

# **Progress Report**

## **February 2004 – April 2004**

### **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 in February - April:***

##### **Outcome Measures**

A tutorial session was delivered in February to allied health staff as part of the Allied health New Graduate Program on using writing SMART goals and using Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) to write programs. The project officer has provided ongoing support to staff implementing GAS in February – April in the form of discussion at discipline specific GAS writing meetings and written and verbal feedback about GAS goals on request. Training in using GAS for individual therapists beginning work with TA's has also occurred.

A random program audit of therapy assistant programs in April found that 70% of programs were written in the GAS format with almost all of those written in GAS being technically correct. A further program review is planned for the end of June.

##### **Guidelines & Policy**

Guidelines on training for therapy assistants have been developed and are now in use. Key Midwest & Murchison Health Region policies related to the use of therapy assistants are currently being developed. These will link closely with the roles & responsibilities, supervision and training guidelines.

##### **Training**

In addition to the tutorial session on Goal Writing, a tutorial on "Introduction to working with TA's" was held in February as part of the Allied Health new Graduate program. Training for allied health professionals in supervision skills is planned for May and is being run by the Combined University Centre for Rural Health.

Eight MMHR therapy assistants are part way through the "Assist with the delivery of an allied health therapy program" competency from the Certificate 3 in Health Service Assistance (Allied Health Assistance). This 6 week competency is being undertaken through Southbank TAFE in QLD via flexible delivery and the process will be evaluated at the conclusion.

The MMHR TA project group have been part of a group developing a videoconference training initiative with WA Country Health Services and Disability Services Commission. This initiative would see key TA training modules delivered via videoconference with presenters of information drawn from different health regions. A needs analysis for TA training has been completed and

an initial working group meeting held. The next step will see the development of 6 training modules providing specific clinical skills for the launch of the training in August 2004.

### **Technology**

The MMHR internet site continues to contain up to date information on the project <http://www.mmhr.org.au/Home.asp?documentid=289> .

A new MMHR intranet site is currently being developed. Information is currently being uploaded onto this site.

### **Evaluation**

The evaluation phase of the project is well underway with the Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health (CUCRH) coordinating the final evaluation report. Long term planning for continual evaluation and review (including consumer participation) of the TA program is also being planned. This needs to fit with other allied health program evaluation & review and be sustainable within current staffing.

### **Promotion**

A paper titled "Therapy Assistants – a model in rural/remote Western Australia" has been accepted for presentation at the SARRAH (Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health) conference in August 2004.

***For further information, please contact***

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