

Mental Health Professional Online Development

List of topics – as of 1 July 2015

Contents

Acquired Brain Injury & Sensory Impairment.....	3
Becoming an evidence based practitioner.....	3
Biopsychosocial factors	3
Building the Therapeutic Relationship	3
CAMHS and Youth MH: Conditions and Assessments	3
CAMHS and Youth MH: Interventions	3
Carer Advocacy	3
Carer Participation	3
Classification of Mental Disorders	4
Confidentiality and privacy in practice	4
Consumer Identity and Advocacy	4
Cultural Awareness.....	4
Culturally Sensitive Practice	4
Dual Diagnosis.....	4
Dual Disability	4
Effective documentation in clinical files	5
Effective Working Within the Multidisciplinary Mental Health Team.....	5
Ethics in Healthcare Research	5
Evidence based practice.....	5
Formulation	5
Gender issues in mental health	5
Health Promotion and Mental Health Promotion	5
Impact of Medical Conditions.....	5
International and National Mental Health Policy.....	6
Legislation and mental health practice	6
Mental Health and Mental Illness Across the Lifespan.....	6
Mental health care and Human Rights	6
Mental Health Care for Indigenous Australians	6
Mental Health for Older Persons: Conditions and Assessments.....	6
Mental Health for Older Persons: Interventions.....	6
Mental Health for Same Sex Attracted Persons	6
Mental health histories and MSE	7
Mental Health Service System; the Organisation	7
Mental Health Services in Primary Care Environments	7
Networks of Care	7
Outcome measures	7
Parenting Issues and Mental Health Care	7
Pharmacological Interventions.....	7

Prevention and Early Intervention.....	8
Professional Ethics	8
Psychosocial Interventions	8
Psychosocial Interventions – Strategies for Case Managers	8
Quality Improvement and Evidence Based Practice	8
Recovery.....	8
Recovery Based Practice	8
Relapse Prevention	9
Risk and protective factors	9
Risk Assessment and Management	9
Service development	9
Strategies for Working with People at Risk of Suicide	9
Supervision and Self Care in Mental Health Services	9
Supporting a Mental Health Peer Workforce	9
Taking an Empowering Approach to Case Management.....	9
The broad impact of mental illness and the need for partnership	10
Transitional Care Planning	10
Trauma and Mental Health	10
Working with People with Borderline Personality Disorder	10
Working with People with Forensic Histories or at Risk of Offending.....	10
New topics released on 9/02/2015.....	10
Reducing and eliminating seclusion and restraint	10
MH peer workforce within the broader MH system.....	10
Social wellbeing, connection and belonging.....	11
Skills for promoting physical health	11
Skills for supporting consumers to study or work	11
Social relationships - working with families	11
Living with chronic ill health	11
Working with people who self-harm.....	11
Eating disorders	11
Citizenship and recovery	12

Acquired Brain Injury & Sensory Impairment

Acquired Brain Injury (ABI), sometimes also called Acquired Brain Impairment, is the name given to damage done to the brain at some time after birth. Sensory impairment (SI) is damage done to one (or more) of the senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste and spatial awareness. This topic considers the issue of mental illness co-existing with acquired brain injury (ABI), and/or acquired sensory impairment (SI).

Becoming an evidence based practitioner

Current focus in mental health emphasises work within an evidence-based framework (Killackey et al., 2008). Evidence-based practice (EBP) is more than providing intervention supported by the most rigorous research. Working within an evidence-based framework challenges mental health workers to develop a style of thinking and questioning allowing them to reflect on their own practice and service delivery. This topic explores the practical steps a mental health professional can take to work towards becoming an evidence-based practitioner.

Biopsychosocial factors

This topic introduces the biopsychosocial model and considers its application in mental health. Biological, psychological and social factors impact on both the onset and course of mental disorders, and this will be explored in relation to schizophrenia in particular.

Building the Therapeutic Relationship

The therapeutic relationship is at the heart of mental health practice. Like all other relationships, the therapeutic relationship takes time to develop and requires commitment and effort to maintain. The outcomes of all interventions depend on the nature of the therapeutic relationship. A 'good enough' therapeutic alliance has the potential for growth and change

CAMHS and Youth MH: Conditions and Assessments

This topic covers mental health and physical conditions that commonly present in child and youth mental health, the general principles for assessing children, youth and families and specific assessments used.

CAMHS and Youth MH: Interventions

This topic discusses the structure of child and youth mental health services around Australia. It provides best practice service examples, and effective interventions for children, youth and families.

Carer Advocacy

This topic follows the Carer Participation topic and explores the role of carers working as advocates in non-government organisations or in the mental health system. Carer advocacy involves representing carer perspectives and needs in order to improve the responsiveness of mental health services to people living with mental illness. It is critical that mental health workers understand and value the importance of carer advocacy roles in order to collaborate effectively towards improved services and outcomes for carers and consumers.

Carer Participation

When a person experiences mental illness, the care provided by family members, friends and other people often exceeds the usual expectations of a close family or personal relationship. Carers are uniquely placed to notice when the mental state of the person they are caring for changes, yet they frequently report that they are not listened to, or their views are not wanted. This topic introduces the concepts of carer participation and the lived experience of carers and families. Family carers may be parents, partners, children, siblings or the wider 'family'.

Classification of Mental Disorders

This topic covers relevant components of a mental health history and the components of a detailed mental status examination.

Confidentiality and privacy in practice

In mental health services, the consumer's right to privacy and the practitioner's promise to maintain confidentiality is the cornerstone of the therapeutic relationship. Confidentiality acknowledges respect for the consumers' dignity and privacy, and it promotes wellbeing. Relatives and friends who provide care and support to a person with a mental illness often report that receiving inadequate information from service providers hinders their caring role. Practitioners need to be familiar with the laws, ethical guidelines and workplace policies regarding confidentiality and privacy. They need to develop good practices for sharing essential information with consumers' families or other carers.

Consumer Identity and Advocacy

'Consumer participation' is a familiar phrase in mental health settings, incorporating several conceptual, ethical, political and practical challenges that need unpacking. Today, consumer participation is formally recognised in a range of Australian mental health policies at national, state and territory levels. This topic unpacks consumer language and identity issues, and outlines the types and key characteristics of systems-level consumer participation.

Cultural Awareness

Learn how broad aspects of culture influence the clinical relationship, the understanding of mental disorder and the impact of disorders on individuals, families and communities.

Culturally Sensitive Practice

This topic aims to equip practitioners with practical strategies for working with CALD (people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds) consumers and their families. It addresses a community development approach to understanding how different CALD communities understand and manage mental illness, allowing mental health workers and services to better understand the specific needs of CALD consumers and communities. This topic should be completed in conjunction with its sister topic Cultural Awareness.

Dual Diagnosis

Dual diagnosis refers to the co-occurrence of mental illness and substance use disorder. The co-existence of mental health and drug and alcohol problems is very common: nowadays it is the expectation rather than the exception in clinical practice (Minkoff & Cline, 2004). Consumers with dual diagnosis problems often do not receive optimal treatment. They are at times excluded from one service until the 'other' service treats their 'other' problems. This topic presents general features of dual diagnosis and describe some evidence-based treatment interventions. On completion of this module, practitioners will understand how to screen and assess for dual diagnosis, and have a beginning grasp of possible interventions.

Dual Disability

The co-occurrence of an intellectual or other developmental disability and mental illness presents several difficulties for the practitioner. Understanding how these conditions interact is critical to providing optimal care.

Effective documentation in clinical files

This topic discusses the importance of documentation in providing quality patient care. Its role in facilitating communication, and appraising results and future plans. Documentation also helps to evaluate different strategies and models, with a view to identify best practice and continually improve practice.

Effective Working Within the Multidisciplinary Mental Health Team

This topic examines the core role and purpose of multidisciplinary teams and some of the benefits and challenges of teamwork in mental health practice. It considers the challenges inherent in teamwork and offers practical strategies to address challenging issues that arise in teams.

Ethics in Healthcare Research

Research, like everyday life, often generates ethical dilemmas in which it may be impossible to find agreement on what is right or wrong. This topic describes the criteria of ethical research and seeks to heighten the ethical awareness of all those involved in research and its review.

Evidence based practice

Evidence-based practice has become a cornerstone of modern mental health practice. Its focus is to improve the quality of mental health care. In this topic you will be introduced to evidence-based practice and how it has developed. You will build your understanding of what it means and the limitations of an evidence-based approach in current mental health practice.

Formulation

Formulation in psychiatry can mean different things, depending on the context and to some extent the background of the person using the term. In the Australian mental health system, formulation usually refers to a series of hypotheses about why the consumer has become unwell, and why this vulnerability has manifested in the specific form and timeframe that has led to their presentation to services. This topic discusses how and when a formulation can be of assistance, the characteristics of a good formulation, and its context and potential uses.

Gender issues in mental health

Although there are more similarities than differences between the sexes in presentations and management of mental illness, the mental health needs of men and women are significantly affected by gender. Best practice recognises the specific vulnerabilities of men and women to different forms of mental illness and how gender may affect presentation and management of symptoms. This topic considers the implications of both sex and gender categories for mental health practice and some of the effects on individual outcomes.

Health Promotion and Mental Health Promotion

In simple health terms, prevention relates to the targeting of a specific risk and/or known cause of a disease. Health promotion aims to build up the health capability of people so that they do not get sick in the first place. This topic explores two different health promotion and prevention frameworks: the model largely adopted here in Australia, and the Ottawa Charter of Health Promotion. The topic then discusses the role mental health workers play in the promotion of mental health and well-being for individuals, families and populations.

Impact of Medical Conditions

The physical care of people with a mental health problem is increasingly recognised as an essential part of their overall care, and has become a major public health issue. In the future, it is expected that co-existing medical conditions will be found to be the rule, rather than the exception (Meadows et al., 2007). It is increasingly being recognised that good mental health care will, in future, include some routine monitoring of physical health (Muir-

Cochrane, 2008). This topic will assist you to recognise the importance of the connection between physical and mental wellbeing and the impact of medical conditions on mental health.

International and National Mental Health Policy

This topic introduces these frameworks and shows their impact on our everyday practice. Australia's recognition of the rights of people with mental illness and the shift this has caused in policy, services and individual care is one key example.

Legislation and mental health practice

Mental health law exists first to ensure that people with a mental illness are provided with appropriate treatment and care, and second to enable the protection of individuals and others from the impact and/or consequences of mental illness. This topic will assist workers to understand key aspects of Australian legislation, both legislation specific to mental health and other legislation applicable to public mental health services.

Mental Health and Mental Illness Across the Lifespan

Life presents a range of challenges, which vary throughout a person's lifetime. Accordingly, mental health may be affected by these challenges, and the impact of these may vary considerably depending on the age and developmental profile of the person. This topic discusses the ways in which mental illness may present in children (<12) and adolescents (12-18), in young (18-25) and mature adults (25-65), and in the elderly (65+). The more common mental health problems, and life experiences, are discussed in each section.

Mental health care and Human Rights

This topic explores human rights in relation to mental health practice and helps contextualise contemporary policy and legal developments that are investigated in other MHPOD topics

Mental Health Care for Indigenous Australians

This topic explores social and emotional wellbeing as it relates to Indigenous Australians, how it relates to mental health and why the distinction is important. The topic also considers how mental health professionals can play a role in supporting and promoting social and emotional wellbeing for Indigenous Australians.

Mental Health for Older Persons: Conditions and Assessments

This topic explores the transition to old age and the changes to physical health that can either co-occur with, or masquerade as mental illness. The prevalence of mental disorders and dementias among older people is outlined, along with approaches to assessment and diagnosis of mental disorders. The topic also invites learners to consider ageism - challenging our beliefs and attitudes when we work with older people.

Mental Health for Older Persons: Interventions

This topic considers approaches to mental care for older people including person-centred care, collaborative care, care coordination and health promotion. Learners will undertake an assessment and identify appropriate interventions for an older person and her family. The topic outlines interventions commonly used in older persons' mental health services, including a profile on ECT.

Mental Health for Same Sex Attracted Persons

Same-sex attracted (SSA) people (including gay men, lesbians and bisexuals) participate as consumers, carers and workers within mental health services. Mental health workers need an awareness of the issues that SSA people face in order to better understand and support their mental health and wellbeing. This topic briefly discusses the history of discrimination and support exhibited by the mental health system. It touches on specific factors that

contribute to SSA people's resilience and provides practical suggestions for making clinical practice and mental health services more welcoming and sensitive to the needs of SSA consumers and their families. The differing experience of some particular subgroups including Aboriginal, CALD, young, and older SSA people is also considered.

Mental health histories and MSE

This topic covers relevant components of a mental health history and the components of a detailed mental status examination.

Mental Health Service System; the Organisation

This topic identifies the core components of the mental health service system and their functions, and the range of ways each element might be delivered. The non-government and private mental health sectors are also discussed, as they are key partners in providing comprehensive care, together with other health and welfare services.

Mental Health Services in Primary Care Environments

This topic looks at the role of GPs and other health professionals in a changing landscape for primary mental health care in Australia. The perspective of the GP is presented, along with the importance of, and barriers to collaborative relationships between mental health and primary care practitioners. Models of effective transition and shared care are discussed along with best-practice examples of programs which deliver good primary care outcomes for consumers and carers.

Networks of Care

Many consumers require a system of support that extends beyond specialist public mental health services. Collaborative working with the agencies that provide that support is critical to facilitate the social, economic and political participation of consumers and carers in society. A good working relationship with these agencies and services improves outcomes in key areas. This topic addresses the principles of effective interagency working, and identify and describe the services that comprise a comprehensive health and welfare system.

Outcome measures

This topic considers the theoretical foundations, policy requirements, and practical implications of outcome measures for mental healthcare practitioners. It examines their evolution, the implications for service provision, and their strengths and weaknesses.

Parenting Issues and Mental Health Care

A significant number of adults who experience mental illness are parents. All parents face challenges in managing the demands of raising children. Parents who experience mental illness may face additional stressors that impair their wellbeing and that of their children. Mental health workers have an important role in the early identification of the needs of parents who experience mental illness and their children, and in the promotion of mental health and general wellbeing in families. By providing family members (including children) with empathy, accurate information and access to appropriate support, mental health workers may help prevent mental health problems occurring in the future.

Pharmacological Interventions

This topic discusses how commonly prescribed pharmacological treatments work through a common schema for classes of mental health drugs. It also covers techniques for monitoring the impact of medications and collaboration to maximise effectiveness.

Prevention and Early Intervention

Treatment outcome research indicates that the interval between the onset of a mental disorder and the commencement of evidence-based treatment strongly influences the outcome. Generally, the longer the interval, the poorer the treatment outcome. Prevention and early intervention are conceptually linked to another MHPOD topic, Mental Health Promotion. This topic addresses the early detection of new cases of mental illness and strategies for early intervention (secondary and tertiary prevention).

Professional Ethics

The objective for this topic is to identify the core ethical responsibilities and behaviours of a mental health professional. As part of Australia's National Mental Health Strategy, national practice standards for ethical practice and professional responsibility have been created to provide guidance for practitioners in mental health services. This topic provides an overview of the standards and increased awareness of the core knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective ethical practice within mental health services.

Psychosocial Interventions

Consumers, health professionals and governments continue to report unacceptable rates of unemployment, loneliness, homelessness and poverty related to mental illness. This topic provides participants with an overview of psychosocial interventions used to meet the needs of people who experience mental illness. A wide range of psychosocial interventions is outlined, and principles, core skills and useful resources for those seeking more information are provided.

Psychosocial Interventions – Strategies for Case Managers

This topic aims to provide practical examples of how evidence based psychosocial interventions can be used in routine care. In supporting recovery from schizophrenia, the approaches of five psychosocial interventions (four with a strong evidence base) are all described. Whilst the topic recommends practitioners do further training in psychosocial interventions, the building blocks of each approach are outlined, with the aim of providing case managers with some useful tools to support consumers in routine practice.

Quality Improvement and Evidence Based Practice

Quality service provision is the ultimate aim of all mental health practitioners and organisations. This topic introduces the concepts and key features of quality improvement and evidence based practice (EBP), and the historical context in which they evolved. Looking at how theory and evidence can be translated into practical and effective approaches, it discusses some of the policies that espouse EBP and quality improvement.

Recovery

This topic defines the concept of 'recovery'. It teaches you to identify principles that can both support and hinder the processes of individual recovery.

Recovery Based Practice

This topic builds on Recovery 1 and is similarly informed by the experiences of those who have struggled with and triumphed over a mental illness. The topic describes the terminology and associated practice environments that support individuals in their recovery efforts and processes. As the terms are often used interchangeably, often without a clear understanding, the topic explains recovery and the work of recovery based practice, and differentiates these concepts from rehabilitation and biomedical approaches.

Relapse Prevention

The episodic nature of mental disorders means that further illness episodes can occur for many people. The experience of relapse and possible associated rehospitalisation can be distressing and traumatic. This topic introduces the concept of relapse prevention, distinguishes between 'growth-oriented' relapse prevention and 'risk-oriented' relapse prevention. It describes strategies for developing a collaborative relapse prevention approach, and highlights the value of relapse prevention for recovery.

Risk and protective factors

This topic explores risk and protective factors - including some interventions that promote protective factors - and the limitations of this approach. You will see how the stress-vulnerability model is used to describe how episodes of psychosis can arise, and look at the water tank metaphor as a way to explain the model.

Risk Assessment and Management

Risk is an inevitable part of mental health practice (Holloway, 1997). This topic identifies principles and tools available to support practitioners in assessment and management of risk. We discuss different kinds of clinical risk, risk assessment, risk formulation, and risk management as well as positive risk taking. The topic highlights an innovative program designed to improve clinical risk management, and provides some brief, current information on suicide and its prevention.

Service development

Change and development in services is an ongoing process as services respond to expanding evidence and pressure from different stakeholders. This topic aims to give a brief outline of how and why service development occurs and to provide a range of examples that showcase how service development is benefiting consumers, carers, workers and the public.

Strategies for Working with People at Risk of Suicide

This topic outlines concepts in current thinking about suicide, high-risk groups, the prevalence of suicide in Australia and the National Suicide Prevention Strategy. It provides advice to workers about how to practically respond to risk factors, advocating an approach to suicide prevention that is based on understanding the person and their predicament.

Supervision and Self Care in Mental Health Services

This topic outlines the importance of supervision, examining supervision models and considerations for choosing a supervisor where this is possible. For routine practice, common barriers to effective supervision are explored and the rewards of being a supervisor highlighted. The topic also explores the emotional impact of mental health work and the importance of self-care as a complement to supervision, outlining strategies for health workers to optimise their well-being and professional practice.

Supporting a Mental Health Peer Workforce

This topic explores existing and emerging peer worker roles in Australian mental health services and the international evidence base for peer work. This includes history, rationale and values as well as some myths and facts about peer work. Common challenges to peer work in Australia are considered and how meeting these requires a paradigm shift in thinking, akin with the values of recovery based practice.

Taking an Empowering Approach to Case Management

This topic discusses the evolution of case management outlining the development of different models. Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) is emphasised as an evidence based vehicle for delivering care. Effective case

management, from the perspective of consumers and carers, and common practice dilemmas, such as working with a consumer on a CTO are highlighted. The topic challenges practitioners to adapt to a changing landscape, where traditional case management needs to be balanced with a recovery-oriented approach.

The broad impact of mental illness and the need for partnership

This topic explores ways to conceptualise the impact of mental illness, international classifications, the socio-economic impact and DALYs. It looks at the impact of mental illness across a person's life, and some useful interventions.

Transitional Care Planning

This topic introduces the principles and practice of transitional care planning. Transitional care refers to a set of actions, practices, and procedures designed to provide continuity and coordination of health care as people transfer between programs, services, locations, age groups, levels of development, and acuteness of condition. Transitional care planning is a person-centred, multidimensional, and interdisciplinary process that addresses the changing biological, social, and psychological needs of people in health care.

Trauma and Mental Health

This topic describes the neurobiology of trauma, child maltreatment, interpersonal violence and the impact of traumatic events on an individual's mental health. The principles of trauma informed care are examined, alongside the importance of practitioner awareness - to not re-traumatise consumers through mental health service experiences. The topic also outlines the rationale for the re-orientation of services, components of the therapeutic relationship and the values which underpin trauma-informed practice.

Working with People with Borderline Personality Disorder

The topic introduces personality disorders, the issues that present in practice, and the lived experience of these disorders. It discusses challenges for staff, and how to get support in identifying and managing personal reactions to consumers with personality disorders, along with working with other agencies to promote a consistent approach.

Working with People with Forensic Histories or at Risk of Offending

This topic explores the terms associated with forensic mental health and the legal system, facts and figures about mental health and offending and the issue of stigma for consumers and their families. Common challenges experienced by staff are outlined as well as strategies to maintain positive attitudes for consumer recovery. Learners will also consider the complex issues in undertaking a forensic assessment and interventions commonly used in rehabilitation.

New topics released on 9/02/2015

Reducing and eliminating seclusion and restraint

Reduction of the practices of seclusion and restraint in mental health services is a national endeavour, requiring leadership, cultural change, and skills development for all practitioners. The use of seclusion or restraint can be traumatic for all involved, and has enduring negative effects. This topic explores the legal, ethical and safety issues related to seclusion and restraint. It assists mental health practitioners to develop the skills required to respond to distress in ways that avoid the use of these practices.

MH peer workforce within the broader MH system

Peer contributions to the field of mental health are made through direct support (both within and alongside traditional mental health services), education, research, representation and advocacy. This topic explores the

depth and breadth of these roles, and assists mental health practitioners to recognise and support best practice in peer work.

Social wellbeing, connection and belonging

Social wellbeing can be profoundly affected by the experience of mental illness, through a breakdown and loss of daily contacts, connections and relationships. People with mental illness can find themselves very socially isolated, which is a further risk factor for poor health and mortality. Re-establishing and maintaining social connectedness may require specific supports. This topic demonstrates how mental health practitioners can operate as a bridge to social connectedness and enhanced social wellbeing, and explores the complexities and boundaries of professional, peer and social relationships.

Skills for promoting physical health

People with mental illness experience physical health problems at a far higher rate than the rest of the community, and without intervention can expect a greatly reduced longevity. Mental health services and practitioners need to be equipped to support people experiencing mental illness to address and improve their physical health. This topic provides an opportunity for mental health practitioners to recognise effective strategies to address physical health issues.

Skills for supporting consumers to study or work

The endeavour of work and study are major undertakings in adult life, providing economic and social resources, and a source of intellectual, creative and personal satisfaction. People experiencing mental health problems may face significant barriers to engagement in work and study but these barriers can be addressed and overcome. This topic demonstrates the skills needed by mental health practitioners to support consumers to engage and succeed in the study or work of their choosing.

Social relationships - working with families

All people live and thrive in a social context, and families are often the most enduring social relationships in our lives. Family relationships can be complex, but if ignored in the context of treatment of mental health problems, opportunities for support for recovery can be missed, and families may continue to experience heightened levels of stress and distress. This topic demonstrates ways of working with families that can be both brief and effective, and features activities exploring Single Session Family Consultation.

Living with chronic ill health

Enduring or chronic physical health conditions frequently have an impact on mental health and wellbeing. Mental Health practitioners need to be able to work effectively with people living with chronic ill-health or managing chronic conditions, to address co-occurring mental health problems and maximise wellbeing. This topic explores the relationship between physical and mental health and assists practitioners to apply the skills needed to assess and respond to people in the context of the condition they are living with.

Working with people who self-harm

Self-harm is a complex, widespread but often hidden problem. It is not a mental illness or disorder, but does indicate underlying distress. Self-harm (such as cutting or burning) may be an attempt to manage difficult emotions and circumstances. This topic assists mental health practitioners to effectively support individuals who self-harm by identifying the risk factors, understanding the reasons for self-harm and recognising culturally sensitive, age-appropriate therapeutic responses.

Eating disorders

Eating disorders have a significant impact on the mental and physical health of individuals and families. People with eating disorders may need specialist services and practitioners, but all mental health practitioners need to be able to identify the risk factors, early signs and presence of eating disorders, and play a role in supporting treatment and recovery. This topic assists mental health practitioners to work collaboratively, with the person, their family and other health practitioners in the early identification, treatment and recovery from a range of eating disorders.

Citizenship and recovery

The rights and responsibilities of citizenship are available to all members of our society. Many people who experience mental illness or have had contact with mental health services, find their citizenship status restricted as a result of these experiences. For many, recovery involves a full restoration of citizenship. This topic explores how mental health practitioners and services can work with consumers to recognise and address barriers, and find pathways to the full rights and responsibilities of citizenship.