

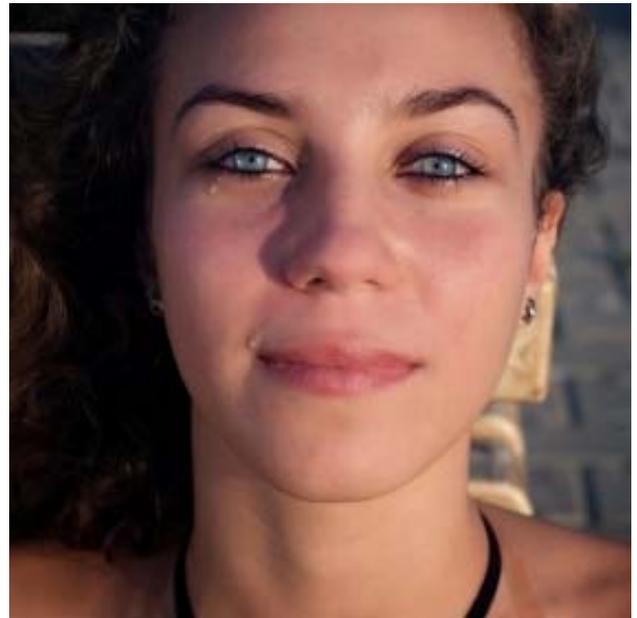
RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Helping Young People with Mental Illness

Associate Professor Natalie Bolzan from Social Justice and Social Change and Sharon McGee from the School of Social Science in conjunction with the Richmond Fellowship of NSW are investigating the success of an intervention and recovery program for young people with mental illness who have a history of substance abuse. This research is funded by the Mental Health Coordinating Council.

'The use of alcohol and illicit drugs by young people with mental health issues compounds the complexity of their health condition, situation and their needs', says Associate Professor Bolzan. 'A Young People's Program facilitated by the Richmond Fellowship and working collaboratively with local mental health services has a proven track record in working well with these challenging issues, achieving successful client outcomes. It is unclear though what exactly are the demographic, clinical and intervention-based factors that influence a young person's recovery and form the basis of the program's success. This study aims to identify what it is about the program that works so well and why.'

The study includes the use of focus groups and interviews with up to 36 current and previous clients of the Richmond Fellowship Young People's Program to identify their perspectives on the operation of the program. Once themes have been identified from these groups, an analysis of all client case files will be conducted to determine trends and common factors in interventions and successes. Data will also be collated, examining client demographics, mental health diagnosis and history, drug use, social inclusion, family involvement and other factors.



These findings will be used to further improve the Young People's Program and will be shared with other organisations and the general mental health sector with the aim of improving youth mental health services, early intervention strategies and outcomes for young people with mental illness and their communities.

Project Title: A historical, retrospective analysis of the presenting issues and outcomes for young people with a mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse.

Funding has been set at: \$85,467

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