YOUNG & RESILIENT RESEARCH CENTRE

Y&R 2026 SEMINAR SERIES

11 March: Dr Benjamin Hanckel

Associate Lecturer in Sociology, Western Sydney University

Designed for young people? Examining the collisions in the production and practices of youth digital mental health and well-being



Dr Benjamin Hanckel, Associate Professor of Sociology, Western Sydney University

Digital mental health has emerged as a contemporary site for the provision of mental health services and support. Recognising global concerns about young people's mental health, there has been an influx of digital mental health spaces that aim to support young people.

In this talk, Dr Hanckel will present some of the emergent findings from an ARC DECRA project, which interrogates and examines the emergence of digital mental health tools across two contexts: Australia and the Philippines.

The talk will present data from interviews with practitioners, designers, policymakers, as well as focus groups and longitudinal interviews with young people.

The findings highlight how tools are developed in a field constituted by new(er) actors, including commercial organisations, accrediting bodies, software developers, clinicians, citizens and the state.

The talk will consider how bringing together the imaginaries and promises of digital mental health and practices results in a collision, offering a space for reflection on the ways digital mental health (mis)aligns with young people's mental health practices.

Biography

Dr Benjamin Hanckel is a Vice Chancellor's Senior Research Fellow. Benjamin's work examines youth health and wellbeing, social inequalities in health, and social change. His current research explores the design and use of digital technologies for health, as well as the 'real world' settings of public health interventions, particularly in relation to the lived experiences of young people, including LGBTIQ+ youth.

Benjamin is a convenor of The British Sociological Association (BSA) Youth Study Group, and a convenor of the LGBTQI Cluster within the Health Systems Global (HSG) SHAPES thematic group. He also holds affiliate positions at King's College London (KCL) and the University of Tasmania (UTAS).

11 March, 12:00 to 1:00 PM

Parramatta South EZ.1.51 & online

Lunch will be provided