Early Career Researcher (ECR) Training Program Handbook

Training the future leaders of mental health and substance use research
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Overview and aims

Established in 2012, the NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence in Mental Health and Substance Use (CREMS) brings together the largest concentration of nationally and internationally recognised researchers to increase the knowledge base regarding the effective prevention and treatment of comorbid mental health and substance use disorders. The Chief Investigators of the CREMS span seven national and international universities and include the Director, Prof Maree Teesson (UNSW), Prof Amanda Baker (Newcastle University), A/Prof Katherine Mills (UNSW), A/Prof Frances Kay-Lambkin (UNSW), Prof Paul Haber (Sydney University), A/Prof Andrew Baillie (Macquarie University), Prof Helen Christensen (Black Dog, UNSW), Prof Max Birchwood (University of Birmingham, UK), Prof Bonnie Spring, Northwestern University, US), Prof Kathleen Brady, Medical University of South Carolina, US).

The CREMS recognises the importance of providing early career researchers with the necessary training and skills to develop as the future leaders of substance use and mental health research. To this end, the CREMS Early Career Researcher (ECR) Training Program was established in 2013.

The CREMS ECR Training Program provides early career researchers with the necessary training, skills and support to develop as the future leaders of substance use and mental health research

ECRs within the CREMS have world-class specialised training in the prevention, treatment, and epidemiology of mental health and substance use disorders. The CREMS ECR Training Program provides ECRs with the foundations upon which to build their own successful programs of research. Working alongside peers and internationally recognised research leaders in seven different research institutions around the world, ECRs receive training in a variety of methodologies used to undertake comorbidity research. In addition, you will enhance your leadership, management, and research skills in a supportive and collaborative group.
Objectives and benefits

The **objectives** of the CREMS ECR Training Program are to:

- Expand research skills and knowledge
- Improve management and leaderships skills
- Provide mentorship opportunities
- Improve grant writing skills
- Provide opportunities for networking and collaboration with senior academics, peers and service providers in the community
- Provide professional and personal development support
- Provide opportunities to share new ideas, skills, and the latest research on comorbidity
- Promote of a collegial and supportive workplace

The **benefits** of the CREMS ECR Training Program include:

- Development of a strong professional profile and career trajectory
- Increased confidence as researchers and clinicians
- Increased confidence and skill in mentoring and leadership skills
- Ongoing professional and personal development support
- Facilitation of collaborations with senior academics, peers and service providers in the community
- Opportunities to share new ideas, skills and the latest research on comorbidity
- Promotion of a collaborative and supportive workplace

Who are our members?

CREMS ECRs are researchers at academic Level A and Level B, who have been awarded their PhD. This includes Postdoctoral Research Fellows and Research Fellows, Research Associates, Associate Lecturers and Lecturers. Our members are passionate about mental health and substance use research, interested in developing their career and enhancing their leadership, mentorship, grant writing skills. For more details on our members and their research interests, see the **Member Profiles** at the end of this Handbook.
Program structure

The CREMS ECR Training Program is organised and run by two coordinators (Dr Christina Marel and Dr Mieke Snijder) and is overseen by a member of the CREMS senior leadership advisory group (A/Prof Katherine Mills). The structure is designed to provide our postdoctoral researchers with requisite support for both their professional and personal development, and is delivered through; i) meetings tailored specifically to the needs of its members, ii) formal and informal mentoring, and iii) the CREMS Grant Development Workshops.

Meetings

Monthly meetings occur on the second Friday of each month and provide members with the opportunity to meet, share ideas, and to openly discuss any issues they may have. To cater for the unique needs of external or overseas postdoctoral members, there is the opportunity to join in via Skype or conference call. Details of the 2017 calendar are presented below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Meeting topics for 2017 (as an example)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2017</td>
<td>How to ensure research is translational – external speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2017</td>
<td>Mentoring discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2017</td>
<td>How to mark a thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2017</td>
<td>Rebuttal workshop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mentoring

At CREMS we believe mentoring facilitates supportive relationships that are integral for guidance and research career development. As such, the CREMS ECR Training Program provides opportunities not only to receive mentoring, but also to provide mentoring to others.

Mentoring offers a number of benefits. For the mentee, mentoring can increase self-confidence and ability, help clarify career paths and goals, enhance skills and knowledge and broaden research collaborations. For mentors, such relationships can also broaden research collaborations, increase research profile, and assist in developing leadership skills. For CREMS, mentoring promotes collegiality, and increases productivity and staff commitment. Members are assisted in accessing and providing mentoring (both formal and informal) through two complimentary processes:
1. Mentoring provided by the Chief Investigators of the CREMS

As a main aim of the CREMS ECR Training Program is to provide world class specialised training in the prevention, treatment and epidemiology of comorbidity, members have unique access to support from the Chief Investigators of CREMS. Based in institutions across Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, the Chief Investigators are Prof Maree Teesson (UNSW), Prof Amanda Baker (Newcastle University), A/Prof Katherine Mills (UNSW), A/Prof Frances Kay-Lambkin (UNSW), Prof Paul Haber (Sydney University), A/Prof Andrew Baillie (Macquarie University), Prof Helen Christensen (Black Dog, UNSW), Prof Max Birchwood (University of Birmingham, UK), Prof Bonnie Spring, Northwestern University, US), Prof Kathleen Brady, Medical University of South Carolina, US). They represent a multidisciplinary team of international experts in the field of comorbidity and offer extensive research and clinical experience in the mental health and drug and alcohol arenas. Postdoctoral members can seek advice from by Chief Investigators with the aim of promoting the professional and personal development.

2. Mentoring drug and alcohol and mental health workers in the field: The CMHDARN Community Mentoring Program

The CREMS and the Community Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Research Network (CMHDARN) are working in partnership to implement an exciting CMHDARN Community Mentoring Program. This opportunity recognises a shared interest in improving comorbidity research and practice, as well as a commitment to optimising the translation and impact of research findings.

This Mentoring Program aims to provide workers in community managed organisations with an interest in research with academic mentor support to develop their research knowledge and skill development. CREMS ECRs offer support to individuals and organisations in developing their research practice, skills and knowledge. Short-term informal mentoring (3-6 months) and/or longer-term formal mentoring (6-12 months) will be delivered based on the specific areas indicated by the mentees.

This is a unique and highly beneficial opportunity for CREMS ECR members to gain valuable mentoring experience, increase research knowledge and skills, enhance understanding of community managed organisations, and engage with the community. The Mentoring Program also promotes capacity building and facilitates the development of a collaborative research culture between CREMS and service providers to promote practice-based research.

More information can be accessed via the [CMHDARN website](#).
Grant writing and workshops

Members have a valuable opportunity to attend annual Grant Development Workshops designed to provide continued support with grant applications throughout the year. These workshops are designed so that senior academics and ECR researchers can provide and receive targeted advice in the planning, development, and revision of grant applications. Moreover, these workshops provide the opportunity for ECRs to review other grants and be spokespersons during the workshops (as reflected by the NHMRC model of grant review). This is a valuable opportunity for members to experience the grant review process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop topic</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparing grant rebuttals</td>
<td>July (1-day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing and reviewing grants</td>
<td>November (2-days)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Achievements of current and past members

The CREMS ECR group is supportive and collaborative environment, with strong and active links with the CREMS Senior Leadership Advisory Group. Since the group was first established in 2013, members have achieved success in grant funding and been the recipients of numerous awards. Although these have been obtained in partnership with the CREMS Senior Leadership Advisory Group and other CREMS members, all have been led by CREMS ECR members. Some of these include:

- Australian Drug Foundation *Excellence and Innovation in Research*
- Australian Drug Foundation *Innovation in Prevention and Education*
- Australasian Professional Society for Alcohol and Drugs (APSAD) *Early Career Researcher Award*
- Australian Rotary Health *Bruce Edwards Postdoctoral Fellowship*
- Australian Rotary Health *Knowledge Dissemination Award*
- Australian Rotary Health and Alliance for the Prevention of Mental Disorders *Award for Research Excellence*
- Fulbright *Postdoctoral scholarship*
- Mental Health Matters *Mental Health Promotion and Wellbeing*
- National Council of Women of NSW *Australia Day Award*
- NHMRC *Early Career Fellowship*
- NSW Health *Early-Mid Career Fellowships*
- Society for Mental Health Research (SMHR) *Early Career Researcher Fellowships*
- TheMHS *Best Practice Award: Highly Commended*
- TheMHS *Early Career Research Award: High Commendation*
Communication

All CREMS ECRs are members of the CREMS ECR Training Program and provided with a copy of this Handbook. Members communicate via email and at monthly ECR meetings, with those located off-site welcome to attend meetings remotely via Skype or teleconference. ECRs are encouraged to use email to generate informal discussions or seek advice.

Annual Feedback Survey

Outcomes of the CREMS ECR Training Program are annually assessed via a feedback survey. At the end of each academic year, members are asked to confidentially respond to a short, electronic survey. This information both evaluates the annual progress of the program, and informs revisions and refinements to the program.

Contact us

If you have any questions please contact the Program Co-ordinators, Dr Christina Marel (c.marel@unsw.edu.au) or Dr Mieke Snijder (m.snijder@unsw.edu.au), or visit the CREMS website, or ECR Training Program webpage.

Mental Health and Substance Use  CREComorbidity
Members and contacts

Coordinators

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We are very grateful to the previous CREMS ECR Training Program coordinators for their assistance with, and contribution to, the Program and this Handbook
Dr Louise Birrell  
National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre  
University of New South Wales

**Background**
Louise joined NDARC in 2013 and completed her PhD in 2017. Her PhD focused on the development of anxiety disorders, mood disorders and alcohol use during adolescence, using population-level and prevention trial data. During her time at NDARC Louise has worked on large school-based randomised controlled trials of online substance use and mental health prevention programs, and an online toolkit to disseminate evidence-based information about crystal methamphetamine to the Australian community. Her research focuses on the links between alcohol use and mental health in adolescents. She also has experience in systematic reviews of substance use related mobile apps and app development.

**Research interests**
- Anxiety disorders;
- Mood disorders;
- Adolescent alcohol use;
- Comorbidity;
- Adolescence;
- School-based prevention;
- e-Mental Health.

**Methodological expertise**
- Analysis of large-scale epidemiological data sets (e.g. discrete-time survival models);
- Analysis of randomised controlled trial data;
- Analysis of longitudinal data;
- Latent variable modelling (e.g., latent class analysis, parallel latent growth modelling, growth mixture models).

**Potential Topics**
I am available to supervise honours, ILP, masters, PhD and undergraduate student placements related to any of my research interests listed above. Some examples of potential topics are listed below:
- Examining trends and/or links between adolescent alcohol use and mental health;
- Identifying teacher-related factors associated with adolescent mental health and substance use;
- Reviewing the evidence on effective mental health and substance use programs targeted at teacher wellbeing;
- Systematic review of e-health apps.
Background
Dr Simon Byrne completed a PhD/Masters of Clinical Psychology at Macquarie University in 2015. His PhD focussed on the augmentation of exposure therapy for children, using the cognitive enhancer, D-Cycloserine. Simon has also conducted research in the effects of the antipsychotic risperidone for treatment of PTSD and behavioural problems in children. He recently returned from a postdoctoral position at Yale Child Study Centre. He is currently working in at the Discipline of Addiction Medicine at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, where he is conducting research into psychosocial treatments for addiction.

Research interests
- Treatment of anxiety disorders
- Novel use of psychotropic medication to mental health problems
- Exposure therapy for anxiety disorders
- Treatments for children and adolescents

Methodological expertise
- Experimental study of treatment mechanisms
- Experience writing review papers
- Conducted research examining the effects of off-label psychotropic medications
Dr Katrina Champion
National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre
University of New South Wales

Background
Dr Katrina Champion joined NDARC in 2011 and completed a PhD in Public Health and Community Medicine in 2016. As part of her thesis she developed the *Climate Schools: Ecstasy & Emerging Drugs module*, the first online school-based prevention program designed to prevent ecstasy and new psychoactive substance use. Katrina evaluated this program through a cluster randomised controlled trial in 11 secondary schools. She is currently an Early Career Fellow at NDARC, UNSW and Northwestern University, USA. Her research interests include the development and evaluation of innovative resources to improve the health and wellbeing of young Australians, multiple health behaviour change and school-based interventions.

Research interests
- Use of the internet and other technologies to address risk factors and improve health;
- Health risk behaviours in young people (including substance use, smoking, poor diet, physical inactivity and sedentary behaviour);
- School-based interventions;
- Substance use prevention and drug education.

Methodological expertise
- Development and evaluation of preventive interventions;
- Design and coordination of randomised controlled trials, particularly in school settings;
- Longitudinal data analysis (mixed models).

Potential topics
- Development and evaluation of an online intervention to prevent multiple lifestyle risk behaviours among secondary school students;
- Examining the prevalence and co-occurrence of lifestyle risk behaviours among adolescents;
- Understanding the relationships between multiple risk behaviours and physical and mental health outcomes.
Background
Dr Mark Deady is a UNSW postdoctoral research fellow at the Black Dog Institute’s Workplace Mental Health Research Program. Prior to taking up this role he worked for the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, UNSW and has over ten years research experience in the field of mental health and substance use disorders. In this time he has worked on a range of projects at a coronial, epidemiological, and clinical level. He was conferred his PhD in 2015 for his thesis entitled, ‘Comorbid Depression and Problematic Alcohol Use in Young People: The Development and Evaluation of an Online Intervention.’ He has a particular interest in eHealth in the treatment and prevention of a range of mental health and substance use conditions. He has specific interest in using these technologies in workplace settings and among difficult to reach populations. Currently he leads the employee arm of the Well@Work project. The project—a $2.88 million world-first study funded by beyondblue, with donations from the Movember Foundation—aims to develop a range of eMental health tools for workers and employers. Dr Deady is funded through an iCare postdoctoral position to work on a range of programs to improve mental health in the workplace.

Research interests
- The treatment and prevention of mental ill health and substance use, and suicide prevention;
- Co-morbidity between health risk behaviours and mental health problems;
- Role of workplace factors in employee wellbeing
- The potential role of the new technologies for better mental health (eg mobile, wearables, and online);
- User engagement with services.

Methodological expertise
- Design and coordination of randomised controlled trials, particularly among youth and in workplace setting
- Epidemiology
- Design, collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data
- Development and evaluation of treatment and preventive interventions (especially mobile and online).

Potential Topics
- Evaluation and utility of mobile applications to address health behaviours, mental health problems or substance use;
- Workplace programs for improved wellbeing
- Accessibility and quality of online mental health and/or substance use treatments;

Projects would suit an honours or post-graduate student interested in eHealth, workplace mental health, and/or mental ill health/suicide.
Dr Sally Hunt
National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre
University of New South Wales

Background
Sally is a clinical psychologist who has worked in research since 2005. She completed her PhD in 2015. Her PhD focused on the neuropsychological profile of people with comorbid depression and alcohol misuse and the impact of cognitive functioning on the effectiveness of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) in this population.

Since completing her PhD Sally has worked on the development, evaluation and dissemination of eHealth interventions for co-occurring psychiatric and substance use problems. She also has a research interest in the closing gender gap in alcohol use and is working to stop the trend in increased alcohol use by women.

Research interests
- Alcohol use disorders;
- Mood disorders;
- Maternal mental health;
- Comorbidity;
- Implementation science;
- Health service reform;
- e-Mental Health.

Potential Topics
I am available to supervise honours, Clinical Psychology masters, and PhD projects related to any of my research interests listed above. Some examples of potential topics are listed below:
- Examining factors related to motherhood and alcohol misuse in women;
- Systematic review of gender specific alcohol interventions;
- Developing and testing the reach and effectiveness of alcohol harm reduction messages for women;
- Systematic review of gender specific alcohol interventions.
Dr Stephanie Kershaw
National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre
University of New South Wales

Background
Steph completed her PhD in 2015, which focused on the impact of genetic predictors of opioid dependence on neuroimmune and endocrine markers in healthy adults. Following her doctorate, she undertook an internship and several appointments at the World Health Organization (WHO) Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. These appointments focused on the impact of illicit drugs on public health and the translation of evidence-based research into international policy outcomes, through the Expert Committee on Drug Dependence.

Steph joined NDARC in 2018 as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow. She is responsible for managing ‘Cracks in the Ice’; a Commonwealth Department of Health funded project to disseminate and maintain an online community toolkit and mobile app for crystal methamphetamine.

Research interests
- Epidemiology, prevention and treatment of substance misuse
- Translation of evidence-based research
- National and international policies for illicit drugs
- Improving health outcomes for individuals and communities

Methodological expertise
- Design and analysis of randomised controlled trials
- Design, collection and analysis of online survey research
Dr Mark Larsen  
Black Dog Institute  
University of New South Wales

Background  
Mark joined the Black Dog Institute in 2014, and is currently a Research Fellow in the NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence in Suicide Prevention and the Digital Dog research programs. He has a DPhil in Biomedical Engineering and his research examines the use of new technologies for mental health, with a focus on suicide prevention. His research projects include detecting changes in mental health from smartphone sensor data, and delivering mobile health interventions for those who have had a suicide attempt.

Research interests  
- Ehealth and mhealth interventions for mental health;  
- Suicide prevention;  
- Smartphone apps and data collection.

Methodological expertise  
- Design of online/mobile interventions;  
- Database design/working with information from different sources.
**Background**
Christina is a Research Fellow at the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre. Her research focuses on improving our understanding of, and responses to, co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders in complex populations. This include projects examining the long-term patterns and predictors of heroin use and mental health, and understanding individual periods of risk. She led the recent revision of the Australian Government Department of Health-funded *Guidelines on the management of co-occurring alcohol and other drug and mental health conditions in alcohol and other drug treatment settings (2nd edition)*, and accompanying online training program. She recently coordinated the 11-year follow up of the NHMRC funded Australian Treatment Outcome Study (ATOS), which is the largest and longest running study to examine treatment outcomes for heroin dependence in Australia. Christina also leads a project with the Central Australian Youth Link Up Service in the Northern Territory to evaluate the impact of their service on young people’s involvement in crime and petrol sniffing in communities across Central Australia.

**Research interests**
- Comorbidity
- Heroin dependence
- Patterns and predictors of substance use and mental health problems
- Translation
- Relationship between crime and substance use over time

**Methodological expertise**
- Longitudinal analysis
- Finite mixture modelling

**Potential Topics**
- The Australian Treatment Outcome Study is a naturalistic, prospective longitudinal study of heroin dependence, examining the natural history of heroin dependence and mental health over time. The project would suit an Honours or postgraduate level student interested in public health, psychology or criminology
- Examining patterns and predictors of substance use, mental health disorders, and/or crime over time
- Translating research into practice
Dr Natalie Peach  
National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre  
University of New South Wales

Background

Natalie joined NDARC in 2018 as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow. She currently works as the Project Coordinator on the COPE-A clinical trial, investigating the efficacy of integrated exposure-based therapy for co-occurring post-traumatic stress and substance use disorders in adolescents. She has recently completed a combined Masters/PhD in clinical psychology at the University of Melbourne and Orygen Youth Health. Her PhD focused on phenomenological relationships between childhood trauma, PTSD symptoms and psychotic symptoms in young people with early psychosis.

Research interests:
- PTSD
- Childhood trauma
- Adolescent mental health
- Comorbidity
- Early intervention and treatment
- Psychosis

Methodological expertise:
- Cross-sectional studies
- Regression analyses
- Qualitative research
Background
Katrina joined NDARC in 2013 after completing a Bachelor of Science (Psychology)/Commerce and Honours in Psychology at ANU in Canberra. She completed her PhD at NDARC, in the School of Public Health and Community Medicine, in 2017. Her PhD focused on the prevalence, impact and persistence of social phobia among individuals with depression and substance dependence. Whilst at NDARC Katrina has worked on a randomised controlled trial (RCT) for behavioural activation therapy among people with depression and substance dependence, and an RCT of a new online CBT-based intervention for anxiety and hazardous alcohol use among youth. Her research interests focus on improving our understanding of, and responses to, mental health disorders among people with substance use disorders.

Research interests
- Comorbidity;
- Anxiety disorders;
- Mood disorders;
- Substance use;
- e-Mental Health;
- Early intervention and treatment for comorbid mental and substance use disorders;
- Trauma.

Methodological expertise
- Analysis of large-scale epidemiological data sets;
- Analysis of randomised controlled trial data;
- Analysis of longitudinal data (e.g., generalised estimating equations);

Potential Topics
I am available to supervise honours, ILP, masters, PhD and undergraduate student placements related to any of my research interests listed above.
Member Profile

Dr Mieke Snijder
National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre
University of New South Wales

Background
Mieke joined NDARC in 2012 as a student completing her Master’s degree in Public Health, following which she undertook her PhD at NDARC, which she finished early 2017. Her research currently focuses on drug and alcohol prevention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. In her PhD, she worked closely with Aboriginal communities in the development, implementation and evaluation of community-based programs that were effective in reducing alcohol related harms. As a Post-doc, she is collaborating with schools, Aboriginal communities and other stakeholders to develop a school-based prevention program that is culturally appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Her passion for research is driven by a desire to improve the health and wellbeing of the most disadvantaged members of our society.

Research interests
- Inter sectoral collaborations and community-driven research;
- Evaluation of existing services and community-based programs promoting health and wellbeing;
- Health promotion and empowerment;
- Promoting equity and reducing disadvantage;
- Substance use prevention and early intervention.

Methodological expertise
- Participatory research methodologies;
- Qualitative research methods (including interviewing, focus groups, thematic analyses);
- Analysis of large-scale administrative data sets (e.g. police data, hospital data);
- Multiple baseline (or stepped wedge) designs and interrupted times series analyses.
**Member Profile**

**Dr Louise Thornton**

National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre  
University of New South Wales

**Background**

Louise completed her PhD in 2012 at the University of Newcastle. Her doctoral research investigated tobacco, alcohol and cannabis use, and attitudes towards these substances, among people with and without mental disorders. Louise currently holds the position of a post-doctoral research scholar within CREMS and was hosted by Professor Bonnie Spring in the Department of Preventive Medicine at Northwestern University, Chicago between April 2013 and May 2014. During her time at Northwestern University Dr Thornton spearheaded the development of an intervention aimed at addressing smoking cessation and weight gain prevention among people with mental disorders. In 2015 she began a UNSW Vice-Chancellor Post-doctoral fellowship at NDARC in which she plans to develop and evaluate a mobile app addressing health risk behaviours among people with mental disorders.

**Research interests**

- Health risk behaviours including tobacco use, excessive alcohol use, poor diet and physical inactivity;
- Co-morbidity between health risk behaviours and mental health problems;
- The potential role of the Internet and mobile technologies to improve health and health research;
- How patient engagement with drug and alcohol, and lifestyle, interventions can be improved.

**Methodological expertise**

- Design, administration and analysis of survey research (particularly online);
- Design, collection and analysis of qualitative data;
- Development of online and mobile e-health tools.

**Potential Topics**

- Use and quality of mobile applications to address health behaviours, mental health problems or substance use;
- Accessibility and quality of mental health and/or substance use treatments online;
- Cardio-vascular disease risk reduction among vulnerable populations e.g. people with mental health and/or substance use problems.

Projects would suit an honours or post-graduate student interested in ehealth and/or health behaviour change.
Dr Alyna Turner
Centre for Translational Neuroscience and Mental Health
University of Newcastle

Background
Alyna is a Clinical Psychologist at the University of Newcastle, and a Research Fellow at Deakin University. She has worked with people with comorbid conditions (mental health/ substance misuse/ physical health conditions) in a clinical and research capacity for over 13 years. In a research capacity, she has experience in the development, delivery and evaluation of psychological interventions for people with comorbid conditions (heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cardiovascular disease risk behaviours, depression, anxiety, substance misuse, psychotic illness), based on cognitive behaviour therapy, problem solving therapy, motivational interviewing, and mindfulness based stress reduction techniques. She has significant experience with coordination of randomised controlled trials, including most recently coordination of a multi-site RCT of a pharmacological intervention for depression in people with bipolar disorder.

Research interests
- Treatment of coexisting physical and mental health conditions, particularly post-stroke depression and depression and anxiety disorders in people with cardiovascular disease;
- Psychological interventions for coexisting mental health and substance use disorders;
- Depression screening in physical health settings;
- Psychological interventions for cardiovascular risk behaviour reduction.

Methodological expertise
- Randomised controlled trial development and coordination;
- Psychological intervention development and evaluation.
Background
Michelle currently works as a Research Fellow at Black Dog Institute/Centre for Research Excellence in Suicide Prevention (2015 – present), but prior to this, worked at NDARC for 10 years, where she completed her PhD in Public Health and Community Medicine in (2015). Her research focuses primarily on suicide prevention, where she is currently co-Director of the research and evaluation of an Australian first large-scale multi-level suicide prevention trial in NSW. In 2018, she will also be principle investigator a feasibility pilot trial of a primary school intervention that aims to reduce mental health burden and suicide risk.

Research interests
- Early childhood, school-based, interventions for mental health/substance use;
- Suicide prevention, particularly among young people;
- Comorbidity;
- Knowledge translation;
- Substance use;
- Violent behaviour/criminality;
- Developmental research.

Methodological expertise
- Epidemiology;
- Quantitative analysis of large-scale survey data;
- Survey design;
- Development and evaluation of preventive interventions (including RCTs, stepped wedge trials, quasi-experimental).

Potential topics
- Examination of how media reporting of suicide changes as a result of a large-scale intervention in NSW;
- How well the identification of suicide ‘hot spots’ in intervention sites translates to behavioural or structural changes, and barriers to change.
- Peer network changes and the spread of suicidal behaviours in adolescents as a result of a school-based intervention.
Last updated: 17 April 2018