Associate Professor Mathew A. White

Program Director, Master of Education,

School of Education, Faculty of Arts, The University of Adelaide

Presentation Title: Positive education: Learning and teaching for wellbeing and academic growth
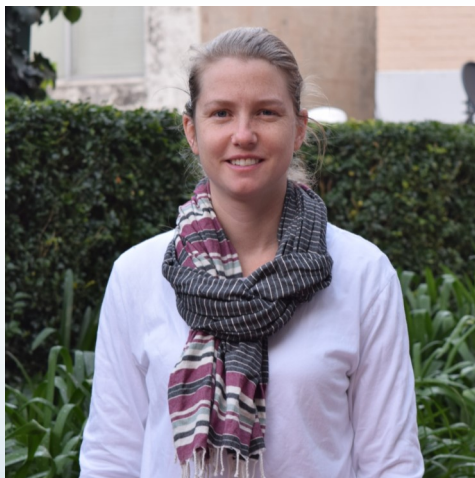
Abstract:

Over the past decade, positive education has emerged as a rapidly growing arm of positive psychology that has attracted both interest and critique. Successful positive education programs blend evidence-based learning from the science of positive psychology, best practices in learning and teaching, whole school strategy, and evaluation, and consider pedagogy, philosophical assumptions, and a school's culture. However, many schools rush towards positive education without considering the knowledge required, application, and how to manage this development responsibly, as there is also potential that attempts are ineffective or do harm. Through a case study, this presentation will outline that positive education can positively impact students, teachers.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the lecture, delegates will:

- be able to identify and discuss current global trends in positive and wellbeing education

- be able to identify and address the philosophical underpinning of the field and its potential impact on professional practice.

Dr Victoria Rawlings
Academic Fellow, School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney

Presentation Title: On the Straight and Narrow: Gender, Sexuality and School Violence

Abstract:

Teachers and school staff continue to rely on fixed definitions of 'bullying' to address anti-social behaviour in school. While these definitions were formed in the 1970s, they still closely inform the definitions at work in NSW schools and the DET. This session will review these definitions of 'bullying' and how they often fail to capture the realities of violence in school. In addition, it will explore the ways that gender and sexuality are central features of violence that takes place in school, and the reasons why this type of violence remains largely unaddressed. Finally, it will provide information about the young people who experience this violence and its affects on them.

- Learning objectives of the presentation

This presentation will encourage participants to:

- Review their own understanding of 'bullying' and interrogate which violence 'fits' and which does not
- Recognise the integral place of gender and sexuality within school violence
- Identify that violence polices the gender and sexuality of all students in a range of ways

Dr Michelle Tye
Research Fellow, Black Dog Institute,
University of New South Wales

Dr Aliza Werner-Seidler,
Research Fellow & Clinical Psychologist,
Black Dog Institute

Presentation Title: Suicide prevention in the classroom: How to do it, and do it well

Abstract:

Suicide is a leading cause of death among those aged 10 – 19 years, and rates of youth suicide are growing at almost twice the rate of the general population. This unprecedented increase in youth suicide is occurring despite ongoing prevention efforts, highlighting that we need more effective suicide prevention to stop young people from reaching a crisis point. Early prevention is an important part of reducing young people's risk of suicide, with evidence suggesting that suicide prevention programs implemented in schools can effectively reduce rates of suicide, as well as major mental health risks (depression, anxiety) which are associated with suicide.
In this workshop, we will review the research literature on what is effective in schools-based suicide prevention, with a consideration of why the school environment is the optimal setting in which prevention efforts should be directed. Key risks and warning signs of youth suicide will be discussed. We will then walk the audience through evidence-based suicide prevention programs for schools that are currently available, or will become available to schools soon, and e-health online programs that are for mental health more broadly, and which have evidence for reducing suicidal thinking. We will then briefly address some of the key barriers to the implementation of prevention programs in schools. Engagement and the ways that technology can overcome these some engagement issues will be considered. We will conclude the workshop by talking to the practical ways in which teachers can access, promote, and deliver, prevention programs to improve wellbeing and prevent suicide risk in their school communities.

At the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Describe what the risks for suicide among young people are;
- Understand what role teachers have in addressing the problem of youth suicide
- Recognise, and explain, the importance of choosing evidence-based programs for suicide prevention;
- Identify practical ways to improve suicide prevention efforts within their school community
- Understand how they can access expertise and support to deliver suicide prevention initiatives within the school environment
- List important considerations for the implementation of programs in schools
- Identify ways to improve communications between educational and wellbeing staff and students to reach at risk students early enough to prevent crisis.

Jeannette James
National Advisor- Service Development, headspace in schools

Presentation Title: Mentally Healthy School Communities: New Government initiatives

Abstract:

Many young Australians experience mental health concerns, which can have lifetime impacts.

- 1 in 7 children in Australia has experienced a mental health condition in the last 12 months

- Only 1 in 6 of these children are receiving help

- Half of all mental health issues emerge before the age of 14

Research shows that supporting children and young people to develop social and emotional skills helps them to successfully socialise, manage conflict, form intimate connections, express empathy to others, and develop a positive sense of self. Early intervention strategies can address mental health concerns experienced by children and young people, and improve lifelong outcomes for adults.

Drawing from the National Mental Health Commission Review in 2014, and with funding from the Australian Government Department of Health, beyondblue will lead a new National Education Initiative launching in Term 4 2018 with delivery partners headspace and Early Childhood Australia.

This new initiative will provide a single end-to-end school and service-based mental health framework. Covering the continuum from early childhood to secondary school, and pre-service teachers, to support mental health promotion and suicide prevention.

The National Education Initiative will integrate and build on the strengths and evidence based principles of key existing Commonwealth Government mental health initiatives currently being delivered in education settings such as, KidsMatter Early Childhood, KidsMatter Primary, MindMatters, headspace school support and Response Ability.

Apart from the National Education Initiative, headspace in schools will also be working on other services including a pilot project funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health targeting rural, regional and remote school communities with a focus on self-harm and suicide prevention, to reduce the number of young people attempting suicide.