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Service learning placements in rural aged care during a state in lockdown: The experience of the supervisor, student and academic.

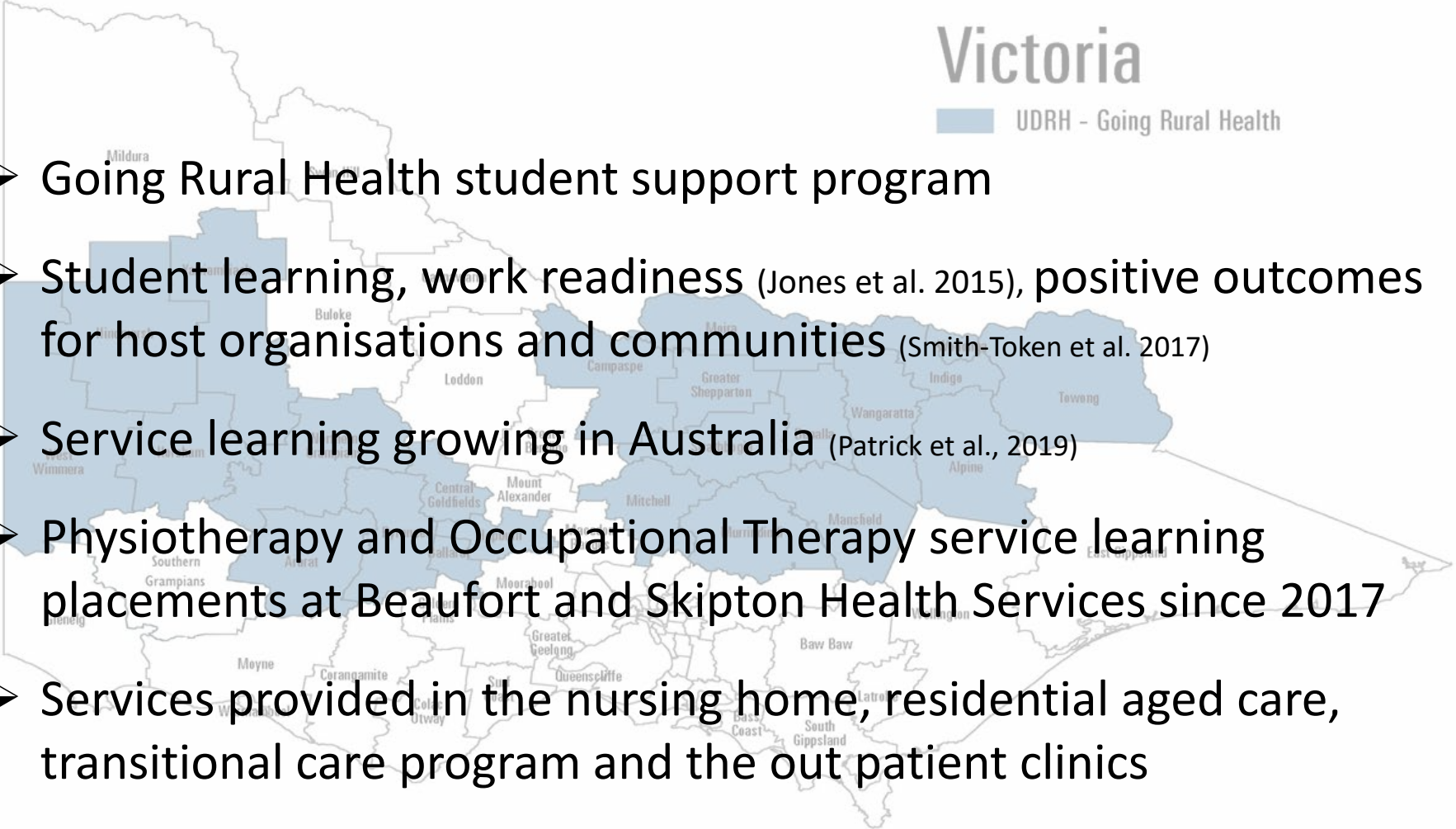
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going
rural
health

The Background

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- Victoria
- UDRH - Going Rural Health
- Going Rural Health student support program
 - Student learning, work readiness (Jones et al. 2015), positive outcomes for host organisations and communities (Smith-Token et al. 2017)
 - Service learning growing in Australia (Patrick et al., 2019)
 - Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy service learning placements at Beaufort and Skipton Health Services since 2017
 - Services provided in the nursing home, residential aged care, transitional care program and the out patient clinics

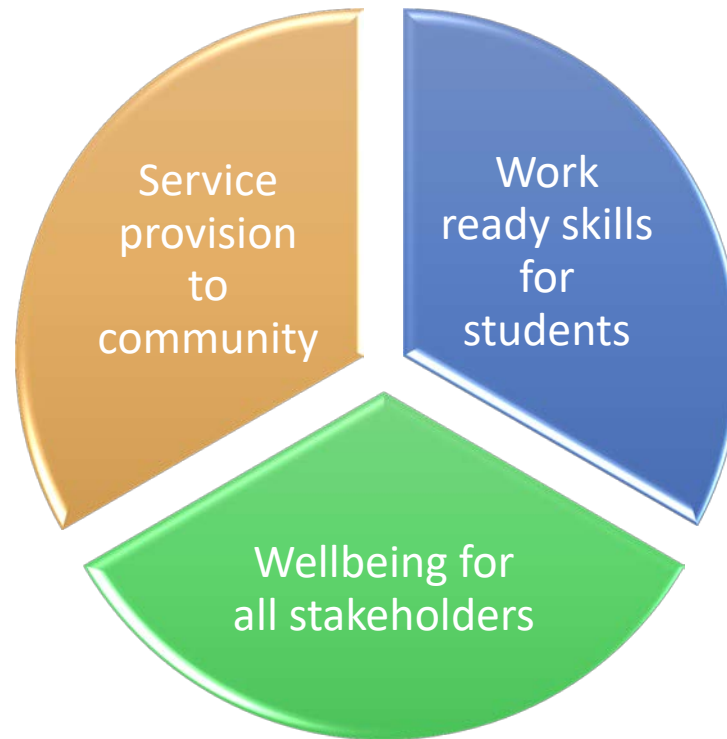


2020/2021 Covid 19 impact

- 24 Physiotherapy students and 4 Occupational Therapy student placements were planned to run over 2020 and 2021
- Students were restricted from travelling to rural Victoria
- Students were restricted from moving between the 2 sites
- Students were restricted from entering the nursing home and undertaking home visits
- External supervisors and agency allied health staff restricted from working on site
- Students required to produce negative Covid-19 tests and isolate

Priority areas

- Telehealth
- Development of educational resources
- Remote observation
- Planning and evaluation online



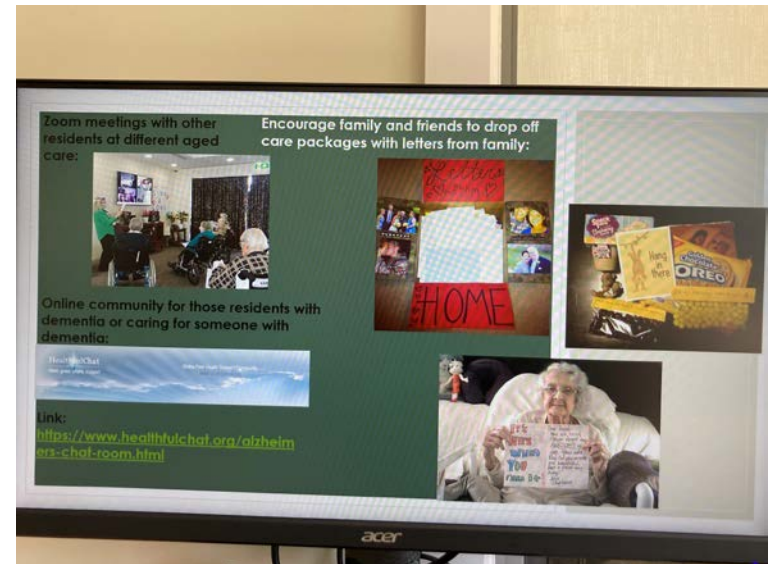
- Role plays/simulated learning
- Site specific education
- Remote observation
- Project development
- Interprofessional learning developed

- Mentoring and social engagement
- Wellness education
- Leisure and ADL equipment provision
- Adjustment of placement days

(Salter et al.,2020)

Occupational Therapy Services

- Education for staff on the social connectivity
- Mental health and social engagement group for residents in the nursing home
- Outpatient equipment prescription
- Home visits
- ADL assessments in transitional care program





Challenges from a students perspective

- The restrictions on travel
- Lack of rural community interactions and experiences
- The difficulties of PPE on communication
- A reduction in clinical experiences and learning





Wins from a student perspective

- Extra educational supports/sessions from the clinical supervisor
- A wide range of mentoring/wellbeing programs available for students
- Social connection with other students in the accommodation
- A full-time job offer at the end of the placement






Physiotherapy Services and adaptations

- Host organisation identified needs:
 - “Virtual Staff Clinic”
 - Exercise and reablement for older adults residing in long-term care
- Resource development
- Telehealth outpatient consultations and simulation
- Remote observation and supervision
- Additional mentoring and education sessions


Exercise Episodes – Physical Wellbeing
With Erin and Kirsten




Transverse Abdominis (TrA)

- TrA is the deepest abdominal muscle.
- Its role is to create a stable core to allow efficient movement of the arms and legs.
- It is connected to the deep stabilizing muscles of the spine (e.g. multifidus) via a bridge of connective fascia.
- If the TrA exhibits reduced or delayed activation, high loads with movements such as lifting can place increased strain on back stabilizers leading to instability (Selinger, Cox & Ross, 2017).


1. Positioning
Lying on your back with the knees bent, tuck your tailbone so your spine is flat on the floor.
Place your fingers 2cm inwards from the bony prominences at the front of your pelvis (the ASIS) to feel the TrA fibers contract under the fingertips.



2. TrA Activation
Without tensing the superficial “ab” muscles, draw the area under your belly button in towards the spine as you breathe out slowly. Hold the contraction for 3-5 seconds continuing to breathe. You should feel the TrA contracting lightly under your fingertips. Relax fully, then repeat 5x.
This is a gentle movement, as if holding in the urge to go to the bathroom or zipping up a tight pair of pants.




3. Progressions
Do NOT hold your breath or suck in. Your superficial abdominals are not invited to this party.
Progression #1: hold contractions for up to 10 seconds, 10x.
Progression #2: Alternate lifting one heel up, sliding one leg forward and back or lifting one arm or leg up.
Functional: Perform in sitting and standing positions.



Further Resources
<http://www.abdomio.com.au/transverse-abdominis>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7MA1J...>

Reference:
Selinger, N. M., Cox, M. R., & Ross, S. (2017). Transverse Abdominis Activation and Toning Improves Following Core Stability Training: A Randomized Trial. *International Journal of Sports Physical Therapy*, 12(7), 1044-1056.





Challenges from a supervisors perspective

- Long tradition of hands-on, face-to-face approach to Physiotherapy placements
- Adjusting placements as restrictions fluctuated: online and mixed placements
- Creating engaging online clinical experiences
- New methods for coordinating and sharing information
- Ensuring requirements of all stakeholders were met





Wins from a supervisors perspective

- Service Learning placements have been successfully adapted
- Online and mixed Physiotherapy placements are valuable and engaging
- Positive experiences continue to influence placement development
- Students gain valuable work ready skills
- High quality services and resources are being provided to the health service and wider community





The way forward - the academic perspective

- Online supervision to continue to allow for more rural placement development and time management
- Highly valued education for staff/community to be continued
- Social connectedness for elderly clients during lockdowns
- Support of new grads as an ongoing part of the learning process
- Development of engagement opportunities for students to enjoy/explore the region





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Thank you

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www.goingruralhealth.com.au



Australian Government

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Thank you

Beaufort and Skipton Health Services

Monash University School of Occupational Therapy

The University of Melbourne School of Physiotherapy

Allied health agency staff serving BSHS



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