

Transition Support Program for Allied Health Graduates – All together now!

Background

Graduate Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) face numerous challenges at the beginning of their careers, as they navigate the transition from student to professional. The Victorian Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) recognises the importance of a positive supported transition to practice for new graduates and provides funding to support such activities. However, transition programs can be challenging to run in specialist or rural hospitals where new graduate numbers are typically smaller and group activities are more difficult to run. In 2014-2015, DHHS awarded grants to establish cross-site graduate support clusters, to bring together new graduates from rural or specialist hospitals.

'Taking the Next Step'

The *Melbourne Metropolitan Cross-Site Cluster* (MMCSC) was established between 4 specialist health services in close proximity to one other (Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Royal Children's Hospital, Royal Women's Hospital, Royal Victorian Eye & Ear Hospital; see Figure 1). A DHHS project grant enabled the MMCSC to develop a pilot program titled 'Taking the Next Step', designed to support the transition of Graduate/Intern AHPs across the cluster. The program comprises 6 face:face modules, being rolled-out over a 6 month period from July to December 2015. Module sessions are as follows:



Figure 1

1. *Who's who in the zoo?* (organisational structure & peer support) – hosted by RWH
2. *Who cares?* (resilience, health & wellness) – hosted by RCH
3. *Who are you looking at?* (professional shadowing exercise) – completed at own service
4. *Look who's talking?* (communication skills) – hosted by RVEEH
5. *Whose shoes?* (emotional intelligence & responding to emotional cues) – hosted by PMCC
6. *Where are you headed & who will you be?* (career development) – hosted by RCH

Each module runs for 4 hours and is evaluated via a 'paper & pencil' survey at the end of the session. Evaluation results for Modules 1 & 2 are presented in a parallel ePoster (Muir et al).

Development Process

The key steps in developing the cross-site program were:

1. *Establish a Leadership Team* – Schedule meetings between the Directors of Allied Health across all sites to secure organisational commitment, resourcing, staff willingness to participate & support of the program. Identify a Project Lead to coordinate the program.
2. *Conduct a 'Needs Analysis'* – Disseminate an online survey to Graduate AHPs (n=13) and conduct Focus Groups with Graduates and students (n=19) across the sites, to identify their transition priorities and unmet needs, in order to inform the focus areas, direction and development of the cross-site program.
3. *Establish a Working Group* – Bring together staff drawn from all sites (n=12) to design the program schedule (Figure 2) and plan the module content (Figure 3). Allocate modules to sub-groups, who will facilitate the face:face sessions. Circulate the program to the Leadership Team for review & endorsement.
4. *Develop the Modules & Resources* – Sub-groups liaise together to prepare Module running sheets & develop resources which are sustainable and widely-useable.
5. *Identify eligible Graduate/Intern AHPs* – Disseminate invitations to all eligible Graduates/Interns across the cross-site cluster (with program information provided to Managers) to participate in the 6 month program.



Figure 2

We're Better Together!

Numerous opportunities arise from cross-site collaborations, including sharing the infrastructure, resources & staffing support necessary to facilitate quality transition activities. Bringing together Graduate AHPs across sites increases the participant pool, enhances peer learning, and establishes valuable peer support & networking across the region.

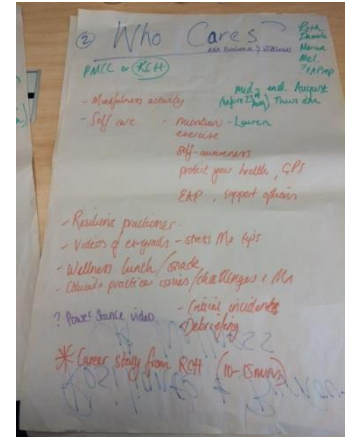


Figure 3

Acknowledgments: People in Health (DHHS Victoria) & members of the Melbourne Metropolitan Cross-Site Cluster
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