

Jawun Research Centre

SEMINAR SERIES

Communication, Health, and Social
and Cultural Well-Being

Seminar 40: Systems thinking and a systemic exploration of mental health and wellbeing for Indigenous boarding students. Same mountain, different view.

This multidisciplinary seminar series aims to create a forum centered in Jawun. It is for researchers at CQUniversity, across Queensland and all over the world, as a forum to share their research findings and establish potential synergies, leading to joint grant applications, and partnerships that endeavour to advance knowledge in various disciplines.

Date and Time

Wednesday, 3 April 2024

3:00pm – 5:00pm QLD time

Light refreshments provided.

Locations

Room **3.06**, CQUniversity Cairns Campus

Corner Abbott Street and Shields Street

Or via [Zoom](#) Passcode: 303099

Abstract

The thesis this presentation is based on was developed through investigation of the “Resilience Study” (2012-2019), a participatory research project taking a socio-ecological approach to improving the mental health and wellbeing of remote-living First Nations students attending boarding schools in Queensland, Australia. The method “Inductive Systemic Analysis” (ISA), combining the principles and basic concepts of systems thinking with the existing methodology of grounded theory, was developed to reveal the social complexity underlying both student distress and wellbeing; as well as make systems thinking a more accessible paradigm. The presentation starts with introducing the philosophy of systems thinking. It then goes on to show how ISA was applied to the issue of student psychological distress; the theory-based resilience ecosystem required for student wellbeing; as well the systemic change required to



achieve wellbeing. Ultimately, analysis reveals complexity: in the multiplicity and systemic nature of the challenges underlying student distress; the multi-faceted and empowered nature of a student resilience ecosystem; and the equity-focussed and multi-dimensional systemic change needed to achieve student wellbeing. It shows how improving student mental health and wellbeing will require a substantial rethink of the ways in which mental health research is currently typically conducted, as well as adoption of a new paradigm able to embrace social complexity.



Speaker

Dr Alexandra van

Beek, Research

Fellow with the Office

of Indigenous

Engagement,

CQUniversity.

BIO

Alex is relatively recent to academic research, having come from a checkered background including heavy industry and micro-business. She completed her degree in psychological science (honours) with CQUniversity in the early 2020s and went on to do a PhD with the Centre of Indigenous Health Equity Research. As somebody with a natural system thinking philosophy and puzzled by the reductionist principles applied to what she saw as innately complex systemic issues, she set out to apply this philosophy to her thesis and the case study under investigation. At this seminar she will present this philosophy and the method developed with the worked case example of Indigenous boarding student mental health and wellbeing.

RSVP

JRC Administration via email:

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