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### **Is a good idea enough?' Engaging mental health professionals and University of Wollongong students to facilitate sustainable change in health care for mental health consumers**

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# Is a good idea enough?' Engaging mental health professionals and University of Wollongong students to facilitate sustainable change in health care for mental health consumers

## Abstract

Abstract of paper that presented at the 2013 Engagement Australia Conference, 15-17 July, Australian Catholic University, Melbourne.

## Keywords

university, wollongong, good, students, idea, facilitate, sustainable, change, care, consumers, enough, engaging, mental, health, professionals

## Disciplines

Medicine and Health Sciences | Social and Behavioral Sciences

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## **'Is a good idea enough?' - Engaging mental health professionals and University of Wollongong students to facilitate sustainable change in health care for mental health consumers**

### **Summary:**

A growing body of research shows that people living with a mental health diagnosis regularly experience significantly poorer physical health compared to those without a mental health disorder. Behavioural factors commonly associated with mental illness and the effects of some medications substantially contribute to poor physical health outcomes. Mental health consumers themselves have identified that their physical health is neglected once the diagnosis of a mental illness is made. Addressing the physical health needs of mental health consumers requires innovative and skilled practitioners; and increased collaboration between health care providers. Mental health nurses are at the forefront of mental health care; however there is a critical need for support, infrastructure and additional resources to perform this role effectively and equitably.

This Roundtable will explore the progressive implementation of the 'ACTive' program - a collaborative healthy lifestyle program created in partnership between Shellharbour Mental Health Rehabilitation Unit, and the Schools of Health Sciences, and Nursing, Midwifery and Indigenous Health at the University of Wollongong. The program is supported by the University of Wollongong Community Engagement Grant Scheme (CEGS), and is based on a successful program developed by the Concord Centre for Cardiometabolic Health In Psychosis.

The Roundtable discussion will examine the strategies used to engage with a vulnerable and sensitive population whilst navigating the complexities of aligning patient care with student learning, program sustainability and cross-institutional policy and processes. It will seek to explore the elements that expand from 'having a good idea' to a tangible and successful outcome, and invite participants to share experiences and provide feedback. It will reflect on the process of engagement and participation of key stakeholders, including funding through the CEGS process.

### **Questions**

Through participation in this Roundtable, participants will be able to share, discuss and reflect on the following questions:

- How to engage people with a 'good idea', in order to facilitate successful and sustainable change?
- How to develop a small program to be more broadly applicable for similar services or communities?
- What are:
  - Key elements when working in community engagement across the university and public health sectors?
  - Strategies to balance different priorities and agendas?
  - Suggestions to ensure successful and meaningful student and clinical learning?
  - Additional challenges might exist when working in a sensitive area or with people often viewed as vulnerable and difficult (i.e. mental health consumers)?

### **Roundtable Plan**

In this session, we will aim to work through the following goals and learning outcomes:

#### **Goal 1: "Good Ideas"**

- Gain fresh perspectives about the process of realising the potential of a good idea, through participants sharing stories and experiences

#### **Goal 2: The journey...**

- Explore shared knowledge about progression from a pilot project into sustainable practice and change
- Contribute to participants' ongoing engagement experiences and innovation by sharing our successes and challenges from this project

#### **Goal 3: Sustainable change!**

- Share strategies in community engagement that encourage stakeholder ownership
- Share effective ways of developing innovative projects for long term change

## Roundtable Agenda

AGENDA	FACILITATION METHOD
Introduction	Project partner present
Section 1- A good idea	Project partner 1 to facilitate Small table discussion and reflection on questions, tables share responses
Section 2- The journey...	Project partners to speak, share experiences from the pilot program CEGS representative to speak Short DVD of student who was part of program
Section 3- Sustainable change	Project partner 2 to facilitate Small table discussion and reflection on questions, tables share responses
Conclusion	Project partner summarise

## References

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## Key Words

Mental health, physical health, engagement, collaborative care, sustainable change