



Creating Pathways - A Mental Health Allied Health Graduate Program

Addressing persistent recruitment and retention challenges

Authors: Kendra Strong, Chief Allied Health Advisor, Tasmanian Department of Health; Adjunct Associate Professor, College of Health and Medicine, University of Tasmania. David O'Halloran, Senior Policy and Project Consultant, Tasmanian Department of Health; Adjunct, School of Primary and Allied Health Care, Monash University. Simon Watt, Deputy Chief Allied Health Advisor, Tasmanian Department of Health.



01 THE CHALLENGE

Tasmania's Statewide Mental Health Service (SMHS) faced persistent difficulties recruiting and retaining allied health professionals—especially graduates—due to limited entry-level roles and career pathways.



03 CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK

A comprehensive graduate Capability Framework was developed through stakeholder consultation and review of existing standards. A practical self-assessment tool was introduced to help graduates reflect on their development and guide supervision and self-directed learning.



05 PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

A structured peer support program was launched that included session guides and informal group evaluations to support reflective practice. Emphasising professional focus, shared leadership and engagement with lived experience fostered connection and resilience among graduates.



07 OUTCOMES

Graduates now have clear entry points and development pathways for Allied Health careers in mental health settings. Supervisors are supported with practical tools to guide their roles effectively. Early feedback on the program has been positive, and a formal evaluation is planned. The program has successfully transitioned to business as usual, with ongoing oversight to ensure continued effectiveness.



02 THE SOLUTION



A six-month collaboration in 2024 between the Department of Health and SMHS leveraged graduate scholarships to deliver a structured Graduate Program, aimed at providing wrap around support for new graduates and resources to support supervisors.

04 STRUCTURED SUPERVISION



A detailed Supervision Guide was created, outlining staged development, supervision practices, educational resources, and early warning signs for supervisors.

06 RESOURCE HUB



A dedicated SharePoint site facilitated collaboration throughout the project and was transitioned into a long-term resource hub that contained all elements of the graduate program.

For More Information
(Including Copies of Resources)



allied.health@health.tas.gov.au

