Peer Supervision in rural and remote Australia using technology

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Introduction: Research trialing models of peer supervision using technology as a way to strengthen resilience, was undertaken for twelve months in rural and remote Australia. A lack of supervision and access to professional development activities are two factors contributing to the turnover of allied health professionals and difficulties in recruiting and retaining social workers in rural and remote Australia. Cuss (2005) and Symmons (2005).

Purpose: To share findings from this research and present peer supervision as a viable option and a way to build resilience. It is transferable / applicable to other professions and locations.

Methodology: This qualitative research uses an interpretivist approach, that is, interpretation or the act of making sense out of successful than unstructured groups. Themes from the data confirm that isolation was overcome by connecting with professionals in similar work situations. Benefit from the experiences of multiple group members is noteworthy.

Lessons learned: A structured model for peer group supervision is successful. Telephone conference calls work well and are cost effective. The model and technology is readily available and replicable for other professionals. Comments on group size and models are offered.

Conclusion: The success of the trial will be of interest to social work and other professions wanting effective and accessible ways of providing professional supervision. It is suggested that this can positively affect recruitment and retention and contribute to resilience in rural and remote areas.