UniThrive: an online resource to help students not just survive, but thrive at uni.

Colleen J Lewig[1]

1 University of Adelaide, Counselling & Disability Service, Adelaide, SA, 5005, colleen.lewig@adelaide.edu.au

As with many student counselling services across Australia, the University of Adelaide Counselling Service reached a critical point where we needed to think about how to maximise our resources and develop creative ways to complement the existing traditional Counselling Service (CS) model of practice. We asked ourselves how can we reach a broader range of students without increased pressure on the service, and ideally up-skill students early to reduce pressure on the one to one counselling resource.
We needed ways to support students who may not think to contact the CS but would benefit from the experience, expertise and resources held within the service. And finally we wanted a pathway to support students post one to one counselling intervention.

Based on these underlying questions, and through a process of consultation and collaboration the CS subsequently developed "UniThrive", a web resource aimed at building resilience and supporting good mental health in our students.

Launched during 2013, the UniThrive website is now well embedded as a student resource across the university. Built around a 'Positive Psychology' framework, it exists as a 'standalone' resource, branded separately from the CS, to minimise potential barriers such as a perception or stigma regarding 'counselling'. Additional interactivity through a blog, a mobile application and new resources ensure the resource remains relevant and engaging. The google analytics show a strong uptake with spikes during the traditional peak counselling times. Counsellors are able to incorporate these resources in their support plans for students. School and Faculty staff refer students directly to the site, and many staff utilise the resources for their own personal development, which in turn supports them to appropriately refer students. And finally, the design of the site will enable continual development as new resources and ideas become available.

Key words: Online resource, student wellbeing, student consultation and collaboration