

Health and Wellbeing Collaborative session: getting the message across to a captive audience.

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Identifying prominent areas of health concerns amongst international students was a key area in initiating a directed health and wellbeing program to Deakin's new arrivals. We understand that a student's health and wellbeing is a determining factor in their ability to thrive in the university environment, particular for international students with a limited immediate support base.

International Student Advisers at Deakin identified some key areas that were frequent concerns of students during consultation and student feedback, and from there a collaborative health and wellbeing afternoon as a part of orientation was formed.

Amongst the areas identified were: Sexual Health, Car accidents, poor diet and mental health issues.

Acknowledging that we are not the experts in these areas, we decided to seek outside input. Looked firstly to local organisations such as Barwon CASA, TAC and YMCA nutritionist to present to students and also engaged the Multicultural Health & Support Services at the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health to deliver the sensitive subject matter of sexual health. It was also important to us to ensure that this was presented in a non-threatening atmosphere and that it was as engaging as possible.

It was important for the International Student Support team that this session was run very casually to encourage engagement and interaction with the providers. This was facilitated by the off-campus location, shared lunch, giveaways from BUPA and a casual set up which catered for separation of males and females for the sexual health component of the afternoon.

The Health and Wellbeing afternoon received a high level of positive feedback from the students involved and has thus been identified as a key aspect of our orientation program. It has been a positive experience for all involved. Our students have been able to identify outside organisations which are able to assist them with health issues and staff members from within the university have been able to develop working relationships with outside providers so that we can link students in directly with the services when needed. It has also facilitated ongoing conversations between organisations outside of the orientation period.