

**Title:**

**Pharmacy students' professionalism and perceptions in supporting the care of people living with experience of mental health challenges: A feedback-driven qualitative narrative**

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**Background:**

Internalised Stigma is considered to be the main barrier to people receiving effective treatment for mental health problems (Knaak *et al*, 2017). As healthcare students become more professionalised, they learn how to provide optimal quality care to all patients. Experiential models of learning complemented with feedback and debriefing are said to be one of the approaches to preparing healthcare professionals who are work ready (Tavares *et al*, 2019).

**Method:**

We collected feedback data from people living with mental health experiences following an experiential learning activity via interactive learning sessions (ILS) and focus group discussions (FGDs). We manually analysed the data for themes; after which, we used the data as a guide for a series of semi-structured in-depth interviews with MPharm students.

**Results:**

Main themes emerged from the FDGs were that people living mental health experiences want to be seen as a person, not a prescription. They also appreciated that there is no “magic bullet” to solve all of the challenges. MPharm students felt that the environment for learning was enriching; however, they felt they needed more time to apply their knowledge and skills. When prompted that people with experiences of mental health would want to be looked at as a person and not a prescription; MPharm students appreciated the feedback. However, they felt they needed to also ensure that they are applying their pharmacotherapy knowledge.

**Conclusion:**

ILS with content-based learning improved students' perceptions of mental health issues. Moreover, the feedback-driven, real-world experiences and experiential learning in the education of pharmacy students, was well-received by MPharm students.

Not only does this benefit students' education, it has also allowed for those with mental health experiences to communicate their concerns in education of future healthcare professionals, as well as enhance their abilities to ‘tell their story’ more effectively, without fear of stigma or judgement.

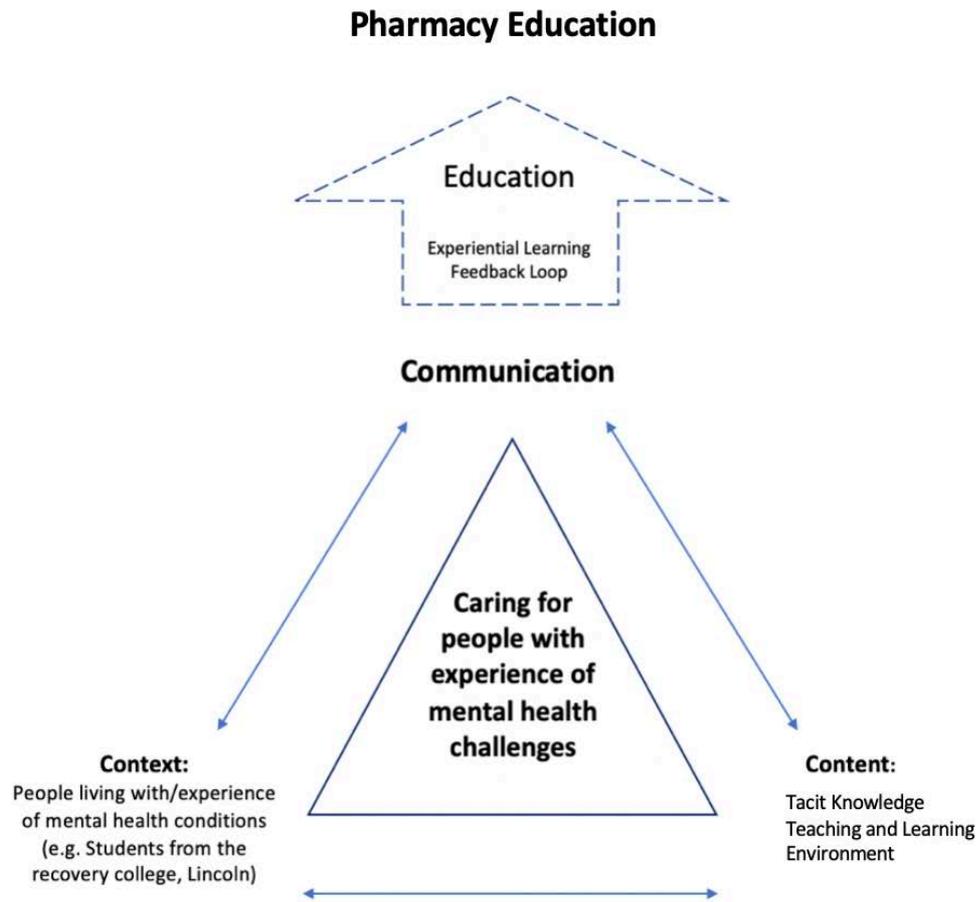


Figure 1 Overview of results

## References

- 1) Tavares, W., Eppich, W., Cheng, A., Miller, S., Teunissen, P., Watling, C. and Sargeant, J. (2019) Learning Conversations. *Academic Medicine* 1.
- 2) Knaak, S., Mantler, E. and Szeto, A. (2017) Mental illness-related stigma in healthcare. *Healthcare Management Forum*, 30(2) 111-116.

Pharmacy Education Conference 2020 – Abstract Submission

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Preferred method of presentation: Oral presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Poster <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No preference <input type="checkbox"/>