lifeline and Youthline, are examples of services providing support using synchronous chat (live online chat), online support groups and self-directed modules. Funding has also been recently announced in Australia for Medicare rebated videoconference sessions with psychologists for those living in rural and remote areas; complementing already established teleconference support by psychiatrists (Department of Health, 2017).

Mental health in Australian universities

Awareness has gradually increased regarding the particularly high levels of mental distress in the Australian university student population. Research by Helen Stallman (2010) provided a foundation for a greater focus in this area with her comparison of psychological distress levels in university students with that of the general public. Stallman's article has now been extensively cited and has received coverage in news media within Australia and internationally. Stallman's findings indicate that approximately 84% of university students are experiencing elevated levels of mental distress: a significantly higher level than the approximately 29% estimated to be experiencing this level of distress in the general Australian population (Stallman, 2010). Furthermore, Stallman (2008) has reported elsewhere that very high mental distress has a substantial impact on the ability of those suffering, to work and study.

In addition to the low level of professional help-seeking aforementioned, efforts to support the mental health of university students are complicated by a shift in the nature and delivery of university study. Online courses have allowed a wide array of students who may have previously been unable to attend on-campus study, due to location or other commitments, to access a variety of university courses. However, the same factors also preclude online students from accessing on-campus support services.

Provision of online mental health and wellbeing services

It is worth noting that there also appears to be a trend or preference toward seeking support online, even for those who can access face to face services. Mission Australia's recently released Youth 2016 report indicates that almost half of young people who seek personal support do so via the internet. Glasheen, Shochet, and Campbell (2016) also reported a high level of interest in online support from Australian high school students. The authors report that over 80% of the high school students who participated in their research, indicated they would, or might, access online counselling if offered by the school counsellor. This study also reports a relative increase in males

being interested in seeking online counselling support, compared with face to face support.

Ryan, Shochet, and Stallman (2010) similarly report an increased preference for Australian university students to use online support during times of high distress. In the research they conducted with university students, they reported that almost 60% of respondents with high levels of psychological distress expressed intention to access online support. The authors subsequently concluded that "online interventions may be a useful way to provide help to students in need who otherwise may not seek formal help" (p.1).

Reflecting the shifting preferences reported above, many Australian and New Zealand universities have begun implementing online counselling services, with some forms of tele-conference and email support being those most commonly promoted (Cathcart, 2016; Mullin et al., 2014).

Current evidence for effectiveness of online counselling

Work at the Macquarie University eCentre Clinic has produced promising results for an online wellbeing program, coupled with clinician contact via phone or secure e-messaging service (Mullin et al., 2014). The treatment group (those who received support through the program) showed significant reductions of clinical levels of anxiety and depression symptoms compared with the control group (those on the waitlist) at post-treatment and at three-month follow-up. Whilst results are promising, the number of participants in this study is small, and some limitations regarding sampling method are reported. Similarly, a review of online programs by Davies, Morriss, and Glazebrook (2014) reports some promising results but their review also found many methodological flaws with population sampling, small numbers, or the non-inclusion of a control group.

In the broader community there is a growing body of research examining online psychological interventions. The National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre in Australia has conducted numerous trials on the effectiveness of a range of electronic Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (eCBT) programs for reducing comorbid depression and substance use (Deady, Mills, Teesson, & Kay-Lambkin, 2016; Kay-Lambkin et al., 2015) as well as increasing healthy lifestyle behaviours (Baker et al., 2011). Similarly, there has been success in using eCBT for anxiety and depression (Andersson & Cuijpers, 2009; Cuijpers et al., 2009; Cuijpers, Donker, van Straten, Li, & Andersson, 2010), and internet-delivered manualised interventions for depression (Wagner, Horn, & Maercker, 2014), and PTSD (Lappaleinen et al., 2014).

Study objectives

Given the limited amount of published research about online services within Australian and New Zealand university counselling services, the foremost purpose of the current study was to determine a baseline of current service provision. Furthermore, in the interest of sharing as much information as possible with the Australian and New Zealand higher education support services sector, it was considered important to collect any evidence of effectiveness of interventions, where available, and to explore the attitudes and concerns of university-based counsellors about the provision of online services.

Method

Survey

A survey for university counselling staff was developed by the researchers with three separate sections: 1) details of online services offered both currently and in the past; 2) perceptions and/or evidence regarding successes and limitations of these, including staff attitudes towards any online services trialled; and 3) demographic details of the university, number of campuses and number of students.

Questions specifically about the online counselling presence provided by the service, both current and past, along with participant attitudes towards this, were asked at the commencement of the survey. A full copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

Participants

Participants were sought from amongst those who work within Australian and New Zealand higher education counselling services. They were recruited in three different ways: 1) an advertisement via the newsletter of the Australian and New Zealand Student Services Association (ANZSSA); 2) an email invitation from the President of the ANZSSA Heads of Counselling Group; and 3) an e-mail invitation sent to each counselling service across all Australian and New Zealand Universities. Altogether, 47 institutions across Australia and New Zealand were contacted. Participants could be any employee of the university counselling service, not limited to clinicians, in order to increase the response rate. In order to increase anonymity, the specific demographics of the participant, such as role, gender, age, ethnicity, were not obtained.

Each participant was provided with a link to the online survey described above. Participants were given the option of anonymously completing the survey in part or full, and also the opportunity to have their responses withdrawn from inclusion in the results to be publicly disseminated through conference presentation and publication.

Data analysis

All qualitative data were analysed through thematic analysis, employing a widely used method for exploratory qualitative research, whereby the responses were read, re-read and common themes and sub-themes were identified and subsequently named (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Carrera-Ferdandez, Guàrdia-Olmos, & Pero-Cebollero, 2014). Table 1 demonstrates an example of this process.

Table 1 Example of coding process

Survey responses	**Initial Coding Framework**
What Works Well	
"Structured, targeted approach to 'homework'"	Capacity & Power
"Communicate about social anxiety that prevents them from initially making a face-to-face appointment"	Reduced Barriers
Barriers and Limitations	
"Limited time available to successfully promote some things"	Poor Quality and Resourcing
"Internet speed of user"	Technology

Results

Respondents

There were 38 respondents who completed the survey, two of whom did not consent to their responses being used in analyses and were therefore removed. Respondents were counsellors, service managers, and other staff associated with counselling services from 20 universities across Australia and New Zealand. A further three did not indicate their university. Of those who identified their university there were 19 out of a possible 39 from Australian campuses, one out of eight New Zealand universities and an overall response rate of 43%. The response rate is quite high

for survey participation and the numbers adequate for the level of analysis used within this research. A large variety of universities were represented; predominately they were large, multi-campus institutions offering courses at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Survey responses revealed information regarding the counselling services in which the participants worked. Most services included multiple counsellors (mean=5.97, SD=2.03), and predominantly permanent staff. The vast majority provided a selection of face to face counselling, drop-in sessions, workshops, and participation in other events on their campus. Wait times reported for counselling varied from one or two days, to three weeks.

Current online offerings

Twenty-five respondents reported regularly referring students to online self-help resources, 20 reported referral to smartphone applications and 17 reported referral to e-mental health websites. Video (for example, Skype) sessions were also reported by 12 respondents as an alternative method of contact, while 17 mentioned email. Furthermore, nine reported trialling Webinars, nine had set up Facebook pages, nine had developed online question and answer sites (Q&A), while five had used blogs. This reflects the growing trend for universities to be offering their students online support, such as Western Sydney University's 'eCounselling' (Western Sydney University, 2017) and the University of Newcastle's Online Skype Counselling (University of Newcastle, 2018).

Success of current offerings

Analysis of qualitative data from the survey revealed multiple themes on the topic of what has worked well for current online offerings. Themes were determined when four or more responses indicated a similar idea. These are outlined below:

Capacity & Power: This included comments about the power, quality and subsequently positive results of using online support services. Comments included references to the ability to provide more structured support, to reflect on past session content, and capacity to gain quality outcome data.

Accessibility & Reach: Responses related to a perceived increase in the accessibility of offering online services, compared with offering on-campus services only. Convenience, equity and flexibility were all reported as positive aspects of online services.

Diversity: These responses made particular mention of the way that providing online support options improved the diversity of their service, allowing students a greater ability to choose how they access support.

Reduced Barriers: Responses specifically reported the benefit of providing students with an accessible first contact point, particularly for those who are quite anxious and hesitant about the prospect of entering a counselling environment. The potential for anonymity was included here.

Speed & Triage: Many responses also referred to the benefits of some online services which allowed concerns to be dealt with more quickly, particularly those that did not end up requiring counselling intervention and could be more speedily triaged.

Difficulties of current offerings

The repeated themes that emerged in relation to what has been difficult, or barriers to using online support, were as follows:

Poor Quality and Resourcing: Poor quality of the services offered, along with inadequate promotion, were mentioned as significant barriers to the effective operation of online services. Specifically, a lack of resourcing to promote services was reported, and a lack of quality in some

online services accessed. One respondent reported that their service was "self-help only, not a real online service" and another commented, "limited time available to successfully promote…"

Practitioner Difficulties: Some practitioners (counsellors) reported difficulties adapting their skills for use in the online environment, including being unable to access non-verbal information.

Suitability / Severity Issues: These included concerns about high-risk clients and the related legal concerns in their management. Multiple respondents indicated a concern with severe, risky and complex presentations coming through email.

Technology: Comments related to technological issues; specifically, internet speed and various other technical difficulties impacting on the support offered.

Low Uptake & Reach: A small sample of comments referred to difficulties establishing adequate reach (for example in promoting services via social media) as well as students' lack of interest in online support.

Student Preference: A number of comments also mentioned a reluctance in some students to engage in online support options. A desire for face to face, where available, was mentioned in multiple responses.

Previously offered online interventions

Of the universities which responded, 19 indicated no changes in their service; that is, they had either not offered any online services to students, or had continued to offer the online services they had been offering for some time and had not ceased using any. Seven universities reported trying one or more online interventions, which they no longer use. The most commonly trialled and abandoned was Skype individual appointments. The reasons given for no longer offering these appointments was a lack of security and information technology (IT) infrastructure to support the service, as well as a concern about indemnity insurance limitations when the students were located overseas. Comments included: "online security and confidentiality concerns and lack of IT infrastructure" and "We sometimes did this for students overseas - advised that insurance and registration status is not valid when providing counselling services to students when they are located overseas."

E-mail counselling was trialled and discontinued by two universities, with a participant from one of these indicating that a lack of support from counselling staff resulted in the students being encouraged to use face-to-face services instead. This participant commented: "Advertised email counselling, but reality was that counsellor just encouraged students to attend in person."

A Q&A site and two blogs were also discontinued, with a participant at one university indicating there was a lack of time and resources to continue with the service, as it was seen as a lower priority than face-to-face services. "Resources - blogging takes time staff don't have! Often not seen as a priority amongst other more pressing issues." Other services which were trialled and discontinued included live webinars, Facebook pages, and referrals to e-mental health resources.

Engagement strategies

Figure 1 below outlines the frequency of use of specific promotion strategies across the 39 responses for this question. The more popular strategies used were: attendance at student events on campus; advertising on university and counselling webpages; and building staff awareness. Additional strategies mentioned by respondents included: guest lectures to students; posters on campus; and e-mail communication with current clients of the service.

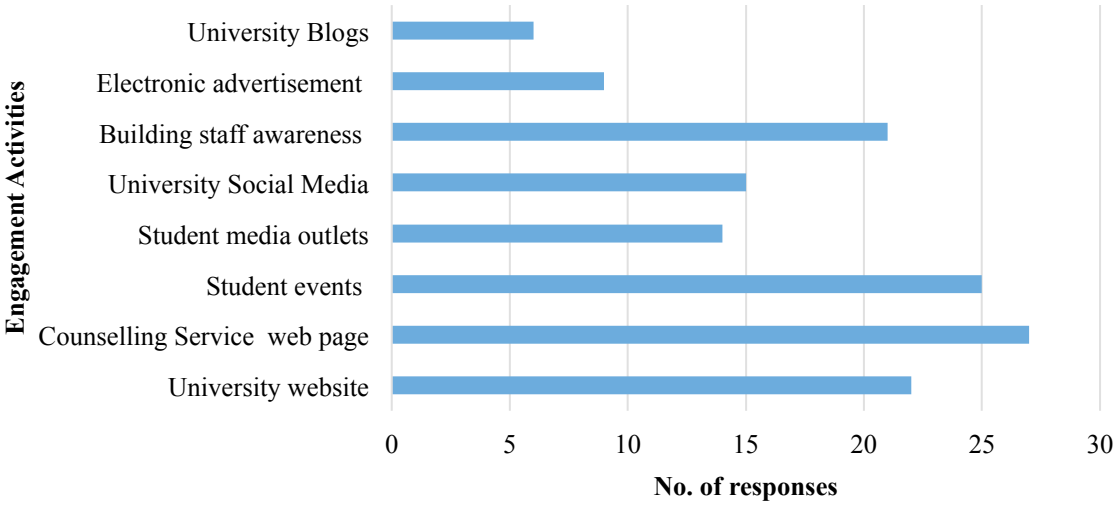

Figure 1. Engagement strategies used to engage students in online services

Only 19 respondents indicated a level for success of the strategies used, with 37% of these (n=7) indicating a high level of success, as evidenced by an increase in numbers and high demand for services: "Excellent! Using student communications teams' Twitter, Instagram and Facebook page allows for access to more than 20,000 audience. Staff awareness and networking has really helped also." And "Each year we have an increase in students accessing online counselling."

Four participants indicated a moderate success, while two others indicated low levels of success.

"It has been a slow uptake! Intermittent - needs to be strategically targeted but hard when there is so much information they get given" and, "Reasonably successful. But constant and ongoing promotion required."

Three said they were unable to comment as they indicated they were not specifically collecting data on how students were referred to the service.

Respondents indicated difficulties with their current promotion strategies, including a lack of awareness of the services, limited resources, and a resistance from the practitioners within the counselling service. A number of responses given here were reflective of a wider issue – that of the attitude and skills of staff in offering online services, rather than difficulties with the engagement strategies themselves. For example, there were reports of difficulty in building rapport and communicating effectively with students using online technologies, as well as technical difficulties around engagement in the actual services themselves. There were also attitudes expressed about face-to-face counselling being superior to that delivered online.

Beliefs and attitudes

In response to the question about whether they would be interested in offering online services at their campus, 21 participants reported that they would, although six added that they would only do so if training and adequate resources were provided. Only two participants indicated they were not interested in offering online services while 13 did not answer. The remainder of participants indicated that they were already offering online counselling.

When asked what concerns they had about providing online services, the most common concern raised was difficulty with technology. "Getting staff up to speed with technology is a big issue".

Following this, the biggest concern raised was difficulty engaging in a therapeutic relationship with clients, possibly also linked to the concern mentioned earlier about a lack of skills and training in offering online counselling. Six participants said they had no concerns. Figure 2 below illustrates the range of responses.

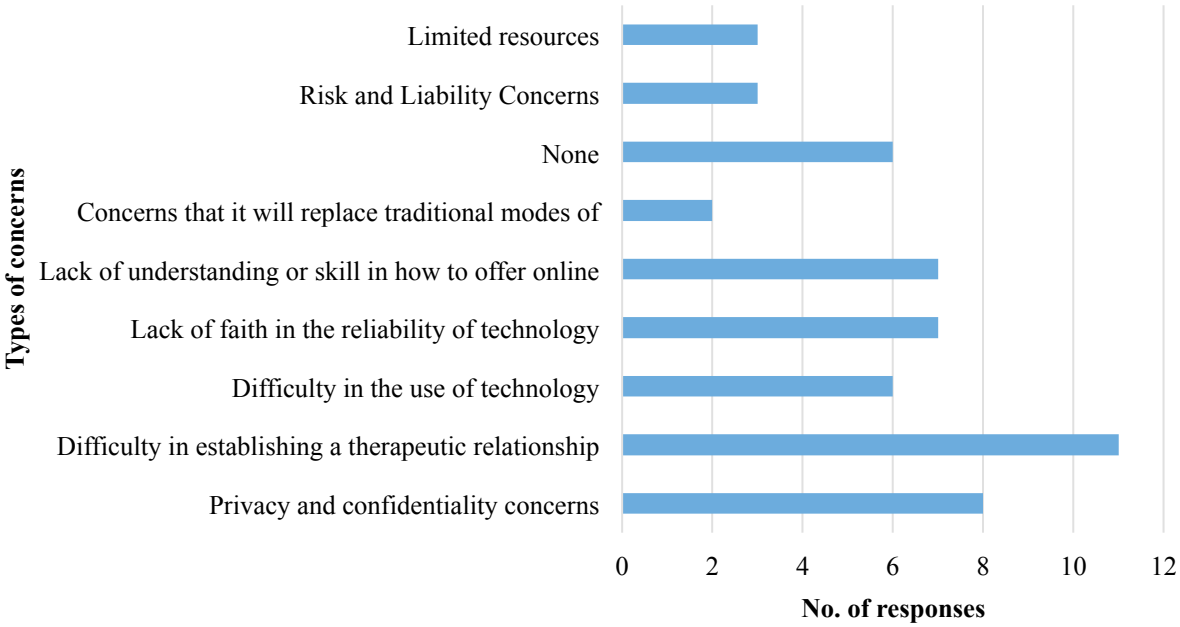

Figure 2. Concerns about offering online therapy

Again, participants indicated some concern for the client's safety when they were identified as being at risk, "Only concerns continues to be what happens if you are working with a student who is in a different country and they report a risk of harm to themselves or others, particularly children."

Discussion

The growing awareness of mental health issues amongst the general Australian population is reflected in the expansion of existing public and private mental health services, as well as the development of new services. As previously mentioned, research indicates that the prevalence of mental health issues in Australia is higher amongst the student population studying at tertiary facilities than amongst the general population, with approximately 84% of university students experiencing elevated levels of mental distress compared with 29% of the general population (Stallman, 2010). However, despite these concerning rates, the percentage of students seeking help through university counselling services is much lower. This, coupled with a shift towards more online university academic programs, in which students are working and studying simultaneously, has forced the university sector to consider alternative pathways to providing support for students in distress. Given the growing popularity of e-mental health services and the familiarity of students with electronic resources, it is perhaps not surprising that many respondents indicated that their university is either offering, has offered, or is contemplating offering online counselling services to accommodate the needs of their students.

The survey results confirmed that universities are moving into the e-mental health space, with a wide range of services being offered across campuses, ranging from blogs, Q&A e-mail services, online video, audio and text audio chats, e-mail sessions and referrals to self-directed and clinically assisted applications and programs. Participants repeatedly mentioned the greater flexibility and

accessibility of e-mental health services. Given the increasing number of students studying online, this has implications for greater equity in service provision for those who are less able to access on-campus connections and support services, which may in turn place them at higher risk of distress.

Several participants indicated that their institutions had discontinued one or more of their e-mental health services for students. The reasons for this varied but fell across two main categories, that of a lack of uptake from students and a lack of resources available to support the service. Whilst it has been reported that e-mental health options are a cost-effective method of offering services to a more geographically and socially diverse population (Andersson & Titov, 2014; Hedman et al., 2012), the initial start-up costs required for hardware, software and clinician training can perhaps be a barrier. In an environment where tertiary support services are stretched, resources may be directed towards maintaining existing services rather than establishing new services, even though these could be potentially more far-reaching.

Another barrier identified by respondents was the lack of awareness, amongst students, of the services available, with a consensus that promotion of the services needs to be ongoing. This is consistent with other evidence of a lack of awareness amongst the general population, of mental health services, what they are and how to access them (Gulliver, Griffiths, & Christensen, 2010). Promotion of e-mental health services amongst student populations requires dedicated time and resources and needs to be implemented across a number of platforms. Lack of assistance from other departments, such as technical support from IT staff, was also mentioned as a difficulty in offering the services. Participants who reported higher success appeared to be working at institutions which were implementing a number of different engagement activities and had assistance from other departments.

Despite increasing evidence to suggest that retention of students is significantly increased when they are provided with adequate support from services such as counselling (Munro, Campbell, & Graham, 2015) respondents indicated a lack of shared purpose and drive between academic, professional and counselling staff, which in some cases resulted in e-mental health services being discontinued. One example was the lack of adequate software to ensure privacy and confidentiality. Similar to face-to-face counselling environments, online environments must be able to address any concerns regarding privacy and confidentiality for clients accessing these services. A lack of support from staff within IT departments was identified, particularly around the level of software security deemed to be sufficient. This was sometimes due to a lack of resources, such as infrastructure funding, or at other times disagreement about the threshold for security of software required. The lack of highly secure software inevitably limits the feasibility of offering online counselling services. Interestingly, the potential barriers of privacy and confidentiality concerns have been successfully negotiated within the public health, non-government and private sectors which offer e-mental health services, including online psychological therapy under the Australian Medicare 'Better Outcomes in Mental Health' initiative offered to the general population. This suggests that the challenges are not insurmountable and that further work between university departments could resolve these issues.

The other barrier to offering e-mental health services was that of the beliefs and the attitudes of existing counselling staff. These concerns lay mainly with a lack of skill and confidence in offering the services, specifically how to build therapeutic rapport in an online environment and to a lesser degree how to manage risk. These could potentially be resolved with additional training that assists staff to understand what is available, how to use their existing skills in the new environment, and allows them time to practise the skills before implementing them. For example, much of the evidence in the literature to date has focused on the manualised self-directed and clinically assisted programs used to treat depression and anxiety within this population (Barak, 2007; Lappeleinen et

al., 2014; Wagner et al., 2014). However, few participants indicated they used these types of programs with their clients. Whilst this could be due to a lack of awareness or experience with these programs, it could also reflect a lack of confidence in e-mental health strategies, which could potentially be addressed in the provision of both training and time to explore and use the programs themselves.

Additional research is also required to explore further the influence of clinicians' attitudes and beliefs towards online methods and on their willingness to use such tools. Furthermore, conclusions must be drawn tentatively at this stage, with further research to focus on a more in-depth exploration of the issues involved and a larger sample size required, especially from New Zealand universities.

Conclusion and implications for practice

For university counselling services to successfully develop and implement a suite of student-specific e-mental health services comparable to or exceeding those available to the general population, the following recommendations are made, on the basis of the findings from this survey. Institutions need to:

- Allocate time and resources to researching types of e-mental health services that are available and would best complement their existing counselling service and student population. There is also a need to consider the utilisation of existing products and programs that may be purchased or re-branded to be part of the suite rather than 'reinventing the wheel'.
- Allocate a budget to invest in the set-up of hardware, software and training of staff and students in the use of these products, to enhance uptake of the services.
- Allow adequate time and resources for the development and set-up of the services being offered. This should include staff training, not only in the use of technology, but also in the development of therapeutic skills in synchronous and asynchronous methods of delivery.
- Implement promotion and engagement strategies with both students and staff, alongside the e-mental health services. A lack of awareness of services can be a major source of failure.
- Develop a comprehensive evaluation plan for all elements of the service. The plan should look at uptake, promotion strategies, experience and effectiveness of the services being offered. Not only will this help guide the future direction of the services being offered, but it will also contribute to the wider research of e-mental health across tertiary education facilities.

Overall, survey results indicate both an interest in and movement towards offering e-mental health services as part of a suite of services and supports for students. Whilst e-mental health services have been available to the general community for some time now, through phone lines, chat services, and online programs, higher education institutions within Australia and New Zealand are only just starting to move towards these types of services. To date, there has been a lack of consistency in approach, with most universities just dipping their toes into these waters and trialling one or two methods with no formal promotion or evaluation strategies, hence hindering the identification of success. The lack of money and resources allocated to this area leads to difficulty in providing and building the services, as well as difficulty for clinical staff members in feeling confident and engaged with the services. Additional time and resourcing in planning and setting up services, including the training of staff, could assist in not only providing a consistent approach across universities, but also in providing a platform for more formal research into the effectiveness of e-mental health services for the university student population.

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Appendix A

Survey Questions

Q1. Do you consent to the information provided being used anonymously in the preparation of results for publication?
□ Yes □ No

Q2. Do you consent to the information provided being used anonymously in the development of a workshop?
□ Yes □ No

Q3. What online counselling services are you currently offering students at your university?
□ Individual Skype sessions □ □ □ Individual BlackBoard sessions
□ E-mail sessions □ □ Question & Answer service
□ Blog □ □ Online webinars and workshops
□ online skype drop-ins □ □ Facebook pages
□ Referrals to e-mental health resources □ □ Referrals to smart device applications
□ Referrals to self help online resources □ none

Q4. For each of the services you are currently offering could you please provide a short description of how the services operate?

Q5. For each of the services you are currently offering could you please provide a short description of what works well for them?

Q6. For each of the services you are currently offering could you please provide a short description of what the limitations or barriers have been?

Q7. What engagement or promotion strategies are you using to encourage participation from students?
□ Information on the university website about the service
□ Information on the counselling web pages about the service
□ Promotion at student events on campus
□ Promotion in student media outlets (organisations, print publications, electronic media)
□ University operated Facebook pages
□ Building staff awareness of the service
□ Electronic advertisement across campus
□ University Blogs

Q8. How successful have your promotion strategies been in increasing engagement with students?

Q9. What difficulties have you encountered in engaging with students online?

Q10. What if any concerns do you have about offering online counselling services to students?
□ Privacy and confidentiality
□ Difficulty in establishing a therapeutic relationship
□ Difficulty in the use of technology
□ Lack of faith in the reliability of the technology
□ Lack of understanding or skill in how to offer online therapy
□ Concerns that it will replace traditional modes of therapy
□ none
□ other

Q11. If your university offered online counselling services to students, would you be interested in providing these?
□ Yes □ No □□ Unsure □ □ □ Yes but only if training was provided □ □Other

Q12. If you answered yes to Question 11 could you elaborate on your reasons for this?

Q13. What if any online counselling services have you offered in the past but no longer offer?
□ Individual Skype sessions □ □ Individual BlackBoard sessions
□ E-mail sessions □ □ Question & Answer service
□ Blog □ □ Online webinars and workshops

□ online skype drop-ins □ □ □ Facebook pages
□ Referrals to e-mental health resources □ □ Referrals to smart device applications
□ Referrals to self-help online resources □ □ none

Q14. If you stopped offering one of these services in questions 13 above could you please provide the details of what the service was and why you stopped offering the service?
Q15. What University are you from?
Q16. How many campuses does your university have?
Q17. Approximately how many students are enrolled at your university?
Q18. What types of programs are available at your university?
Q19. How many full-time equivalent counsellor positions do you have at your university?
Q20. How many of these counsellor positions are permanent?
Q21. What types of services does the counselling service at your university offer?
Q22. What is your current wait time for an initial counselling appointment?
Q23. Are there any further comments you would like to offer?

A Case Study of Why it is Important to Provide Financial Counselling for Vulnerable Students at University.

Robyn Angus
Financial Counsellor
La Trobe University Student Union.

Abstract

The La Trobe University Student Union (LTSU) is the peak representative body for La Trobe University students at the Melbourne, Mildura and Shepparton campuses LTSU has a specific focus on students who are vulnerable, in terms of experiencing financial stress. LTSU aims to assist these students by providing free student advocacy, legal and financial counselling services. Following are some of the typical issues faced by students at La Trobe University who seek financial counselling, the type of assistance provided, the positive outcomes and some practical guidance for others to replicate.

What is financial counselling?

Financial Counsellors are professionals who provide assistance, advocacy and information to those who are experiencing financial difficulty. The professional code of ethics requires that the service is provided without charging clients, that client confidentiality is maintained, and independence and absence of conflicts is ensured (Financial and Consumer Rights Council, FCRC, 2018).

Financial Counsellors (FCs) advocate for clients in debt with creditor organisations, and can do so under a specific credit licence exemption from Australian Securities and Insurance Commission (ASIC). The licence exemption is granted, subject to FCs being professionally qualified and eligible to be members of the relevant state body (in Victoria, FCRC), being employed by a non-profit organisation and not charging a commission or fee for service.

Financial Counselling Services on campus

Financial Counsellors provide counselling casework sessions to eligible clients. At La Trobe University, all enrolled students are entitled to this free service, and those who are experiencing financial difficulty may seek assistance. In addition, emergency relief services are available for immediate assistance in crisis situations. Referral pathways to off-campus services are also coordinated, to Centrelink or other external housing and health providers.

Financial capability workshops

Financial capability training workshops are also conducted. This educative approach is partnered with casework to prevent future difficulties for students. These workshops focus on budgeting, saving, avoiding debt traps and understanding superannuation.

Coordinated services

Financial Counselling is another dimension of the wider provision of student support services on campus. Student services include personal counselling and advocacy, to assist students manage their difficulties and succeed with their study. Often these services can be coordinated for students with multiple difficulties. It is important that all this support is located on campus, as many students would not be aware of off-campus community services, or have time to attend those appointments.

Outcomes

As the student survey data described below indicate, student outcomes from the first two years of a Financial Counselling practice at La Trobe University demonstrate the importance of this service as

an essential student service, providing relevant assistance to students who may face temporary unemployment or accommodation crisis, or other students who have long-term needs and no parental support. Offering assistance at these crucial times, offers encouragement and increases the likelihood of successful completion of their degree.

What are the issues faced by financial counselling clients at La Trobe University?

In their recent comprehensive study of financial stress and financial resilience in Australia, Marjolin, Muir, Ramai, & Powell (2017) found that 'those in short-term rentals, younger than 35 years old, from non-English speaking background, and those with mental illness, are prone to financial stress' (p. 9). This description is a good fit for many tertiary students, who are particularly vulnerable to financial stress. As Newton's (2000) study of students at Ballarat University puts it, 'Poor students saw their well-being and self-worth affected by poverty as they struggled to escape a cycle of indebtedness and risked academic standards by working longer hours' (p.251)

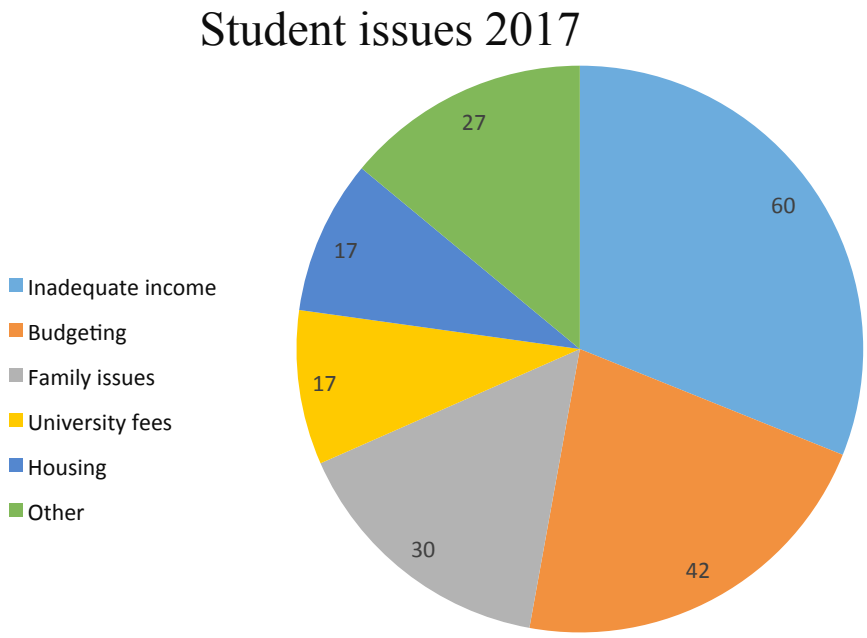

Figure1: Student issues 2017

Figure 1 above, derived from LTSU student data (LTSU, 2017), illustrates the issues faced by the students who attended financial counselling sessions in 2017 at La Trobe University. This survey data show that most clients faced several of these issues, in addition to health and academic disadvantage. At La Trobe University, the financial counselling clients are often first in their family to come to university, with parents who are dependent on Centrelink benefits, are short-term renters, working part-time to cover expenses, and with low financial literacy skills. Clients also have high levels of financial exclusion, as measured by access to financial products (Muir, Marjolin & Adams, 2015). Many student clients did not possess a credit card, could not raise $2000 for an expense, and many also owed money to family and friends (LTSU, 2017).

Impact of Financial Counselling Services at LTSU

Emergency Relief

Financial counselling provides material relief for those who need food, a transport ticket, phone recharge, or a shopping voucher. LTSU is also registered with the Women's Services Network

(WESNET) as an agency for assisting victims of family violence and provides referral to other professional domestic-violence resources.

At La Trobe University in 2017, the Financial Counsellor assisted 95 students who were facing either immediate risk of homelessness, or insufficient income for travel, mobile phone re-charge or food for the week (Figure.2).

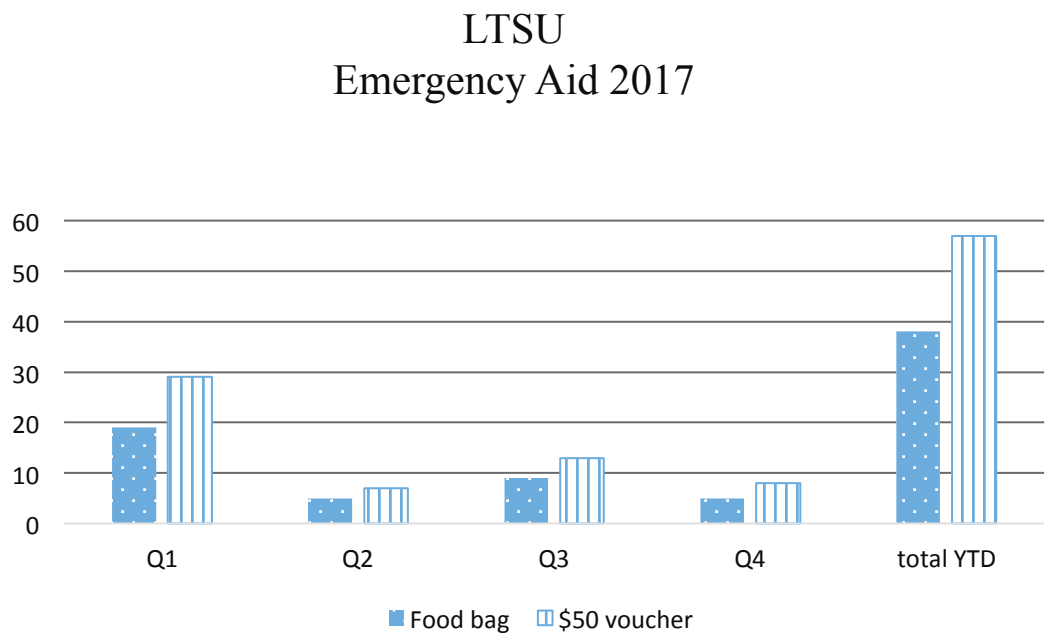

Figure 2: Emergency aid 2017

The LTSU data reveal that 40% of clients are surviving solely on Youth Allowance benefits, which provide less than $15,000 per annum (LTSU, 2017). A large proportion of student clients (40%) are renters, and rental costs typically accounted for 62% of income. As a reference point, housing costs in excess of 30% of income are regarded as the level at which a client will experience financial stress (Marjolin et al., 2017). Eighteen students could not pay their housing costs and were at risk of homelessness, and six were actually homeless.

LTSU offers short-term resources and can also refer to the wider Financial Counselling community for further help off-campus. Emergency relief helps students in financial difficulty to manage in the short-term, but the more systemic issues of long-term debt and rent assistance require dedicated on-going casework. The implications for student retention is worthy of further research.

Financial Counselling casework

Over the six months July to December 2017, a client casework questionnaire identified the following outcomes. The questionnaire surveyed 42 students. Only four students who sought help had to leave University due to financial issues; 38 (90%) were able to continue study and manage their issues, as illustrated below in Figure 3.

Financial Counselling Client outcomes July - Dec 2017	% of Clients
Benefited from changing income/expenses	19%
Gained funding: grant, fee relief	21%
Emergency Relief provided	19%
Hardship: waiver or payment plan	24%
Left University or unknown	10%
On-going clients - no outcome	7%

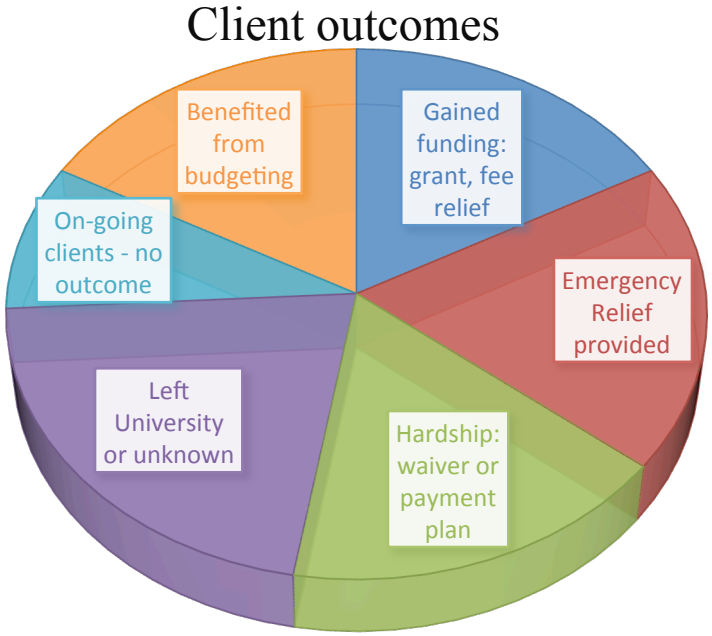

Figure 3: La Trobe student outcomes - 2017

Some students were assisted in claiming Centrelink benefits that they were eligible for; they had either not realised their eligibility, or were having difficulty proving eligibility. Other students gained assistance with repayment plans for their University fees, or for applying for scholarships and grants from the university.

Some students were assisted with accessing hardship arrangements in relation to debts, making arrangements for waivers or payment plans. Referrals were made to the campus lawyer to assist with legal issues with tenancy or with unscrupulous employer practices. For example, one student was financially crippled by large repayments to a credit card, but after discussion with the bank, repayments were reduced, interest charges waived and fees removed. Assisting students to acknowledge their financial issues and to manage them early, can enable these students to continue their studies more successfully. This is particularly so when students participate in financial literacy training; the new skills and knowledge they gain enable them to prevent financial problems repeating in the future.

Financial capability training

The students who attend financial counselling, although academically able, may not always have good financial literacy skills or knowledge. When faced for the first time with financial decisions, such as mobile phone contracts, rental leases or credit cards, problems can result.

At La Trobe University, it was also found that the financial capability training for students in need is a necessary partner of casework practice. This is consistent with evidence from Gerrans and Heaney (2014) who identified the positive effects of developing the financial skills of tertiary students. Students are particularly receptive of any help with managing their financial resources and improving their skills to manage their limited income. As a result of the financial capability workshops conducted over 2016 and 2017, the student feedback is unanimously in support of this learning opportunity. The advantages of an educative, client-based approach is illustrated below in Figure 4.

Karen is a recently widowed mother of two, originally from Lebanon, studying Arts, but struggling with the loss of her husband, and the financial implications of widowhood.*
Initially through attendance at the financial capability workshop, Karen improved her knowledge of the financial system and the mechanisms of banking and lending in Australia. The workshop improved Karen's skills in applying this information to her own situation.
Through on-going financial counselling sessions, Karen's knowledge and skills, with support from the financial counsellor, were applied to advocate to the bank, claim insurance and apply for family benefits and relief from some study expenses. Karen then gained a scholarship to study overseas and complete her studies
** Pseudonym used to maintain student confidentiality.*

Figure 4. Case study – Karen

Some recommendations about financial counselling on campus

1. **Offer face-to-face, individual, professional financial counselling on campus.**

The provision of individual, free and professional financial counselling gives confidential and specific guidance and options for students struggling with their finances. Outcomes measured so far at La Trobe University point to positive changes in behaviour, assisting students to self-manage future problems and sustain them through student life. On-campus provision is essential to enable access to the service.

2. **Students do benefit from financial capability training:**

Casework should be complemented by group financial capability workshops to improve financial literacy. This is especially relevant in an educational institution where students are already receptive and capable of learning.

Students are very responsive to learning financial skills, across disciplines. It cannot be overstated how important it is to provide opportunities for students, especially those from vulnerable backgrounds, to receive a good grounding in the Australian financial system.

3. **Systemic student financial issues identified**

Through working with students across emergency relief, casework and financial capability workshops, systemic financial issues can be identified, and further outreach and education can be planned, in order to have wider impacts and promote relevant services to students. This knowledge

can also be fed into wider Financial Counselling networks and industry interactions to improve the operation of supports for students. For example, this can take the form of more accessible and better structured hardship programs, or better targeted outreach to students from Ombudsman schemes.

4. **Vulnerable student groups can be assisted, who are otherwise at risk of withdrawing because of financial pressures.**

Emergency relief is important to deal with immediate situations of homelessness, unemployment or personal emergencies. The provision of food parcels, vouchers, travel tickets and phone re-charge cards is essential for students in immediate and urgent need to cover travel expenses to campus, stay connected on-line for learning materials, purchase books and continue studying. However, this needs to be accompanied by longer-term casework to tackle the underlying issues. Without tackling both the immediate and underlying problems, the student is at greater risk of withdrawing from study.

Students are also vulnerable to inappropriate or unethical services being offered, such as additional credit, debt management or consolidation services. Financial counsellors can protect students from unethical providers and can often solve an issue without paying any fees or worsening the debt.

Potential for financial counselling on other campuses

The LTSU experience demonstrates the important benefits to students and tertiary institutions of the provision of financial counselling services. Such services can educate and assist students in areas of vulnerability, remove major barriers to academic progress, and support student retention.

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Crisis Management on Residence: The Ten Elements of Effectiveness

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Abstract

Given the likelihood of a negative incident occurring on campus, a simple but comprehensive framework was developed in 2016 at La Trobe University so that Accommodation Services staff could refer to a tool to assist them to respond to situations of crisis or potential crisis.

The Crisis Management Framework comprises ten elements. These ten elements are not sequential and are not to be interpreted as steps or stages. The central theme in this framework is that each element needs to be taken into consideration when responding to a crisis and delivered to varying degrees. The ten elements are:

- *Co-ordinate, Control and Contain*
- *Cluster*
- *Communicate*
- *Create a place to Congregate and instil "Community"*
- *Collaborate*
- *Business Continuity*
- *Plan Comprehensively and Chronicle*
- *Care and Counsel*
- *Continuous Review and Improvement*
- *Celebrate*

Background

On-campus accommodation is in many ways a microcosm of society and is therefore subject to the same potential for negative incidents as the broader population. Over the course of an academic year it is highly likely that at least one undesirable incident will occur within a residential precinct. University staff have duty-of-care obligations to provide the highest possible standard of health and safety and uphold their legislative obligations, ensure business continuity and support the university's reputation. It is imperative that managers and staff working within Accommodation Services and, to a lesser extent, the wider university's Emergency Management Team have an exemplary response to both sudden and smouldering crises within on-campus accommodation.

The ten elements of the Crisis Management Framework outlined in this paper were developed in 2016 by the Regional Manager of Accommodation Services at La Trobe University at that time, to ensure an effective response to the management of critical incidents on residence at La Trobe University. This comprehensive Framework may be useful for others working within a university context to follow, particularly those who work in on-campus accommodation and, specifically, the manager in charge. It is designed to support student residents and the broader community in relation to a range of incidents that may occur, with different levels of severity and for varying periods of duration.

The ten elements within this Framework are not intended to be sequential nor interpreted as steps or

stages; they are simply a list of important controls for crisis co-ordinators who must respond effectively to a residential emergency. Each element needs to be considered in the context of the individual crisis and delivered to varying degrees throughout and after the crisis.

Crisis management on residence: The ten elements of effectiveness

The crisis manager

Effective crisis control within a university's residential context requires a Crisis Manager (CM) to oversee and take overarching responsibility for the incident at the residential level. The person with the highest authority who is working *from* the campus-in-crisis and within the Accommodation Service team would usually be the most appropriate person to take on this role. If the incident is small, the Manager in charge could take on this role. If the situation is larger or escalates, the role of CM should be nominated and/or endorsed by the university's Emergency Management Team. In these instances, it is advisable to also allocate an assistant to the CM. The assistant can manage record keeping, assist with the management of priorities and take on some of the CM's minor tasks so that the CM can meet the more important existing and additional obligations.

The CM is often required to make critical judgements during emergency situations under temporary or prolonged stress. An effective leader during a crisis will break each required action down into its component parts then allocate tasks, according to expertise, interest, and availability. When inspiration, expertise or support is needed, the CM must ask for it.

The following Crisis Management Framework is a list of the ten crucial components the Crisis Manager needs to consider when responding before, during and after an impending emergency within on-campus residential accommodation.

Figure 1: The Ten Elements in the Crisis Management Framework

Element: *Co-ordinate, Control and Contain*

One vital consideration for the Crisis Manager (CM) is to ensure effective co-ordination, control and containment of residents' verbal, emotional and physical responses to an incident so they can support positive outcomes and reduce negative consequences.

Firstly, the CM needs to ensure the location remains as unadulterated as possible as it might be a crime scene. Witnesses should be separated to ensure the integrity of their evidence and witness statements. Asking them to write down what happened whilst it is clear in their mind and until police arrive can be a beneficial approach.

Secondly, the CM needs to guide, influence, regulate or direct residents' communication (either verbal or electronic). The CM's leadership should include the establishment of a well-managed communication strategy that is clearly conveyed to staff and the residents. This strategy needs to regularly inform staff and residents, without sensation or unnecessary detail, what they should

expect to see or hear. If residents are forewarned they are often more in control of their reactions and can practise their response in their mind.

The communication strategy also needs to take into consideration residents' interaction:

1. **With other residents and students**. Instruct them that they must not participate in unhelpful chit-chat, gossipy questions, rumours, misrepresentation or defamation associated with the incident and outline the consequences of such action. Provide residents with strategies and responses so they can shut things down confidently, politely, effectively and promptly;
2. **With their families and friends external to the University**. Encourage them to contact their loved ones and provide them with the message you would like them to send;
3. **With the media**. Give all students a standard response to use if they are approached by the media. Ask student leaders to inform their residents to forward all inquiries from the media to the CM and to inform the CM if the media approaches them; and
4. **Via social media**. Educate residents that social media is not always accurate, that their input can strongly influence the outcome of events, that what they put out there can be used as evidence or can make them liable to prosecution. Remind them that personal responsibility means managing impulses and encourage them to refrain from combing through information about a personally distressing matter.

Finally, the CM needs to contain residents' emotional responses to a crisis, some of which may risk a second incident emanating from the first. Sometimes anxiety, hysteria or anger can escalate an incident or lead to unmanageable behaviour. Empowering residents and organising meaningful ways they can assist with the crisis may reduce their stress, decrease their sense of helplessness, curb any vigilante response to the incident or prevent residents from taking any detrimental action (such as searching for a missing person themselves). Additionally, residents may need to be helped with ways to respond to a given situation.

Element: *Cluster*

There may be many people with whom the CM needs to communicate and the CM's messages often need to be tailored for different cohorts. The more intricate the crisis, the more important it is to organise cohorts into clusters. Cluster examples relevant to a crisis are "Team Members", "Student Leaders" and "Residents from the same Dorm"

The CM should obtain contact details of people within clusters and provide each cluster member with information about the cluster, its purpose, the people in the cluster and the type and frequency of communication they may receive. The invitation may not be accepted and people may suggest others to be part of a cluster. The CM should then liaise with the cluster members to determine the most effective communication channel for each cluster and also, when numbers are large, establish one person to be the representative of that cluster and through whom communication is channelled. Throughout the crisis, the CM should keep updated details pertaining to each cluster, contact details of those within each cluster and the communication they have provided and received. An example of the flow of communication from the CM can be found in Figure 2.

Element: *Communicate*

The CM must ensure all communication is done regularly and with clarity, professionalism and

integrity. This practice provides residents and staff with reassurance, prevents anxiety and panic and ensures the truth is being circulated.

A CM should assure residents and staff that accurate information will be forwarded to them and inform them of its medium and frequency, taking into consideration Privacy Laws and the restrictions associated with crime investigations. When the crisis is at its peak, information may be as frequent as every hour, even if it is informing stakeholders that there are no updates. Whilst emails and texts can be quick and efficient, the CM should deliver some face-to-face updates in order to observe people, look for signs of stress or exhaustion and follow up accordingly.

Staff who have been tasked with keeping business continuity so that others can be freed to take on additional duties and respond directly to the crisis should be treated as part of the response team and given regular updates on the situation.

As shown in the Flowchart of Communication (Figure 2), all information pertaining to the crisis is to be channelled through the CM who will pass on to individuals, clusters, colleagues and/or external bodies such as the police, accordingly. This clear line of communication should be established and shared with all stakeholders. It should also include informing people when there is a change of command. Through this process, the CM can keep abreast of the facts and falsehoods circulating in the broader community, check for accuracy of information and correct any untruths.

At the onset of a crisis, a dedicated CM's mobile phone number and email address need to be established and communicated to all stakeholders. The CM can redirect unrelated inquiries to another line and hand over the mobile phone and a dedicated notebook to a relieving CM if the crisis lasts longer than ten hours.

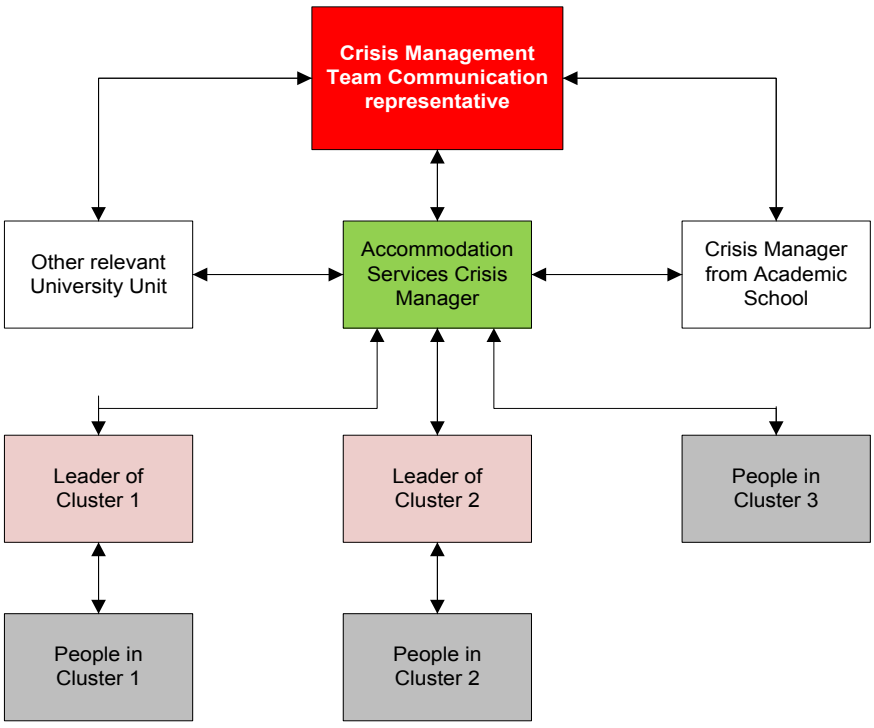

Figure 2: The Crisis Management Framework Flowchart of Communication

Element: *Create a place to Congregate and instil "Community"*

Especially during a crisis, residents should be encouraged to support each other and look out for

each other in their on-campus home. Dispatches and conversations should include messages about sharing, respect, unity and empathy.

Depending on the crisis, the CM may need to create and convey to all residents the availability of a "safe" community place where they can congregate any time during and, if necessary, after the crisis. It should be a comfortable and calming sanctuary, conveniently located on campus for easy access and a staff member should be stationed there to provide support. Residents should be encouraged to go there if they are distressed. This place should be the meeting place for any activity or community announcement relating to the incident. If possible, there should be a kitchenette to ensure drinks and healthy food can be provided and a separate meeting room.

Element: *Collaborate*

A team approach across university divisions is essential during a crisis. Most universities have a Crisis Management Team (CMT) with overarching responsibility for all emergency situations. The CM will be managing the demands of the crisis at the residential level but must act as directed by the CMT, to maintain constant communication and take the time to attend all CMT meetings and updates. Other important collaborative arrangements to consider are:

- The CM's direct supervisor
- Academic Schools - staff need to know who may be affected by the crisis so they have empathy for anxious students or student absences and can consider reasonable adjustments during and after the crisis,
- The Media Relations Unit (MRU)– approval for major communication announcements needs to be obtained and the MRU needs to be abreast of the situation,
- The HR Division and the Occupational Health & Safety (OHS)Team – these specialists can provide advice and ensure decisions made in relation to the CM's control are within regulations,
- Support Teams such as cleaners, security staff, chaplains and counsellors and event managers who will need to know if there might be an increase or change to the demands of their job or may need to change their own plans and events as a result of the situation.

Element: *Business Continuity*

The CM is required to have a balanced approach to two important priorities – the crisis and business continuity. The reputation of the business cannot suffer. Residents pay rent and fees, they expect a high level of professional service at all times. Crisis or not, phones ring, future students and their families require attention, students with health and wellbeing issues need support, the business must collect rent and follow up overdue payments, planned social and academic programs and events need to be delivered or, if this is not appropriate, they must be postponed or cancelled.

Element: *Plan Comprehensively and Chronicle*

The CM must commence comprehensive planning from the moment a potential crisis emerges, regularly referring to the Ten Elements of Effective Management and chronicling everything with precision and detail.

The CM has the responsibility for the completion of a working *blueprint* containing comprehensive

plans and a chronicle of all matters pertaining to the crisis and business continuity. If the crisis persists for more than 24 hours, a longer-term plan is required; if it is complex, planning may need to include a brainstorm of different crisis scenarios and possible tasks and resources for each. When the CM is relieved, the relieving CM takes on the responsibility for comprehensively planning and chronicling the crisis. Chronicling should be in written form, but the CM can make notes via notebook, digital recording or even using a whiteboard marker on glass to record as necessary, and then transfer information to the blueprint when there is more time.

The blueprint will include a daily program which includes recording meetings, their attendees and outcomes, plus communication schedules, staff rosters and events. No team member, including the CM, should work longer than five hours without a rest and sustenance, while staff schedules should ensure every team member has at least 8 in 24 hours away from responsibility.

All required tasks will be listed, as well as the personnel and resources required to complete them. A tally of costs will be kept and all agreements and assurances will be documented. Lists of key stakeholders and clusters and their contact details will be added, as will ingoing and outgoing communiques (phone calls, texts and emails). The CM will include personal notations regularly with arising issues, actions and outcomes. The blueprint will be amended with additional facts, including any changes, cessation or additions to plans. There will be a chronicle of pre-, mid- and post- crisis action, of celebration and contributions. It is critically important that timetabling and planning includes time-out for staff rest.

Planning and chronicling is vital for business continuity, effective crisis management, continuous improvement and post-crisis review. Documentation may also assist the CM when required to recollect facts, provide evidence in a court of law or demonstrate duty-of-care and professionalism.

Element: *Care and Counsel*

A proactive response to the health and wellbeing of staff, residents, student leaders and support personnel is required during a crisis; stress and harm need to be minimised, emotional support must be provided, and individuals should be given coping strategies. From the outset, the CM needs to organise for intervention for individuals so they can deal with their response to the situation, acknowledging that the impact of a crisis often goes beyond those directly involved in an incident. This can include engaging educators and mental health practitioners and ensuring relevant personnel have sufficient training to effectively offer unconditional acceptance, reassurance and support. Care also includes supplying a safe place and somebody to talk to, the provision of healthy food and drink, assistance with assignment extensions, opportunities for relaxation and positive thinking, and access to resources and lists of support networks, thus enabling individuals who choose to take personal responsibility for their wellbeing, to do so in a private way.

Element: *Continuous Review, Improvement*

A process of continuous review and improvement should take place during a crisis at the end of each day or at a particular milestone. The format of the review is dependent upon the matter being assessed and can range from a formal team meeting to an informal brainstorm undertaken done by the CM.

After the crisis (exactly when, depends on the severity of the incident) the CM should call a meeting and invite team members, superiors, representatives from clusters and/or members from the university's OHS Team, or Emergency Response Team, and conduct a formal analysis of the processes and actions undertaken before, during and after the crisis. A Crisis Report should ensue,

with minutes from the meeting and a list of good practice, oversights, failures, lessons learned and acknowledgements. It should contain a list of action items emanating from the review, those responsible for them and dates by which they should be completed. A person should be put in charge to ensure these actions are undertaken and the Crisis Report should be updated accordingly.

Element: *Celebrate*

Celebrate the good things about the outcomes and the teamwork achieved. Appreciate the work of others and take time to say "thanks" for specific contributions, however small,and the achievement of major milestones during and after a crisis.

Conclusion

Residential precincts are not exempt from crises and, despite efficient preventative actions and processes, some emergencies just cannot be avoided. Accommodation Services' personnel, particularly a nominated Crisis Manager, need operational tools to assist them as they strive to achieve outcomes that are as safe, swift and successful as possible. These tools need to include crisis planning and reporting solutions, provide strategies for managing and communicating with all stakeholders and ensuring their health and wellbeing, and prompt Crisis Managers to undertake continuous review and show appreciation for the efforts of others.

Support staff working with students who reside on campus can use this Framework of Ten Elements of Effectiveness as a reference point to prevent overlooking important aspects of crisis management on residence.

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JANZSSA Submission Guidelines 2019

Manuscripts for submission to JANZSSA must be submitted electronically at https://janzssa.scholasticahq.com/for-authors

JANZSSA publishes *Refereed* (peer-reviewed by double-blind process) and *Professional* papers; which are reviewed by the Editor/s of JANZSSA to ensure their suitability for publication. Within the Professional category are included full-length papers as well as shorter *Best Practice Case Examples, Book Reviews, Reports* and *Conversation Pieces.*

Word Processing platform

All articles should be submitted electronically using Microsoft Word or in another commonly used word processing format able to be converted to an MS Word document.

Language and spelling

JANZSSA uses Australian English so please adjust your spell check in Word to ensure compliance.

Journal format

JANZSSA is published online at https://janzssa.scholasticahq.com/issues with full pdf versions of each edition also stored at http://anzssa.com/Public/JANZSSA/Public/JANZSSA/JANZSSA.aspx

Article Length:

Manuscripts would normally be fewer than 6,000 words to be accepted. Manuscripts longer than 6,000 words may be returned to authors to be shortened.

Abstract is required:

All manuscripts submitted must include a brief (<250 words) abstract.

Page layout required:

Articles for inclusion in JANZSSA in either the referred or non-refereed suctions need to be submitted electronically using the following layout instructions.

The following is a normal page layout in MS Word:

Top: 5. 5	Bottom: 5. 5	
Left: 2. 54	Right: 2. 54	
Gutter = 0	Header = 1	Footer = 6

Font type:

Times New Roman

Font pitch:

Manuscript Title:	14 point **BOLD**
Author/s Name, Role, Institution:	12 point
Abstract header:	12 point **BOLD**
Abstract body:	10 point *italics*
Body text:	12 point
Header within body of the text:	12 point **BOLD**
Footnotes:	9 point

Diagrams tables and drawings:

Any diagrams and tables included in the text must be no larger than 21 cm in depth x 17 cms wide.

Any drawings included are inserted with **Paste Special** function so that the drawing is stable in the body of the text.

Text within a table is preferred as centred or left margin aligned.

Use of references:

Referencing protocol is the APA Referencing System. Examples of the APA Referencing system are easily found using an internet search. Below are two examples from Australian Universities.

https://student.unsw.edu.au/american-psychological-association-apa-referencing-system
http://libguides.murdoch.edu.au/APA

Suitable content for articles submitted for publication in JANZSSA:

Manuscripts may include comment and debate on current issues, reports of student services in practice, policy matters, research projects, and reviews of relevant books. The guiding editorial policy is that manuscripts are of interest to student service staff, and are of a high standard.

JANZSSA publishes both Refereed and Professional papers:

Authors who wish to submit an item to be published as a refereed article must include a written note to that effect at the time of submission. If an author does not specify for inclusion in the refereed section the editors will consider the article for publication in the professional section.

Refereed (double–blind peer reviewed) Manuscripts:

JANZSSA uses a double-blind peer review process for refereed articles. The editor of JANZSSA will consult with the Editorial Board to identify at least two expert referees (who may not necessarily be members of ANZSSA). Each referee will be unaware of the identity of the other referee/s. Each of the referees will be provided with an electronic copy of the article from which the author's name has been removed.

As author/s you should also remove other identifying information, and replace any such words or sentence with "words removed for purposes of author anonymity" so that you are not identifiable as the author/s once the author names have been removed.

Referees will submit a report back to the editor that contains one of three recommendations. These are:

1. That the manuscript be accepted (usually with minor amendments to be approved by the Editor/s of JANZSSA).
2. That the manuscript be revised and re-submitted with major amendments to be approved by the reviewers
3. That the manuscript not be accepted for the refereed section. (Reviewers may choose to recommend that it be accepted as a professional paper, with or without amendments)

At least two referees must be in agreement for an manuscript to be published as a refereed paper.

Professional manuscripts:

Manuscripts submitted for publication without being peer-refereed will be published at the

discretion of the editors. Authors may be asked to make amendments to the manuscript prior to publication.

Best practice case examples to showcase:

JANZSSA includes in its non-refereed section examples of best practice and innovation emerging in Student Services.

Contributions to this section would normally be descriptive and not evaluative.

Length of submissions can vary but the upper word limit will normally be 1500 words. Contributions of longer length may be returned to the author for editing or considered as Professional manuscripts.

A Showcase Best Practice Report Template is available from the Editors. See contact details below. Use of the template is not compulsory and is offered simply to assist if required.

Reports, Reviews and Conversation Pieces:

Reports and discussion pieces on aspects of policy and practice within Student Services and the Post-Secondary Education sector are invited. Short reviews of books, articles, journals, reports which would be of general interest to JANZSSA readers are also very welcome.

Quality submissions:

All submissions for publication are required to comply with the layout requirements, and edited for grammar, punctuation and spelling accuracy prior to submission to the JANZSSA co-editors. Manuscripts will be returned to authors for corrections, if required, prior to consideration for publication or distributed for peer review.

Submission deadlines:

JANZSSA publishes issues in April and October each year.

Deadline for submission of professional manuscripts, reports or reviews, and contributions to the section, Best Practice Case Examples:

- January 31 for the April issue
- July 31 for the October issue.

Deadline for submission of refereed manuscripts:

- October 30 for the April issue
- April 30 for the October issue.

Enquiries:

Any queries regarding submission format should be directed to either of the co-editors. See contact details below.

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Janzssa@gmail.com

Cheryl Brugman
(Interim co-editor)
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Before submitting your manuscript:

Please refer to the following check list and complete these actions prior to submission of the manuscript.

Please check:

- JANZSSA page layout has been used
- JANZSSA font type and font size requirements have been used
- JANZSSA referencing system (APA style) has been used throughout and that all references are included in full.
- Spelling, grammar and punctuation reviewed.
- All diagram and table contents are position and text correct (i. e. text abbreviations used are consistent throughout diagram or table and that text is centred or left margin aligned.).
- Drawings included are inserted with Paste Special function so that the drawing is stable in the text.
- Do print and read for final corrections.
- De-identified version of paper as reviewer copy completed and attached (if the manuscript is for submission for the refereed section of JANZSSA).

The editors would like to acknowledge the contribution of the following people in the production of JANZSSA:

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Information about ANZSSA

The Australian and New Zealand Student Services Association provides development opportunities and sector representation for professional staff working in post secondary student engagement, student participation, student wellbeing and student development throughout Australia and New Zealand. Through meetings, seminars, workshops and conferences, experienced practitioners share information, ideas and research within their areas of expertise.

ANZSSA is focused on:

- The quality of the student experience
- Supporting and empowering students to achieve their educational and life goals
- Enhancing student wellbeing and development
- Improving student success and persistence
- Providing outreach to students at-risk
- Raising institutional student retention rates

Membership

Whilst ANZSSA is based in Australia and New Zealand, anyone is welcome to join us, no matter where you may be located. Full details of current membership categories and registration costs are available via the ANZSSA website members' page at www.anzssa.com

Belonging to ANZSSA will connect you to a community of professionals across many institutions and support areas – including:

First year experience and transition services - Mentor programs - Counselling - Learning support - Careers - Academic advisors - Health services - Student advisors - Disability support - Welfare advisors - Housing services - Recreation services - Student guild advocates - International offices - Grievance/Conflict Resolution officers - Chaplaincy and other faith officers -–Equity staff - Financial advisers - Volunteer and leadership program coordinators - Directors and Heads of operational areas.

Professional Development and Communication Activities

The ANZSSA Annual Conference attracts international participants as well as delegates from across Australia and New Zealand and internationally.

Regional and State meetings range from informal workshops to visiting speakers and annual conferences.

Information about how to join and subscribe to the ANZSSA members' mailing list (listserv) is at http://lists.vuw.ac.nz/mailman/listinfo/anzssa while information about joining Professional Focus Groups and Regional Groups is located on the ANZSSA web site at www.anzssa.com

These provide opportunities for members to share information and collaborate on programs and issues.

Publications

JANZSSA, the Journal of ANZSSA, is published online twice per year with further information available at https://janzssa.scholasticahq.com/ and on the ANZSSA website at

http://anzssa.com/Public/JANZSSA/Public/JANZSSA/JANZSSA.aspx

A monthly newsletter is published and emailed to all members; also available on the ANZSSA website at http://anzssa.com/Public/Resources/ANZSSA_Newsletter/Public/News/ANZSSA_Newsletter

The ANZZSA web site is a comprehensive resource offering a broad range of information to professionals working in student support and student services' roles.