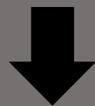


Defining the Role of the Allied Health Assistant in Hand Therapy

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INTRODUCTION

The role of an Allied Health Assistant (AHA) is invaluable in the Hand Therapy program within the Occupational Therapy service at Barwon Health, however staff had identified some areas where efficiencies could be addressed. These included refining the understanding of the scope of the AHA role within Hand Therapy, and methods for communication and handover.



INITIAL SURVEY

An initial survey was conducted with AHA and Hand Therapy Staff, to gain an understanding of the current role of the AHA. Findings from this survey included:

- The AHA role was not clearly defined
- 66% of respondents perceived that the methods for communication and handover were inefficient
- There was no process for tracking completed tasks
- There was poor completion of important tasks, with staff members assuming others had completed the tasks.



AHA TASK LIST

Information from the Initial Survey was analysed and collated to develop a Task List, which:

- Listed prioritised tasks to be completed each shift
- Described each task
- Included a section for signing and dating when the task was completed



FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

Following an 8 week trial of the Task List, a Follow-up Survey was completed with Hand Therapy staff. Results indicated the Task List:

- Increased the efficiency of AHA's time in Hand Therapy
- Improved the channels of communication and ease of handover
- Contributed to an increased understanding of the division of tasks between the AHA and other staff
- Assisted with a quicker prioritisation of tasks on busy days
- Facilitated better awareness amongst staff of the impact of non-completion of tasks
- Increased job satisfaction among the AHA staff



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The AHA Task List will assist in defining the role of the AHA within the Hand Therapy program and guide the future of the AHA role, contributing to:

- Increased staff time efficiency
- Orientation of new staff to the AHA role in Hand Therapy
- Development of a similar Prioritised Task List for the non-clinical Occupational Therapy Assistant in Hand Therapy

Task	Tuesday	Friday
TO BE COMPLETED EACH SHIFT		
Enter information for new referrals into BOSS (includes reviewing Operation Records and X-rays)		
Update Statistics for Patients seen in Plastic Clinic		
Review Therapist Clinic Statistics and Items Retrospective Forms Folder if correct		
Empty Receipt and Confidentiality Bin		
Review stock in multiphysics Department (articulated splints, exercise spheres and handbars, Tuli grip, gloves)		
Stock up inlay tray in preparation for Friday Clinic		
TO BE COMPLETED FORTNIGHTLY		
Press, Velcro straps		
Cut thermoplastic material to template size		
Sew Finger Slits and Tube-grip with Threads		
Clear Retrospective report folder (older than one month, ADHC only)		
Review New Referral Filing Cabinet		
Manage the Signit Display board		