

MHPoD

July 2008



MENTAL HEALTH
WORKFORCE
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Web-based Professional Education Project

The Project

The aim of this national project is to develop and implement an innovative web-based professional education tool for staff from a range of disciplines in public mental health services. The tool will also be of use to other workers in other roles in the health system working with people who have a serious mental illness. The project is being undertaken by CADRE Design with the Psychosocial Research Centre at the University of Melbourne and is managed by the MHWAC Secretariat. All states and territories and the Commonwealth Government, have contributed funding for the project through the Mental Health Workforce Advisory Committee.

The objectives are to:

- Improve health worker knowledge and awareness of the recognition and treatment of mental disorders;
- Support workforce development, using a web-based education model reflecting the requirements of the *National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce*;
- Demonstrate a cross-jurisdictional approach to the development of on-line clinical education resources for those providing health services to the seriously mentally ill;
- Provide examples of innovative teaching and learning methods in mental health; and
- Improve access to evidence-based educational programs for those providing health services to the seriously mentally ill, including those working in rural and remote areas

Broad Timelines

The project has a three year timeframe, and it is expected that ten hours of pilot content will be produced during 2008 and tested with mental health staff. A further sixty hours of content will be produced in 2009 and 2010.

The Expert Group met for the first time on 5 May 2008 in Melbourne. The Curriculum Overview has been finalised, and writing of the content has commenced. Design specifications for the modules are being developed.

The Modules

The project will produce seventy hours of evidence-based content organised into modules. The curriculum is aimed at qualified staff in their first two years working in a mental health service. Topics will link to the *National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce*, and may include areas such as professional ethics, concepts of recovery, partnerships in service delivery and culturally appropriate assessment instruments.

It is anticipated that users will be able to log into the system and complete modules online at their own pace. People with existing competency will be able to move through the material more rapidly than those with less experience and knowledge, through the use of challenge assessments. The latter group will receive more support and links to appropriate materials. The modules will use video, animation, interactivity and simulation techniques to communicate complex ideas to mental health staff. Scenarios will also be used to illustrate particular issues and themes.

A sample mock-up screen is shown below:



Expert Group

An Expert Group has been formed to provide advice on the curriculum and content of the modules. The membership is as follows:

Mr Noel Muller, Consumer representative, Mental Health Council of Australia

Ms Kim Ryan, Australian College of Mental Health Nurses

Associate Professor Beth Kotze, Area Director Mental Health, South East Sydney and Illawarra Area Health Service

Ns Eileen McDonald, Carer representative, Mental Health Council of Australia

Dr Carol Harvey, Psychosocial Research Centre (Chair)

Professor Eimear Muir-Cochrane, Chair of Nursing (Mental Health Nursing), Flinders University

Dr John Farhall, Senior Lecturer, School of Psychological Science, La Trobe University and Consultant Clinical Psychologist, North Western Mental Health, Melbourne

Dr Valerie Gerrand, Allied Health representative

More Information

For further information, please contact:

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