Mental Health and Well-being - How Trauma Informed Schools Project is transforming schools in WA

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Abstract:
The Student Engagement, Mental Health and Wellbeing in Western Australian Catholic Schools Audit (the SEMHW Audit) was conducted in response to formal and in formal feedback from schools about the impact of students with mental health issues in schools.

The SEMHW Audit was considered an important way of informing Catholic Schools and Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) about the current status of these students and the role of schools in supporting mental health and well-being of students.

The intention of the SEMHW Audit was to share information collected across the system which would then be used to inform service delivery from the system in the area of student engagement and associated mental health and well-being. The audit was conducted in August 2016 and 156 Catholic schools (97%) across the state completed the survey

It was anticipated that the SEMHW Audit would provide information that would assist with:
- identifying the impact and needs of students with mental health concerns in schools
- understanding how to build the capacity of Catholic schools to meet the needs of these students;
- examining the relationship between mental health and its impact on behaviour and learning;
- understanding the current issues and what support/resources/guidance are needed by schools to support students and staff;

A strategic plan was developed with 22 recommendations. One of the recommendations from the Audit was to provide relevant support to build capacity of school communities to understand and cater for the needs of students with had experienced trauma.

The Trauma Informed Schools Project was developed and implemented across schools over WA. The package of support includes access to training for all schools across the state, participation in action research, self-audits and developing system reform. The presentation will examine the project and its impact to date