Caring Communities Program - Project Overview

Organisation: Carers ACT Inc.
Name of Project: Education Link - PC
Length of Project: 3 years

Project Summary

To provide fee education and training to service providers who are working with families who are receiving or may receive palliative care services. The purpose of the training is to provide staff and volunteers with information and skills to:

- Understand the role of palliative care and its services.
- Understand the impact of receiving palliative care on carers.
- Provide appropriate support to carers.
- Increase understanding of carer loss and grief.

The training will be base on an education package developed by Carers Australia Inc. in 2002.

Project Objectives

1. Recruit staff and volunteers from a range of community organisations.

2. Provide education to staff and volunteers that will increase understanding of the role of palliative care and palliative care services and benefits.

3. Provide education that will increase understanding of the range of loss and grief issues for carers and the impact of caring for someone receiving palliative care.

4. Provide education that will develop the ability of staff and volunteers to appropriately support carers of a person receiving palliative care.

5. Provide education that will assist staff and volunteers to respond to their own need for support in the workplace regarding loss and grief issues.

Project Activities

1. Promote the training to a range of relevant agencies.

2. Recruit staff and volunteers to participate.

3. Deliver the education package developed by Carers Australia through a single session of three hours twelve times over a three year period.

4. Evaluate training at the end of each session and after the deliver of six sessions.

5. Report on all activities and evaluation outcomes.

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The Main Message-What we did

- Trained 246 people in 25 community workshops (1-3 hours long) about palliative care and grief and loss.
- Ran a day Retreat for volunteers working in bereavement support.
- Ran two workshops for workers in palliative care about self care and preventing burn-out.
- Assisted in the establishment of an ACT and Region Bereavement Support network for paid and un-paid workers in the bereavement field.

What has been learned?

- Community workers and Aged Care workers are keen to learn about palliative care and engage in open discussion about grief and loss issues for themselves and their client group.
- Self care is vital when working with people who are dying and their families.
- Residential Aged Care Facility staff needs access to specialist palliative care support, and appropriate training in the latest palliative care approaches.

What is useful to other projects / communities?

- The training overheads developed for this Project on grief and loss can be used or modified by other educators
- The project has improved the caring capacity of the community and health workers by increasing their knowledge of palliative care, palliative care services and how to refer to them. As a result of this initiative, many of these services are now working more closely together.
- Community workers working with the dying and their families are thirsty to discuss death, dying and grief openly and look at their own self-care.
- The project has facilitated the sharing of other training opportunities.

What have been the benefits of disseminating information about your project?

- Dissemination of information about the training has led other agencies and educational establishments to contact us for similar training as well as written information on palliative care and grief and loss.

What needs to happen in order to sustain the key achievements of your project?

- On-going training needs to be available to community agencies in palliative care, and grief and loss.
- The ACT and Region Bereavement Support Network needs to have ongoing secretarial support.