Mountain Climbing:

A Resource for Tertiary Graduates with Lived Experience of Mental Illness Making the Transition to Employment

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"The best way to appreciate your job is to imagine yourself without one."

- Oscar Wilde

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Overview

- Background of the development of the resource

- The resource – snap shot

- Some key points
    Disclosure
    Relaxation

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Background

People with lived experience of mental illness experience higher levels of unemployment.

Liaison with Tertiary Disability advisers and the Disability Employment Agencies indicated that this disability type constitutes a significant proportion of their student/client base.

There is also anecdotal evidence that they face some of their greatest challenges when working with this student/client group.

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The project objectives were

•To develop and disseminate a resource that will better enable people with a mental illness make a successful transition from tertiary education employment

•Provide individuals who support people with a mental illness access examples of good practice and strategies for working with this client group

•Identify and collate available material that will assist graduated with a mental illness make the transition from tertiary education to employment, and provide links to relevant information from other resources

•Describe good coping strategies, indicators of stress, benefits of having an individual health plan, employment options, and how to explore and work from the perspective of individuals strengths

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Keys to its success

1. Appointment of a great Project officer who not only had the skills and capacity to undergo the research and collating the resource in a proficient and engaging manner, but also was able to use his own lived experience of mental illness to reflect on the material. was invaluable and a major key to the success of the project.

2. Formation of an Advisory/steering committee at the start of the project that was representative of key stakeholders from the employment, tertiary and mental health sectors

3. Keith Mahar's support and guidance

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Contents

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The resource is online at www.ndcotas.com.au

Mountain Climbing A resource for tertiary graduates with lived experience of mental illness making the transition to employment

Mental Health @ Work

Disclosure-Discussion

What are some of the potential risks of disclosing one's mental health issues in the workplace?

What are some of the potential benefits of disclosing one's mental health issues in the workplace

Disclosure: Pros & Cons

PROS

• You don't have to pretend to be well all the time.

• Your employer can make workplace modifications and reasonable adjustments to your workload.

• You further the cause of equal rights and show how 'well' people with a mental health condition can be. It's not your fault that you have a mental illness.

• You might be able to access support from your workplace counselling or support services.

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Disclosure: Pros & Cons

Cons

• You could be discriminated against.

• You could be stigmatised and subjected to too much focus on your behaviour.

• Workmates could be constantly 'looking out' for signs of illness and respond negatively to any out of character behaviour.

• You might feel patronised and never feel that you are working on a 'level playing field' with everyone else.

[Keith Mahar](#)

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Managing stress

What are some strategies and /or techniques that might be useful for managing stress in workplace?

What have you tried that was not effective or helpful?

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