

Project Update

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 workers in other roles in the health system, working with people who have a serious mental illness.

Five topics are being developed in the first instance:

- Understanding concepts of recovery
- Biopsychosocial factors implicated in the onset and course of mental disorders
- Principles of carer participation
- Risk and protective factors for onset and course of mental disorders
- Evidence-based practice.

Each topic includes an overview, activity, in-practice section, and resources, such as checklists, templates, or other work tools. The content is being written by a multi-disciplinary team of people with a background in mental health clinical practice and education. Writers are based in a range of locations nationally, and include consumers and carers.

The five pilot topics will be tested with the target audience during the period December 2008-February 2009. The modules are principally aimed at qualified staff in their first two years working in a mental health service.

Look of the Modules

CADRE, the eLearning company producing the modules, has developed a visual style guide for MHPOD that will ensure a consistent 'look and feel' across different topics. The modules will use video, animation, interactivity and simulation techniques to communicate complex ideas. Characters are being developed—such as Michael, a young man from a rural background with schizophrenia—who may appear in more than one topic.



MHPOD H G ? X

Learning Objective 2

OVERVIEW ACTIVITY IN PRACTICE RESOURCES

Activity 1

Test your knowledge
Identify the risk factors that impacted the ONSET of Michael's illness.

- Genes, move away from family and friends, adolescent hormonal changes and family conflict.
- Genes and adolescent hormonal changes.
- Genes, move away from family and friends, cannabis and adolescent hormonal changes.
- Adolescent hormonal changes, cannabis use and family conflict.

1 of 3 Next question

Risk factors or stressors he experienced around that time:
Moved to city away from family and friends; Hormonal changes of late adolescence; Cannabis use...

1. ONSET 2. STABILISATION 3. RELAPSE

Testing

Focus testing of the pilot material will occur over summer in a range of jurisdictions. Participants will largely be new graduates, or staff who have just completed their graduate year. At least five participants will be sought from each participating mental health service, and a time commitment of between two and five hours is required. After working through two or more topics, participants will need to complete a short online survey. Representatives from a range of disciplines will be included. Focus testing participants will be recruited through the national Project Steering Committee.

Collaboration

Where possible, we are seeking to collaborate and avoid duplication with other web-based mental health professional development projects. MHPOD staff have met with staff from the Clinical Research Unit for Anxiety and Depression, responsible for CLIMATE-Mental Health. The latter involves web-based lessons that are largely focussed on disorders and treatments, and includes anxiety, bipolar disorder and substance use disorder.

MHPOD's curriculum links to the *National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce*. In choosing and developing topics, a key question has been, 'what do staff really need to know in their first two years in mental health?' The modules are interactive and engaging, with content vetted by a multidisciplinary expert group. Where possible, permission will be sought to use appropriate existing resources, such as video of a carer describing a particular experience, rather than funding a new duplicate resource. However, new resources will also be developed, for example, clinicians describing what a particular topic means to them in the course of their work.

Project Steering Committee

A Project Steering Committee has been formed to oversight project governance. The membership is as follows:

Ms Tracy Beaton, Senior Nurse Adviser, Mental Health & Drug Operations Branch, DHS Victoria (Chair)

Ms Lana Racic, Director, Clinical Services Reform, Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing

Mr Marc Reynolds, Manager, Mental Health Clinical Services Development Unit, Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol Office, NSW Health

Dr Maddy Phillips, Program Director, Queensland Centre for Mental Health Learning

Ms Fran Pagdin, Director of Nursing, Top End Mental Health, NT

Ms Coral Muskett, State Director of Nursing, Mental Health, Tasmania

A/Prof Brett Emmerson, Executive Director Mental Health, Royal Brisbane Hospital

Ms Penny Tolhurst, Secretariat Manager, MHWAC

More Information

For further information, please contact:

Penny Tolhurst, Secretariat, Mental Health Workforce Advisory Committee on (03) 9096 8402 or via email on penny.tolhurst@dhs.vic.gov.au

David Juriansz, Project Coordinator, Psychosocial Research Centre on (03) 9355 9830 or via email on david.juriansz@mh.org.au

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