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Thinking outside the box: Recovery Camp, a case study of a mental health nursing education innovation

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Clinical placements are an integral component of nursing education. It is during the clinical placement that the theory practice gap is addressed and students get to put theoretical knowledge into practice.

The Recovery Camp, which is the feature of this case study presentation, is an Australian first. Future health professionals from the disciplines of Nursing (n=20); Psychology (n=3); Exercise Science (n=2) and Nutrition (n=1) spend a week in the Australian bush, immersed in an experiential innovative clinical placement.

Facilitated by mental health academics and an educational specialist, students spend 5 days living, eating and interacting with 30 people who have serious and enduring mental illness. Importantly, people with lived experience are a part of the student's education and play a major role in helping students understand mental illness from a consumer perspective.

This is the first clinical experience of its kind that takes a strengths based person centred approach to mental health care and treatment. This paper explores the role that this innovative mental health clinical placement plays in facilitating knowledge transfer from that learned at university to the point of practice.

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