

**UNIT OUTLINE**

**Unit Code:** CO513

**Unit Title:** Towards an Understanding of Mental Health

**Semester:** 2

**Year:** 2020

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| **Unit code** | CO513 |
| **Unit name** | Towards an Understanding of Mental Health |
| **Associated higher education awards** | Master of Counselling |
| **Duration** | One semester |
| **Level** | Postgraduate |
| **Unit coordinator** | Roslyn Price |
| **Core/elective** | Core |
| **Weighting** | Unit credit points: 10Course credit points: 160 |
| **Delivery mode** | Face-to-face on siteExternal |
| **Student workload** | *Face-to-face on site*Contact hours 35 hoursReading, study, and preparation 55 hoursAssignment preparation 60 hours**TOTAL 150 hours***External*Engagement with study materials 90 hoursAssignment preparation 60 hours**TOTAL 150 hours** |
| Students requiring additional English language support are expected to undertake an additional one hour per week. |
| **Prerequisites/ co-requisites/ restrictions** | Nil |
| **Rationale** | Mental health in Australia is rapidly becoming one of the major social issues of our time. With research showing that one in five people will experience some kind of mental health issue every year (SANE, 2014), the reality is that many people are finding that their mental health challenges create on-going difficulties for themselves and their families in their day-to-day living. In order to effectively respond to these challenges, governments and industry groups are recognising the importance of funding mental health support service to both address these challenges and to educate the community in an attempt to reduce the stigma traditionally associated with mental health. Considering this unprecedented increase in the numbers of adults, adolescents and children experiencing mental health issues, it is foreseeable that many of the clients counsellors see may have a mental health issue/s, even if it is not the presenting issue. Therefore, in this unit, the student will have the opportunity to examine traditional and contemporary theories related to addressing mental health challenges. They will also be equipped with the skills to recognise mental health issues, and know how to respond appropriately to those issues within the limits of counsellor training and when referral to another mental health professional is warranted. |
|  | Further to this, the student will have the opportunity to evaluate the strength-based philosophies being utilised by those in the mental health sectors as well as examining factors that threaten mental health from a variety of different perspectives, including neurobiology, psychology, traditional medical models and evidence-based practices, multicultural understandings, postmodernism, and a Christian worldview perspective. Other important factors, including the Australian mental health care system will also be examined. The goal of this master’s level unit is to enable students to establish a framework for working with clients facing mental health challenges. |
| **Prescribed text(s)** | Hungerford, C., Hodgson, D., Clancy, R., Monisse-Redman, M., & Bostwick, R. (2018). *Mental health care: An introduction for health professionals in Australia* (3rd ed.)*.* Brisbane, Australia: Wiley. |
| **Recommended readings** | **Books**American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.Benjamin, R. (2019). *Humanising mental health care in Australia: A guide to trauma-informed approaches.*Melbourne:Routledge.May, G. (1993). *Simply sane: The spirituality of mental health.* New York, NY: Crossroads.[[1]](#footnote-1)Meadows, G., Farhall, J., Fossey, E., Grigg, M., McDermott, F., & Singh, B. (2012). *Mental health in Australia: Collaborative community practice* (3rd ed.). Melbourne, VIC, Australia: Oxford University Press. Pilgrim, D., & McCranie, A. (2013). *Recovery and mental health.* London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.Shannon, S. (2013). *Mental health for the whole child: Moving young clients from disease and disorder to balance and wellness.* New York, NY: Norton. Swinton, J. (2000). *From bedlam to shalom: Towards a practical theology of human nature, interpersonal relationships, and mental health care.* New York, NY: Peter Lang International Academic.1Tantum, D. (2014). *Emotional well-being and mental health: A guide for counsellors and psychotherapists.* London, UK: Sage.Thornicroft, G., Szmukler, G., Mueser, K.T., & Drake, R.E. (Eds.). (2011). *Oxford textbook of community mental health*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.**Journals***Best Practices in Mental Health**Evidence-based Mental Health**Journal of Mental Health Counseling**Journal of Mental Health and Human Behavior**Journal of Psychology and Theology***Websites**https://mhsa.aihw.gov.au/home/ http://www.aihw.gov.au/mental-health-services-publications/ http://www.mindframe-media.info/home www.cmha.org.au |
|  | In addition to the resources above, students should have access to a Bible, preferably a modern translation such as The Holy Bible: The New International Version 2011 (NIV 2011) or The Holy Bible: New King James Version (NKJV).These and other translations may be accessed free on-line at http://www.biblegateway.com. The Bible app from LifeChurch.tv is also available free for smart phones and tablet devices. |
| **Specialist resource requirements** | Nil |
| **Content** | 1. Introduction to mental health
2. Neurobiological,psychological and sociological understandings of mental health and mental health challenges
3. Different models of mental health
4. DSM-V classifications of mental disorders and medical models
5. Australia’s mental health care system (including ethical, legal, and policy issues)
6. Assessment skills and decision-making processes
7. Crisis interventions
8. Evidence-based counselling approaches
9. Accessing resources and referral pathways
10. A framework for working with mental health clients as a counsellor
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| **Learning outcomes** | On completion of this unit, students will have demonstrated that they have:1. analysed mental health and mental distress from various perspectives including traditional models, cultural understandings, postmodern theories, and a Christian worldview;
2. exhibited an advanced understanding of the signs and symptoms of major mental health challenges commonly faced by counsellors in their work;
3. critically evaluated Australia’s mental health care system, considering ethical, legal and policy issues;
4. developed specific strategies for assessing and working with mental health issues, including appropriate referral processes and pathways;
5. critically reflected upon their own attitudes to and engagement with mental health; and
6. communicated at an appropriate tertiary standard with special attention to correct grammars, punctuation, spelling, vocabulary, usage, sentence structure, logical relations, style, referencing, and presentation.
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| **Assessment tasks** | **Task 1: Comparative Report** Compare a biblical perspective of mental health with two other perspectives from the list given. Psychological models is considered the equivalent of two perspectives as you will be expected to address the four schools of psychology.* the medical model
* the biopsychosocial model
* the psychological model(s)
* a neuroscientific model
* a specific cultural understanding

Compare definitions or understandings of mental health, the conditions required for mental health, factors that contribute to mental health challenges, and mechanisms for a return to health, noting any correlations and divergence in conceptualisations. Word Length/Duration: 2000 wordsWeighting: 30%Learning Outcomes: 1-3, 6 |
|  | **Task 2: Oral presentation plus handout**Research one mental health issue commonly encountered in counselling from the list supplied on Moodle™. Analyse the neurological and psychological understandings of this disorder, comparing different understandings of the disorder (e.g. particular cultural perspectives, post-constructivist understandings, Christian worldview) with the medical model. Give an overview of evidence-based counselling approaches for this issue.A 1-2-page handout for the class, outlining the major points of your presentation, is to be included with your presentation. External students may present to the class via Skype (or similar), or video their presentation and upload it to Office365 Streams. Word length/Duration: Presentation - 20 minutes; Handout - 1,000 wordsWeighting: 35%Learning Outcomes: 1-4, 6Assessed: Weeks 10-13**Task 3: Case study**Assess the mental health challenges being faced by the client in the case study, justifying your hypothesis with reference to appropriate literature. Formulate a plan for proceeding with this client that includes relevant ethical, legal and Christian worldview considerations. Include a personal reflection on your response to this case study.Word Length/Duration: 2,000 wordsWeighting: 35% Learning Outcomes: 1-6Assessed: Week 15 |
| **Unit summary** | This unit explores the concept of mental health from a variety of different perspectives, including neurobiology, psychology, traditional medical models and evidence-based practices, multicultural understandings, postmodernism, and a Christian worldview perspective. Students have the opportunity to examine the Australian mental health care system, and major mental health challenges that might present in their counselling practice. The goal of this unit is to enable students to establish a personal practice plan for working with clients facing mental health challenges. |

1. Seminal text. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)