

Group Reflection.

For our interception interviews, our goal was to meet a diverse group of international and domestic students, with a different point of views, experiences and backgrounds. This would be difficult to achieve because we couldn't screen the interviewees beforehand but, in the end, we ended up with a diverse group of participants. Initially, it was quite daunting to go up to people but once we got the ball rolling it became a lot easier. I found people genuinely wanted to help once they found out the reasons why we were conducting these interviews. Due to the time restraint, up to 15minutes per interview, it was difficult to dig deeper and to better understand their point of views.

From the range of perspectives, we gathered, we found a lot of interesting concerns. While most of the information we gathered confirmed our suspicions we also were surprised to realise a few things and one of them is that time is a huge factor for students. The duration of the appointment at the doctors isn't long enough, especially when the person before you are running late. One participant's experience was when they arrived on time for their appointment, had to wait 20 minutes before they could see the doctor. Which caused them to be late to their other commitments which left them in a sour mood. Also, the time between the initial booking of the appointment and the actual appointment is too long. The one participant had to wait 10 days before they could see someone. This person was in a dark place and contemplating suicide.

Additionally, there seem to be a big distrust of the services, especially mental health services. Some of the participants found that the staff were unprofessional, lacked compassion and there was a language barrier. Most of our participants agreed they would talk to their friends first before reaching out to the services.

The participants agreed that current marketing doesn't work. Students receive a lot of emails from AUT and don't pay attention to them. Some participants would like to see the services use other platforms such as Facebook.

Furthermore, the students were hesitant about using the services. Some participants said they wouldn't use them because, in their culture, they didn't talk about it. Some felt they would be judged by their peers. Majority of the international students felt they couldn't fully open to counsellors because of the cultural differences and language barriers.

When discussing the possible solutions our group we came up with a few game-changers. First, to create a comic series, which showed real situations that students have experienced and them seeking help. This would eliminate the language barrier and would be able to reach all students. Secondly, changing the system. Making the doctors' appointment longer and sending out a message to students notifying them when there will be a wait. Marketing on other platforms such as Facebook. Thirdly, ultimately removing the stigma around mental health. Creating a new word for mental health. Saying to students, these services are included in your tuition. Finally, bigger advertising, instead of the A4 papers around the campus. Advertising in the main buildings, such as the library.