Panel:
How can Mindfulness
and the model of Psychological Flexibility
be utilised to create a healthier
university context?
ACBS Conference Sydney 2013
12/7/13 [4.30-5.45 pm]

Chair: John Boorman
Panel members:
Anthony Biglan, PhD. , The Oregon Research Institute
Paul Atkins, ANU, Canberra
Annie Andrews, Julie Grove, John Boorman UNSW, Sydney

A whole of University approach to student success and wellbeing: UNSW as case study - a work in progress

Background: Counseling Services in HE - reporting increasing concern about the mental health of students. Mental Health and Wellbeing has become "hot topic".

Context:

- Teaching and research; one of the GO8 elite uni's >53,000 students; Age: 16-60+; >male < female

- >170 first languages; 22+% on international visa's; 50% CALD backgrounds (includes local students);

- increasing % living on campus; primarily commuter students

- U/G & P/G coursework programs; P/G research programs;

- focus on professional programs

More context

- Budget and resource constraints
- Increasing enrolment figures (this university has grown from fewer than 25,000 enrolled students to approximately 55,0000 students between 1999 and 2013)
- The demand for one-one consultations to address psychological distress and mental health needs outstrips the resourced capacity to respond.
- Even with many of the team embracing ACT ☺
- Use of 30 min 1st consultation
- Exploring Single Session Therapy approach
- Exploring use of in session feedback mechanisms

Solution Seeking: on an annual basis

- Given resources - 1-1 consultations not an option for all in need

- Use of stepped care approach: tip sheets/online resources; programs (peer mentoring); skills development and therapeutic (research) ACT cf CBT for Anxiety workshops; **mindfulness**/relaxation workshops; 1-1 services; referral service; consultation to staff service

- 1-1 interaction – most preferred by students when facing personal issues

- Every year some modification to service delivery strategies, screening for urgency and model of service delivery

- Scaling up interventions has provided a head scratching challenge

- Specialisation of support services and programs well advanced:

Learning Centre * *Student Participation Advisors* * Careers and Employment * *International Student Services* * Equity and Disability Services * *Many volunteer programs to encourage social connection and community contribution*

- Start peer-peer initiatives: MENTORNG; SLEEPSMART; STUDENT MINDS

Getting to know the cohort

- Student Wellbeing Survey: 2003, 2009, 2013
- Questionnaires used within service (K10; DASS; AUDIT; FROST PERFECTIONISM Scale; BPD and self harm and suicidal thoughts/actions)

- Significant levels of psychological distress, anxiety, depression, relationship issues, academic stress
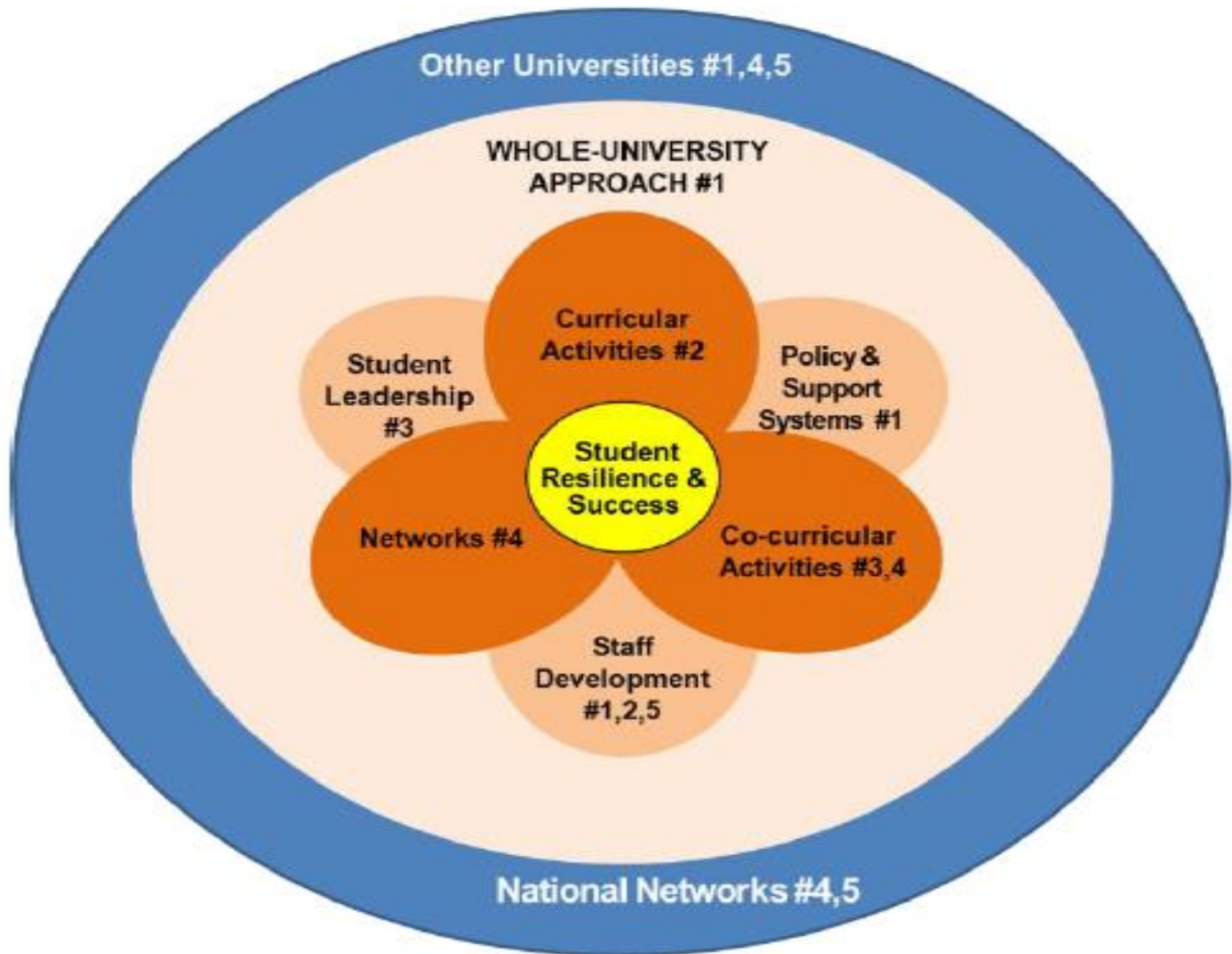
Opportunity Knocks

- Staff undertaking higher degrees – use of service delivery and cohort opportunities

- UNSW Funds Student Wellbeing Survey 2013 – project officer

- Collaboration with colleague from Psych School:

OLT Grant:

Curriculum Renewal to Build Student Resilience and Success: Phase 1
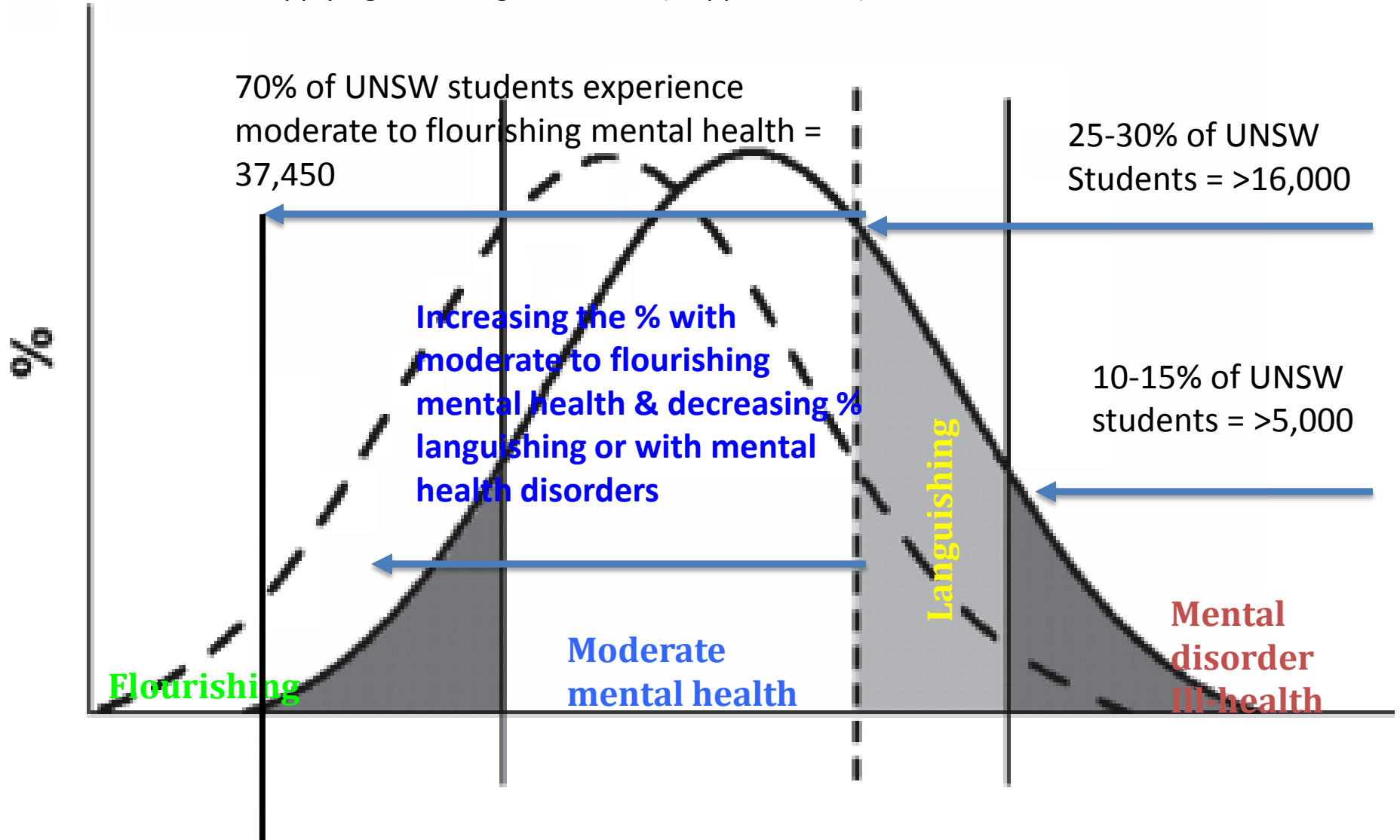
OLT GRANT model

Psychological Literacy meets Psychological Flexibility and Resilience

- Whole of university approach to increasing student resilience and success

- Curricula approach: normative opportunities for students to gain resilience skills

- Extra curricula - Student community volunteering

- Resilience and wellbeing networks

- Nationally focused not-for-profit Student Minds Australia

OLT Grant

- OLT Grant application successful
- But what an opportunity ☺
- Funds for project officer 2 days per week
- Funds for curriculum development
- Funds for network meetings
- What a lot of work! Evaluation required!!!

- Felicia Huppert's thought provoking bell curve

Applying UNSW figures to the (Huppert, 2005) bell curve

70% of UNSW students experience moderate to flourishing mental health = 37,450

25-30% of UNSW Students = >16,000

Increasing the % with moderate to flourishing mental health & decreasing % languishing or with mental health disorders

10-15% of UNSW students = >5,000

%

Languishing

Flourishing

Moderate mental health

Mental disorder Ill-health

At first presentation almost **20%** (approx 400) attending CAPS have **a history of or current self-harming behavior** and **33%** (approx 660) had **thought about or wanted to commit suicide**

NOT a GREEN FIELD

Looking for a model to structure the whole of university approach to student success and wellbeing

- PROMISE NEIGHBOURHOODS
  http://promiseneighborhoods.org/

- Mapping into the UNSW context using EVIDENCE BASED KERNELS -The smallest unit of proven behavioral influence. Embry and Biglan (2008).
- Following table gives example of this experiment with mapping and identifying gaps (nurturing environment/development of psychological flexibility opportunities

TARGET	EVIDENCE	ACADEMIC / EDUCATIONAL	NURTURING ENVIRONMENT	PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY / RESILENCE / WELLBEING	INSTITUTION: POLICIES / PROGRAMS / PROCEDURES SERVICES / PRACTICES / ACTION STRATEGIES
OUTCOMES/ INFLUCENCES					Evidence of action in place
Influences:	Background:				
	FINANCIAL: Student financial situations – strong indication of link to levels of stress, anxiety and depression (Student Wellbeing Survey 2009; 2013)	GOVT PROGRAMS (AUSTUDY, ABSTUDY NEWSTART, DISABILITY SUPPORT PENSION, EQUITY SCHOLARSHIPS, AUSAID; PG RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIPS) INSTITUTION MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS	PARENTS / OTHER FAMILY / COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP GRANTS/LOANS STUDENT EMPLOYMENT	Capacity to negotiate financial decision making on daily basis Control over impulse to gamble Capacity to curb impulse spending esp via internet opportunities to spend (iTunes, Gaming sites etc where credit card details are required at sign up) Control of 'retail therapy' urges to improve mood	Emergency loans Hardship grants (e.g. uni response to relieve financial hardship in specific circumstances impacting on regular payments from Govt impacted by civil war or economic or natural disasters) Payment plans: uni fees / on campus accommodation costs Money management skills (information. workshops, programs) On campus employment Education friendly employers

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OUTCOMES/ INFLUCENCES					Evidence of action in place
Influences: Background:	SOCIAL COHESION	Institutional affiliation Integration in Faculty and School Opportunities for participation in events with School peers Focus on team work	Encouragement of pro-social behaviour Provision of opportunities to participate in programs/events/ activities that provide opportunities for social connection Positive and engaged attitude conveyed by institution toward students	Awareness of personal values Capacity to actively engage with values Ability to adjust to new contexts (people and culture)	Communication prior to enrolment Institutional reputation Institutional communication about institutional culture Institutional values aligned with enrolled cohort values Transition and Engagement strategies Student participation in governance structures and decision making Peer Mentoring during first 6 weeks of enrolment Student volunteer programs – multiple options – formal participation recognition Within curricula focus on team work Extra curricula options for team engagement

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OUTCOMES/ INFLUCENCES					Evidence of action in place
	PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	Safe environments for learning	Safe environments for living	Thinking in advance about potential acculturation and adjustment factors	Safety and Wellbeing Tutorial – online
				Actively seeking information in advance or on needs basis	OHS and safety training for all students working in Labs
				Actively seeking support	Student Conduct: Non Academic Misconduct Rules
				Capacity to make concerns known – assertiveness	Student Grievance and Complaints procedures and people
				Reflective practice by individual	Anti-discrimination legislation Equity Officers Grievance procedures
					ALLY Program
				Knowledge of problem solving strategies Ability to apply problem-solving strategies	Online Information about local rental market: tips and traps – targeting international students – available to all students
				Ability to adjust behaviour to take corrective action	Legal team support for rental problems – provided by Student Organisation
					SLEEP SMART Program

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OUTCOMES/ INFLUCENCES					Evidence of action in place
Influences: Immediate	CARING REL'SHIPS	Teacher as facilitator of learning Soft competition strategies Collaborative learning facilitated	Peer to peer support – both formal and informal Student societies structured around discipline areas Peer organised and delivered transition/support programs Institutional support (student support services) that assist student development in collaborative learning environment	Knowledge of the benefits of prosocial behaviour in learning environment Capacity to apply Prosocial behaviours in learning context Recognition of value of collaborative learning Capacity to experiment in collaborative learning Approach vs Avoidance strategies utlised to enhance motivation and active learning in collaborative environment	

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OUTCOMES/ INFLUCENCES					Evidence of action in place
	EFFECTIVE EDUCATION / PEDAGOGY	Students engaged in active learning

% of enrolled cohort that graduates in expected time frame (+1 year)

Retention (data)

Institutional planning and agreed approach to curriculum design

Program of learning goals clearly articulated

Review process for programs and courses | Student societies structured around discipline areas

Peer to Peer study groups encouraged/ structured by course authorities

Student focused learning support services / information provision / academic skills workshops | Non - judgmental self reflection

Capacity to recognise learning skills needs

Capacity to adapt behaviour

Capacity to self motivate for timely completion of learning tasks and assessment requirements

Capacity to manage time and to complete assessment tasks to required deadlines

Capacity to recognise when will not meet assessment task deadlines

Capacity to seek support via various avenues | PASS tutoring programs – limited to certain courses

Student societies structured around discipline areas

Learning Centre – academic skills development: online and hard copy information, workshops, self paced learning options with learning advisor support

Writing Assistance - trained paid peer support program

Maths Support – learning advisor – limited to specific alternative entry program

Workshops to enhance psychological flexibility provided

Information to support development of psychological flexibility provided

Individually focused opportunities to further develop psychological flexibility provided

Peer to peer engagement to increase early help seeking for those struggling with challenges |

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OUTCOMES/ INFLUCENCES					Evidence of action in place
	PEER INFLUENCES	Structured student leadership opportunities	Peer to peer support – both formal and informal Student leadership opportunities Student Organisation engagement – extra-curricula activities		

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OUTCOMES/ INFLUCENCES					Evidence of action in place
Outcomes Primary:	COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT				
	SOCIAL EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE				
	ABSENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PROBLEM BEHAVIOURS	Absence of plagiarism and cheating Absence of students resorting to cheating in exams and assessment. Absence of students being disciplined for plagiarism.			
	PHYSICAL HEALTH				

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OUTCOMES/ INFLUCENCES					Evidence of action in place
EVIDENCE BASED KERNELS					
	Antecedent				
	Reinforcement				
	Relational	Peer to peer tutoring	Peer to Peer social engagement Volunteering programs	Peer to peer engagement/ interventions	
	Physiological				

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POLICIES					
PROGRAMS					

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BRAIN DEVELOPMENT					