



Position statement: Facilitator training and implementation of the Living Strong Program

The Living Strong program was developed by Queensland Health for implementation by health professionals for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults who are overweight or obese, at risk of chronic disease, or who are ready to adopt healthier lifestyle behaviours. For non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people there is the *Lighten Up to a Healthy Lifestyle Program* which is more appropriate for the non-Indigenous population.

Living Strong received national accreditation as a lifestyle modification program (LMP) in October 2009 from the Department of Health and Ageing. It is the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander program to receive LMP accreditation in Australia. When Living Strong is implemented as an LMP there is the option to receive a Medicare rebate for eligible participants if accreditation criteria is met. Eligible participants are those who are at risk of Type 2 Diabetes. To deliver Living Strong as an LMP it is mandatory to attend the LMP day following facilitator training.

Facilitator training

One of the strengths of Living Strong is that facilitators do not have to have a qualification or be experts in nutrition or physical activity, unless the program is run as an LMP then a minimum of a Certificate IV in Primary Health Care is required. The program is flexible and can be structured to suit local priorities. Facilitator training is based on the 'Training for Skills' model where participants perform the skill of 'presenting' at the end of the training. Participants are assessed during their presentations to ensure they have the confidence and competence to facilitate the program in their community. All trained facilitators are issued with a Living Strong Facilitator's Manual and CD (which contains PowerPoint Presentation of the workshops). Trained facilitators are encouraged to commence a program in their community within twelve months of the training being completed and their line managers sign off to say they will support their staff to deliver in this timeframe.

The role of the Living Strong facilitator includes health assessments and referral, as well as program facilitation and evaluation. Community volunteers and administration officers without health professional qualifications may assist in the administration tasks of Living Strong. They may also train as facilitators but will need to run Living Strong programs with the assistance of a Living Strong trained health professional. It would be ideal for such volunteers and administration officers to attend facilitator training together with a health professional from their own organisation/community who they can partner with to deliver programs.

Support is offered by specifically trained professionals and Population Health Services. Other allied health professionals are encouraged to act as program supporters. This may include guest speaking or providing expertise to assist the facilitators with difficult questions. Living Strong facilitators and supporters may have the following professional qualifications:

- Advanced Health Workers (Nutrition Promotion)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers
- Health Promotion Officers (working in Nutrition)
- Diabetes Educators

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- Dietitians and Nutritionists
- Enrolled Nurses
- Exercise physiologists
- Health Promotion Officers
- Registered Nurses
- Indigenous Chronic Disease Coordinators.

To be recognised as a Living Strong facilitator, interested participants are required to complete a five day Living Strong facilitator training workshop which covers interactive workshop topics:

- Why do people get too heavy?
- What to eat to stay healthy
- Move more and lose more
- Shopping tour
- Buying healthy food
- Healthy cooking
- How to spend your food shopping money
- Self esteem and behaviour change
- Diabetes awareness
- Staying on track.

Facilitation skills and management and evaluation of Living Strong programs are also covered.

Living Strong is a multi-disciplinary program and all interested participants are required to complete the training to be considered Living Strong facilitators. An attendance certificate will be awarded by the Living Strong Program Advisor to facilitators when they have completed the training.

Facilitator training is only to be planned by or in conjunction with Regional Health Services. The facilitator training program and resources have been developed and updated by the State-wide Living Strong working group. A limited number of places are available at facilitator training, with priority given to staff of the hosting Health Service District or non-government organisations. Other local health professionals are encouraged to contribute as guest presenters in their area of expertise.

Training and implementation of the Living Strong program is core business for Queensland Health and other primary health care service providers. Staff should be released to attend training, with backfill arranged if necessary, and allocated time to run the program as part of their workload. Staff members are not expected to attend training or deliver programs in their own time.

Implementation of Living Strong

The copyright for Living Strong – A healthy lifestyle program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities belongs to Queensland Health. The program may

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only be called Living Strong if it is run by a recognised trained facilitator as designed and presented in the training program and facilitators' manual.

Organisations other than those hosting Program Coordinator (Healthy Lifestyle) may provide a Living Strong program for Queensland communities with the agreement of the Living Strong Advisor. Appropriate members of the organisation must have completed the Living Strong training program prior to running the program.

Expectations of trained facilitators:

- Facilitate or co-facilitate at least one Living Strong Program in the first two months of being a trained facilitator and from then a minimum of one program per year.
- Maintain regular contact with the Program Coordinator (Healthy Lifestyle) and the Living Strong Advisor (details below).
- Conduct regular evaluation of the program, to ensure the program is being conducted in accordance with Queensland Health guidelines OR Living Strong program learning outcomes and to assist in periodic state-wide evaluation of the program, i.e. enter participant data into forms on the *Lighten Up* website for Living Strong or forward paperwork to Program Coordinator (Healthy Lifestyle), or in their absence the Living Strong Advisor).
- Maintain skills through relevant professional development opportunities, for example the one-day professional updates delivered by the Living Strong Advisor.
- Permission must be gained from the Living Strong State-wide Working Group for any content change to the program and must maintain the objectives and learning outcomes of each session.
- If any content change is made to any sessions of the Living Strong program that result in the objectives and learning outcomes **not** being met, the facilitator must rename the program and acknowledge the Living Strong program as the source (as per copyright).

Living Strong as a Lifestyle Modification Program (LMP)

The final day of Living Strong facilitators training covers the details of the criteria required to implement Living Strong as an LMP. Information is given about the rebates that are available when Living Strong programs are offered as LMPs as well as criteria that facilitators need to meet if they wish to be accredited.

While Living Strong can be implemented as an LMP there is still the option to offer it as a non-LMP program and these details are further explained at the training.

Cost

Where training is provided by Population Health Services a Living Strong Facilitator Manual and CD are issued free of charge. Other associated costs may include

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travel and accommodation; this cost is the responsibility of Health Service Districts or non-government organisations.

To deliver the program at the community level the cost may vary depending on the location and needs and this is the responsibility of Health Service Districts and non-government organisations.

Organisations external to Queensland:

- Government organisations and private organisations external to Queensland can access the program resources by contacting the Dr Edward Koch Foundation on 07 40310 145 for an order form.
- Organisations purchasing resources are strongly encouraged to attend facilitator training.
- If the request comes from within Queensland, it should be referred to the relevant Living Strong Advisor for follow-up.

For information about Living Strong programs or facilitator training please contact your Living Strong Advisor:

Northern	Health Promotion Officer (working in Nutrition), Tropical Regional Services	07 4226 5527
Central	Health Promotion Officer (working in Nutrition), Central Regional Services	07 3624 1137
Southern	Health Promotion Officer(working in Nutrition) , Southern Regional Services	07 4631 9818

Living Strong information can be found on the Lighten Up website

- *Lighten Up* website;
http://www.health.qld.gov.au/lightenup/living_strong/default.asp