Community Care Unit wins award for innovative approach to medicine delivery

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service, Community Care Unit (CCU) has won a national award for a medication initiative staff successfully developed and implemented with residents.

The CCU is a mental health residential rehabilitation setting which is staffed twenty-four hours a day by clinical staff and peer support workers. Residents have a persistent and serious mental illness and on average, stay in the CCU between six months to two years.

During this time, the aim is to improve mental and physical wellbeing, as well as their ability to live as independently as possible. Staff of all disciplines are routinely involved in enhancing a resident’s understanding of medication, involvement and subsequently medication adherence.

To support this process in a consistent manner, the team at CCU developed a special system to administer medicine, called Stages of Medication Administration (SOMA).

Mental Health Education Team Clinical Nurse Consultant (CNC) Larissa Hallam and CCU CNC Paul Dawson say SOMA was developed after staff recognised the need to improve the delivery of medication.

“We developed this initiative to educate and empower our residents to managing their own medication. The development team worked with the whole team at CCU and consulted with pharmacy and medical staff to work out a system which would suit CCU residents and support recovery,” Ms Hallam said.

SOMA enables staff members to determine each resident’s level of ability to independently manage their own medication, communicate this to a team (including the resident and their family/carers) and support them to become more independent in a standardised manner. The model has an education component built into each stage to support progression through the stages.

Staff developed a training package, workplace instruction and medication assessment as part of the program, and say the national recognition has blown them away.

“We are a relatively small team who are very passionate about what we do, and work hard, but we didn’t think we had a chance at winning when you look at some of the previous winners, so to be recognised by a National Medicinewise Award is fantastic,” Team Leader Alistair Russell said.
“The CCU team is amazing, they embrace change and are really supportive of new initiatives,” Mr Dawson said.

Ms Hallam recently travelled to Canberra on Friday (1 June 2018) to attend the National Medicinewise Awards and receive the award in the category of Consumer Initiatives: community or population level.

The CCU team has already started work on its next project with implementation of Safewards which to our knowledge is the first CCU in Australia embracing the safewards model. The initial intervention is the development of staff and resident profiles to share with each other to support engagement.

ENDS

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