



The University of Southern Queensland

## Course specification

The current and official versions of the course specifications are available on the web at  
<<http://www.usq.edu.au/coursespecification/current>>.  
Please consult the web for updates that may occur during the year.

### Description: Indigenous Australian Mental Health Today

Subject	Cat-nbr	Class	Term	Mode	Units	Campus
IMH	5002	79124	2, 2008	EXT	1.00	Toowoomba

<b>Academic group:</b>	KUMBN
<b>Academic org:</b>	KUMBNL
<b>Student contribution band:</b>	2
<b>ASCED code:</b>	061305

### STAFFING

Examiner: Bill McCann  
Moderator: Ron Hampton

### RATIONALE

In the course IMH5001 Concepts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, the contrasting viewpoints of Indigenous and Western notions of health were outlined. In this course, concepts developed in this earlier course will be expanded upon, with particular reference to the status of Indigenous Australian Mental Health in the early part of the 21st century. The central core of this course is to give an overview of the present situation with regard to Indigenous mental health in Australia. The course also addresses the need to facilitate equal access to mainstream mental health services for Indigenous people. At present, data on hospitalisation and mortality due to serious mental disorders and illnesses are the main sources of information that provide an indication of mental health conditions of Australia's Indigenous people. Other data are available on issues such as self-harm and assault, child abuse and neglect, substance abuse and incarceration. These may be taken as indicators of distress, both social and emotional, but do not, of themselves, explain the source or cause of the patient's mental illness or behavioural problem. Available data indicate that Indigenous Australians suffer a greater burden of emotional distress than the population as a whole, leading to a higher burden of mental illness than that experienced by the wider community. This is borne out in figures indicating over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in inpatient mental health care. There is large agreement that this greater prevalence of mental health disorders in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders compared with non-Indigenous Australians is related to the unique historical, cultural and social situation of Indigenous Australians.

### SYNOPSIS

Centrally important to this course is the fact that culture has profound influences on the experience and presentation of mental disorder - how and whether symptoms are expressed and how they are understood. The available data indicate that, compared with non-Indigenous Australians, Indigenous Australians suffer a higher burden of emotional distress and possible mental illness, widely acknowledged to be related to the unique historical, cultural and social situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This perspective is taken into consideration in looking at the main types of mental disorders and problems experienced by Indigenous people. The difficulties of

researching this field will be outlined. Newer tools such as those developed by Westerman specifically for use with Indigenous youth will be explored. The course also deals with implications of mental health problems experienced by Indigenous people, including the greater hospitalisations for most types of mental and behavioural disorders and greater contact with the criminal justice system. Some consideration is also given to mental health issues of other indigenous cultures and communities throughout the world.

## OBJECTIVES

On successful completion of the course students should be able to:

1. analyse the greater prevalence of mental health disorders and problems in Indigenous communities, in relation to the unique historical, cultural and social situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Assessments 1 and 2)
2. describe Indigenous Mental Health from the holistic perspective of social, cultural and emotional well-being (Assessment 1)
3. assess in a critical and meaningful way the difficulties inherent in researching Indigenous Mental Health purely from a Western biomedical perspective (Assessment 1)
4. critically analyse modern data for Indigenous Mental Health and Well-Being (Assessment 1)
5. analyse the reticence of many Indigenous Mental Health clients to seek assistance from mainstream practitioners (Assessment 1)
6. explain the importance of culturally sensitive, culturally safe and culturally responsive intervention strategies in treating Indigenous mental health clients (Assessment 1)
7. compare and contrast Indigenous Australian mental health issues with other world indigenous groups (Assessment 2)
8. assess the role of Indigenous Mental Health workers with regard to their clinical skills and insights into cultural dynamics in Indigenous communities (Assessment 1).

## TOPICS

	Description	Weighting (%)
1.	Research into Indigenous Australian Mental Health problems and issues; prevalence of mental health problems in Indigenous Australian communities; trans-generational stress and trauma.	20.00
2.	Indigenous cultures and mental health issues: the problem of culture; defining one's own culture and how it affects interaction with others; global and national perspectives; the role of Indigenous health and mental health workers	20.00
3.	Specific issues of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health.	20.00
4.	The burden of mental illness in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities	20.00
5.	Suicide and suicide attempts in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; how suicide in Indigenous Australian communities is different; risk factors and protective factors in suicide in Indigenous communities.	20.00

## **TEXT and MATERIALS required to be PURCHASED or ACCESSED**

ALL textbooks and materials are available for purchase from USQ BOOKSHOP (unless otherwise stated). Orders may be placed via secure internet, free fax 1800642453, phone 07 46312742 (within Australia), or mail. Overseas students should fax +61 7 46311743, or phone +61 7 46312742. For costs, further details, and internet ordering, use the 'Textbook Search' facility at <http://bookshop.usq.edu.au> click 'Semester', then enter your 'Course Code' (no spaces).

## **REFERENCE MATERIALS**

Reference materials are materials that, if accessed by students, may improve their knowledge and understanding of the material in the course and enrich their learning experience.

Bailey, J 2005, 'You're not listening to me!! Aboriginal mental health is different - don't you understand?' (Available: [http://www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/html/html\\_health/specific\\_aspects/other\\_aspects/](http://www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/html/html_health/specific_aspects/other_aspects/)) [Accessed 03 03 2007]

(Paper presented at the 8th National Rural Health Conference, 10-13 March, Alice Springs)

Brown, R 2001, Australian Indigenous mental health, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of mental health nursing*, Vol 10, no.1, pp33-41.

Commonwealth of Australia 2004, , *A National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' mental health and social and emotional well being, 2004-2009*,

Dudgeon, P, Garvey, D & Pickett, H 2000, *Working with Indigenous Australians: a handbook for psychologists*, Gunada Press,

Gorman, D, Brough, M & Ramirez, E 2003, *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing, How young people from culturally and linguistically backgrounds experience mental health: some insights for mental health nurses'*, Vol 12, no.3, pp194-203.

Hunter, E 2003, Mental health, *The health of Indigenous Australians*, N Thomson, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

Hunter, E 2000, *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, Using a socio-historical frame to analyse Aboriginal self-destructive behaviour*, Vol 24, no. , pp191-198.

McKendrick, J & Ryan, E 2002, Foundations of clinical psychiatry, *Indigenous mental health*, S Bloch & BS Singh, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne.

(2nd edn)

NSW Institute of Psychiatry, Sydney 2002, 'Australian Indigenous mental health' (Available: ).

(Written and produced by Helen Milroy)

Queensland Health 1996, *Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health policy*, Health Department, Brisbane.

Sheldon, M 2001, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, Psychiatric assessment in remote Aboriginal communities of Central Australia*, Vol 35, no. , pp435-442.

Swan, P & Raphael, B 1995, *National consultancy report on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health: ways forward*, Office Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health, Canberra ACT.

(Parts I & II)

Trewin, D & Madden, R 2005, *The health and welfare of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples*,

(Australian Bureau of Statistics and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Commonwealth of Australia)

Vicary, D & Westerman, T 2004, Australian e-Journal for the Advancement of Mental Health, *That's just the way he is': some implications of Aboriginal mental health beliefs*, Vol 3, no.3, pp1-10.

## STUDENT WORKLOAD REQUIREMENTS

ACTIVITY	HOURS
Assessments	40.00
Directed Study	35.00
Private Study	90.00

## ASSESSMENT DETAILS

Description	Marks out of	Wtg (%)	Due date
ESSAY 1	50.00	50.00	12 Sep 2008 (see note 1)
ESSAY 2	50.00	50.00	31 Oct 2008 (see note 2)

### NOTES

1. Present status of Indigenous Australian mental health.
2. Comparison of Indigenous Australian mental health issues with those of any other two indigenous groups in the world.

## IMPORTANT ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

- 1 Attendance requirements:  
There are no attendance requirements for this course. However, it is the students' responsibility to study all material provided to them or required to be accessed by them to maximize their chance of meeting the objectives of the course and to be informed of course-related activities and administration.
- 2 Requirements for students to complete each assessment item satisfactorily:  
To complete each of the assessment items satisfactorily, students must obtain at least 50% of the marks available for each assessment item.
- 3 Penalties for late submission of required work:  
Students must negotiate with the course examiner for extensions to the due date of their assignments. If students submit assignments after the due date without prior approval then a penalty of up to 20% of the total marks gained by the student for the assignment will apply for each working day late.
- 4 Requirements for student to be awarded a passing grade in the course:  
To be assured of receiving a passing grade a student must submit all of the summative assessment items, and attain at least 50% of the available weighted marks for the summative assessment items.
- 5 Method used to combine assessment results to attain final grade:

- The final grades for students will be assigned on the basis of the weighted aggregate of the marks obtained for each of the summative assessment items in the course.
- 6 Examination information:  
There is no examination in this course.
  - 7 Examination period when Deferred/Supplementary examinations will be held:  
Not applicable.
  - 8 University Regulations:  
Students should read USQ Regulations 5.1 Definitions, 5.6. Assessment, and 5.10 Academic Misconduct for further information and to avoid actions which might contravene University Regulations. These regulations can be found at the URL <http://www.usq.edu.au/corporateservices/calendar/part5.htm> or in the current USQ Handbook.

## ASSESSMENT NOTES

- 1 The due date for an assignment is the date by which a student must despatch the assignment to USQ. The onus is on the student to provide proof of the despatch date, if requested by the examiner.
- 2 Students must retain a copy of each item submitted for assessment. This must be produced within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt of request being made by the examiner. The student must retain this copy until the grade for this course has been finalised.
- 3 In accordance with the University's assignment extension policy (Regulation 5.6.1), the examiner may grant an extension of the due date of an assignment in extenuating circumstances.
- 4 The Faculty will normally only accept assessments that have been written, typed or printed on paper-based media. Students who do not have regular access to postal services or who are otherwise disadvantaged by these regulations should contact the examiner of the course to negotiate special arrangements.
- 5 In the event that a due date for an assignment falls on a local public holiday in their area, such as a Show holiday, the due date for the assignment will be the next working day. Students are to note on the assignment cover the date of any local public holiday for the examiner's convenience.
- 6 Students who have undertaken all of the required assessments in a course but who have failed to meet some of the specified objectives of a course within the normally prescribed time may be awarded the temporary grade: IM (Incomplete - Make up). An IM grade will only be awarded when, in the opinion of the examiner, a student will be able to achieve the remaining objectives of the course after a period of non-directed personal study.
- 7 Students who, for medical, family/personal, or employment-related reasons, are unable to complete an assignment or to sit for an examination at the scheduled time may apply to defer an assessment in a course. Such a request must be accompanied by appropriate supporting documentation. The following temporary grade may be awarded - IDM (Incomplete - Deferred Make-up).
- 8 When there is more than one marker for a single item of assessment, the distributed patterns and means for the different markers will be compared and marks adjusted if necessary.
- 9 Marking criteria are provided in course material as mark sheets/guides or as part of assignment specifications.
- 10 All summative assessment items must be submitted. To be assured of receiving a passing grade, students must achieve at least 50% in each assessment piece and at least 50% of the available weighted marks for the summative assessment items.

11 Summative assessment items will receive a numerical score. Any ungraded assessment requirement will receive a Pass, Fail or Incomplete.