Good afternoon, everybody, or good morning depending on where you are in Australia. Today I'm on Tasmanian Aboriginal land and I want to acknowledge with deep respect the traditional owners of the land. I want to pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging and Aboriginals that continue to care for country. A continued effort to fight for Aboriginal justice and rights, paving the way for a strong future. Thank you for joining us today. I'm Darlene McLennan and I'm the manager of the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on education and training, ADCET for short. We're excited to bring you this webinar in partnership with NCSEHE. Professor Sarah O'Shea the director from the national centre will introduce the topic and speakers soon, but before we do that I want to start with a little bit of housekeeping. I think I've said this, we had a webinar last week and because we're coming from our different homes around the country, sometimes the Internet does play havoc for us and sometimes with you, but hopefully everything will go to plan. This webinar is going to be live captioned by Bradley Reporting and will be recorded. The recording will be available on ADCET in the next day or two and on the national centre's website. If you're requiring closed captions, there is a closed caption button in the tool bar that's either located on top of your Zoom page or at the bottom. You can increase the lines by clicking on the caption box, and finding an arrow, which then allows you to enlarge that caption box, but we have also made captions available by your browser. So, if you go into the chatbox you will see a link to the browser captioning. If you have any technical difficulties throughout this webinar, feel free to email us on admin@ADCET.edu.au. The presentation will run for around 45 or so minutes. We want to make it as interactive as possible and encourage you to ask questions. If you have questions for our presenters that you would like me to ask at the end of the webinar, please add that to the Q&A box. So, there's two options ‑ there's a Q&A box and the chatbox. We encourage you to use the Q&A box. That's where we'll be asking the questions from. There is also the chatbox and that's where we'd love you to actually chat with each other so you can choose all panellists and attendees in that chatbox and that gives us an opportunity to chat throughout the presentation. It might be that one of our presenters mentions something and you might know more and might want to put a link up. Really encourage you to chat. Just to confirm, if you have a question for the speakers please use the Q&A pod and for a general chat, use the chatbox. That's all from me and over to you Sarah.

>>: Thanks, Darlene. I'd also like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land in which I'm located at the moment and pay my respect to Elders past, present and emerging. Welcome to our webinar focusing on COVID‑19 and supporting our students. This week we're exploring students' wellbeing during this global pandemic. My name is Sarah O'Shea and I'm the director of the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education which is housed at Curtin University, but funded by the Commonwealth Government with a dedicated mission to improving the higher education access, participation, retention, success and completion rates for marginalised and disadvantaged people. In a matter of weeks, we've found ourselves in a new planning and working context that was unplanned and unimaginable a few short weeks ago. This webinar is exploring the key facets which is the emotional impacts on our university student populations particularly the wellbeing needs of our students and it draws on current interview data with students from rural and remote areas. So, I'm delighted to introduce two of our National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education fellows who will host this webinar Dr Nicole Crawford and Cathy Stone. Her research focuses on equity and inclusion in higher education including enabling education, mature age students, regional and remote students and students and staff mental wellbeing. She initiated social inclusion community of practice and the national association of enabling educators of Australia, special interest group on mental health. Cathy Stone is an independent consultant, researcher in the field of student retention and success. She's a conjoined Associate Professor in the University of Newcastle and an adjunct fellow with the national centre at the moment. Cathy's publications focus particularly on the experience of mature age, first in family and on‑line students. Her final report from her 2016 Equity Fellowship has provided national guidelines for improving outcomes in on‑line learnings in post‑secondary education sector. This webinar adopts a just in time approach to providing empirically supported evidence. We hope you can apply this knowledge to your specific context. In today's session Nicole will present and Cathy will assist her by reading out some of the quotes and also joining for question time at the end. As Darlene mentioned, please use the Q&A function and not the chat function for any questions you might have. So, without further ado, I'll hand over to Nicole and Cathy and we hope that you enjoy and gain something from this webinar. Thank you.

>>: Thank you, Sarah and Darlene. Hello, everyone. I'd also like to acknowledge the Elders of Tasmania and pay respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of the lands whenever you are listening from today. In last week's webinar, Cathy provided the findings and national guidelines from her 2016 Equity Fellowship on on‑line learning and from there we drilled down to three essentials for students for this current move on‑line examine those three essentials were firstly recognising the diversity of students' strengths, needs and circumstances. The second point was about having a strong teacher presence and the third was about interactive and engaging course design. If you missed that one, it was recorded and it's on the NCSEHE and ADCET websites. So today, I'm going to introduce you to my Equity Fellowship which Sarah mentioned I'm currently undertaking that, and we'll make some suggestions for supporting student mental wellbeing in the current COVID‑19 context. And these suggestions are based on the experiences of mature‑aged uni students in regional and remote Australia. It's really struck me a lot lately as I've been analysing the data and just seeing how relevant my preliminary findings are from the experiences of students in regional and remote Australia. People everywhere in cities, in other countries, for everyone making that transition to moving and studying at home and on‑line. Some of the challenges many of us might be experiencing now for the first time are probably pretty standard for people in regional and remote Australia and I think we can learn a lot from them. So, here I'll just introduce you to my project topic. You can see that the topic here, I'm interested in looking at how "we", academic and professional staff and universities in general, how we can proactively support the mental wellbeing of students and my particular target group is undergrad and mature age students from regional and remote areas in Australia. A quick note about how I define "mature age". In Australia there's no one definition so I'm going with 21 and older at the commencement of their undergrad course. You might be wondering how I define rural and remote. I'm using the remoteness structure. You can find the map on the Australian Bureau of Statistics website, but I'm using the one here that's in the final report, because I like the colours. You can see the difference between each category a bit more easily. Basically, Australia gets divided into five categories. We've got major cities which is orange. The inner regional pale blue, outer regional, the sort of teal colour. Remote is pale pink and very remote maroon. The students in my research are from inner regional, outer regional, remote and very remote. So, just for short I say "regional and remote". My topic is really the intersection of three areas that I'm very interested in. Student mental health and wellbeing, students from regional and remote Australia and mature‑aged students and that comes from my research over the last decade and significant issues underpin the topic, as well. You're probably aware of just the increasing concern that students in Australia and internationally have around student mental health and wellbeing. Regional and remote student are in the national spotlight. There's been several national reports in recent years about this equity group. But often the attention is paid to school leavers. I'm responding to calls for a deeper understanding of the diversity and complexity of equity group cohorts and so I'm looking at an aspect of regional and remote being mature‑aged students. Just a little bit more contextual information about uni student mental health. Momentum is really gaining in Australia regarding high‑level acknowledgement of health and wellbeing in university settings, with recent reports I've listed here Baik et al, Orygen, Higher Education Standards Panel and international blueprints, approaches and frameworks such as the Okanagan, holistic, institution‑wide, settings approaches and the Higher Education Standards Panel recommendation 8 has prompted action. Universities Australia have commissioned Orygen to develop a framework for unis and that's going on right now. There's a real shift from placing the responsibility onto individual students and on university counselling units for everything related to student wellbeing and that shift is moving to taking more of a holistic whole of institution point of view and that's the approach I'm taking. I'm interested in all students in the target group whether they have a mental health condition or not. I'm interested in what we can all do, so I'm viewing student mental wellbeing as a whole of institution responsibility. Just a little definition here, but it's difficult to pin‑down terms like mental health and wellbeing, because they have different roots in philosophy and they get used differently in different disciplines and contexts. So, for the purposes of the presentation I'm understanding mental wellbeing as being able to manage the normal stresses of uni and life so you can be productive and fulfilled and how might you be able to do that? Having resources to meet your challenges and then there's human needs to be met. These four dot points come from a combination of model of wellbeing such as self‑determination theory and the four dot points are around having agency, having belonging, connections, possibility for growth and having a purpose. I could talk for a long time about defining these terms and I'll go into that in a lot more detail in my report, which you can check out later on in the year. What have I done? Just a quick look at the data collection. I received data from the Australian Department of Education and that's enabled me to get a national profile of my target group. I developed a student survey administered in the second half of last year and in February this year, so my colleague Sheridan, Gemma, Ellen and I conducted the 51 in‑depth interviews. For the purposes of today, I'm going to share a few snippets from the survey that relate to students who are on‑line and then come up with some suggestions. I'll just mention, too, that of the 53% of the survey respondents study fully on‑line. Now, here's one statement in the survey, I have at least one person staff or student who I can turn to for support. 31.1% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with that. You might not think it's not the majority, but that's still pretty concerning and the statistician has done a lot of work to help with this and she's drilled down deeper and run tests to see who's saying this. If you look at on campus versus on‑line, on‑line students are more likely to disagree or strongly disagree with this statement. The statement is I have a supportive peer group face‑to‑face or on‑line at university. 46.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed and again drilling down deeper it was the on‑line students more likely to disagree or strongly disagree. We asked the question; do you consider deferring or withdrawing from this course? They did the survey last year and 47.7% of the respondents said yes and then when we drilled down looking at some demographic characteristics and some other statements to see who was saying "yes" it was more likely the on‑line students said yes. Students who found the teaching environment stressful. Students who felt included were more likely to not consider withdrawing and students who agreed they had social connections were less likely to consider withdrawing. We asked why they said yes, and these are the top five reasons. Stress, feeling overwhelmed by my university study load, mental health difficulties, couldn't fit study in with my other commitments, and financial difficulties. We asked an open‑ended question, what can unis do better to support the mental wellbeing of mature‑aged students from regional and remote Australia? Just to give you an indication of the response we got 50A4 pages in 8‑point font in response. We did a detailed analysis and the responses were mostly about teaching practice, the learning and learning environment, the content, course delivery, course assessment ‑ basically all about teaching and learning. Students' experiences vary across the country between universities, within universities and even within courses. The 51 interviews really showed how empowering and transformational the actual learning can be, but at the same time how stressful and disempowering aspects, some of the practical aspects can be. So, what I've done is distil the preliminary findings down to the most relevant for the purpose of this webinar, for the purpose of our current COVID‑19 environment and we have these seven areas. Firstly, knowing students' needs. Secondly, being aware of practical challenges. Thirdly, the importance of facilitating student connections and providing opportunities for questions and answers. The fifth point there, the importance of checking in with students. The sixth, promoting your university's student services and the last point is really a reminder and something you might not be aware of, just the massive impact you have and often it's the really small actions that really count. What we're going to do is elaborate on these seven points. As Sarah said Cathy's going to read the quotations and then I'm going to spend a bit of time unpacking the quotes and then at the end Cathy will do some summing up. First of all, though, I just wanted to return to this slide I showed earlier. It's worth having that in your mind what's needed for mental wellbeing as we unpack the quotations. Here we have the first quote from a student who lives in a rural area who works night shifts. She has small children and she's studying fully on‑line. So, this student would really have loved to have after‑hour access to a quiet place away from home. Due to where she's located she didn't have that and right now students in regional and remote Australia who might have had alternatives if they lived an hour from a regional uni campus they might have visited that regularly or visited a local library or a regional university centre where they would then be able to use high‑speed Internet and computers et cetera. Right now, with us physically distancing they won't have those options. Similarly, students in Metro areas who might usually rely on free and fast Internet and computer on uni campuses probably won't have that access right now. I really like this quotation, because I think right now, this student's reality is suddenly the reality for a lot of people studying and working at home. It's a really good insight into students' lives. They may be juggling parenting and work with uni studies and in the current context they could also be trying to home school their kids. Also, like all of us, managing with this extra layer of stress and anxiety in these uncertain times. So, the point here is this first one is knowing students' needs and understanding their diverse circumstances. The tip here is to take an inclusive approach to everything that you do, to your course content, delivery, the tools you use on your learning management system and to really think about who is it including? Who might I be excluding? For example, if you offer synchronous sessions, not all students will be available at that scheduled time or maybe their technology will mean it just doesn't work for them. So, a solution is to ensure that you provide material asynchronously, as well. It's really important to look through an equity lens and think about the diverse needs of students within your course and to endeavour to accommodate all students. I've been thinking about a student in my class a couple of years ago with autism who attended lectures and tutees face‑to‑face. I'm wondering what the transition is like for him right now. I wonder if it's like for him in Zoom break‑out rooms, if that's anxiety‑provoking. Maybe it is, maybe it isn't, I don't know. But I wonder, will he have choices? If that is anxiety‑provoking will he have options to respond to questions in a discussion forum that might be less intimidating or less stressful. I've been thinking a bit about the use of videos. We've got our use of videos on right now, but that could be stressful for some students having their peers and teaching staff peering into their personal spaces. It's little things like that, maybe we don't need to have videos on if your students don't want to. Our point is something called teaching for diversity and I've actually got a reference to a nice short piece, a nice introduction to universal guide for learning and it's in the references at the end. I want to mention really that UD L principles are really important, so having multiple ways of presenting the same material, multiple ways of engaging the students and multiple ways that students can demonstrate their learning. Onto the second quote here:

While it's a frequent experience for students in regional and remote Australia to have inconsistent and unreliable Internet access this could increasingly be the case for student and staff in the city, as well with more band width being used, with more people working from home, loads more video conferencing going on. I also want to mention, we can't assume that all students can afford high‑speed Internet and also, their usual work‑around like using the uni campus or a local library for free Wii‑Fii probably isn't an option now. This takes us to our second point which is be aware of practical challenges such as band width. The tip is to keep your technology simple and do ensure that the lecture recordings and other materials can be downloaded, because that's really going to give students the opportunity to download their weekly course content or assignment readings when they can. It might be that their Internet doesn't work in the afternoons, maybe at 11 o'clock at night is when their Internet is better. It's just giving them the flexibility to be able to download it when they can or when they're near free Wii‑Fii and then they have the flexibility to listen or read or watch at a time that suits them. Here we have a couple more comments:

Students are really screaming out, I think, for staff to help them connect with each other. It came up a lot in the open‑ended questions in the survey question. It takes a fair bit of time as it is for on‑campus students to find like‑minded peers and it's more difficult for on‑line students. I also know it's tricky to facilitate as staff, but I really do encourage you to endeavour to create opportunities for those kind of corridor‑type conversations that take place face‑to‑face, it's worth thinking, how might I enable facilitate that to happen in the on‑line context? And why do I think this? Students learn such a lot from each other. They learn a lot about the academic culture, they learn a lot about the day‑to‑day requirements of their course. A student might remind them of a deadline or help them with referencing and they also provide each other with a lot of emotional support. This leads us to our third point, which is facilitate student connections. How might you do that? You could do that, say, synchronously in a video conference, or via the discussion board, so asynchronously. You could take a few minutes at the beginning or end of synchronous sessions for lighter more informal communication. You could ask questions on the discussion boards that encourage students to share something, an interest or a hobby about them. You could take the lead so students enjoy their teacher's human side. And I also just wanted to mention, because it came up a fair bit in the open‑ended question as well, is the use of Facebook. Students often use it within their group so it's got nothing to do with their teaching staff, but they might initiate a closed Facebook group for their particular unit for the semester and they find that a way of supporting each other, just realising they're in it together, they're not the only person feeling the way they're feeling et cetera. Here we have another quote:

Students studying on‑line really want opportunities to ask questions and to get timely answers. They really miss out on hearing questions and answers that occur in the face‑to‑face environment when sometimes you're just setting up your PowerPoint or writing on the whiteboard or walking down a corridor and a student asks a quick question about the assessment task and in 30 seconds you can provide an answer. They haven't needed to wait. They've got it then and there and off they go and they can go about their assessment task. I really get the sense that on‑line students really seek more of this. If they don't understand their assessment task, that's really stressful and it's even more so if the advice isn't readily received, if they don't get it easily. That leads us to this point 4 about providing opportunities for questions and answers. You could dedicate a regular video conference meeting for questions and answers about upcoming assessment tasks. You could pop your student consultation times into an on‑line meeting. Whatever the caseload whatever you use, let's say discussion boards, it's important to maintain that through the semester. Something I mentioned in last week's webinar is it can feel demoralising when you're posting information on the discussion board and you don't get heaps of responses, but you don't need to. That doesn't mean students aren't reading your comments and benefiting from them. Just another point is to make sure your expectations of students and staff are very clear around response times for emails and discussion posts so that students aren't waiting all day on a Wednesday to get an answer if you're not going to post until a Thursday. Here we have a suggestion from a student:

Studying on‑line, fully on‑line, can be quite isolating. Some students are really proactive in asking for questions, but others aren't. So, having lecturers or tutors check in with students really contributes to students feeling they're visible, connected, they're valued and that they belong in their course or in their uni. The suggestion here is our fifth point and that is to check in with students. Be approachable and proactive in supporting students. I suggest checking in semi‑regularly in a personalised way via email. I've got two suggestions here for how you might do that and it will depend on your staff to student ratio, for sure. It was interesting how often in the open‑ended question this theme of checking in came up and also students mention using the phone, saying how beneficial it would be if someone actually called them. I know that might sound really daunting if you've got lots of students, but I just thought I'd share an experience I've had. A few years ago, teaching a writing unit, students are face‑to‑face and some were on‑line and I really felt the on‑line students were missing out on just particularly those little corridor conversations where someone can quickly get an answer about their assignment. So, I decided as we were approaching an assessment task due date that I would make myself available to call students. I sent an email to the on‑line students saying okay Thursday I'm free between 2 and 4 if you'd like to check in about your assignment, I can call you. I didn't get a single answer to that email. Right, I thought the next week I'm just going to do it. I send an email saying, okay I'm going to call you, if you'd like to ask questions about your assignment it will happen at this time. I had student phone numbers and called them. Every single student had questions. As soon as I'd ask, what are you arguing in your essay and what reasons you've got behind that? Every student did actually have lots of questions. They were really grateful that someone had phoned them and grateful for that time to talk through their ideas. I left a message and very soon I was getting these returned calls. I felt that it was really beneficial for the students and for me, too. I had a real sense of where they needed more assistance. Alternatively, another idea is a short 2‑minute video if you've got hundreds of students and you know lots of students are asking similar questions you could cover that in a couple of minutes and that's another way to check in. A couple of quotes about support services:

So, look, I'm guessing most people listening all work in educational institutions of some sort. We know that, say, at unis we all have student support services and there's loads of information about the different services on our institution's websites, but students are often unaware of them and even more so when they're studying on‑line. They might have heard about them at orientation, but if that's a while ago and if it wasn't of major relevance to them then and there, plus there's so much information, they might have forgotten about it. The point here is to promote your university's student services such as counselling, disability services, academic learning support and all sorts of student life programs that your uni offers. Most of those services will be going on‑line right now, too. It's sort of not enough to say it once at the beginning. It might be something that you can send reminders a few times in the semester and in different ways. It might be that one time you mention something in an email, or on a discussion board on your learning management system, or even at the beginning or the end of the class. I know right now lots of university's student services are quickly providing information on their websites about coping with COVID‑19. I had a look the other day at my uni's website and found info there. Looked at University of Newcastle, they've got great stuff there and other unis have as well. If your uni is probably doing that and if they haven't yet, you could always look elsewhere. It seems to be publicly available. Onto our next quote:

So, this point I think is really important, because it's something that struck us, my colleagues and I who did the interviews and each time we had a meeting to discuss the data analysis, it really struck us the positive impact of really small actions such as replying to a student's email or a discussion post. It's far greater than you realise. Numerous interviewees recounted these small actions that really made them feel that their teacher knew who they were and that they cared. For many students studying on‑line, their teacher is their connection to their course and their university. I don't think students are expecting us to bend over backwards. They really acknowledge that teachers are overworked, but they're really grateful for these small actions. They really mean a lot and they don't forget them. This is a reminder to you that your impact is enormous and it's often just the small, little kind human things that make a really big difference. So, the seven points we've gone through, they really come from distilling the themes from the students. The open‑ended questions in the survey and the interviews of relevance to our current move on‑line. I just wanted to add a few extra thoughts, because I couldn't help myself, and that is really just to say that many students might have got themselves into a routine at the beginning of semester with their face‑to‑face classes, fitting in their work shifts, their day care, managing everything else in life. This move on‑line will be a massive upheaval for them as it is probably for you. In my humble opinion, I don't think you can expect to be charging on as per normal and you might want to reassess your expectations of you and your students. I think pastoral care and support roles will be even more important right now and you might think, how on earth can I take that on, too? Some of the students we've covered like checking in, having opportunities for questions and answers will enable that to happen. That will be able to happen in those times. You might think about how you're feeling, are you finding it hard to focus? If you are, your students could be too. Just checking in about things like that, they'll probably find comfort in hearing that their peers and their teachers are feeling the same and I also think it might be a time when going back to basics will be helpful. Going back to basics with things like time management and just taking one little step of time, those reminders might be really helpful for students at this time. I can't talk about student mental wellbeing without mentioning staff. When you have students who are stressed out or anxious, it can really impact on you, too. There can be quite an emotional load to carry and this is in the best of times. In the current circumstances I would think this is going to be compounded. You might think about things you can do to support each other and I've got a few points there that colleagues in Enabling Education have found helpful. We're in a special interest group meeting for about five years. We check in for a couple of hours every month, share what we do, share some challenges, some solutions, ideas and it's become a really nice supportive community of practice in which we get to debrief and really share a bit about emotional load. Here are a few areas you could explore further. I've got the references at the end. What I'll do now is hand over to Cathy to sum up and then there'll be some time for questions.

>>: Okay, great, thank you Nicole and I think it's just important to stress that this information, this data, the findings from the data that Nicole's been going through, this has come from as she said at the start just a huge number of student surveys. She's had really massive numbers in this project, so this really is evidence‑based and in a way, it probably bears out what a lot of you know already, but it's kind of nice to know what you might be doing or thinking is backed up by this research. I guess to sum up is, do what you can, but first and foremost you have to look after yourselves and each other, because these are very challenging times as Nicole has said and it's really important people don't expect too much of each other. I liked Nicole's point about sharing that with the students, saying, " This is really stressful for me guys, so goodness knows what it's like for you." Students respond to that so well, that human approach. Try not to be too clever tech logically given a lot of people might be struggling with this. Be clear, as consistent as you can and flexibility is really important at this time. Not only are students having to make this change to on‑line, if they're not familiar with it, they've also got kids home from school and all those sorts of things. It's really important not to forget not to draw on the support of others in the community. Ed Tech people are helpful with on‑line. The counselling staff, the disability advisers, the academic learning advisers and so on. They're there to help and support not just the students, but the academic staff as well in all sorts of ways and to I guess take a collaborative approach to supporting students and certainly in this moment we can learn a lot from the experiences of students who come under those equity categories such as students in regional and remote Australia, because these sorts of situations and difficulties can be exacerbated for students who are already at some level of disadvantage. So, hearing from these students is really important at this time, because we get more of a handle on what it's like for students who have a degree of disadvantage and in this case, in Nicole's research it's a geographic disadvantage. If we think about the webinar today and last week ‑ if any of you were here at last week's as well or had the opportunity to listen to it ‑ I think between us Nicole and I have really tried to get across these three key messages and the first one which we've both talked about, probably ad infinitum is about really trying to get to know your students, understanding that they are diverse. There are challenges, but they also have strengths, so it's important to try to find out who's in the class, what's the mix of age, circumstances, the various circumstances they're living under, what might be the key issues for them. Do they have family? Are they working? Have they got Internet problems? You're not going to find out all those things, but by giving them the opportunity to introduce themselves and you introduce yourself and the opportunity for Q&As and any sort of conversations you can have, you'll get to know more about them, which leads onto the second key message which is about facilitating those connections and keeping up that communication as much as you can. Both Nicole and I both today and last week have talked about many different ways of doing that and I've just been kind of watching some of the chats as they come up and there are a lot of great ideas out there, as well, people are giving each other. I can see lots of really good ideas too about how to connect with students. It's really important to have that teacher to student connection, encouraging students to connect with you and they will only do that if you're connecting with them and ways of connecting them with each other within the classroom situation, encouraging the Facebook sites, all those sorts of things. Giving feedback, responding, setting clear guidelines about when you'll respond and what you expect of them and the checking in is great if you can manage to do that. The number of students who've said to me if they've had a phone call, they're just bowled over by it, and it doesn't have to just be by the teacher. You can team up with someone in student support about, I'd really like to try to check in with these students to see how they're all going. Can we work together on this? So, it can be a coordinated approach so it doesn't all fall on you. And the third one is leading into that, is about your university support services. Promote them to students, but make use of them yourself. I worked in university support services for many years and we can all get caught up in our own little bubble, our own little work areas and it's just so important for support staff, professional staff in support services to be working with academics and vice versa, because we have a huge amount to learn from each other and by working together we can not only support each other better, but provide much better support to the students. So, really you know, make the professional services your friends, because together a lot more can be achieved and promoting them to the students at every opportunity is a really important way to go, as well. They're the sort of three key messages, really, weren't they Nicole? Have we run out of slides now?

>>: Yes.

>>: So now we're over to questions ‑ is that right?

>>: Yes, that's brilliant. Thanks, Cathy, for that. I did drop out which was a panic. Every webinar lately I drop out for 5‑10 minutes just to make sure that my heart and blood pressure are all okay. We've had a couple of great questions. If people have questions you can put them into the Q&A question pod and also some fantastic chat between each other. So, well done. I love people that can do two things at once. I also forgot to mention that the National Centre and ADCET have been tweeting throughout this webinar, so you can actually check out our tweets and please like and reshare, which will be fantastic. One of the questions we got which was how can professional staff, like the staff that may be in the care roles within the universities and TAFEs, how are they able to support academics and teachers to achieve that care‑based approach when they're already overstretched? Have you got any recommendations to help academics and teachers, how we as support staff within the sector can help?

>>: Okay, so I'm looking at the question now. I'm wondering if the person's referring to academics being overstretched or professional staff being overstretched? I suspect you're all overstretched.

>>: Probably a good call there, Cathy!

>>: Speaking from the perspective of having been a member of professional staff for many, many years in the past, in my experience when I was working with academics on particularly projects, I always felt that I was achieving much more than I would have on my own. So while everybody might be feeling overstretched, what's the saying, a problem shared is a problem halved and it's maybe not quite halved, but it is amazing how much more you can do if you're working together and I think it's just beginning to strike up those conversations and saying, "Okay, is there a way we can work together on these issues?" Together, I think it's possible to work out some really nice pieces of work that makes... I suppose it just gives that support to each staff member, but covers a lot more students and a lot more issues. I don't know if you've got anything to add to that Nicole?

>>: Over the years when we've had ‑ basically I'd teach, normally I would be teaching being a lecturer or tutor and when we'd have our staff meetings to talk about our students' progress we'd invite counselling staff to attend those meetings and obviously they're not going to be able to do that across all the universities, but maybe once a semester they might be able to go to a few and we found that incredibly useful. It was this 2‑way learning that went on. We would learn more about how students might behave depending on a particular situation they were in and the counsellors would learn more about it from our perspective, expectations of what it is to be in an on‑line classroom or a face‑to‑face classroom. So, I found that to be very useful, yes.

>>: Another question was ‑ and you may not be able to answer and a couple of people have had suggestions in the Q&A ‑ but around any on‑line training. Is there any Mooks out there at the moment that can support staff in understanding teaching and support in the on‑line environment that you know of Cathy or Nicole?

>>: I do know of one, I can send the link to you. There's a great Mook, it's actually not just on‑line teaching it's a Mook on generally teaching, but there's a component of it that deals with on‑line. So, I'll send that link through Darlene and then you could send it out.

>>: That's fine. What we usually do also if we get too many questions to be answered as a part of this webinar, we send the questions and our brilliant panellists have agreed to answer those questions where they can and we put them on our website along with the recording. We get to those answers. You raised ‑

>>: Deakin Uni have a Mook. I haven't done it, but that's another one.

>>: Someone's just put one up.

>>: UNSW.

>>: You talked about trying to engage learners through Facebook and open Q&As, people are just asking, is there any other ways that you looked at trying to get student engagement? Any other suggestions that you may have?

>>: All the sorts of ways I suppose that Nicole has covered and that we talked about last week, as well. There's a multitude of ways in terms of engaging students. I'll send a link through as well Darlene about a guide to asynchronous discussion groups which is really good by the FO LD Group, if people look that up. And there's a terrific guide put together on how to generate student interaction really well through an asynchronous discussion format. That's one I can think of off the top of my head if people want to look that up, but I'll send through the link on that, as well.

>>: Brilliant. Now there was a question with regard to an international student needing to see a psychiatrist, but it looks like there is actually ‑ and it may be outside of the scope of your knowledge ‑ but there has been great answers in the Q&A pod now, which is fantastic. I think that's probably answered that person's question. It's great to have this. Because I dropped out, I've lost some of the questions. If I haven't asked your question, please put it back in the Q&A. I did lose some when I had to reboot.

>>: I saw one, how do we convince our managers that on‑line learning and proper on‑line admin requires time and our workload should not just be measured just for scheduled classes and marking. If you were at the webinar last week or can access the guidelines that came out of my research to improve outcomes in on‑line learning, it's on the NCSEHE website. I would print those out and take them and wave them under the nose of your managers, because this is evidence‑based research, which shows that it really does have to be done properly and enough time and resource does have to be put into it and if you can show that there is clear evidence around this now, that the time does need to be dedicated to it, that it takes more time to teach on‑line than a face‑to‑face class is what most people who teach on‑line will tell us. I think that some joint action's required by you and your colleagues to say this is the evidence and this is what we need to have a discussion about and that's the best I can suggest, unless Nicole's got other ideas?

>>: No, I agree with you Cathy.

>>: Alright, thank you for that. A question here, it's not necessarily the audience of academics within students, but it was asking if you could give advice to high school teachers moving on‑line, what would it be? Times we have high school students and it's certainly something that high school teachers and they probably haven't had as much experience of the on‑line environment as others have.

>>: Ideas for high school teachers?

>>: Yes, moving on‑line.

>>: I imagine the interaction needs are just as strong if not stronger and keeping that connection with the students going. I'm really just talking off the top of my head here, because I haven't done research on this. My daughter is a high school teacher teaching on‑line at the moment and she says allowing the kids time to talk to each other on a Zoom call. Sometimes she sits and listen and gives them time to chat about all sorts of stuff that may not be related to the course. That sounds like a good idea, because they must miss that class interaction. I hope on this chat line, there may be other people who've got better informed answers than I have. I guess from my experience with university students that interaction with teacher and other students is similarly important.

>>: I think you could apply ‑ I haven't done research into high school children either ‑ but I think you could apply what you're saying. I've noticed from talking to my friends with teenage kids who have gone on‑line in the last couple of weeks and it seems like they're on‑line from 9 until 1 or 9 until 3 without much of a break. Everything being synchronous that might work with some students, but others really need a bit of a break, or need to work away on their tasks without being in the video. That could be absolutely exhausting. But that's not based on anything except for my personal opinion.

>>: We haven't got a lot of time. Maybe one last question which is a great question around a lot of students are actually saying they're overwhelmed at this stage, particularly in on‑line classing. How can we best respond here? I wonder if there's any information overload or tipping point people are getting to? Any advice?

>>: I'm looking at a similar question, too which is about should we tell students that completing a course in their circumstances will be close to impossible? It's hard at this stage if we're past the census date. I don't know if that's the case for all universities, though. I know a lot of universities extended the census date so there may still be an opportunity to have conversations with students about whether or not they want to pull out at the moment. I think that rather than telling them what to do, people need to be able to listen to what they actually want to do and to let them know that it's normal as Nicole was saying to feel overwhelmed, that they will feel overwhelmed that you're all feeling overwhelmed, we're all feeling overwhelmed so this is normal. Maybe there's a way of reducing it to the basics. They just need to be able to do enough to get through and not to expect they're going to get the distinctions and the high distinctions and to give them a bit more leeway and flexibility around things, it would be what I would suggest. Nicole, any thoughts?

>>: Sorry, I might just wrap it up, because we are running out of time.

>>: Okay.

>>: But we'll go through the questions and if we can add any further information to those questions, we will put them onto the website. Just a quick plug is next week we do on the 16th of April ADCET has another webinar which is around students on the autism spectrum, which is the transition to higher education for autistic students on the 16th. You'll be able to see that on our website. The National Centre who's about to develop a page on their website around COVID‑19. ADCET has also got a page where we've got relevant information that hopefully can support the disability staff within the sector. So, please go and check that out. Sorry I had to cut the two speakers off, because we were getting to the end, but now I'd like to hand back over to Sarah to finish off the session.

>>: Thanks Darlene. Thank you to Cathy and Nicole for a really interesting presentation. Just some really great snippets and key points there of what you can do to assist your students during this difficult time. If you'd like to hear more about their work or the research of all our equity fellows, please subscribe to the National Centre newsletter or take the time to browse our website, which contains a wide variety of open access materials that are available to everyone across the sector. As Darlene mentioned, we will have the webinar recording up on the website within a matter of days, as well. Thank you, Nicole and Cathy, and thank you ADCET again for sponsoring us and allowing us to use your webinar platform. Bye.

>>: Bye.

>>: Bye.

>>: Goodbye, everyone.