**Transcript**

***Annie Venville – Unfinished Business: student perspectives on disclosure of mental illness and success in VET***

We’ve been looking at factors that impact upon successful course completion for vocational education and training students with a mental illness. And what we’ve found is that there are, is a complicated relationship between disclosure of mental illness and successful course completion and that students tell us that the risks usually outweigh the benefits of disclosure.

What we hope to achieve with this research is the uncoupling of disclosure with the provision of reasonable adjustment. At the moment in the VET sector the only way student can formally obtain reasonable adjustment is to disclose their mental illness. And, in fact students tell us that the disclosure of mental illness carries with it such risks as to further damage in a sense their sense of recovery, their sense of identity, they don’t want to stand out, they don’t want to be known as the depressed guy. They want to be another student. And students tell us that they would rather fail on their own terms than disclose and receive some assistance.

What we think is that if we can see the adoption of inclusive teaching practices within the VET sector, if students can be aware of the range of adjustments that are possible without the need to disclose, if teachers can be more aware of the triggers or indicators of students at risk of poor course completion then what we do know is that we are likely to see an increase in successful and timely course completions for students with disclosed and non-disclosed mental illness. And that leads to increased participation in the workforce, increased sense of self esteem and recovery and we think that must be a very good thing.