

Mental Health Research Report: June 2014

Occupational Therapy

Dr. Justin Scanlan – Senior Occupational Therapist, Area Mental Health

1. Research:

Research conducted by occupational therapists in mental health focuses on supporting optimal functioning and independence in individuals living with a mental illness or other emotional distress.

2. Key Achievements, 2013 - 2014

Research led by occupational therapist in the Sydney Local Health District mental health service is leading the way in exploring the effects of sensory rooms and other sensory approaches in supporting the integration of trauma-informed approaches to practice. Additionally research conducted by occupational therapists into the effectiveness of “practical food groups” in the eating disorders day program is leading the way in establishment of an evidence base for occupational therapy practice in this specialty area.

Current projects include: (i) using sensory modulation techniques in a variety of settings to support consumers to manage distress more effectively; (ii) exploration of the cultural appropriateness and safety of occupational therapy assessment for consumers from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds; (iii) the association between functional cognition and functional independence in individuals living with a mental illness; (iv) outcomes of occupational therapy interventions provided in a day program for individuals recovering from an eating disorder; (v) clinical utility of a group participation rating scale in inpatient psychiatric units; and (vi) developing a practice foundation for occupational therapy in “hyper-acute” inpatient settings.

Dr Justin Scanlan is also employed part-time at the University of Sydney and is engaged in a range of collaborations with University of Sydney researchers exploring the barriers, facilitators and effects of employment for individuals with mental illness and other disabilities. He is a member of the Sydney Health and Work Research Network and the Centre for Disability Research and Policy.

Dr Scanlan is also leading a current project exploring the educational priorities for occupational therapy students to prepare for contemporary mental health practice. This project is coordinated through the Australian and New Zealand Occupational Therapy Mental Health Academics network and draws together occupational therapy academics and clinicians from across Australia and New Zealand.

3. Higher Degree Students

Theresa Novak – *Effects of a salutogenic, occupationally focused resiliency and mental well-being (The Boomerang Effect) program in school students and teachers* – Master of Applied Science (Research), University of Sydney

Catherine Pace – *Improving occupational therapy assessment practices for consumers from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds* – Doctor of Philosophy, Australian Catholic University

4. Publications and Presentations, 2013 - 2014

Peer reviewed papers

Scanlan, J.N. & Still, M. (2013). Functional profile of mental health consumers assessed by occupational therapists: Level of independence and associations with functional cognition. *Psychiatry Research*, 208, 29-32. doi: 10.1016/j.psychres.2013.02.032

Scanlan, J.N. & Still, M. (2013). Job satisfaction, burnout and turnover intention in occupational therapists working in mental health. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*. 60, 310-318. doi: 10.1111/1440-1630.12067

Scanlan, J.N., Meredith, P., & Poulsen, A.A. (2013). Enhancing retention of occupational therapists working in mental health: Relationships between wellbeing at work and turnover intention. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 60, 395-403. doi: 10.1111/1440-1630.12074

Novak, T., Scanlan, J.N., McCaul, D., MacDonald, N., & Clark, T. (2012). A pilot study of a sensory room in an inpatient psychiatric unit. *Australasian Psychiatry*, 20, 401-406.. doi: 10.1177/1039856212459585

Conference presentations

Novak, T., Scanlan, J. N., McCaul, D., MacDonald, N., & Clarke, T.
Implementation of a sensory room in an acute mental health unit.
Occupational Therapy Australia 25th National Conference, 24 – 26 July 2013.

Scanlan, J. N. & Still, M. *Functional profile of mental health consumers assessed by occupational therapists. Level of independence and relationship to functional cognition. The importance of functional cognition in supporting functional independence.* Occupational Therapy Australia 25th National Conference, 24 – 26 July 2013.

Scanlan, J. N. & Still, M. *Job demands and burnout for occupational therapists in mental health.* Occupational Therapy Australia 25th National Conference, 24 – 26 July 2013.

Chang, L., Still, M., Yu, L., & Yule, E. *The Use of the Activity and Participation Questionnaire in the Sydney Local Health District.* Occupational Therapy in Mental Health Forum, 13 September 2013.

Evatt, M. & Priede, H. *Researching the Validity of Occupational Therapy in the Hyper Acute Mental Health Setting.* Occupational Therapy in Mental Health Forum, 13 September 2013.

Novak, T., Scanlan, J. N., McCaul, D., MacDonald, N., & Clarke, T.
Implementation of a sensory room in an acute mental health unit.
Occupational Therapy in Mental Health Forum, 13 September 2013.

Scanlan, J. N. & Still, M. *The importance of functional cognition in supporting functional independence.* Occupational Therapy in Mental Health Forum, 13 September 2013.

5.Contact Details

Dr Justin Scanlan, Professional Senior – Occupational Therapy
Level1 Administration, Concord Centre for Mental Health, Hospital Road,
Concord, 2139
Ph: 02 9767 8985
Email: justin.scanlan@sswahs.nsw.gov.au