

Summer Studentships 2026/2027

PROJECT TITLE:

Lived Experience in Medical Education Teaching

AIM:

To develop a practical, evidence-informed guide for including lived experience of mental distress in teaching, based on reflections from a lived-experience-led teaching team across multiple teaching sessions.

METHODS:

This project uses a qualitative design based on reflective practice. Members of a lived-experience-led teaching team will record short, plain-language reflections before and after teaching sessions over a 4–5-month period. Reflections will focus on things that went well, expectations, challenges, safety, in-the-moment responses, and what educators would do differently next time. The data will be analysed using reflexive thematic analysis to identify common challenges, strategies, and approaches to safe and effective teaching. The findings will be used to develop both a peer-reviewed journal article and a practical ‘how-to’ guide for lived experience educators and those who work with them.

RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE:

Lived experience is increasingly included in higher education teaching, but there is limited practical guidance on how to do this safely and effectively in medical education. This project provides real-world insight into how educators navigate teaching through their lived experience across repeated sessions in a medical education context.

STUDENT’S ROLE AND EXPOSURE TO SCIENTIFIC METHOD:

The student will gain experience in qualitative research, including working with data, coding and analysing reflections, and identifying themes. They will work closely with the research team to understand how qualitative analysis is conducted and how findings are translated into both academic outputs and practical resources. The student will produce a poster for the Poster Showcase Event and a written report, which will act as their contribution to drafting a journal article and developing a practical guide.

RELEVANT PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS (Education or Research):

Students with an interest in education, lived experience-led teaching, or qualitative research are encouraged to apply. Prior experience in qualitative research is helpful but not required. Strong communication skills, the ability to work effectively as part of a team, and a commitment to the World of Difference programme are essential.

The applicant must include a 100-word statement in their application outlining their alignment with the World of Difference programme, whether as a member of the lived experience community or an ally. The student will be paid for this opportunity through a World of Difference - He Ao Whakatoihara kore Research Student Stipend Award.

(Find out more about World of Difference here: <https://www.otago.ac.nz/wellington/departments/departments-of-psychological-medicine/research-and-projects-in-the-department-of-psychological-medicine/world-of-difference>)

Main supervisor:	Dr Snita Ahir-Knight	
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Other Supervisor/s:	Dr Tehmina Gladman, Secondary Supervisor	
Host Department:	Department of Psychological Medicine Te Tari Whakaora Hinengaro Tangata	
Location:	Wellington Pōneke	
	Can students work remotely?	Yes / No - The student will ideally be on-site at least Tuesdays and Thursdays while the department is open.