



Allied Health Professional Support Capacity Building Project:

Allied Health Professional Support Framework

What is the proposed Allied Health Professional Support Framework?

The proposed state-wide Allied Health Professional Support Framework (AHPSF) will provide training programs and resources to allow all Allied Health staff state-wide to maximise their participation in professional support activities. The proposed AHPSF comprises a flexible suite of professional support activities which individual staff members or work units can review and adopt as their preferred professional support and development method. Accordingly the Framework will be designed to include professional support and development options which are appropriate for Allied Health Professionals from a range of professional backgrounds, career stages, service models and geographical locations. The resources and training programs will provide access to core skills development, structures and templates for a range of appropriate, relevant and applicable professional support methods which work units and individuals can use to maximise the outcomes from the time they spend engaged in these activities. All Allied Health Professionals have a role in supporting colleagues to enhance their practice. The AHPSF resources and training can be adopted and implemented or adapted to suit the needs of each work unit or individual.

What exactly does “professional support” mean?

Professional support in this context is used as an umbrella term for activities which enhance the capacity and competence of a health professional to provide services to their clients and community. From an organisational perspective, professional support is an important aspect of clinical governance and a tool for maximising service delivery quality for the community. As a key determinant of recruitment and retention of staff, access to professional support is also regarded as an important tool for facilitating workforce growth in a competitive health workforce market.

What forms of professional support are included in the Professional Support Framework?

The forms of professional support, referred to as “components” of the Framework, proposed for inclusion are Mentoring, Supervision, Peer Group Supervision, Journal Club, Inservice and Work Shadowing/Clinical Placement. Each component will have a resource package with information on maximising the benefit from the method of support along with resources such as templates and evaluation forms. Some will also have training programs to assist staff to enhance their skills in participating in the professional support activity. The training programs may be delivered in face-to-face, video-conferenced or web/paper-based resources mode. Piloting of the training programs is already underway and will continue in the first half of 2009.

How will the Professional Support Framework impact on existing local support programs?

Many work units or service streams already have structured, effective, well evaluated professional support programs e.g. Mental Health Practice Supervision, departmental inservice programs. The AHPSF will provide guiding documents and resources for all Allied Health staff to enhance access and participation in professional support across the Allied Health workforce. The AHPSF will also assist line managers, professional leaders and discipline educators to establish effective professional support systems within the local work unit. It will not supplant well developed and managed existing programs that are meeting the needs of staff. However, resources from the AHPSF may add rigour to these programs where relevant such as through providing evaluation templates.



Will participation in the Allied Health Professional Support Framework be mandatory?

Development of a policy underpinning professional support participation is part of the current Allied Health Professional Support Capacity Building Project. The policy will guide Allied Health Professionals and their managers regarding the minimum standard of professional support activity engagement which Queensland Health would expect of Allied Health staff.

How will the AHPSF relate to Performance Appraisal and Development (PAD) processes?

It is anticipated that the AHPSF will aid the PAD process, by providing guidance for staff and line managers regarding professional development and support options. The AHPSF will not replace the PAD process which is an organisational requirement for all staff. An example may make this clearer...

A staff member and line manager identifies participation in a formal mentoring process as part of the staff member's PAD plan. The AHPSF will provide training for the staff member in this form of professional support, information for the line manager on the time and resource implications of participation in the process, and resources such as mentoring agreement templates and evaluation tools. The staff member and line manager source an appropriate mentor in their workplace or from another work unit and trial the use of this form of professional support. An evaluation of whether mentoring is meeting the needs of the staff member would be monitored through the PAD process.

When can I expect to be able to access the AHPSF resources?

The AHPSF will be produced largely through drawing together many existing resources and where necessary developing or purchasing some components. The majority of this work is being done as part of the Allied Health Professional Support Capacity Building Project 2008/09. The resources will be finalised at the end of the 2008/09 financial year. However, several components of the AHPSF are currently being trialled and can be accessed by staff. In particular Peer Group Supervision one-day training programs are currently offered throughout the state as part of the Allied Health Capacity Building Project. You can access more information or lodge an email by contacting the Cunningham Centre (see below).

The Allied Health Professional Support Capacity Building Project is an initiative of the Allied Health Workforce Advice & Coordination Unit and is funded by the Queensland Health People Plan 2008/09. It conducted in partnership with the Cunningham Centre.

Access further information at:

http://www.health.qld.gov.au/cunningham/allied_health.asp

March 2009