

TAFE QUEENSLAND

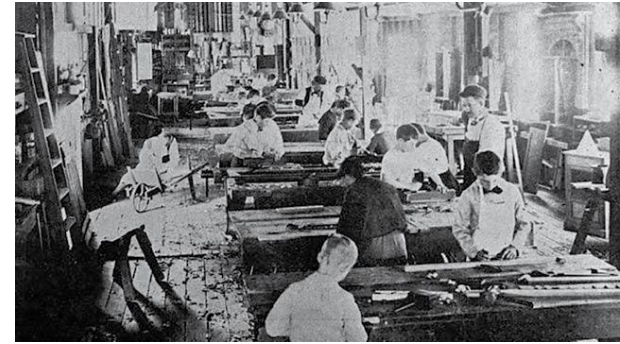
Accidental Counsellor: Staff training workshop

**Presented by: Brandon Taylor
Student Support Manager
Brisbane Region**



TAFE Queensland - overview

- Queensland's largest training provider – 135 years old
- Entry level certificates to bachelor degree
- 50 training locations across Qld
- 110,000 students each year
- 5,500 employees



Background

Increase in

- student mental ill health in classrooms, training facilities and campuses
- teacher referrals to student support
- teacher requests for advice & guidance
- the complexity of mental ill health

Late 2018 – development of the draft TAFE Queensland Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy

- many aspects including staff training requirements
- working group – consultation and identification of the issues, needs and available options
- teachers, HR, WHS, Faculty Managers & Student Support



Challenges and considerations

- How to deliver and have staff released to attend training when, where, how
- Training must respond and directly meet the emerging issues & needs of teachers
- Training should be contextualized for VET practitioners
- Demonstrate how our policies, procedures and Student Behaviour Management Framework can support outcomes
- Provide practical hands-on strategies, skills and develop confidence in responding to and managing real day-to-day situations in our training environments

- We had the staff with the skills, knowledge and expertise to develop and deliver appropriate training



Workshop objectives

- ✓ Understand what we know already that is useful
- ✓ The importance of rapport
- ✓ Understand how personal beliefs and values influence your communication

- ✓ Understand and demonstrate the use of joining, attending skills and active listening skills
- ✓ Determine when disclosure is appropriate and helpful
- ✓ Recognise and deal with distress and crisis - mental illness, self harm and suicide – manage, collaborate, escalate

- ✓ Understand the limits of confidentiality
- ✓ Be aware of the impact that others' distress can have on you
- ✓ Develop and maintain boundaries and enhance self-care
- ✓ Identify avenues for debriefing



The invitation to *Accidental Counsellor*

In response to the increased prevalence of students reporting mental health issues to staff, and in recognition that educators are often the first to hear this information before students attend student support, a training workshop is being developed.

Participants will be provided with basic skills to support someone in emotional crisis by recognising, responding and referring to an appropriate service.

The workshop will be tailored to the specific needs of the group depending on the type and level of their engagement with students, and may include such topics as: the helper/student relationship, communication skills, boundaries, understanding who can help and referral pathways, self-care, and one or more of domestic and family violence, self-harm/suicidality and/or conflict resolution.



The initial roll-out

Workshops were delivered to groups of 10 – 20 participants
9am – 3:30pm with active participation activities

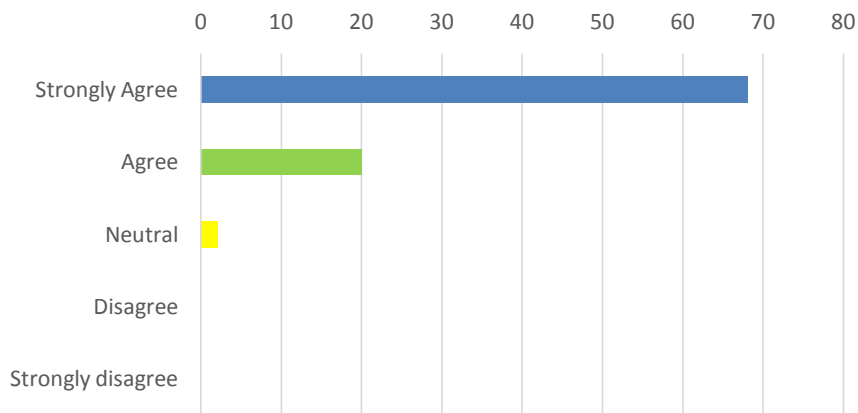
Early findings:

- In a safe and secure workshop, teachers were very open about their experiences – for some it was very emotional and a relief to know they weren't on their own
- Dealing with increasingly worrying student ill health
- Carrying increasing levels of worry & stress
- Teachers wanted to know their boundaries & obligations
- High level of appreciation for the time to work through relevant case studies and discuss with colleagues

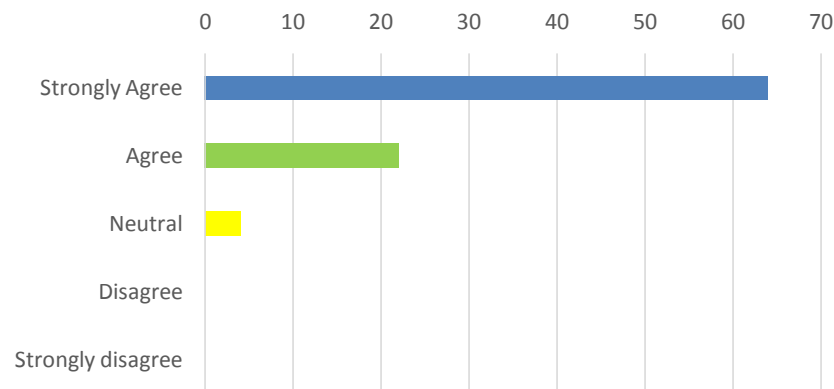


Early survey responses – 90 respondents

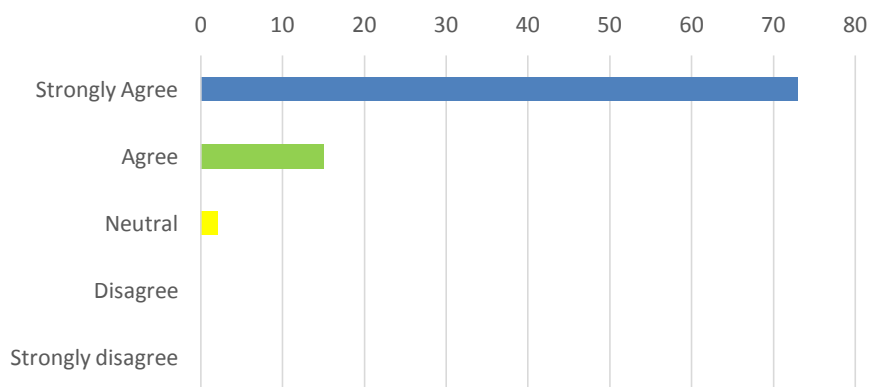
I will be able to apply the learnings in my role



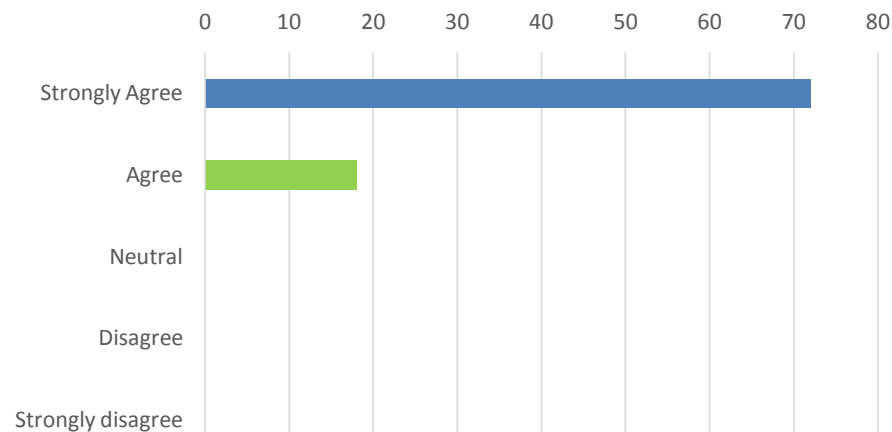
I feel better prepared to respond to challenging situations



I would recommend this workshop to a colleague



I found this workshop useful



Attendee survey commentary

What did you find most useful?

- *Discussion and “fine-tuning” responses to student issues and stress*
- *Importance of teacher self-care*
- *Learning tools/strategies to assist students in crisis/experiencing difficulties*
- *Conversation starters – what to say, what not to say*
- *I love the conversations that were shared*
- *The self-care sessions – allowed me to be kind to myself – I can’t fix everything*
- *Learning to ask for support – I am not alone*
- *Learning that it’s not my role to fix all students’ problems/issues but rather facilitate their self-reliance*
- *Learning that all teachers deal with students with mental illness*
- *Conversation starters, duty of care, setting boundaries*



What did you find least useful?

- *Verbal and non-verbal explanation*
- *Could be more content in the same duration*
- *There was a degree of repetition*
- *Didn't really cover how to help build resilience in students*
- *No free coffee*

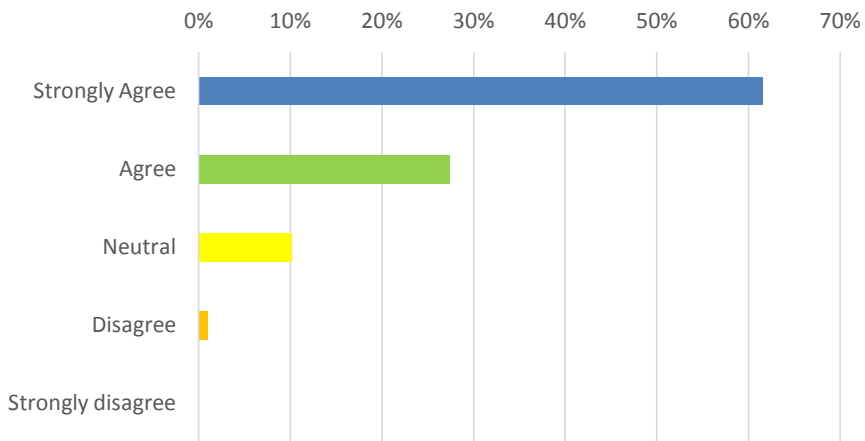
What workshops would you like to see in future?

- *More managing student mental health - Mental health first aid*
- *A deeper understanding of how to get the most out of students with most common mental health issues e.g. Anxiety, Depression*
- *Building resilience*
- *Dealing with clashes of personality in class*
- *Similar ones + self-care*
- *Facts, info about types of mental illness and how to help in emergency e.g. panic attacks*
- *How to assess/treat disability issues*
- *Perhaps an emphasis on more specific interpersonal communication strategies to deal with some of the more intense student interactions*
- *How to increase resilience*
- *How to create positive cultures in classrooms*
- *Self-care*
- *Time management and stress management for teacher*

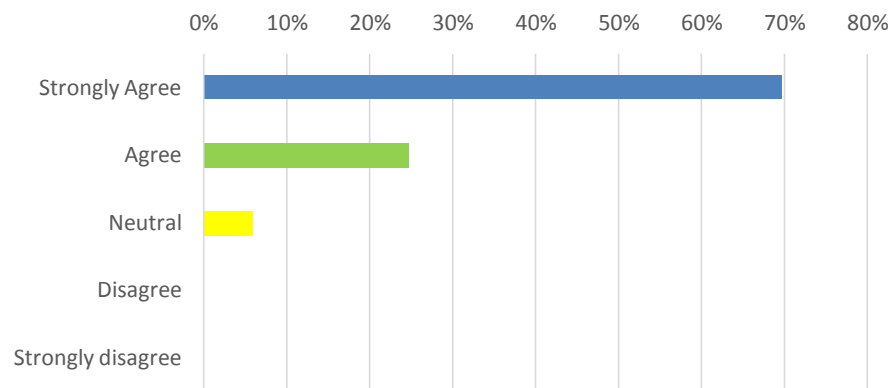


Survey responses to date

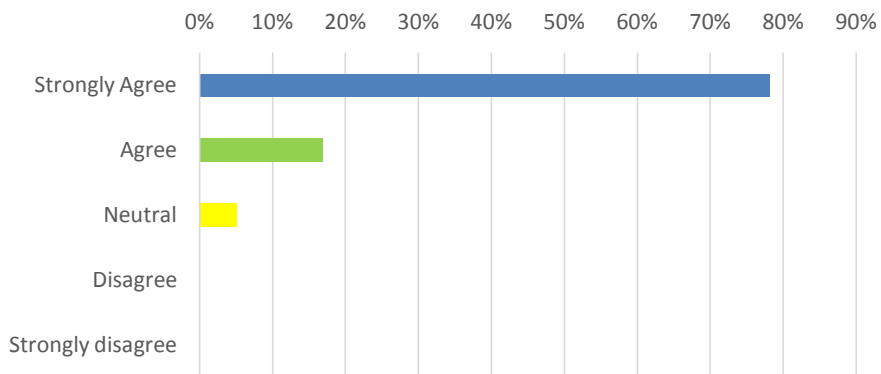
I will be able to apply the learnings in my role



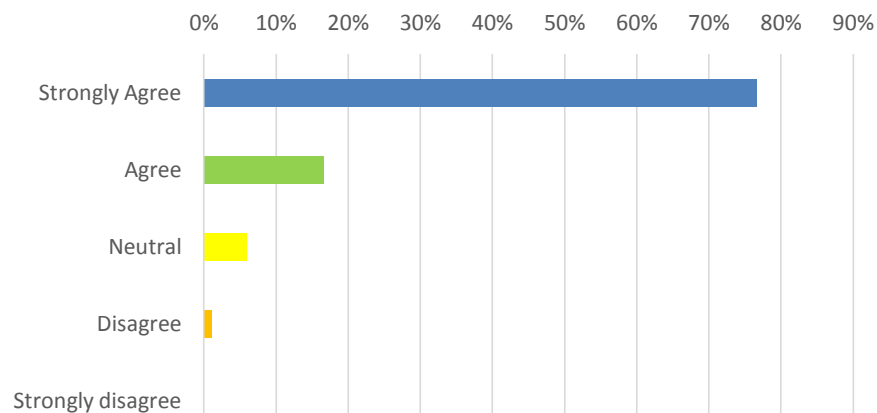
I feel better prepared to respond to challenging situations



I would recommend this workshop to a colleague



I found this workshop beneficial



Current and future work

- ✓ Further rollout of Accidental Counsellor
 - 400+ staff to date
- ✓ Delivery of train-the-trainer across the state
- ✓ Follow-up session / activity with staff who have attended
- ✓ Progression to further training – e.g. Mental Health First Aid
- ✓ Explore further training opportunities that support TAFE Queensland's
 - Strategic and Operational Plans
 - Student Success & Retention Strategy
 - Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy
 - WHS and People & Culture objectives



Acknowledgments - Q&A

- ✓ Following the early consultation phases, Michelle Keel (Team Leader, Student Support, Brisbane Region) led the work to develop the workshop
- ✓ Recently this work has been co-delivered by Louise Kelly (Counsellor, Student Support, Brisbane Region)
- ✓ The workshop is periodically offered through the staff training catalogue and demand is always high
- ✓ We receive regular enquiries - *'when will you run this again'* 😊

