Theme 2: Responding to and engaging with industry & employers

'Social work education student placements and workforce strategies'

Maike Kaehler

Abstract:

Health Workforce Australia funded initiatives across Australia resulting in 335,000 additional clinical placement days as a strategy for meeting the future challenges of providing a skilled, flexible, innovative health workforce that meets the needs the Australian community.

Some 23 allied health disciplines are taking part nationally, and in South West Sydney a partnership between South West Sydney Local Health District and University of Western Sydney was funded for 2 years to establish a social work student education program. Student educators were employed for mental health, community health and hospital social work.

This paper will describe the work of the Mental Health Social Work Student Educator, funded for 2012-14, with initial positive evaluations from students with majority indicating an interest in finding employment in mental health. Also positive evaluations from field educators about feeling supported by the student education program, either by resources directed at students or directly toward field educators, such as the peer support group program for field educators and consultation service offered by the student educator.

Challenges for the future… sustaining this growth and capacity beyond 2014, when this funded project concludes.

Presenter:

Maike Kaehler
Social Work Student Educator (Mental Health)
South West Sydney Local Health District

'Focusing on professional growth: the experiences of external social work supervisors in field education'

Ines Zuchowski

Abstract:

Social work field education relies on experienced social work practitioners supervising student in human service organisations. Current work contexts and increasing number of students mean that providing placement opportunities for social work students with social work qualified supervisors on

site is becoming more difficult. Literature points to limitations, opportunities and important components of placement with external supervision.

This paper presents a subset of data from a larger PhD research which examined the experiences of all the key stakeholders involved in social work placements with external supervision. This presentation seeks to illuminate the specific views, concerns, interests and strategies shared by the people who identified as external supervisors, and thus provide the social work supervision to students who undertake their field education in agencies where there is no qualified social work on site able to provide the required social work supervision to them. Participants highlighted the challenges and opportunities posed by external supervision. They discussed formal supervision, where they took on educational roles, and focused on promoting student's professional growth within the profession developing a framework for practice and the social work component to the placement. External supervisors foregrounded relationship building and role clarification as important prerequisites of working supervision arrangements.

Presenter:

Ms Ines Zuchowski - School of Arts and Social Sciences, James Cook University
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A Narrative approach in social work supervision: Evoking the Indigenous expertise'

Michael O'Dempsey, Mariya Neerish, Mariya Ali

Abstract:

The role of supervision in the small developing country of the Maldives is two fold: development of professionalization of the role and the need for accountability in areas of child and family protection. Moving from a charity model of welfare to a developing liberal welfare state is driven by market logics. Hence, a more procedural and regulated form of supervision compliments this model rather than a more therapeutically influenced model. Despite this force, the needs of the frontline social service workers in the rural areas are far from their peers based in the very urban capital city, who have more experience and some with tertiary education. The more administrative and bureaucratic approach to supervision, initially tried, reinforced the level of frustration among the workers, as western models did not compliment cultural understandings that were more prominent in the rural areas. The introduction of aspects of narrative therapy into peer supervision increased the morale, confidence and practice standards among the workers. It also led to a more comprehensive understanding of the social and organisational problems of the developing welfare system. The experiences of supervisee's illuminate that a narrative approach, provided the space to acknowledge best practices among the workers and decreased the feeling of inadequacy. Narrative approach as a tool for professionalization hence provides a platform for the development of culturally appropriate models for supervision of social services workers in indigenous communities.