

## Allied health, non-government organisation (NGO) and university partnerships building an evidence base for a consumer peer-led education program in youth mental health.

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### Aim:

To establish, deliver and evaluate a peer led education program in a clinical youth mental health service.

### Background:

Eastern Health Child and Youth Mental Health Services (CYMHS) had a consumer informed objective to deliver peer support though lacked a platform or model. Wellways, an NGO, had a My Recovery (peer- led education) program but did not have a way to easily reach young people; and their program was based on an adult model. A collaborative partnership between the two agencies enabled adaptation of the model for delivery in a youth mental health space. Evaluation of the adapted My Recovery program was sought however time and resourcing presented a challenge.

### Method:

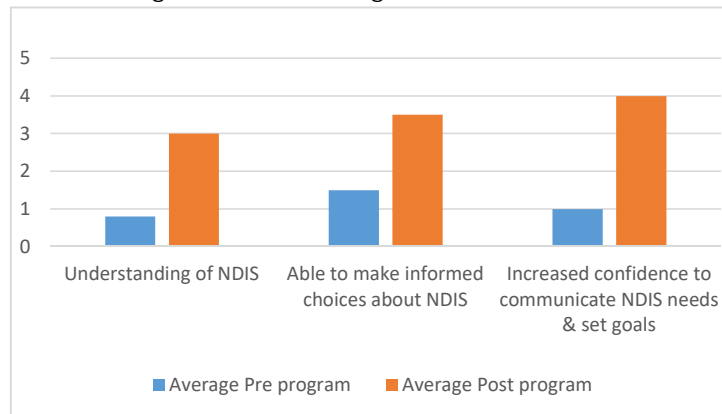
Through the initial partnership:

- Training for Peer Facilitators was delivered by Wellways to maintain integrity of model.
- A CYMHS senior clinician coordinated the local program to help address clinical risks, enabling the Peer Facilitators to focus on course delivery.
- Collaboration with Monash University, Department of Occupational Therapy, enabled evaluation via student projects and Honours research, also providing valuable placement experience.

### Results:

The Wellways existing peer education program was successfully adapted for youth; and for delivery within clinical services.

The initial pilot demonstrated benefits to participants over a range areas including NDIS orientation.



Source: 2013 Eastern Health CYMHS My Recovery pilot

### Consumer & service outcomes

The ten week course has to date been delivered to 39 CYMHS consumers, across seven small group programs, with positive feedback from consumers and clinicians.

'It was pure understanding from people who had been there and come out the other side.... When I started the group I have a black and white tumblr blog with depressing posts, after a few weeks ...I began to blog in colour, and I think that is what recovery is'. (CYMHS My Recovery participant)

' ... Both client's had little to no day time activity ...this group provided structure and routine and gave them confidence to slowly re-engage in community... participants have since returned to TAFE... ' (CYMHS Clinician)

### Student outcomes

The partnership provided placements to six students with exposure to both clinical and NGO work.

### Conclusions:

Effective and responsive services to consumers is more likely achieved through interagency collaborations and meaningful partnerships that include Peer Facilitators whose lived experience is pivotal to engagement.

Further Information:

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