



home and community care

A JOINT COMMONWEALTH AND STATE/TERRITORY PROGRAM
PROVIDING FUNDING AND ASSISTANCE FOR AUSTRALIANS IN NEED

health

Developing Interdisciplinary practice
between allied health professionals &
HAS assessment staff

Eastern Metropolitan Region

- Four LGAs participated – Whitehorse, Manningham, Monash and Knox
- Allied health professionals in Community Health Services (CHS) and HACC assessment staff in councils
- In one instance RDNS was included as an interdisciplinary partner
- CHS' led the projects
- Projects started Aug/Sept 2009 and finished March-June 2010

Background cont.

- All four projects focused on interdisciplinary practice between CHS Occupational Therapists and council HAS assessment officers
- All projects developed or refined new policies and/or processes to establish closer working relationships
- Two projects organised joint assessments

The Presentation

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The presentation will provide

- background,
- common objectives,
- results,
- and key learnings.

Common Objectives set by Department

- Develop strategies for participants to strengthen understanding of each others roles
- Strengthen the understanding of systems to facilitate referral and joint problem solving
- Opportunities for participants to develop practices that share expertise and skills
- Strengthen work practices in order to make the best use of resources available in the local area
- Work collaboratively around common client goals

Summary of objectives identified from the individual projects

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- Enhance the understanding of each agency's priority for access and agreement on the timelines for responding to referrals
- Reduce duplication for clients through streamlined information collecting and sharing
- Effectively utilise the complimentary skills of the OTs and HAS to deliver client centred assessment & care planning
- Ensure there are consistent processes & practices that are transparent to all participants (staff/client/carer/family)

Reported benefits to the organisations

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- A better understanding of the services available at each agency
- Staff feel more confident to advocate for each other's roles
- Increased trust to contact each other to make enquiries, brainstorm ideas &/or for secondary consultation
- Ability to present a more united front to clients

Reported benefits to consumers

- Enhanced continuity of care
- Reduced need for client to re-tell their story
- Increased responsiveness and problem solving as the OT & HAS officer could work through issues together and provide immediate feedback
- Convenience & ease of planning for the client & carer/s to come together for one assessment

Common barriers to implementation

- Finding a suitable environment to accommodate the group in joint assessments
- Maintaining the conversational flow of assessment
- Increasing the duration of the assessment (2-3 hours long)

Summary of key learnings

- The benefit of working in partnership & strong rapport positive in all projects
- Sharing of information – organisational structure & culture, meet & greet of staff
- Working in partnership has helped to identify strengths & gaps in each organisation

Specific key learnings from joint assessments

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- Thoughtful planning and client selection criteria are required
- Clearly articulated eligibility criteria
- Strategies for early identification of client's holistic needs, prior to the initial assessment
- Simple & streamlined screening process
- Allocate joint assessment times across agencies

The Department's Learnings

- Evaluation reports really important & valuable
- Department needed to remain flexible with the projects
- Incorporating change management is a large undertaking
- DH cannot expect agencies to implement change quickly
- It is a slow process where strong structural systems need to be developed

- Other short term projects were identified from these projects
- Importance of working in collaboration to achieve best outcomes for clients, an early ASM message
- The meetings where learnings were shared found helpful by some
- ASM alliance will play an expanded role