

## **Empowering Future Practitioners: A Curriculum Approach to Enhance 'Response Able' Communication about Mental Health Issues.**

**Jaelea Skehan**

Hunter Institute of Mental Health and University of Newcastle

**Robina Xavier**

Queensland University of Technology

**Siobhain Lowthe**

Hunter Institute of Mental Health

### **Abstract**

*The power of public relations to shape community attitudes is well documented but with it comes professional responsibility. Mental illness and suicide are two key social issues requiring the profession of public relations to consider its role. This paper reports on the development process and pilot evaluation of a federally funded educational initiative designed to empower public relations undergraduates to consider the impact of communication on public understandings of, and responses to specific social and health issues. While the curriculum materials focus on mental illness and suicide, the process has application to other areas of social responsibility. The curriculum resources reflect the model of empowerment and capacity building, avoiding proscription or censorship but offering emerging practitioners tools and knowledge to make their own informed decisions about the way in which they can responsibly communicate in practice.*

Keywords: Public Relations, Community Attitudes, Professional Responsibility, Social Issues, Mental Illness.

### **Public Relations and Social Impact: The Challenge for Responsible Practice**

There is on-going international interest in the impact of certain forms of communication about suicide and mental illness; however Australia is the first country to integrate a program dedicated to public relations practice into its mental health or suicide prevention strategy (Commonwealth of Australia, 2011). While many countries internationally have developed media guidelines that promote responsible reporting of suicide and in some cases mental illness (for example, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong), a more comprehensive approach has been taken in Australia by working with a range of other sectors (such as the mental health sector, police and courts) and by including this material in the undergraduate training of journalism students (Pirkis, Blood, Beautrais, Burgess, & Skehan, 2006; Skehan et al., 2009). Addressing the role of public relations professionals, through undergraduate training is internationally innovative and so evaluation of its effectiveness is significant.

Research shows that certain representations of suicide may increase the risk of copycat behaviour among vulnerable people (Pirkis & Blood, 2010). There is also concern that people living with a mental illness are predominantly portrayed in a negative and stereotypical way, which may increase stigma and discrimination (Francis et al., 2001). The Australian Government's response to this evidence was the establishment of the *Mindframe* National Media Initiative, funded under the National Suicide Prevention Strategy to encourage responsible, accurate and sensitive media representation of mental illness and suicide (Skehan, Sheridan-Burns, & Hazell, 2009).

While many may argue that the potential for public relations practitioners to influence media content is limited, studies on the effect of public relations on the media have found that almost half of the articles published in major metropolitan media are the result of public relations activity with some media content as high as 70 per cent (Macnamara, 1993; Zawawi, 1994, 2001). Australian studies also show that while the reporting of both suicide and

mental illness is improving in quality in Australia, the number of reports have more than doubled, indicating increased media attention (Pirkis, Blood, Dare, & Holland, 2008). Increased media attention is likely to lead to increased public relations practice, both in a reactive manner and proactively through development of health communication campaigns to influence community attitudes and behaviour. It could be argued that mental health issues are more likely to be a focus of activity for practitioners in the future; necessitating further attention to this area in pre-service education and professional development.

This paper presents a rationale for including public relations in any national strategy to address media reporting and portrayal of suicide and mental illness. It also outlines the developmental process for a curriculum approach and reports on evaluation data from seven institutions that completed a pilot of the program.

## **Why consider the role of public relations?**

Public relations practice has an impact on health and social issues, just as important social issues inevitably have an impact, either directly or indirectly, on public relations practice. Public relations is potentially powerful in shaping public opinion, and can have a significant impact on community attitudes and behaviour (Bowen, 2005). This impact may be even greater for complex social issues such as mental illness and suicide where evidence suggests that, despite improvements, community understanding is generally poor. This lack of understanding leads to confusion, fear, misconceptions, stereotyping and discrimination of those living with a mental illness (Barney, Griffiths, Christensen, & Jorm, 2009; Hocking, 2003; Jorm, Korten, Jacomb, Christensen, & Henderson, 1999; Wahl, 1999).

The power to influence, points to the need for public relations practitioners to have a broader view of ethical standards and practice that include the welfare of specific publics and “to act...in a socially responsible way” (Starck & Kruckeberg, 2003, p. 37; Fitzpatrick & Gauthier, 2001). As Fitch (2012) and others argue, the social impact of public relations practice should be measured beyond business practice and corporate ethics alone, to consider community and society more broadly. Communication can at times “require some limits and careful consideration of... how to influence target audiences” considering both harms and benefits of that communication (Fitzpatrick & Gauthier, 2001, p. 206).

There is possibly no better illustration of these ethical considerations than with the issues of mental illness and suicide. Mental illness and suicide are complex and emotional issues that affect many stakeholders. Mental illnesses and mental health problems are common in the Australian community. Research suggests that one in five people will be directly affected by mental illness in any 12-month period with many more indirectly affected as a family member, friends or colleague (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007). Official data also suggest that just over 2,000 people die by suicide each year in Australia, with many more attempting to take their own lives. This has devastating effects on family, friends, colleagues and potentially the whole community. The way both suicide and mental illness are discussed is important, especially where that discussion occurs through the mass media or other public means (Pirkis & Blood, 2010; Francis, Pirkis, Dunt, & Blood, 2001).

Without appropriate consideration of responsible practice, public relations practice could reinforce the discriminatory attitude of a largely uninformed general public/society, generating further alienation of those most vulnerable. Alternatively, public relations practice that considers the potential impact of these issues on communities and stakeholders. PR could empower publics and assist in breaking down stigma associated with mental illness and in reducing potential harm to those who are vulnerable to suicide or impacted by suicide.

Public relations practitioners need to be conscious of the powerful messages that certain images, symbols, pictures and words are conveying to publics about mental health issues. It is often too easy to use emotive words or images or to escalate an issue through the use of certain statistics to gain interest in an issue or promote a particular client. The practitioner, however, needs to be aware that images and words can perpetuate negative and inaccurate stereotypes about mental illness or place people who are vulnerable to suicide at increased risk by providing specific details about suicide, such as the method or location of a death or deaths (Francis et al., 2001; Pirkis & Blood, 2010). Public relations practitioners need to make choices about the ethical use of language and understand its potential impact on those who may be vulnerable. Is there a case example where this was illustrated?

Public relations practitioners are also uniquely placed to advance the needs of certain publics when armed with appropriate knowledge and skills to navigate the interface between vulnerability, communication, risk and advocacy. To achieve this level of skill, public relations practitioners require relevant education and training to enact their communication roles within a socially responsible framework. The Public Relations Institute of Australia outlines the importance of such a framework in mandating the consideration of social and ethical implications of public relations practice within tertiary education as a prerequisite for accreditation (Public Relations Institute of Australia, 2012).

## **A Curriculum Approach: Engaging with Educators to Build Relevant Resources**

As the largest focus for tertiary study in public relations, the undergraduate degree provides an ideal opportunity to expose future practitioners to social issues and dilemmas and provide them with guided opportunities to understand and navigate complex ethical challenges. Public relations educators, however, need to find practical and relevant ways to introduce these concepts as part of their teaching program.

*Response Ability* for Public Relations (rebranded as *Mindframe* for public relations in December 2012) was developed in partnership with public relations educators and professionals. It includes a set of flexible multi-media curriculum resources that were based on a successful curriculum program used in the undergraduate training of journalism students (Skehan et al., 2009). While the resources use mental illness and suicide as the topics to be explored, the resources have been developed in a way as to expose students to authentic learning tasks in public relations, such as engaging with real-world case-studies and discussing critical social issues that build the students' understanding and skills for future practice.

Given that these curriculum resources were internationally innovative, public relations educators from around Australia were consulted before the development of the materials to ensure that the resources would be relevant and useful. The project team at the Hunter Institute of Mental Health conducted semi-structured telephone interviews with 23 public relations educators to determine: (a) whether mental illness, suicide or related topics were currently covered in the public relations curriculum; (b) the type of information educators would find useful, and (c) the potential barriers to future uptake. The interviews were conducted with universities (60%), TAFE campuses (22%), private colleges (9%) and the Public Relations Institute of Australia (9%).

The consultation revealed that public relations programs varied, but programs were all structured around core public relations skills and generally did not offer any topic-based subjects. Despite this, some educators indicated that mental health could be included as a campaign example or a student assignment: "They [mental health topics] are covered as case studies where the lecturer thinks they are relevant and appropriate... It's really a matter of incorporating whatever issues are current or the lecturer feels will get the interest of students." In addition, several educators noted students' interest in the topics of mental health and mental illness. When students were offered the opportunity to choose their own topic, many reflected that mental health issues were a very popular choice: "I know when students get to choose their own subjects, a number of them choose mental health...so there is interest out there, but I don't think it should be a subject in itself."

The consultations revealed a strong preference for curriculum resources that were specifically tailored for public relations practice, rather than for redeveloping the current *Mindframe* or *Response Ability* resources. However, similar to Australian journalism educators, there was a strong preference for problem-based learning approaches with topical and relevant case-studies that could enhance student learning of public relations practice while also exposing students to an area that involved management of a sensitive social issue (Skehan et al., 2009). Respondents noted that supporting materials and background documents would also be required to ensure that educators could teach, not only practical skills and tactics, but be in an informed position to address the social responsibility, ethical dilemmas and practical challenges that communication about suicide and mental illness involves.

Educators noted that barriers to uptake would include space within the curriculum to address the issues, a perception that mental illness and suicide may not be the core business of public relations as well as staff discomfort at raising sensitive issues in a classroom setting. Given the prevalence of mental illness and suicide, and the reported misinformation that exists in the community, educators believed they would require additional support to cover the topics well. Educators did, however, believe that these barriers could be managed as long as the

resources were of high quality, easy to use, relevant and provided enough guidance to educators in handling the content areas.

It was clear from consultations with public relations educators that a curriculum approach for public relations programs would need to be flexible and developed in a way that they could be used at various points in the curriculum and in a range of subject areas such as ethics, crisis communication, issues management, media relations and campaign development, to name a few. The resources would also need to be based on core public relations skills, rather than on trying to teach students about mental illness or suicide specifically.

The model of curriculum development already trialed under the *Mindframe* National Media Initiative was translated for use in public relations education; maintaining the inherent problem-based learning design (Skehan et al., 2007, 2009; Greenhalgh & Hazell, 2005; Sheridan-Burns & Hazell, 1998). Problem-based learning models have been used elsewhere for the study of ethics and related subjects within tertiary public relations courses (Slattery, 2002; Erzikova, 2010). In this way, a problem is posed and serves as the context for new learning. To be successful however, it needs to be grounded in real world or authentic contexts (Slattery, 2002).

The resources were developed as an online package and include a core document for students, lecture slides and notes, and six case-studies including video and other multi-media materials. The case-studies are the practical components of the resources and include group work, activities and written exercises that promote what Hutchison described as “active learning”; laying strong foundations for skills proficiency (2002, p. 302). The public relations curriculum resources were developed in partnership with an expert working group of public relations educators and industry representatives who assisted the project team to ensure all exercises and activities were based on ‘real-world’ scenarios. One case study, for example, involves crisis communication about the suicide death of a young person with implications for a number of organisations involved. Other case studies involved the development of a mental health campaign to promote help-seeking behaviour and planning an event to raise awareness of mental illness and engage publics. The case-study and lecture materials are supported by information to assist educators in using the materials and discussing sensitive issues with students, as well as a range of fact sheets that provide background context, facts and statistics, and summaries of research evidence. Refer to [www.mindframe-media.info](http://www.mindframe-media.info) for access to the curriculum resources.

The curriculum resources reflect the model of empowerment and capacity building suggested by Baker and Martinson (2002), avoiding proscription or censorship but offering emerging practitioners tools and knowledge to make their own informed decisions about the way in which they can responsibly communicate about mental illness and suicide in practice.

### **Usefulness and Relevance of the Curriculum Approach: Pilot Study**

A pilot study was run to determine the acceptability and usefulness of the resources to both educators and students. The study also sought to assess the impact of resource-use on students’ knowledge and attitudes to communication about suicide and mental illness. The results of the pilot study were used to identify areas of resource improvement and ways that the resources might best articulate into a public relations course before full dissemination to all relevant Australian tertiary institutions.

Seven universities and technical colleges responded to an invitation to pilot the *Response Ability* for Public Relations resources. Members of the pilot group were sent the *Response Ability* for Public Relations resources, which included a DVD containing the video clips for case studies and copies of other supporting case study materials. For the remainder of the resources—having been designed as online materials—the pilot group was directed to the home website. The website contains a ‘User’s Guide’ for instruction on using the resources.

The seven Australian tertiary institutions that participated in the pilot study were based in New South Wales (3), Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia and included five universities and two TAFE Campuses. Each tertiary institution used the *Response Ability* materials with students and completed evaluation components. Students ( $n = 198$ ) from across first, second and third year subjects received the materials. Measures for the pilot study included semi-structured telephone interviews with educators who piloted the resources as well

as pre (Time One) and post (Time Two) student surveys measures to assess change in knowledge and attitudes, and to gauge views and opinions about the materials and the topic.

### **Resource Usage**

Educators reported using the materials across all years of study, although most used the materials in a second or third year course. Educators indicated that the resources were used in “Ethics”, “Public Relations and the Media” and “Campaign” related subjects. The materials were used predominantly in tutorials or as an individual assessment for students.

While all six case studies were used at least once in the pilot, the most popular case-studies were: (a) *Case Study 1* (50%) dealing with a suicide incident that could be used for crisis management, media relations and related topics; and (b) *Case Study 3* (50%) which was based on a mental health campaign. Most respondents (75%) indicated that they had used the core background document for students, *Issues and Impact* and the planning document for educators, *Discussing Sensitive Issues*.

### **Relevance, Usefulness, Quality and Ease of Use**

Educators were asked to separately rate the relevance, usefulness, ease of use and quality of the resources in their teaching. Educators generally rated each of the resource components as “very relevant” or “relevant” with only one educator rating the fact sheets as only “somewhat relevant”. All educators gave a rating of “very useful” or “useful” and all educators rated the resources as “very easy” to use. A majority of the educators (75%) also rated the quality of both the content and the presentation of the resources as “excellent”.

Educators commented that the resources were of high quality, useful and easy for them to use and thought that students also found them useful and easy to use. Positive comments were generally related to the limited preparation required, the applicability of the material to the subjects, and the quality of the materials. For instance, one educator commented: “The quality of the [information] and the way it is presented is very good... puts it in a format which makes it easy to transfer into a course and then be able to teach” and another: “Most of our students are distance educations and the fact I didn’t get one question about the assignment... indicates there were no issues and I didn’t really have to provide a lot of guidance.”

### **Flexible Enough for my Students to Use in a Way That Was Meaningful to Them**

A majority of students (84%) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the information presented in the lecture or tutorial on ‘appropriate communication about mental illness and suicide’ was relevant to their public relations study. A majority of students (86%) also “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the information presented in the lecture and/or tutorial was interesting.

Survey measures pre- and post-exposure to the resources, indicated that students generally agreed that public relations practice can impact on health and social issues, including mental illness and suicide. Additionally, students generally agreed that public relations practitioners needed to have some level of responsibility for the impact of their campaign or communication.

### **Knowledge and Confidence**

Educators were asked to self-rate their knowledge of the issues related to appropriate communication about mental illness and suicide, both pre- and post-exposure to the *Response Ability* resources. Ratings ranged from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) across both knowledge and confidence ratings.

All educators (100%) gave a “neutral” rating of knowledge before exposure to the resources ( $M = 3.00$ ), with improvements to self-reported knowledge following exposure to the resources ( $M = 4.25$ ). Educators also rated their confidence in teaching about these issues as “neutral” ( $M = 3.00$ ) before exposure but showed an increase in self-reported confidence following exposure to the resources ( $M = 4.00$ ).

All participants (100%) indicated they felt they were provided with enough support to implement the pilot and all participants indicated that they planned to use the resources again in the future and would recommend the resources to other educators: “We will use the resources over a number of subjects...and adapt them to the course.

The resources were more helpful than I thought they would be.” Despite the generally positive feedback from educators, they did highlight issues of concern relating to crowded curriculum and the currency of the resources over time as issues change: “The barrier is not the materials, the barrier is organising your semester or course to accommodate it and working out how much you can fit in. Issues become more complex. In three or four years you will need to see what the current issues are.”

Students were asked to rate from 0 (strongly agree) to 3 (strongly disagree) their confidence in their ability to communicate about mental illness and suicide following the lecture or tutorial. The majority of students (79%) indicated that they either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that their confidence had increased, while a minority indicated that they (19%) “disagreed” or (2%) “strongly disagreed”.

Students were asked to rate their agreement from 0 (strongly disagree) to 3 (strongly agree), with the statement: “I feel I have had enough knowledge regarding appropriate communication about suicide to avoid my practice causing any harm to vulnerable members of the community.” Prior to being exposed to the resource over half of all participants indicated they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the above statement, whereas only 31% of participants assigned a rating of “disagree” or “strongly disagree” after exposure. A paired *t*-test showed that student’s level of agreement prior exposure to the resource ( $M = 1.41$ ) was significantly different to their level of agreement after exposure ( $M = 1.74, p < .05$ ).

Students were asked to rate their agreement from 0 (strongly disagree) to 3 (strongly agree), with the statement: “I feel I have had enough knowledge regarding appropriate communication about mental illness to avoid my practice causing any harm to vulnerable members of the community.” Prior to being exposed to the resource over half of all participants indicated they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the above statement, whereas only 30% of participants assigned a rating of “disagree” or “strongly disagree” after exposure. A paired *t*-test showed that student’s level of agreement prior exposure to the resource ( $M = 1.44$ ) was significantly different to their level of agreement after exposure ( $M = 1.74, p < .05$ ).

Additional questions to assess student knowledge in the pilot study were flawed, with students misinterpreting some questions and answering them in relation to “personal communication” to people they thought may be at risk rather than “professional communication”. Assessment of changes in student knowledge is needed in future research.

## Conclusions and Ways Forward

The power and influence, and indeed the reputation, of the public relations profession require an ethical standard of practice that is responsible, accurate and considered. This is true of many issues and areas that will be encountered by practitioners in the professional realm. If practice is considered, it can have positive impacts in terms of increasing engagement with and awareness of important social issues such as suicide and mental illness. Done without care and consideration, the impacts for publics directly affected, such as those living with a mental illness or vulnerable to suicide, can be harmful and at worst, life threatening.

For public relations education to maintain relevance and usefulness in relation to the demands of practice, both the philosophical principles of ethical conduct, as well as providing opportunity for practical skills-development and experience must be introduced. For educators and institutions seeking to produce these capabilities in graduates, resources should respond to the sector’s needs in their design, relevance and currency. The *Response Ability [Mindframe]* for Public Relations learning suite has been developed with the needs of educators, students as well as those of sector professionals and marginalised publics in mind.

Evaluation conducted in the university context has indicated that there is a place for the material within public relations education. Despite some limitations in measuring the impact of the resources on student knowledge to date, educators and students have recognised the resources as being useful and relevant and have self-reported that the resources have impacted on improved confidence and knowledge. In endeavouring to empower students with

the skills and knowledge to communicate responsibly about mental illness and suicide, the logical next step for this project is to conduct more comprehensive evaluation of the impact of the materials on student knowledge and skill. Beyond this, there would be value in estimating the potential impact of the curriculum resources on future professional practice of those that were exposed to the materials in their undergraduate training.

Fitch (2012) conducted a further evaluation of the *Response Ability [Mindframe]* materials and ethical practice with a cohort of students at one university. The author made a number of recommendations about both the place of these issues in public relations curricula, but also in regards to the nature of their inclusion. In particular, Fitch argues that there is a need to scaffold materials into the assessment schedule to best contextualise learning and provide real-time client experiences that ensure students can apply the principles taught in the materials. The materials will also need to respond to the cultural diversity of many university programs and ensure the materials integrate the opportunities and challenges that the new media environment may present for public relations practice (Fitch, 2012; Makau & Arnett, 1997). Of particular interest to communication studies, it has been argued that globalisation and new media have contributed to an ever-increasing need for a diverse, flexible and effective ethical education (Austin & Toth, 2011; Starck & Kruckeberg 2003; Makau & Arnett, 1997). The *Response Ability [Mindframe]* for Public Relations project has maintained currency and responded to emerging issues through the development of new case study material that incorporates dilemmas facing practitioners in managing media technologies and environments. The relative benefit and risks associated with communicating about mental illness and suicide using new technologies is under-researched posing challenges for both the public relations and health sectors and requiring further examination (Pirkis & Blood, 2010). This is an area for future investigation under the *Mindframe* National media initiative.

As the speed of communication changes, so too must the provisions of both educational and professional support, in order to maintain an empowered profession that leads by example and advocates on behalf of marginalised publics and their safety. While the *Mindframe* program has collaborated with the peak industry body, the Public Relations Institute of Australia, further work is needed to link the curriculum approach to industry skills and standards. An approach that integrates both undergraduate and professional support across all related sectors – health, public relations and media – will have more power to positively influence publics and contribute to the promotion of mental health and wellbeing and to the prevention of suicide.

*Note:* Since this pilot study was completed, the curriculum resources for public relations will be rebranded as *Mindframe for Public Relations Education* and all resources will be located on the *Mindframe* website at [www.mindframe-media.info](http://www.mindframe-media.info)

## References

- Austin, L. L., & Toth, E. L. (2011). Exploring ethics education in global public relations curricula: Analysis of international curricula descriptions and interviews with public relations educators. *Public Relations Review*, 37(5), 506–512.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2007). *Causes of Death, Australia, 2005*. ABS catalogue number 3303.0. Canberra, Australia: Australian Bureau of Statistics. Retrieved from <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/3303.0Explanatory%20Notes12005?OpenDocument>
- Baker, S., & Martinson, D. L. (2002). Out of the red-light district: Five principles for ethically proactive public relations. *Public Relations Quarterly*, 47(3), 15-19.
- Barney, L. J., Griffiths, M., Christensen, H., & Jorm, A. (2009). Exploring the nature of stigmatising beliefs about depression and help-seeking: Implications for reducing stigma. *BMC Public Health*, 9(61), n.p.
- Bowen, S. (2005). Ethics of public relations in health. In R. L. Heath (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Public Relations* (pp. 569-583). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Commonwealth of Australia. (2011). *National Suicide Prevention Strategy*. Canberra, ACT, Australia: Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing. Retrieved from <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/mentalhealth/publishing.nsf/Content/national-suicide-prevention-strategy-1>
- Erzikova, E. (2010). University teachers' perceptions and evaluations of ethics instruction in the public relations curriculum. *Public Relations Review*, 36(3), 316–318.
- Fitch, K. (2012). Communicating mental illness and suicide: public relations students' perceptions of ethical practice. *The International Journal of Communication Ethics*, 9(1), 14-21.
- Fitzpatrick, K., & Gauthier, C. (2001). Toward a professional responsibility theory of public relations ethics. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 16(2-3), 193-212.
- Francis, C., Pirkis, J., Dunt, D., & Blood R. W. (2001). *Mental health and illness in the media: A review of the literature*. Canberra, ACT, Australia: Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing.
- Greenhalgh, S., & Hazell, T. (2005). Student evaluation of Response Ability. *Australian Journalism Review*, 27(2), 43-51.
- Hocking, B. (2003) Reducing mental illness stigma and discrimination — everybody's business. *Medical Journal of Australia*, 178(9), 47-48.
- Hutchison, L. L. (2002). Teaching ethics across the public relations curriculum. *Public Relations Review*, 28(3), 301–309.
- Jorm, A.F., Korten, A.E., Jacomb, P.A., Christensen, H. & Henderson, S. (1999). Attitudes to people with a mental disorder: A survey of the Australian public and health professionals. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 33(1), 77-83.
- Macnamara, J. (1993). Public Relations and the Media (Unpublished MA thesis, Deakin University). Retrieved from <http://www.pria.com.au/sitebuilder/resources/knowledge/files/1172/primpactmedia.pdf>
- Makau, J. M., & Arnett, R. C. (1997). *Communication ethics in an age of diversity*. Urbana, USA: University of Illinois Press.
- Pirkis, J., & Blood, W. R. (2010). *Suicide and the news and information media: A critical review*. Canberra, ACT, Australia: Commonwealth of Australia.
- Pirkis, J., Blood, R. W., Beautrais, A., Burgess, P., & Skehan, J. (2006). Media guidelines on the reporting of suicide. *Crisis*, 27(2), 82-87.
- Pirkis, J., Blood, W., Dare, A. & Holland, K. (2008). *The Media Monitoring Project: Changes in media reporting of suicide and mental health and illness in Australia: 2000/01 – 2006/0*. Canberra, ACT, Australia: Commonwealth of Australia.
- Public Relations Institute of Australia. (2012). *PRIA's university degree accreditation program*. Sydney, NSW, Australia: Public Relations Institute of Australia. Retrieved from <http://www.pria.com.au/development/accredited-university-degrees>
- Sheridan-Burns, L., & Hazell, T. (1998). Response...Ability: Youth suicide and the national university curriculum project. *Australian Journalism Review*, 20(2), 111-128.
- Skehan, J., Sheridan-Burns, L., & Hazell, T. (2007). Keeping pace with current issues in reporting suicide and mental illness. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*, 4(2), 106-119.
- Skehan, J., Sheridan-Burns, L., & Hazell, T. (2009). The *Response Ability* project: Integrating the reporting of suicide and mental illness into journalism curricula. *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator*, Summer,

- 192-204. Retrieved from <http://www.himh.org.au/home/our-work/research-and-evaluation/peer-reviewed-papers?a=4890>
- Slattery, K. L. (2002). Loyalty, harm and duty: PBL in a media ethics course. *Public Relations Review*, 28(2), 185–190.
- Starck, K., & Kruckeberg, D. (2003). Ethical obligations of public relations in an era of globalisation. *Journal of Communication Management*, 8(1), 29–40.
- Wahl, O. F. (1999). Mental health consumers' experience of stigma. *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, 25(3), 467-478.
- Zawawi, C. (1994). Sources of news – Who feeds the watchdogs? *Australian Journalism Review*, 16(1), 67-71.
- Zawawi, C. (2001). Feeding the watchdogs – An analysis of relationships between Australian Public Relations practitioners and journalists. (Unpublished PhD thesis, Queensland University of Technology). Retrieved from <http://www.pria.com.au/sitebuilder/resources/knowledge/files/1172/primpactmedia.pdf>

## Editorial Advisory Committee

Paul Adams	Victoria University, Australia
Jamilah Ahmad	Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia
Medhi Bagherian	Kygozar Institute of Public Relations, Iran
Nigel de Bussy	Curtin University of Technology, Australia
Joy Chia	Monash University, Australia
Craig Fleisher	University of Windsor, Canada
Chris Galloway	Massey University, New Zealand
Leanne Glenn	University of South Australia, Australia
Ray Hiebert	University of Maryland, USA
Gwyneth Howell	University of Western Sydney, Australia
Jane Johnston	Bond University, Australia
Kiranjit Kaur	Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia
Rosechongporn Komolsevin	Bangkok University, Thailand
Jim Macnamara	University of Technology, Sydney, Australia
Steve Mackey	Deakin University, Australia
Sadie-Jane Nunis	Singapore Institute of Management, Singapore
Joseph Peart	Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand
Peter Putnis	University of Canberra, Australia
Stephen Quinn	South China Morning Post, Hong Kong
Deirdre Quinn-Allan	Deakin University, Australia
Bob Pritchard	University of Oklahoma, USA
Richard Ruid	Hong Kong Baptist University Hong Kong
C V N Reddi	Public Relations Voice, India
Marianne Sison	RMIT University, Australia
Rosaleen Smyth	Divine Word University, Madang, PNG
Krishnamurthy Sriramesh	Purdue University, USA
Edwin So	Paradigm Communications, Beijing, China
Noel Turnbull	Australia
Jon White	City University, London
Wimar Witoelar	Intermatrix Communications, Indonesia
Robina Xavier	Queensland University of Technology, Australia
Jordi Xifra	Universitat Pompeu Fabra