

NAFEA Student Placement Report

How has the experience contributed to acquiring professional skills?

I undertook a psychology placement in the Northern Territory with an Aboriginal Controlled health service. My rural and remote psychology placement exposed me to clinical practice with indigenous clients. Improving indigenous mental health outcomes is recognized as being a priority for the profession. The WIL placement gave me ample opportunities to learn about culture, learn how to engage in culturally safe provision of assessment and therapy, and learn from experienced indigenous practitioners. During the placement, the importance of cultural literacy was emphasized and the need to question assumptions when working with indigenous clients. I gained an appreciation for the social determinates of health and was able to see the multiplicity of risk factors and challenges that impact on indigenous mental health, including lived experience of discrimination and disadvantage. Cross-cultural competency is highly relevant to professional roles, and I believe that my experience will help increase my effectiveness in this important area of practice.

How has the experience influenced your personal motivations to work in a rural setting?

Working within a remote environment was often challenging but very rewarding. I had the opportunity to be surrounded by nature. I have attached some photos that give a sense of the rugged and stunning landscape. Working within a rural community, the sense of community was strong, and I had ample opportunity to meet new people and socialize with other students. The clinical work was varied and unique, and I was exposed to complex presentations that gave me significant opportunities to learn new clinical skills. Following my experience, I see how living in a rural remote area can allow for both a rewarding career and the opportunity to experience connectedness and balance

How has the NAFEA scholarship assisted with undertaking a rural placement?

The NAFEA scholarship was essential in supporting me to pay for accommodation and expenses while on placement. The NAFEA scholarship enabled me to focus and maximize the amount of learning I was able to do.

I would highly recommend that students consider a rural placement, given the quality and variety of experiences on offer, and the adventure of being able to go to and experience such unique places.

