

Progress Report

August – October 2003

Therapy Assistant Project (TAP) Midwest & Murchison Health Region

Summary of the project aims:

- To improve best practice within a range of different therapy assistant models operating in the Midwest & Murchison Health Region, including the Midwest ITA model, by developing and piloting practical and usable materials and procedures.
- To promote and make the information developed available to a wider audience in a user friendly way.

Achievements so far:

Engaging key stakeholders

The key stakeholders in the Midwest & Murchison Health Region include therapists, therapy assistants and health service managers. The project officer has been involved with:

- A monthly therapists meeting for discussion of the therapy assistant program
- The therapy assistant training day
- Attendance at various department meetings

The involvement of other agencies via the project steering group has provided a wide reaching communication group. Agencies involved include Department of Health, Commonwealth Department of Health & Ageing, Disability Services Commission, and Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health

Focus groups

Focus groups have been conducted with therapists, therapy assistants, consumers and health service managers involved with the Midwest integrated therapy assistant program to determine the perception of these groups to the existing therapy assistant model. It is planned that these will be repeated at the conclusion of this project as a comparison & evaluation of changes implemented. Ivan Lin from the Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health conducted the focus groups. The focus group summary is available at (web site address)

Recruitment & Orientation

A job description form template has been created with reference to the Statewide TA project outcomes, Health Department requirements and existing therapy assistant JDF's in Midwest & Murchison Health Region. This template has essential components as well as optional components that managers can choose from. This allows flexibility to customise the JDF for a specific position while maintaining common format and language. A set of interview questions to correspond to the selection criteria is currently under development. This template is being trailed in the creation of a new therapy assistant position for Eneabba/Leeman.

A generic and clinical orientation checklist has been developed and trailed by the therapists and therapy assistant working in Mullewa. Evaluation of orientation from the new employees perspective will be used through the 12 months to further develop the orientation checklist.

Outcome measures

Attainment Scaling has been selected for trial from Jan 2004. Belinda Goodale & Ivan Lin have been trained in Goal Attainment Scaling and will be running a training course for all therapists in November 2003 and January 2004 for any new staff.

Guidelines

Guidelines for **responsibilities** of therapists, therapy assistants, line managers, and the primary therapist have been developed and are currently under trial in Geraldton and the Midwest.

Guidelines for supervision, delegation and training are currently in draft form and are being reviewed by the project group prior to trial.

Guidelines related to videoconferencing will link with those developed by the Telehealth Allied Health Bureau Service (TAHBS) project that have yet to be launched.

Clinical Forms

The process of standardising clinical forms and pamphlets related to therapy assistants has begun with separate forms across Midwest, Geraldton community and Geraldton School based services, reduced to allow one standard form for each purpose. The procedure of use of these forms has also been standardized.

Timetable & delegation procedure

The process of allocation of clients to therapy assistant program, including development of the therapy assistant timetable has been standardized across Geraldton and Midwest.

Training

Investigation into recognized training options has begun which has included discussion with recognized training organizations in WA and Queensland.

Review of the training method in Midwest & Murchison health region has also occurred. One outcome is a new education module being offered in November, which involves a one-hour session on documentation of progress in sessions, delivered via videoconference and involving an on-site audience.

For further information, please contact

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