RUN LEARNING AND TEACHING AWARDS 2023

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Title: Using Simulation in social work education to enhance regional equity.

Abstract: Social work faces increased demand for specialised mental health, family and domestic violence and youth crime services; particularly in regional areas where limited practitioners manage complex areas of practice. Traditionally, social work education uses field placements to expose students to professional practice. However, inequity across skills development exists due to placement availability, organisational scope, and limited client-facing opportunities. This inequity is greater in regional areas, with scarce placement opportunities often impacting exposure to client complexities. The UniSC Social Work Simulation Collective collaborated with industry to develop an innovative learning and teaching strategy using simulation to enhance equitable, authentic skills development.

Simulations exposed students to family and domestic violence, suicidal ideation, and forensic case studies. Simulations included structured debriefs, allowing students to develop and apply knowledge to practice. Since implementing simulations, students report better preparedness and confidence to enter the field and simulation-based courses have received consistently high teaching evaluations. Positive industry feedback notes improvement in direct-practice skills and confidence of social work students. The UniSC Social Work Simulation Collective has influenced social work education; achieving research publications, prestigious awards and commendations.

Our innovative approach supports regional students through industry-led, award-winning, and research-driven teaching and learning designed to address local complexities.

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