

Emotional Intelligence in Medicine

Feb 24, 2021 | 0 

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Jules Willcocks speaks to Kirsty Forrest and Jo Bishop about Emotional Intelligence in Medicine.

Summary Writer: Christina Goodman

Script Writers: Kirsty Forrest, Jules Willcocks

Editors: Kirsty Forrest, Jo Bishop

Interviewer: Jules Willcocks

Interviewees: Kirsty Forrest, Jo Bishop

About Professor Kirsty Forrest

Professor Kirsty Forrest is the Dean of Medicine at [Bond University](#), an accomplished medical education leader, teacher, researcher and clinician with proven strengths and skills acquired during her career in the United Kingdom and Australia. She has been involved in medical education research for 15 years and is frequently invited as a facilitator and speaker on education and leadership at national and international forums. Kirsty also practices educational leadership as an Executive Member and Treasurer of the [Medical Deans of Australia and New Zealand](#) and Chair of the Medical Education Collaborative committee.

Kirsty's passion for medical education extends beyond the undergraduate forum into the graduate forum through her roles as member of the Education, Development and Evaluation Committee and a lead facilitator for the educator program of [Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists](#) (ANZCA). She works clinically as a Consultant Anaesthetist at [Gold Coast University Hospital](#) and is a Fellow of the ANZCA. Kirsty's clinical research areas include medical leadership education and patient safety.

About Associate Professor Jo Bishop

Associate Professor Jo Bishop is Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Service Quality and Curriculum lead for the [Bond Medical Program](#), which enables her to work with key stakeholders within the tertiary and health service sector.

Jo is a member of national working groups and contributes significantly to international discussions on student support and medical education pedagogy. She has recently been involved with several webinars and international conferences. Jo has nearly a decade of experience as a curriculum director and an anatomist and former stem cell biologist, and sees herself as a medical sciences educator.

About Dr Jules Willcocks

Jules Willcocks is an Emergency Medicine Consultant and the Director of Prevocational Education and Training at [Gosford Hospital](#).

His interest is in bringing out the best in people principally through [mentoring](#) and [coaching](#). He firmly believes that [wellbeing](#) is a crucial part of this and that you cannot look after someone to the best of your abilities if you yourself are not well.

He trained as an executive coach and has a particular interest in [financial wellness](#) for doctors.

Emotional intelligence and wellbeing

With Professor Kirsty Forrest, Dean of Medicine at Bond University and Professor Jo Bishop, Associate Dean of Medicine at Bond University, Queensland, Australia

Introduction

Should medical schools test emotional intelligence (EI) as part of the admissions process? Can EI make a difference to doctors' wellbeing and patient outcomes? Kirsty Forrest and Jo Bishop think so. They speak with Jules Willcocks about how focus on EI is bringing benefits to their program and hopefully to a future generation of doctors.

1. Emotional Intelligence - ranked students perform well

- Prior to 2018, interview offers for the Medical Program at Bond University were made based on academic performance alone. This meant that only students with exceptionally high academic scores (ATAR 99, OP1) had the chance to enter the program. The Medical Program changed its admissions process to include a lower academic hurdle (around ATAR96 or OP3) and an Emotional Intelligence ability test. Students with the highest EI scores are now offered interviews.
- Since this change to the Medical Program, students are showing just as strong an academic performance as previously and are also perform better in terms of communication.

2. Issues raised help improve dialogue between students and teaching staff

- High EI cohorts of students have tended to raise more issues with teaching staff, it is believed that these issues existed previously though had not been brought to the attention of staff as early as they are now.
- Teaching staff feel they have better dialogue with students and can resolve issues more easily.

3. Debriefing - a tool for learning

- The Medical Program at Bond University has added regular debriefing opportunities into the curriculum, to support students to develop reflection and resilience skills.
- In terms of the medical profession as a whole, debriefing sessions in clinical practice should occur not just when things go wrong, but on a regularly basis and especially when things go well.

Take Home Messages

- Medical professionals tend to be good at recognising and managing the emotions of others but not of themselves.
- Medical training has traditionally encouraged early-career professionals to hide their emotions rather than deal directly with them.
- A greater focus on emotional intelligence may encourage early help-seeking and improve doctor wellbeing.
- Asking others openly for feedback may encourage them to share their thoughts.

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