

Institute of Health and Society Research Seminar

Australian transgender people's experiences with mental health professionals

Damien Riggs

(Flinders University, Australia)

Abstract:

The aim of this study was to examine transgender Australian's experience with mental health professionals. An exploratory survey was designed to measure perceptions of discrimination, respect, comfort and skill as engendered by psychologists, psychiatrists and counselors. The survey was completed by 189 participants, with approximately equal numbers of transgender men and transgender women. Results indicate that transgender women were more likely to report positive experiences than were transgender men. Participants were on average positive about their experiences with mental health professionals, though a significant minority of participants indicated that their experience was negative. In terms of self-reported mental health, experiencing discrimination from mental health professionals was negatively correlated with mental health, whilst experiencing respect was positively correlated with positive mental health. Also in regards to self-reported mental health, participants who had undertaken sex-affirming surgery reported higher levels of positive mental health than did participants who had not undertaken surgery. No relationship was found between a diagnosis of 'gender identity disorder' and self-reported mental health. Overall the findings of this study suggest that whilst many transgender Australians experience positive outcomes in their interactions with mental health professionals, there is still considerable room for improvement in terms of service provision to this population.



Date: Thursday 11 September 2014

Time: 13:00 hrs—14:00 hrs

Venue: BY1150

**All welcome, if possible please confirm attendance in advance of
Monday 8th September 2014 to: michelle.king@worc.ac.uk**