

RUN LEARNING AND TEACHING AWARDS 2023

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Title: Learning the language of rural mental health

Application Category: Regional Education

Abstract: Learning the language of rural mental health is important for paramedicine students as they are likely to attend a large number of calls related to mental health in their future practice. It is also important that paramedicine students learn how to monitor and respond to their own mental health. Learning how to have conversations about mental health can be complex, and work-integrated learning can provide a platform for this learning.

The rural health education team has introduced a student support program to support paramedicine students to engage in mental health conversations during a rural work-integrated learning activity at an agricultural field day event. The support program includes Mental Health First Aid, an online pre-placement briefing, full day orientation, and group connection. During the placement, students are supported by an interprofessional group of supervisors and can escalate concerns and seek support either by having a supervisor sit-in with them or having an immediate debrief after a conversation. On the last day of placement, learning is consolidated through in-depth debrief and reflection and concludes with a session on self-care.

Implementing the support program enabled students to engage safely in the experience and learn the language of rural mental health.