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THINK.CHANGE.DO

Clinical placements in mental health: A university perspective

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Challenges

- **Increased student numbers New BN 2010**

- **160 mental health nursing clinical hours**

2nd year

Fundamentals of Mental Health
Nursing – 80 clinical hours

3rd year

Complex Nursing Care: Mental
Health – 80 clinical hours

- **Quality of placements**



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- **Competition for limited placements**
- **NSW Health placement management system – CPCIS**
- **Restrictions of academic calendar**
- **Availability of facilitators and student ratio**
- **Criminal Record Checks**

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Potential Solutions

- **Perseverance and commitment**
- **Flexibility scheduling clinical time**
 - outside academic calendar
 - use of non-teaching week (AVCC)
 - tri-semester
- **Flexibility of placement week**
 - seven day week
 - shifts over am and pm
 - 8 or 10 hour shifts

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- Increased use of community mental health placements
- Increased use of non-government and private sectors for placements
- Placements with mental health consumer advocates
- Collaboration with consumers to prepare students for clinical placement

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A Consumer Collaboration for Clinical Preparation

- Academics at UTS and two consumer consultants
- A voice hearing simulation workshop for third year students prior to clinical placement
- **Phase I:** Voice Hearing Simulation
- **Phase II:** Assessment and Communication Skill Development

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L to R: Arana Pearson, Keepwell Australia, Douglas Holmes, St Vincents' Mental Health Sydney, Kevin Kellehear and Fiona Orr, UTS

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Aims of the Collaborative Project

- Authenticate the experience of voice-hearing in the classroom
- Increase students' awareness of :
 - consumers' experiences of hearing voices
 - the impact of voice hearing on everyday activities.
 - beginning communication skills needed when interacting with voice hearers.

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- Involved listening to recordings on mp3 players that simulated the experience of voice hearing (45 mins):
 - ranging from whispers to loud vocalizations
 - sounds, and words and phrases in English
 - whilst undertaking activities –
reading/comprehension, participation in a group,
asking for information in the library, purchasing
from cafeteria
- Debrief - mp3s removed and discussion of impact

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Students' Evaluation of the Pre-clinical Workshop

I think this experience ...has given me insight that I would not have gained by reading a book. The way I learn best is by experience because personal experience stays with you
(Comment from student 3, 2008)

I think it was a very useful experience...I thought I was empathic to the experience of hearing voices, but really I don't think I understood how behaviour – being withdrawn, irritable, distracted – was a totally appropriate response to hearing voices
(Comment from student 4, 2008)

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I think this is a fantastic learning tool which gives us a brief insight to what it can be like for voice hearers. It helps contribute to empathy and gain practical tips to use in the future. It reminds me that hearing voices is a human experience, which involves humans to help (Comment from student 2, evaluation 2009).