

Make a difference in mental health Occupational therapy



Andrew

Arts Studio Manager isn't a role you'd typically expect to see in a hospital but it's just one of many diverse roles that exist in the mental health workforce.

Andrew considers himself lucky to have filled such a role for the past 3 years, guiding patients in song writing, music and audio recording, and other creative therapies.

"In my final year of studies, I wrote about wanting to start a mental health recording studio. This dream is now a reality and I'm very grateful," Andrew said.

Andrew studied Occupational Therapy (OT) and was inspired to move into the mental health field having read a mother's account of her son's experience with Schizophrenia.

"This, as well as my desire to work with marginalised people in a supportive role influenced my decision," he said.

Following a student placement at WA's forensic mental health inpatient facility, the Frankland Centre, Andrew has worked in the hospital and community setting for 13 years supporting mental health consumers to identify and work towards goals to live a more meaningful life.

"Mental Health OT is different and unique to many other areas of OT. In mental health OT there is a lot of opportunity to be creative and flexible," said Andrew.

"My role at the Creative Expression Centre for Arts Therapy at Graylands Hospital involves the therapeutic use of music and audio recording to support clients with their personal goals towards recovery."

"I see clients both individually and in groups with sessions involving recovery orientated song writing, music self-expression, audio recording and providing clients with recordings as tangible representations of their recovery progress and journey," he said.

Occupational Therapists are among the qualified and experienced professional groups currently being recruited by WA Health to work in mental health, and Andrew encourages anyone who is interested in a rewarding career to apply.

"I am fortunate to work in a multidisciplinary team where everyone brings their expertise, there's a lot of variety in my role and excellent professional growth opportunities," he said.

"I have been supported to release an audio book on sensory gardens in inpatient mental health, I founded the Graylands Hospital Music Festival and have led many huge mural projects completed with patients across Graylands Hospital."

Andrew's passion has been recognised with the West Australian Mental Health Employee Excellence Award and Rotary Allied Health Award in Innovative Practice.