FINAL REPORT

to

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

to the

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AGEING

for

CARING COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

PALLIATIVE CARE PROJECT
Grants Program

From

ROYAL DISTRICT NURSING SERVICE OF SA INC
EDUCATION CENTRE
71 -79 Richmond Road, Richmond SA 5031

On Behalf of the

"ESTABLISHING THE CAREWORKER ROLE IN PALLIATIVE CARE-EDUCATION, SUPPORT AND INTEGRATION WITH PALLIATIVE CARE TEAMS".

Completion date: Feb 2006

RDNS
EDUCATION CENTRE

Background

"ESTABLISHING THE CAREWORKER ROLE IN PALLIATIVE CARE-EDUCATION, SUPPORT AND INTEGRATION WITH PALLIATIVE CARE TEAMS".

The Time Frame of the project was from February 2003 to March 2006.

In 2003, the Royal District Nursing Service of SA Inc., in collaboration with:

- Southern Adelaide Palliative Services (incorporating the International Institute of Hospice Studies)
- Resthaven Inc. an aged care community service of the Uniting Church in Australia (S.A. Synod)
- Southern Community Programs
- Masonic Homes Incorporated (SA)
- Flinders University
- City of Holdfast Bay
- Royal District Nursing Service

to plan and produce a distance (self directed), education learning package, for careworkers.

The package developed was "Provide Palliative Care for people with Life-Limiting Illness in the Home Care Setting"

Setting

The area covered by the collaborative group was the Southern Metropolitan aged care region of Adelaide, South Australia and included the suburbs of Brighton, Glenelg, Happy Valley, Marion, Mitcham, Noarlunga and Willunga.

A collaborative approach was adopted for the collection of data and information, development, implementation, trial and evaluation of material for the package.

A Nurse Educator employed by the Royal District Nursing Service was appointed as the project officer, part-time, to co-ordinate the project. The project co-ordinator's role was responsible for the following:

- Complete and present monthly reports to the committee
- Complete the six monthly progress reports to the Department of Health and Ageing – this was a requirement of the funding agreement
- The project officer was responsible to the Director of Education, Royal District Nursing Service

The self directed learning package consists of an introduction, user's guide, case study and four individual elements or modules. The project was funded through the commonwealth funded national palliative care initiatives.

The project was undertaken by the collaborative group comprising representatives from the aforementioned establishments and several Careworkers, regarding palliative care to meet identified needs relevant to Careworkers employed to provide support services to people receiving a Community Aged Care Package (CACP).

Project Objectives

- The CACP Careworkers are trained and supported to maintain services to clients, who are receiving palliative care.
- CACP Careworkers have an articulated role within the specialist palliative care Team.
- CACP provider agencies have enhanced capacity to support clients who are receiving palliative care to remain at home
- CACP clients receiving palliative care are enabled to exercise greater choice to remain at home
- Project strategies are evaluated and modified as required.

The project was undertaken with enthusiasm and zeal by all involved thus enabling the project objectives to be achieved.

Methodology

The aim of the project was to identify the need for the provision of education that could be accessed by care workers who are employed to provide basic home and personal care services to frail older people with life limiting illness at home via the community aged care package programs funded by federal and state governments.

The project aimed to develop, trial and evaluate a self directed learning package on palliative care for care-workers. Through a collaborative approach an initial self directed learning package was piloted. Following an evaluation modifications were made an the package was marketed Australia wide. A total over 100 careworkers were recruited and an extensive evaluation procedure was undertaken.

Results

The results indicate that the careful preparation procedures in the development of the learning package, the piloting procedures and the evaluation procedures were appropriate. The package resulted in an improvement in the learners knowledge and confidence in the area of caring for palliative care clients. At this point, none of the data indicates that the package or the evaluation need to be amended.

Organisation

The Southern Adelaide Palliative Services (Incorporating the International Institute of Hospice Studies, Flinders University, South Australia), the Uniting Church in Australia (S.A. Synod, Resthaven) Masonic Homes of South Australia, Flinders University, City of Holdfast Bay and the sponsor organisation was the Royal District Nursing Service of South Australia.

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Major Achievements

Major achievements for the project included the development, trialling and evaluation of a self directed learning package designed to support careworkers caring for clients with palliative conditions.

The project was successful due to the consultation and collaboration of key stakeholders. It also included care workers in all stages of the project and the outcome resulted in a useful and effective resource.

It is noted that the questionnaire results, did not indicate if the knowledge and confidence translated into improved practice despite participants clearly positively evaluating the package.

A major problem faced by the project team was the number of participants that commenced the package and did not complete it. With the implementation of a questionnaire this was further investigated and it is pleasing to report that the participants did not give negative feedback on the package.

Recommendations for improvement would include follow-up of the care provided by the care-workers who have completed the package to assess a change in skill level; this would further support the long term effects of completing the learning package in this group.

The Royal District Nursing Service of South Australia could be contracted by the Department of Health and Aging to deliver the package to Registered Training Organisations, Community Centres and Aged Care Facilities and for use in the home by Carers

In conclusion the package developed is a useful tool to support careworkers in the community