


Help-seeking: The voice of young rural males disengaged from education

Julie Clark
Registered Psychologist
Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology)
University of New England



UNE University of New England

Future fit your life


Help-seeking: The voice of young rural males disengaged from education

What to expect

Appreciate	the value of genuine connection
Understand	the perspective of mental health literacy and help-seeking for young rural males disengaged from education
Question	how current mental health service models need to be redefined in order to achieve inclusive mental health practice

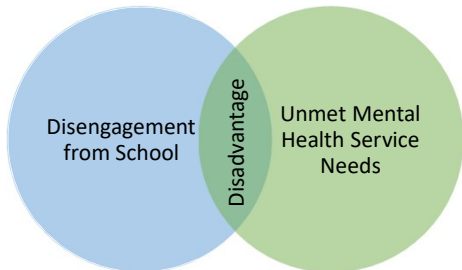
UNE University of New England

Future fit your life



Lower education and delayed help-seeking can have immense lifelong impact (Renner et al., 2024)

Help-seeking: The voice of young rural males disengaged from education



Disengagement from School

Unmet Mental Health Service Needs

Disadvantage

UNE University of New England

Future fit your life

Help-seeking: The voice of young rural males disengaged from education

Objective

To gain an enriched understanding about mental health literacy and help-seeking from the perspective of young rural males disengaged from education

UNE University of New England

Future fit your life

Help-seeking: The voice of young rural males disengaged from education

Qualitative Methodology

Participants

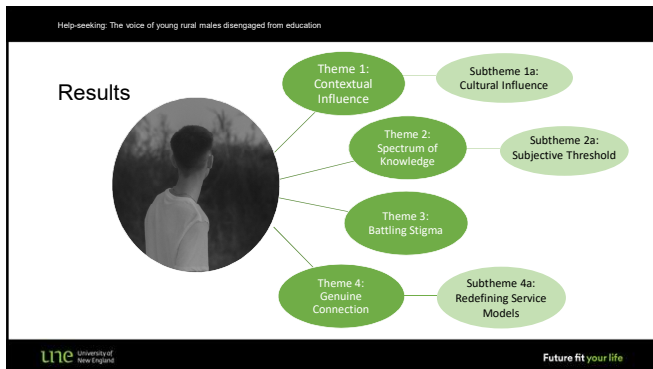
- Engaged with a Non-Government Organisation (NGO)
- Sixteen males, aged 15-to-24-years-old
- Experienced multiple forms of disadvantage
- Most left school in Year 9/10
- 10 participants identified as Indigenous

Procedure and Analysis

- Ethics approval obtained
- Semi-structured Interviews
- Engagement with cultural advisor
- Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021)

UNE University of New England

Future fit your life



Help-seeking: The voice of young rural males disengaged from education

Theme 1: Contextual Influence

"It just like rubs off onto you I guess. Like 'this is shame, that's shame, everything's shame'" (Keegan)

"[mental health] is talked about often so it becomes more normal" (Johnathon)

UNE University of New England

Future fit your life

Help-seeking: The voice of young rural males disengaged from education

Subtheme 1a: Cultural Influence

"Not so much listening to answers or anything, just listening to understand" (James)

"It's gotta come the other way too, that person has maybe gotta open up to that kid to make them feel comfortable" (Michael)

UNE University of New England

Future fit your life

Help-seeking: The voice of young rural males disengaged from education

Theme 2: Spectrum of Knowledge

"They don't necessarily know what they need help with" (Oliver)

"[Counselling] was a good way to slow things down and go well this is how I am feeling...I'm not angry, I'm upset" (James)

UNE University of New England

Future fit your life

Help-seeking: The voice of young rural males disengaged from education

Subtheme 2a: Subjective Threshold

"If you get to that point when you just want to give up then that is the point where you should seek help" (Xander)

UNE University of New England

Future fit your life

Help-seeking: The voice of young rural males disengaged from education

Theme 3: Battling Stigma

"I rather speak to someone who I definitely know won't judge me" (Lachlan)

"Shame and the feeling that you have to be big and strong and tough about how you feel" (Keegan)

UNE University of New England

Future fit your life

Theme 4: Genuine Connection

“Someone to talk to who would actually respect you and have empathy as to what you did go through” (Matthew)

“You know they’re just getting paid to try and make you feel better” (Larry)

Subtheme 4a: Redefining Service Models

“Not just when you step into these doors I’m gonna want to know ya” (Michael)

“Going into an enclosed room with no sound it feels, it’s like, I don’t know, you’re more pressured to speak out about things. But when you’re outside you feel comfortable” (Lachlan)

What does this mean for you?

Listening to create shared understanding

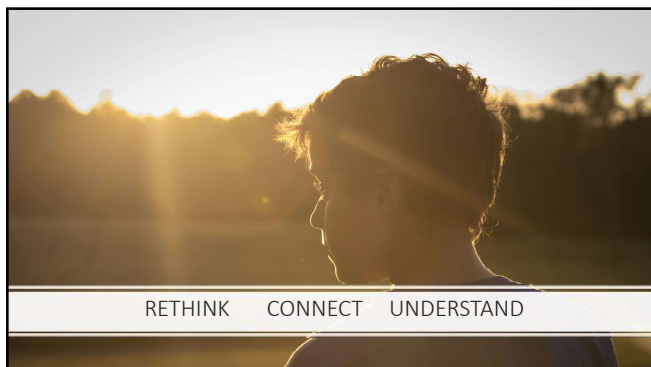
Explore Mental Health Literacy

Give Stigma a voice

Normalise mental health through everyday programs

Genuine connection is valued over clinical expertise

Increased flexibility in service models



RETHINK CONNECT UNDERSTAND

Thank You

Clark, J. C., Bartik, W., Smith, P., & Rice, K. (2024). Help-seeking for young rural males disengaged from education. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 76(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00049530.2024.2430624>



References

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2023). *Australian Burden of Disease Study 2023*. Australian Government. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/burden-of-disease/australian-burden-of-disease-study-2023/content/very-finding4diseases-that-caused>

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). *Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide*. SAGE Publications.

Brown, A., Rice, S. M., Rickwood, D. J., & Parker, A. G. (2016). Systematic review of barriers and facilitators to accessing and engaging with mental health care among at-risk young people. *Asia-Pacific Psychiatry*, 10(1), 9-21. <https://doi.org/10.1111/app.12189>

Carry, T. A., Dudgeon, P., Hammond, S. W., Herriman, T., Kyrle, M., Korfel, L., & Smith, P. (2020). The Australian Psychological Society's Apology to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. *Australian Psychologist*, 55(4), 261-267. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ap.12260>

Gee, G., Dudgeon, P., Schultz, C., Hart, A., & Kelly, K. (2014). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing. In P. Dudgeon, H. Milroy, & R. Walker (Eds.), *Working Together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Wellbeing Principles and Practice* (2nd ed., pp. 55-68). Kulunga Research Network.

Lamb, J., Bower, P., Rogers, A., Dowerick, C., & Gask, L. (2012). Access to mental health in primary care: A qualitative meta-synthesis of evidence from the experience of people from 'hard to reach' groups. *Health*, 16(1), 76-104. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1365453111403345>

Ralph, S., & Ryan, K. (2017). Addressing the mental health gap in working with Indigenous youth: Some considerations for non-Indigenous psychologists working with Indigenous youth. *Australian Psychologist*, 52(4), 288-298. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ap.12287>

Reimer, H. M., Rowland, B., Hutchinson, D., & Tsimbarous, J. W. (2024). The role of adolescent social inclusion in educational attainment among vulnerable youth. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 29(3), 341-350. <https://doi.org/10.1111/camh.12260>

Vogel, D. L., Heimerdinger-Edwards, S. R., Hammer, J. H., & Hubbard, A. (2011). "Boys don't cry": examination of the links between endorsement of masculine norms, self-stigma, and help-seeking attitudes for men from diverse backgrounds. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 58(3), 368-382. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0023688>

Westerman, T. (2010). Engaging Australian Aboriginal youth in mental health services. *Australian Psychologist*, 45(3), 212-222. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00050060903451790>