

**Flinders University Disability & Community  
Inclusion Research Network (FUDCI-RN)**

**RESEARCH MONDAY**

**Honours Findings Presentation**

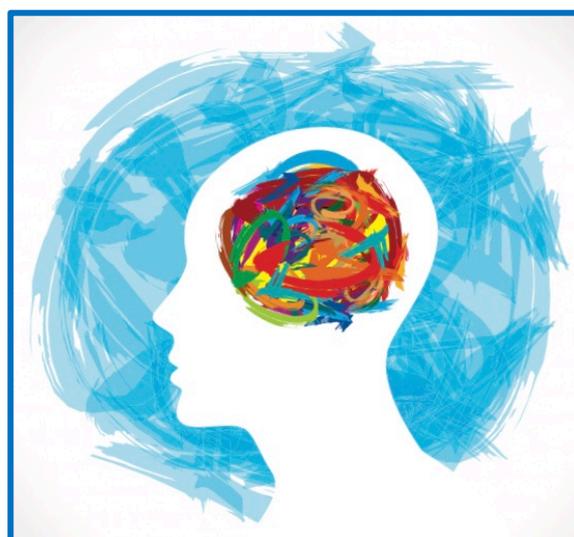


**Flinders**  
UNIVERSITY

inspiring achievement

## **Eleanor Watson**

**Mental Health Matters: the views and perceptions of  
people with complex communication needs regarding  
mental health and wellbeing**



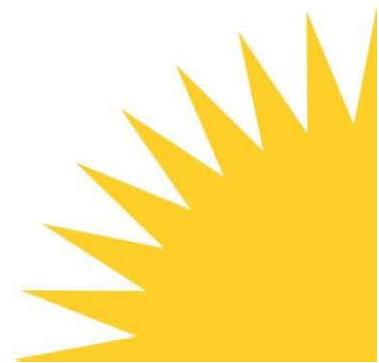
**9:30-10:30am**

**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2018**

**Room S416, South Wing, Sturt Campus**

For further information, please contact Dr Ruth Walker, Ph: 8201 7936

**[www.flinders.edu.au](http://www.flinders.edu.au)**



# **Mental Health Matters: the views and perceptions of people with complex communication needs regarding mental health and wellbeing**

## **Abstract**

Mental health and wellbeing are foundational in human interaction and life satisfaction. People with complex communication needs are at risk of reduced mental health and wellbeing. The aim of the project was to explore the views and perceptions of people with complex communication needs regarding mental health and wellbeing. A further objective was to identify the facilitators and barriers that people with complex communication needs experience when attending to their mental health and wellbeing. A qualitative study design using a phenomenological approach was utilised. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with three participants with complex communication needs, observation and reflexive journaling.

To maximise the impact of each participant's account, results of this study were analysed and presented as three individual case studies, which explored personal perspectives and experiences. Further cross-case analysis was performed to identify the common barriers and facilitators experienced by the participants when addressing mental health and wellbeing. The cross-case analysis identified the positive impact of self-determination and belonging, as well as the assistive and obstructive roles of carers and support workers. Barriers and facilitators to obtaining assistance for mental health and wellbeing related predominantly to the communication partner's skill, attitude and support practices; formal and informal.

This study identifies the need for contributions from people with complex communication needs in the design and development of supports for mental health and wellbeing. Further to this, there is a need to equip people with complex communication needs, their carers and support workers, and mental health professionals with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to promote mental health and wellbeing among this population.