

WORKSHOP ABSTRACT

Integration of Health and Education: The past, present and future of school-based health care in Australia

2nd Asia Pacific Conference on Integrated Care, Melbourne, 11-13 November 2019

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Background: Over the past fifty years the case for integrating health promotion and wrap around health services into a school setting has been mounting. Education is a key predictor in a range of health measures and conversely, health is a key determinant of learning outcomes. There is a symbiotic relationship between education and health that cannot be ignored.

Given the potential benefits of a focus on wellbeing and the deepening mental health crisis in particular, schools are increasingly being prompted and/or mandated to incorporate health initiatives. This has included the proliferation of wrap-around health services and in some cases the establishment of school-based health and wellbeing centres. While these ideas and initiatives have been growing, their full potential is yet to be unlocked. Many schools indeed have only been dabbling with the bigger picture of health promotion and flirting with some of the wrap-around health services available. This has led to a disjointed, adhoc approach across schools resulting in a number of possible models of operation. These have all differed in the proximity of services, funding sources, the types of services offered, the level of collaboration provided, the level of intervention provided and the effectiveness of interventions.

Given the observed variance in models of operation it would seem wise to learn from the past and present situation in order to create a vision for the future of school-based health care in Australia.

Aims and Objectives:

- Constructively critique the history and current state of school-based health care in Australia.
- Identify evidence-based 'best' practice
- Identify potential barriers and solutions for school-based health care, utilising the firsthand experience of presenters and workshop participants
- Outline an aspirational vision for the future of school-based health care

Target audience:

- All education professionals
- All health professionals with an interest in school-based care

Learnings/Take away:

- The importance of health services integrating with the school community.

- Interprofessional Collaborative Health Teams in a school setting. A new working paradigm.
- Networking with an extended community of practitioners working in schools.
- Evidence-based best practice in school-based health care. What does a comprehensive integrated approach look like?

Format:

5mins - Introduction (Lena Sancı)

5mins - The history of school-based health care in Australia (Jon Lituri)

40mins - The current status of school-based health care in Australia. Examples from WA, Vic and QLD. Participants invited to share their involvement and experiences in schools (Jon Lituri, Dana Newcomb, Lena Sancı)

10mins - Best practice? Constructive critique of history and current state of school-based health. (Jon Lituri)

10mins - Barriers and solutions? The theoretical basis for the integration of health services and education is sound, what's holding us back? (Lena Sancı, Dana Newcomb)

20mins - What next for school-based health care in Australia?

Participants consider practical application of content in their context – group discussion (Jon Lituri, Dana Newcomb, Lena Sancı)