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**Type of Presentation:** Workshop

**The Stranger at the University .....the struggle with student life encountered by some freshers (and older students too).**

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**Learning Goal:**

Object

The learning goal for the presentation is an understanding of the issues in relation to diversity and difference, that result in the psychological distress that some students' relocation for a university education causes. In addition the increased likelihood of psychosis and other serious mental health problems occurring.

**Abstract Text:**

I have worked as principal psychotherapist and operational lead for the Kent NHS Early Intervention in Psychosis Services and I am therefore aware of the higher level of referrals occurring in Canterbury, Kent a city with 3 universities. I currently supervise the University of Kent's Wellbeing and Psychotherapy/Counselling team providing services for the student population of 52,000 (with a high percentage of overseas students). Students arrive at the university and the city of Canterbury as strangers to one another and sometimes themselves.

Aspects of difference and diversity are varied and issues of culture, religion, race, class, finance, academia, sex and gender all impact on the new student. Increasingly the term stranger can be extended to the young people who question gender and sexuality issues and who are disproportionately represented in mental health services within the university, presenting as strangers to their old friendship groups and families. The LGBTQ group at the university is supportive of overseas students but many who are questioning their gender or sexuality would not join such a group because of perceived stigma or a fear of being outed to other students from their country of origin. The themes of being a Stranger in the City applies to the young people who study with us and who often experience levels of dislocation and disassociation and for whom university is a difficult and isolating experience.

I would like to explore with the workshop attendees, the diverse ways of supporting these students. We provide at the university a range of support options. I wish to respectfully examine how we could share what is exemplary in our service and improve our approaches by adopting thinking from other student services.

**ON THE HEALING POWER  
OF HUMAN RECONNECTION**