International learner wellbeing forum



Tuesday 10th November, Auckland Grammar School, 9.00am - 3.15pm

This forum brings together international programme teams and health professionals to discuss a coordinated approach to international student wellbeing and support. A key thread will be the need to address the increasing numbers of international learners making insurance claims for anxiety and depression.

9.00am - 9.30am	Registration and pre-session tea and coffee
9.30am - 11.00am	***'Stresses and strains: What we're seeing and the change we're seeking"*. Education provider-health services connections - Alex Wang, Darcy Zhao & Meller Hu from Asian Family Services** How can education providers and health services strengthen coordination to 'load at the front end' and effectively support at-risk international students? Alex Wang and health professionals from Asian Family Services will explore the connections between education providers and health services, with a focus on integrating and coordinating different facets of culturally responsive support.
11.00am - 11.30am	Morning tea
11.30am - 1.00pm	**Tailored mental health support and optimal referral practice for international students - Jason Chang, Psychiatrist at CONNECT Mental Health Ltd & Chairperson of Asian Community Transformation Trust** This session will discuss tailored mental health support for international students. It will include not only a psychiatrist's insights but also pragmatic tools for diversity-responsive care.
1.00pm - 1.45pm	Lunch

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1.45pm - 3.15pm	**Partnerships, consortium travel, student wellbeing and crisis management - Lynda Lidgard, Rangitoto College & Josh Brodie, Massey High School** Lynda and Josh will explore how school partnerships and consortium travel Improve international student wellbeing & crisis management from abroad. The session will consider the value of collaboration, shared approaches and relationships across schools when supporting students.
3.15pm	Symposium closes
Workshop format	Speaker presentation/panel discussion (30-40mins) Workshop discussion (30-40mins) Session wrap (10-15mins)

For more information and to register now visit:
https://events.humanitix.com/supporting-international-learner-wellbeing

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Alex Wang, National Manager-Clinical Service, Asian Family Services

Alex is the National Clinical Manager at Asian Family Services, leading the clinical team and overseeing service quality, clinical governance, and program development. A first-generation migrant from China, he champions culturally responsive, accessible mental health support for Asian communities in New Zealand. Before entering the sector, Alex worked in law enforcement, building expertise in risk assessment and crisis management. A Registered Social Worker and AOD Practitioner with experience across DHBs, CADS, and community agencies, he is committed to equity and evidence-based practice.



Darcy Zhao, Senior Practice Leader for AWS and Asian Integrated Wellbeing Services, Asian Family Services

Darcy Zhao is Senior Practice Leader for AWS and Asian Integrated Wellbeing Services at Asian Family Services, where she provides strategic, operational, and clinical leadership for culturally responsive mental health services for Asian youth and adults across New Zealand. She is a registered social worker with the Social Workers Registration Board and holds a Master of Applied Social Work from Massey University. Darcy has extensive experience in community mental health, dual diagnosis rehabilitation, and culturally responsive wellbeing services, and is committed to advancing equitable access to high-quality, evidence-informed mental health and wellbeing services for Asian populations in New Zealand.

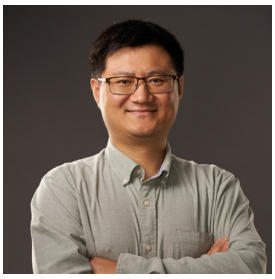
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Meller Hu, Clinical Team Counsellor, Asian Family Services

Meller Hu is a counsellor of Clinical Team at Asian Family Services, supporting Asian communities through culturally responsive counselling. Meller's work includes supporting young people and their families with emotional distress, relationship and family pressures, and transitions between cultures and systems. Through counselling, Meller helps young people identify strengths, build coping strategies, and strengthen communication and their support networks. Meller also contributes to Asian Helpline support, where he responds to young people seeking help, including those experiencing distress or safety concerns, and helps connect them with appropriate support. Meller's practice highlights the importance of accessible, culturally safe, and coordinated responses to international student wellbeing.



Jason Chang, Psychiatrist at CONNECT Mental Health Ltd & Chairperson of Asian Community Transformation Trust

Jason Chang is a Consultant Psychiatrist based in Christchurch and founder of CONNECT Mental Health. He trained through RANZCP and joined Canterbury District Health Board in 2018, treating adults in hospital and community settings, with particular interests in mood disorders and trauma. His approach is pragmatic and empathic, centred on holistic care, whānau inclusion and healthy boundaries. Fluent in Mandarin and English, Jason co-chairs the Asian Community Transformation Trust, working to raise awareness of mental wellbeing and improve access to services for Asian communities.

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Lynda Lidgard, Director of International Students, Rangitoto College

Lynda leads the International Team at Rangitoto College, with a focus on strategic management and student wellbeing. She travels globally to market and meet with new and existing educational agents, fostering the relationships that bring a diverse range of students to Rangitoto College. Lynda is dedicated to ensuring every student is supported and successful throughout their New Zealand journey.



Josh Brodie, Director of International Students, Massey High School

Josh is an experienced international educator at Massey High School who loves sharing the culture and heart of New Zealand with his students. Having taught overseas for many years, he understands the challenges of being far from loved ones and ensures new international students feel cared for and accepted. From initial inquiry until they leave for their next adventure, Joshua encourages active involvement in school life. He prioritises strong relationships with students and their families, meeting parents during overseas travels to discuss their child' s progress.

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