

POSTER ABSTRACT

Giving the people what they want

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Donna Pettigrew

Sydney North Health Network, Chatswood, NSW, Australia

Introduction: The Northern Sydney Primary Health Network is operated by Sydney North Health Network (SNHN). The region covers almost 900km², a total population of over 925 thousand people. SNHN Needs Assessment identified vulnerable groups with poorer health outcomes.

Short description of practice change implemented: The SNHN Strategic Plan identifies Community Activation as a strategic priority, to improve health literacy in our most vulnerable populations. Consultation with these groups clearly stated that the community wanted health information and wanted it delivered by “experts”. Workshops are delivered to community groups, by experts that speak their language, and understand each groups culture.

Aim and theory change: Current workshops aim to address specific objectives, these are measured after each workshop. Objectives include improving knowledge about the topic, benefits to changing behaviour, how to change that behaviour.

Target population and stakeholders: The target cohorts include CALD, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people living in social housing, people living with mental illness, youth and their parents, new arrivals including refugees, seniors and people that have left the armed forces.

Key stakeholders delivering the programs in partnership include: local councils, not-for-profit organisations, NGOs, social housing providers, and other community groups.

Timeline: The program commenced in 2017. Ongoing consultation with the most vulnerable populations, has helped to adapt and streamline the program to meet the changing needs of these communities. The program continues today, with increases year on year.

Highlights (innovation, impact and outcomes): Improved health literacy in vulnerable populations, engagement from local communities, joint delivery with key stakeholders are highlights from this program

Outcomes of this work will be seen in the long term. Some of the community groups that have received workshops are keen to engage again over time, giving the SNHN the opportunity to follow-up for some medium-term impact.

Comments on sustainability: All of the workshops are run in partnership with local stakeholders, reducing costs, allowing a modest spend for broad delivery. Health Professionals are remunerated; however, venues, marketing, and resources are provided in kind.

Comments on transferability: The program would easily transfer to other metropolitan locations and could be adapted by the use of web-based communication for the rural and remote areas.

Conclusions (comprising key findings): The vulnerable communities in the region have many issues that impact on their health. Consultation with these populations indicates they are both interested in their community's health, and a willingness to improve health and wellbeing. Clear messaging, cultural relevance, and taking the information to the people, contribute to the success of the program.

Discussions: This program continues to evolve with new topics being developed to meet health needs of the community. Being responsive to the community and sharing the success with them has ensured ongoing engagement and consultation.

Lessons learned: Today's program looks very different to the original idea. The input from the target communities informing the development. Flexibility in the delivery of the program is key, as is stakeholder's engagement and commitment.