

CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Sharing wisdom: Integrated care – A work in progress

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"No one has all the wisdom

Everyone has some of the wisdom

Everyone has a different piece"

Mary Benet - McKinney (Sharing wisdom: A process for group decision making)

An extended inpatient treatment facility for adolescents with severe and complex mental illness in Queensland (The Barrett Adolescent Centre) closed in 2014. In 2015, the Queensland Government established a Commission of Inquiry (COI) into the closure of the facility with a final report provided to Government in 2016.

The Government response to the COI Report committed to ensuring that effective and inclusive consultation arrangements would be put in place with stakeholders. Furthermore, it stated that Health Consumers Queensland would play an important role in supporting these consultation arrangements, and ensuring that a wide range of consumers and carers had a say in any future changes in service options for young people with severe and complex mental illness resulting from the implementation of the COI Report recommendations.

As a result, Health Consumers Queensland (as the peak organisation representing the interests of health consumers and carers in Queensland) and the Queensland Department of Health through the Division of Clinical Excellence's Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs Branch (MHAODB) have been brought together as partners who have committed to transparency, collaboration and engagement processes that are safe and meaningful for young people and families.

This was the impetus to consider stakeholder engagement strategy and use a range of methods to increase effective consumer and carer input and support. This has led to an unprecedented level of participation and inclusion of people with a lived experience of mental health services at all levels. The process of working in partnership has allowed a greater depth of creative and critical thinking to a degree not previously experienced by consumers and carers in the planning of mental health services.

The 11 month timeline for the implementation phase of the Government response was ambitious when considering the Government's implementation plan for each recommendation, commitment to engagement beyond tokenism, and the need to rebuild trust with the consumers and carers associated with the former facility, alongside collaboration with a broader range of stakeholders to ensure successful implementation.

During this phase of work a number of activities occurred including co-design workshops with an equal or great number of consumer and carer representatives in attendance relative to the number of clinicians in attendance. The intensity of the work was sustained and new collaborative relationships were developed which demonstrate integrated care in practice.

This presentation prepared in partnership with consumers and carers will explore the types of activities, input, feedback and impact that this project had on stakeholders. It will consider the lessons learned, and issues for sustainability through the next phase of work and beyond to realise an integrated health care service system for young people with severe and complex mental health issues accessing services in Queensland.

Keywords: consumer/carers engagement; mental health; child and youth; participation and inclusion of consumers and carers in service co-design
