

Presentation Abstracts

Theme 2: Collaboration in training and development

Mrs Elizabeth Robinson, Bellarine Community Health

liz.robinson@bch.org.au

Ms Annabel Gill, Barwon Health

Abstract title: *Developing an Allied Health Assistant network:
Perspectives of an allied health assistant*

Introduction: There is an increasing emphasis on building capacity of the allied health workforce through: planning and implementing advanced practice allied health professional roles, utilizing other allied health professional roles to their full potential and increasing the allied health assistant workforce and roles for allied health assistants.

A joint project between Bellarine Community Health and Barwon Health had the goal of exploring and developing opportunities for Allied Health Assistant (AHA) networking, peer support and professional development in the Barwon South West (BSW) Region.

Objectives:

- To identify AHAs working in the BSW region and understand their training and peer support needs.
- To develop an AHA training and networking framework for the BSW region led by AHAs.

Method: Eighty-eight AHAs in the BSW joined a regional AHA email distribution list and were sent a needs analysis survey identifying training and networking needs. At a regional Forum, 28 BSW AHAs brainstormed logistics for sustainable implementation of strategies identified in the survey for addressing networking and training needs.

Results: Forty surveys were returned. Survey results guided the forum brainstorming session resulting in the development of a BSW AHA Networking and Training Committee led by three AHA volunteers and supported by 20 AHAs.

The Committee oversees the implementation of these strategies identified by BSW AHAs:

1. distribution of a quarterly AHA training and networking newsletter,
2. an annual AHA Forum and
3. development of an electronic platform for sharing information.

The first newsletter has been distributed to 88 AHAs and the electronic platform is being developed.

Conclusion: Training and networking needs of AHAs must be addressed to continue development of the AHA workforce. A structured consultative process identified strategies to be led by BSW AHAs to meet their training and networking needs.

Biography

Liz has been employed as an allied health assistant for more than 6 years in two different community health settings. She transitioned into this career path, after 10 years of aged care nursing. Liz has expanded her skills to include Certificate IV Fitness and a Diploma of Management. She is challenged in her current role and feels she adds value to her team. The role includes varied exercise programs, falls prevention and Initial Needs Assessment. Liz is passionate about creating opportunities for all AHAs and this project has allowed her to grow and develop the AHA role.