

## PROJECT BRIEF

### *WACHS Therapy Assistant Project*

<b>Project Title:</b> <b>WACHS Therapy Assistant Project</b>	<b>2004/2005</b>
<b>Description:</b> To review, develop and implement policy, guidelines & resources to support the application of Therapy Assistants within WACHS.	<b>WA Country Health Service</b>
<b>Project Officer:</b> 0.2 FTE	

### **Background**

The application of therapy assistants and therapy assistant based service models has been gathering momentum within WA Country Health Service. All WACHS regions engage therapy assistants, to varying degrees, in the delivery of health services to country communities.

The Therapy Assistant model of service delivery has been shown to be effective in achieving:

- Reduced time to reach client goals
- Improved throughput of caseload, due to improved timeliness in achieving goals
- Improved coordination and knowledge at the local level
- Improved interface/ communication between the therapist, clients, parent, teacher
- Improved marketing in an informal manner of therapy services for paediatrics

This model is consistent with the primary health care principles of;

- Accessible services
- Acknowledgment and utilisation of local skills
- Local involvement in planning, delivery and evaluation of services
- Community development/ empowerment

The Therapy Assistant Model of Service delivery is consistent with recommendations endorsed with The Country Health Service Review (2003). The therapy assistant model would form an integral part of the proposed regional network model, creating linkages between Regional Resources Centres, Integrated District Health Services, health services for towns and health services for small communities and settlements. The therapy assistant model is consistent with the vision of creating a system of care that integrates health services across communities within a health region.

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A number of regional based projects have been undertaken to review and enhance therapy assistant models, including the Midwest Murchison Therapy Assistant Project, and the Goldfields Therapy Assistant Review. Other regions are also investing resources in the development of therapy assistant models. A state wide Therapy Assistant Project was conducted in 2001-02, which provided a number of recommendations relating to therapy assistants.

There is an acknowledged need to develop a position statement and consistencies (and resources to support this) across the therapy assistant framework, which will have significant benefits across WA Country Health Service. This would also compliment the current work being undertaken to develop standardised training models for delivery across whole of WACHS (funded via a DSC grant).

## **OUTCOMES**

- Enhanced access to allied health services in rural communities.
- Quality utilisatations of therapy assistant models across WACHS.
- Increased profile of Therapy Assistants as a profession.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Establish a framework for implementing Therapy Assistant Models.
- Facilitating state, national & international networking regarding Therapy Assistants.
- Establishing a training system for Therapy Assistants and Therapist working with TAs.
- Establish policy and guidelines for the application of Therapy Assistant models within WACHS.
- To develop standardised resources for Therapy Assistant models (see appendix one).
- Develop a system to share current developments and resource.

## **PROJECT INDICATORS**

- Completed and endorsed policy.
- Completed & applied resources (see appendix one).
- Web-based communication system established.

## **PROJECT METHODOLOGY**

- Establish a Therapy Assistant Working Party (November 2004).
- Review existing resources and models (November 2004).
- Prioritise resources for development (see appendix one).
- Development of resources.
- Development of web-based resource kit.

## **COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

The project will engage a wide spectrum of stakeholders including: consumers (people with disabilities, families and carers), local therapists and health services, local area

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coordinators, DSC, TAFE, Department of Education, Professional Associations and other rural disability non-government service providers (eg. ILC, CPA etc). Communication during the project will be undertaken via the following:

### Regular Communication

Bi-month updates will be distributed via the Country Allied Health Updates (electronic update which is access by a wide range of allied health stakeholders across WA – metro & rural). Working group members will have responsibility for maintaining communication within their organisation/geographical area.

### Resources

Resources will be available for utilisation across WA, distributed via email or posed on a webpage.

Suzanne Spitz  
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## ***Appendix 1 – Resources for Development***

### **Recruitment (Therapist and Therapy Assistant)**

- Duty Statement Options (for JDF establishment)
- Interview Questions Options
- Promotional information (What is a Therapy Assistant)

### **Orientation**

- Orientation Checklist & Generic Info (where relevant) including:
  - Manual Handling
  - Code of Ethics
  - Liability
  - Confidentiality
  - Disability Service Plan
  - Complaints & compliments etc

### **Policies & Guidelines**

- Use of Therapy Assistants
- Supervision
- Training
- Roles & Responsibilities

### **Training, Professional Development & Networking**

- Training and development system
- Standardised Therapy Assistant learning objectives.
- Standardised Therapy Assistant training modules.
- Agreed therapist competencies
- Training mechanism for therapist competencies.
- Therapy assistant networking.
- Performance management

### **Service Delivery Resources**

- Consent & Client Records
- Therapy program template
- Statistical collection
- Program evaluation system.
- Client progress (eg. recording templates)
- Generic therapy tools & resources
- Supervision tools

### **Workforce**

- TA workforce data (FTE & location).