

FLINDERS UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Department of  
Disability Studies

For an audio recording of this paper  
go to  
<http://som.flinders.edu.au/FUSA/disabstud/>

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**University Training and Disability Support Workers – South Australia and Beyond**

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**View from the Normanville Surf Club**



Nothing to do with the presentation!!

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**Session Overview**

- Background  
People with disabilities need and deserve a skilled and professional workforce
- This session explores some of the changes to requirements being placed on Disability Professionals and advocates for an upskilling of the disability workforce
- Also puts in a plug for our courses 😊 and outlines our 4 year fully external degree – The BDCR – Bachelor of Disability and Community Rehabilitation and
- The recognition of prior learning for DSWs holding Certificate 4 in Disability Work

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**State of Play**

- Recent explorations of workforce development
- Differences between states
- The role of professional associations DPV, dArpa, DP Tas, DP Qld, DP NSW
- And the proposed DPA, **Disability Professionals Australasia**

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**Let's Not Get Confused**



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### What's with all the ACRONYMS!

- Different Groups take different roles
- National Disability Services (**NDS**) advocates by lobbying for improvements in government funding and exploring different service models and workforce improvements
- National Council on ID (**NCID**) represents the global interests of people with intellectual disabilities and advocates for people in a range of ways around a range of issues
- **ASDIO** is a professional interest group which focuses on developing best evidence based practice in working with people with ID
- **DPA** will be a group that improves support to people with a range of disabilities by fostering a forum for the professional development of disability professionals working at a range of levels in the disability "industry"
- All of these (**and many other**) groups have overlapping goals and can work together to pursue a more equitable place for people with disabilities in our community.

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### The Bachelor of Disability & Community Rehabilitation - BDCR

- A 4 year degree that focusses on learning about a range of disabilities and the support implications. It teaches
  - A sound values base and adherence with the dArpa code of ethics  
<http://darpa.asn.au/>
  - Specific developmental programming, counselling, case management, communication, leisure development, employment support, and many other **SKILLS**

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### A DVD about the course I will point out some minor corrections

- The video can be viewed at  
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### Topics

- Human Diversity
- Interpersonal and Group Communication
- Life Span Development
- Perspectives in Disability Studies
- Neurological Rehabilitation
- Health Issues & Disability
- Family Professional Partnerships
- Communication & Language
- Principles of Learning & Instruction 1, 2, & 3
- Counselling
- Case Management
- Employment & Disability
- Ethical & Legal Issues
- Practicum A, B, C and Specialisation Practicum options
- A range of specialisation topics allowing a full year of focus on two specialisation areas
- Specialisations include autism, intellectual disability, acquired brain injury, Leisure & the Arts, technology and disability, mental health, Augmentative & Alternative Communication
- An Honours option for those wishing to go into research

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### Important to teach communication skills early



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### Internal and External

- Internal is probably the best option for most people
- But, for those with heavy work/family commitments
- Or, who live in regional or isolated areas
- This is often not possible
- So, the whole degree is offered externally using a web support framework, supportive topic coordinators, audio lecture recordings and web based activities weekly, plus hard copy readings and/or a text.
- Internal and external students are in the same classes, respond to the same activities and get the same lectures and materials.
- Communication between students is encouraged using "Wikis" and other Web 2.0 approaches

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### A Developing Process

- We have been doing this for 2 years, gradually bringing new topics into external mode.
- It isn't perfect and we face many challenges.
- But our external students are a priority and we do all that we can to stop them slipping through the cracks.
- If you are organised, willing to grapple with the technology, have thirst for knowledge and want to get ahead in the field
- IT IS AN OPTION**


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### Grappling with the Technology



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### What do you need?

- A Cert IV in Disability Work (other similar qualifications may make you eligible)
- A work placement – it is expected that you will be working in a disability or relevant human service area and that your organisation is supportive of you undertaking study and using your work place to meet the Practicum requirements
- Lots of focus and a willingness to do the “hard yards”

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### Uni is different to TAFE

- TAFE and other RTOs require that you demonstrate “competencies”
- Assessment is relatively informal and may not have required strong academic writing skills
- Uni requires that you demonstrate the ability to learn and synthesise (connect) important information, and
- that you can express yourself in a clear and professional manner, including writing reports, literature reviews, and answering questions about important areas of content.

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### And options beyond this

- What about people who have a range of Certificate or Diploma and inservice training
- And have achieved senior positions in their agencies?
- They may be eligible for a post graduate certificate in Disability Studies
- And this can be a gateway to a professional Masters in Disability Studies
- Specialty areas similar in content to those in the undergraduate degree, but at a more advanced level, can be undertaken externally

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### Conclusions

- Professionalisation of the disability workforce is a high priority
- There need to be career paths and many groups are advocating for appropriate funding so that this can happen
- Join a professional association
- Study if you want to progress in your field
- Flinders is an option but there may be others that fit your needs or interests better
- Improve your own practice and the profile of the industry by reflecting on that practice and engaging with study and inservice options that come your way
- I started as a DSW, by another name, and became a Senior Lecturer. Many of my contemporaries hold senior positions in Disability and Human Service Agencies
- What might you do???**

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### Thank You for your attention

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### Contact me if you want to discuss options

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Take a leaflet

Have a good Weekend 😊

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