

MHPOD

April 2009



MENTAL HEALTH
WORKFORCE
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mental Health Professional online Development

Project Update

Almost a third of the fifty topics that will comprise MHPOD have been developed to a near-final stage. Focus testing of five pilot topics took place over summer in a range of jurisdictions, and some of the findings are given below. It is expected that all topics will be completed and ready to roll out by approximately March-April 2010. It is time for jurisdictions and services to start thinking about how MHPOD will be used.

Topics now in development include:

- Mental health care and human rights
- Outcome measures
- Dual disability
- Transitional care planning
- Recovery II: Hope and self-determination.

As before, each topic includes an overview, activity, in-practice section, and resources, such as checklists, templates, or other work tools. The modules are principally aimed at qualified staff in their first two years working in a mental health service.

Focus Testing

Over December 2008-January 2009, 43 mental health workers from a variety of locations in Australia worked their way through two or more topics from an initial set of five. They were then asked to complete an online survey covering technical issues, user experience and the content provided in the topics. Some demographic and professional information was also collected, to check that a range of practitioner types across metropolitan, rural, regional and remote areas were included in the testing.



Although not all states and territories were able to participate, it was pleasing to have a reasonable spread of mental health workers, both geographically and across disciplines. Most participants were from a nursing (42%), social work (28%) or occupational therapy (14%) background with 24 of the participants being in their first two years of practice.

The feedback from the pilot was generally very positive, confirming the approach taken by the development team. 88% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the learning objectives of the topics were relevant to their job, and 91% agreed or strongly agreed that the material in the topics supports the learning objectives. When asked whether they would recommend the course to others doing the same or similar work, some 83% of participants (30 of 36 respondents who answered the question) stated that they would recommend the course. However, six of these responses were qualified by suggested changes, such as more substance being added to one topic, and improving the flow of the format.

As a result of the focus testing, a number of recommendations have been made to address issues raised through the survey. Some recommendations are technical, such as limiting the file size and length of video segments, to ensure as much as possible that they run properly. Other recommendations concern content, and include providing a range of examples and case studies to reflect regional and age diversity, and continuing to monitor the depth and pitch of information provided.

General comments suggested considerable enthusiasm for MHPOD and the type of training it offers. Comments ranged from 'pretty cool' to 'I found this program to be educational and I learnt some things myself. I also found the program positive, engaging and useful to new clinicians. It covered areas that were challenging to new clinicians and that needed reinforcement. I believe this will be a beneficial eLearning experience'.

Overall the focus testing was very helpful in providing feedback to improve the usefulness of MHPOD to mental health workers.

Project Steering Committee

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) will meet in the next month to consider the focus testing results and start discussing implementation issues. The role of the PSC includes:

- Supporting the development of jurisdictional implementation plans
- Engaging in-scope mental health services to ensure optimal outcomes
- Ensuring the implementation process maximises the likelihood of optimal workforce benefit

MHPOD will be a new national resource that has been jointly funded by state, territory and Commonwealth governments. Each jurisdiction has its own arrangements and approaches to professional development in mental health. However, we hope all jurisdictions will use MHPOD, and that it will be a resource that can effectively complement existing mental health training and development activities.

More Information

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