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Conference Abstract

The CHOICE Project: Integrating Peer Support and Shared Decision Making in a Youth Mental Health Service

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Abstract

Introduction: The CHOICE Project is an innovative shared decision making and peer support service, designed to empower young people to make informed and preference based decisions about their own care.

The CHOICE Project is based at ycentral on the Central Coast of New South Wales. ycentral is an integrated service platform incorporating primary, secondary and tertiary mental health care with headspace Gosford and Children and Young People's Mental Health Service.

Young people have a fundamental right to be involved in decision making about their own care. The World Health Organisation states that healthcare providers should "provide adequate information and support to enable each young person to make free and informed choices that are relevant to his or her individual needs" (WHO, 2012).

Description:

The CHOICE Project is multifaceted and integrates the following practice components:

1. Peer Support Workers
2. Shared Decision Making (SDM)
3. Decision Aids

Peer support workers are young people with an experience as/or with a consumer of mental health services. Peer support is offering and receiving help, based on shared understanding, respect and mutual empowerment between people in similar situations (Repper, 2011).

With an increased focus on person-centred care and with roots in evidence-based practice, SDM is one of the most popular approaches to involving consumers at an individual level about their own care.

Decision aids are online tools that facilitate SDM, present evidence and empower consumers to explore their values and preferences when making decisions about their own care. The newly

developed decision aid is an interactive web-based application and highlights how technology can be used to underpin integrated service delivery.

Description of change: The project adopts a collaborative approach to decision making and empowers young people to be involved in making decisions about their own care. This change is assisted by the provision of decision making support from peer support workers and an electronic decision aid, which facilitates SDM.

Targeted population: Young people aged between 14 and 25 years (an identified hard to reach and vulnerable population group).

Highlights: Peer support and SDM are gaining attention from both the academic field and also large health organisations. The CHOICE Project contributes to an emerging evidence base around peer support, SDM, decision aids and how to best support young people to be involved in decision making about their own care.

Transferability: The project is not only transferable across headspace centres but also more broadly to services providing care to young people 14-25 years.

Conclusions: The project includes a robust evaluation and preliminary findings will be presented in terms of involvement in decision making; satisfaction; decisional conflict; and the outcome of using a decision aid to support young people to make decisions about their own care.

This project offers a practical way to integrate peer support, SDM and decision aids across services providing care for young people 14-25 years.

Keywords

people-centred; empowerment; decision-making; technology; young people

PowerPoint presentation

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