



RESEARCHER PROFILE

Dr Deborah Warr

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“Deborah’s research will develop clearer understanding of the associations between place-based disadvantage, social connectedness and health.”

Contact

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Dr Deborah Warr is a health sociologist based at the McCaughey Centre: VicHealth Centre for the Promotion of Mental Health and Community Wellbeing. The centre is part of the School of Population Health at the University of Melbourne.

Deborah’s social connection research incorporates case studies that explore the key research issues in community-based settings. The insights generated by the case studies will contribute to building improved theoretical and empirical understanding of issues from a range of critical angles. Deborah and her team will work collaboratively with communities to develop improved understanding of local social issues and evaluate innovative, community-developed projects.

Using this collaborative approach, Deborah is conducting case-study projects in a range of community settings including schools, playgroups and cultural groups in socioeconomically disadvantaged neighbourhoods. These case studies explore issues of social connection and disconnection, and identify effective approaches for promoting social inclusion.

Deborah’s research will also analyse large secondary data sources to examine wider associations – and patterns of associations – between social connection, socioeconomic disadvantage, place and health-related issues.

Deborah aims to develop improved theoretical understanding of class, gender and culture as contexts for understanding contrasting structures of social connections, and the value of social connections and social capital. Her research also aims to understand associations between place-based stigma, health, and social and physical environments of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. She aims to develop effective processes and approaches for promoting social inclusion for disadvantaged and marginalised populations.

The case studies are yielding important benefits for local communities, such as identifying exemplary and innovative approaches to community engagement, which are being adopted in local and interstate programs.

Findings from the community-based case-studies will be written up as plain-language reports to complement the academic reports.