3.5 Older Wiser Lifestyles (OWL): The First Australian Older-Adult Specific Early Intervention Addressing ‘At-Risk’ Drinking

Presenter: Stephen Bright, Peninsula Health – Community Health, VIC

Introduction: Early intervention programs for older adults are less sexy than programs for younger population; yet, older adults experience significant identity and role transitions. A third of all older adults with alcohol-related problems develop these later in life. This presentation will describe the development of an Australian early intervention protocol that aims to engage older adults identified as being ‘at-risk’ of experiencing alcohol-related harm.

Methods: Engaging ‘at-risk’ drinkers is inherently difficult since they are essentially a hidden population who do not overtly demonstrate any indications of alcohol-related problems. Through partnering with organisations whose service providers have direct contact with older adults, screening has been conducted using an older-adult specific tool that we have developed. Individuals who screen positive are referred to our program for a more comprehensive assessment using the Alcohol-Related Problems Survey (ARPS). Developed at UCLA, this computerised tool assesses the risk of individuals experiencing alcohol-related harm using 176 algorithms that consider their medical history, prescription and over-the-counter medication use, and activities of daily living. It is the first time it has been used in Australia.

The actual intervention being delivered is age-specific, evidence-driven, and draws from yet extends protocols developed in the US. Unlike the US protocols, our intervention incorporates individualised feedback and education, is stage-based, and has been manualised with modular treatment pathways.

Results: Three and six month follow up data evaluating the effectiveness of protocol will be presented.

Conclusion: An Australian treatment protocol for older adults has been successfully developed and disseminated.

3.6 Defining Health Through a Medical Lens to a Determinants Lens – Our Organisations Journey

Presenter: Ruth Cuttler, Bellarine Community Health Service, VIC

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Five years ago Bellarine Community Health Service was using resources to promote health through a medical lens – treating symptoms, and supporting individuals develop skills to manage chronic illness. We now focus Health Promotion (HP) investment on the social determinants of health and direct efforts towards a population approach with an explicit focus on addressing health inequities. This journey has required a major cultural and organisational shift, reflecting a major change management process.

This presentation will detail the strategies that have been implemented to strengthen and further develop organisational capacity for evidence based HP practice. The NSW Capacity Building Framework was used to frame this work.

Organisational Development:
- HP commitment organisations strategic plan
- HP Policy and Procedure developed
- Roles, responsibilities, decision making
- Work plans with HP targets defined- embedding HP into practice
- Performance Appraisals
- Supervision and performance management system developed
- HP hours clearly defined and monitored
- HP strategic and operational plans developed

Workforce Development:
- HP in position descriptions
- Key Selection Criteria reflect HP
- Orientation process includes focus on HP
- Mentoring
- Short courses (SC)
  - 4-hour SC (mandatory) and 5-day SC