

Media Release

Mental health: what's love got to do with it?

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James Cook University researchers want to hear about your romantic relationship(s) so they can work out how love affects your mental health.

PhD candidate Raquel Peel interviewed 15 psychologists as part of her research and says they revealed that while relationship difficulties are one of the main reasons clients seek counselling, that is not the issue they report in the first session.

“So, the issue a client brings through the door is often not the issue counsellors and psychologists ultimately end up working on. The most common issues presented by clients are anxiety, depression, substance abuse, adjustment disorder, and personality disorder. But relationship break-ups are in fact often at the core of why many people seek counselling.”

Ms Peel said despite that, a major gap in the literature exists regarding the effect of romantic relationship break-ups on the mental health of individuals.

“We do know that one of the main obstacles in maintaining relationships is risk regulation and balance between relationship stressors and conflicting goals. So it's possible that divergent life and relationship goals may be leading to mental health difficulties for some people.”

She said a big part of the role of counsellors and psychologists is to explore the core issues a client might be experiencing underneath their initial presentation and work with them to find a balance between work and love.

Ms Peel said results from the survey can ultimately help mental health professionals to better treat relationship issues by asking questions about people's romantic relationships and how they approach them.

The survey is conducted online and takes about 30 minutes to complete. The researcher cannot identify you and the data collected is strictly confidential and anonymous.

The Survey Link is: https://jcuchs.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8qvOCWX8W2dBrmd

Contact for media only: Raquel Peel (Please note Ms Peel works at JCU's Townsville campus).

M: 0427 522 522

E: raquel.peel@jcu.edu.au