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Tania Cartmill
University of Wollongong

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**Gatekeeper training for mental health issues:
An evaluation of youth workers' personal help-seeking
and referral practice.**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree

Doctor of Psychology (Clinical)

from

University of Wollongong

Tania Cartmill

Bachelor of Psychology, University of Wollongong

Department of Psychology

2004

Thesis certification

I, Tania Kristen Cartmill, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Psychology (Clinical), in the Department of Psychology, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institute.

Tania Kristen Cartmill

13 February, 2004

**Relevant manuscript and conference presentation
in the course of the candidature**

Manuscript:

Cartmill, T., Deane, F.P., & Wilson, C.J. (2003). Effects of gatekeeper training on youth workers' personal help-seeking for mental health issues, and referral skill. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Conference presentation:

Cartmill, T., & Deane, F.P. (2000, November). *Gatekeeper training for youth workers: preliminary investigation of personal help-seeking and referral skill*. Paper presented at the 2nd Conference of the Illawarra Institute for Mental Health, Wollongong, Australia.

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Abstract

Gatekeeper training programs that promote help-seeking have been recommended as key mental health and suicide intervention strategies for adults who work with young people. Extensive research suggests that young people do not seek the help they need for mental health issues, and may be reliant on adult gatekeepers to facilitate help-seeking. Further, some research suggests that gatekeepers may not be positively predisposed to seek professional help themselves, and may even have the same barriers as young people to seeking help for mental health issues. This study investigated the personal help-seeking practice of 73 youth workers who attended gatekeeper workshops that incorporated training in awareness of personal help-seeking as well as help-seeking among young people. Personal help-seeking, including perceived barriers, intentions, actual help-seeking behaviours and social problem solving skills were examined prior to, and after a workshop intervention. The relationships between help-seeking variables and referral skill were also explored to investigate the impact that personal help-seeking may have on youth workers' professional practice. Pre-post workshop measures revealed that actual help-seeking behaviour, intentions to seek help for a personal-emotional problem, and social problem solving skill significantly increased, while there were no changes in perceived barriers, or intentions to seek help for suicidal thoughts. Compared to a control group, the workshop group reported significantly higher intentions to seek help for a personal-emotional problem knowledge of help-seeking and social problem solving skill, and lower perceived barriers. There were no differences in referral skill pre-to-post workshop, or in intervention and control group comparisons. Results suggest that the workshop intervention influenced awareness and skills of personal help-seeking, although the relationship with referral skill was unclear. The study is discussed in the context of research that suggests that personal-

emotional functioning and attitudinal barriers toward mental health services are factors that may influence professional service provision.

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Appendix A Pre-intervention materials

- 1) Workshop Brochure
- 2) Front sheet and brief outline of gatekeeper training workshops entitled *Youth Empowerment Series; 1) Help-seeking, 2) Social Problem Solving, 3) Youth mental health.*
- 3) Information and consent
- 4) Help-seeking and referral questionnaire (Time 1 and 2)

Appendix B Post-intervention materials

- 1) Letter to the intervention group and information sheet
- 2) Letter to the control group and information sheet
- 3) Consent form Time 2
- 4) Knowledge questions (Time 2 only)

Appendix C Descriptive data from help-seeking and referral measures;

- 1) Actual Help-Seeking (AHSQ)
- 2) Barriers to Adolescents Seeking Help- Brief (BASH-B)
- 3) Social Problem Solving Inventory for Adolescents (SPSI-A)
- 4) Youth Referral Survey (YRS)