International Students Panel

ACMRO National Conference 2017

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Challenges*

'Core Themes'

1. Personal and interpersonal challenges

2. Meeting basic needs

3. Risks to psychological and physical wellbeing

* Drawn on Judy Wright's and Melinda Gollan's research, *The Psycho-Social Needs of International Students* (2008).

Core Theme 1

Personal & Interpersonal Challenges

- Experiences of loneliness, isolation, lack of connectedness and belonging

- Life/work/study balance and stress

- Communication / language difficulties

- Academic difficulties / pressures (self and others)

- Cross cultural issues (culture shock, reduced supports)

- Transition/adjustment issues to study and Australia

Core Theme 2

Meeting Basic Needs

- Financial needs / difficulties

- Accommodation and housing

- Employment issues

- Transport issues (cost / reliance on public transport)

- Navigating cultural differences – 'Aussie' culture, different foods and lifestyle

Core Theme 3

Risks to Psychological & Physical Wellbeing

- Personal safety (assault, theft)

- Experiences of discrimination on and off campus

- Childcare and parenting issues

- Exploitation (workplace, housing, sexual safety)

- Health concerns (physical, psychological)

Determined to Succeed Research*

'Resilience'

What supports students to stay and succeed at university despite challenges?

- Self-belief and determination

- Having support from family and friends

- Community and faith connections

- Accessing university support services

- Making contact with academic staff

- Maintaining a positive outlook

* ACU Counselling Service 2011 research project

Supporting International Students

What role can we play in addressing these challenges?

- Research shows there are strong links between connection and a sense of wellbeing

- Universities play a significant part in providing a sense of community where connection and belonging can occur

- Fostering positive engagement early in student career > motivates students to engage in campus & wider communities

- Community engagement opportunities which foster connection and inclusion eg. Volunteering, programs, social events