

Including all - Working together: Provision of Mental Health Care in the Homeless Sector

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Face of Homelessness in Australia

Homelessness impacts on all aspects of life including relationships, employment, self-worth and health and well-being.

Homelessness is now a phenomena that crosses all genders, ages, cultural and educational backgrounds.



Face of Homelessness in Australia

- 105,000 people met the criteria of homelessness each night across Australia
- Queensland has the highest number of people sleeping rough out of all the States
- 22% increase in the number of children under the age of 12 who are on the street



Face of Homelessness in Australia

- 30% increase in the number of people over the age of 55 who are homeless
- 11% increase in families who are homeless
- 9% of homeless population are indigenous
- 71% of men and 83% of women who were experiencing homelessness met criteria for at least one mental health disorder



Face of Homelessness in Australia

People who have mental health issues are more likely to experience homelessness during their life whilst homelessness impacts negatively on the mental health of those who find themselves homeless (Smith, 2007).



Partnerships

Partnership simply means that agencies involved in providing services to people with a particular need, work together to support people seeking services. Partnerships should extend across non-government and all level of government with the focus being on the person for whom the services are being provided not on bureaucratic systems being satisfied.



Partnerships

- “no wrong door”
- Partnership agreements between services need to agree to the holistic assessment and to joint planning co-ordination and case management.
- shared information among services about the person seeking services.



Partnerships

- co-ordinated approaches, tailored to the person, that cross traditional service boundaries and bring together clinical and community care
- When services work more collaboratively together and with the consumer, they are better able to problem solve, provide holistic services and achieve better outcomes.



Gold Coast Homeless Network

- Began life as a SAAP Network
- Broadened network to include broader agencies and government departments



Objectives

- key conduit between government and community
- explore issues and trends in relation to homelessness
- identify and develop a coordinated range of responses
- create and promote more positive community responses



Objectives

- foster provision of quality services through a commitment to an integrated and collaborative response
- advocate for homeless people
- inform, support and value workers



Gold Coast Homeless Network

Over the years the Network has grown and now encompasses all levels of governments and includes agencies from Northern New South Wales. There is a spirit of co-operation among all members and the focus of the Network is on ending the cycle of poverty.



Case Study

- Mike
- 25 years on streets
- diagnosis of schizophrenia and has a history of alcohol abuse
- Linked to St John's
- Housing issues



Case Study

- a case conference
- Agencies involved with HHOT co-ordinating care
- Reconnected with family
- Involvement of other agencies
- Enrolled on electoral roll
- Housed for over two years



Including all – working together

When agencies can foster the spirit of partnership and collaboration, then a win-win situation can be achieved for all. But even better yet, the outcome for the most important person in the picture, the consumer, can be all encompassing life success story.

