

Guest lecturer with lived experience of mental illness to enhance student understandings of Global Mental Health and its effects

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I created a new module last year entitled, Sociology of Mental Health & Illness, delivered to third year undergraduate students in the School of Social Sciences. The module was largely a success, and I won the Highly Commended category in the Faculty Outstanding Teaching Awards in 2022/23. However, there was a suggestion from students that it would be great to hear from a person with lived experience of mental illness. So much of the course talks about the privilege and power of psychiatrists, academics and mental healthcare professionals and the relative lack of power of service users and patients within mental health practice and research. I agreed with the suggestion, and it was something I had endeavoured to do in the course. However, given the challenges of writing and setting up a new course, I didn't manage to involve patient voices in the teaching. This was something I wanted to improve for the 'second run' of the module, hence my application to the Social Responsibility fund.

Anto, a PhD student at The University of Manchester, was recommended to me as someone who would be a great guest lecturer on my course. Anto has lived experience of mental illness, as well as experience of chaining (pasung) in Indonesia. He was chained on several occasions when he was unwell in his home country, Indonesia and has subsequently made a [documentary](#) about his experiences. The documentary (30 minutes long) was added to Reading Lists and students were asked to view this as part of their essential preparation for the course. Anto is also Co-Lead of the [Global Mental Health Peer Network](#), where he advocates for better treatment, peer support and the end to mental illness stigma.

Anto delivered a 1-hour guest lecture on the topic of 'Global Mental Health' talking about his experiences of mental healthcare in Indonesia, as well as his advocacy work. His lecture was very interesting and encouraged debate in class, specifically whether treatments in the Global North are 'better' than those provided in many countries in the Global South. One challenge of having Anto guest lecture was ensuring that students were respectful towards him, and balancing asking questions that were pertinent about his personal experiences against those that may be deemed to be overly intrusive. To overcome, I prefaced Anto's lecture by reminding students of the respectful and sensitive ethos we have fostered in class; this is something I talked about in Week 1 of the course, and periodically remind students about, given the topics discussed in the course.

Anto's lecture was excellent; as well as speaking to the Intended Learning Outcome for that week, it also directly linked to other weeks of teaching, particularly those on mental illness stigma, treatment for mental illness, and the survivor/ user movement. He was very open about his experiences, including how he was shunned by friends and people who lived in his home village in Indonesia, the effect this had on him, and how he overcame this. Anto also presented academic research that he has been involved in as well as showing examples of his artwork that has been featured in many publications, including the International Journal of Medical Students and the recent [Lancet Commission on Ending Stigma and Discrimination on Mental Health](#). Students commented that they found it incredibly interesting to hear about Anto's personal experiences and see his artwork. They valued the opportunity to ask Anto questions and suggested in future, there could be more time built in for discussion with students.

It would be great to have Anto lecture on the course again so students can gain insight directly from a person who has experienced mental illness and treatment. Anto and I have discussed the potential to invite him back next year, and incorporate some of his PhD findings about mental illness in Indonesia, into such a lecture.