Caring Communities Program - Project Overview

Organisation: Western Adelaide Palliative Care (previously known as Western Palliative Care Service)
Name of Project: Shared Bereavement Care in the West
Length of Project: 2003 - 2006

Project Summary:
The population of the western metropolitan region of Adelaide is culturally diverse and has a high concentration of Aboriginal people. This project will develop partnerships and strengthen links between specialist and primary health providers of palliative care in the western region to provide coordinated and culturally appropriate bereavement support. As the recognised specialist provider of palliative care in the western region, Western Adelaide Palliative Care is best placed to build on established community links and enhance the capacity of primary health care workers to provide a coordinated approach to bereavement care. In partnership with key stakeholders and workers involved in Aboriginal and culturally diverse communities the project will identify bereavement needs, gaps in services and develop resource materials to be used by specialist and primary health palliative care providers in the western region.

Project Objectives:
1. To identify bereavement needs of people from Aboriginal and culturally diverse backgrounds in the Western Region.

2. To establish links and partnerships with key stakeholders from Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the western region concerning the provision of bereavement care.

3. To collaborate with key stakeholders from Aboriginal and culturally diverse communities to identify resources, barriers and gaps in the access and provision of culturally appropriate bereavement support.

4. To develop education programs and resource information based on identified issues for the provision of culturally appropriate bereavement care to GP's and other key stakeholders providing palliative care in the western region.

5. To increase capacity of community organisations to participate more fully in the provision of culturally appropriate coordinated bereavement support to Aboriginal and other culturally diverse groups in the western region.

Project Activities:
1. Identify and link with key stakeholders in Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse groups in the western region who are most frequently represented in palliative care. These groups include Italian, Greek, Vietnamese, Yugoslavian, Serbian and Croatian, Ukranian, Polish.

2. Establish a reference group which will include workers and community representatives from Aboriginal and other culturally linguistically diverse groups who are represented in palliative care client group.

3. With the reference group, plan activities and providing direction for the project.

4. Facilitate focus groups with workers involved in Aboriginal and other culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the western region to explore needs, gaps and current resources.

5. Facilitate focus groups of families of past palliative care clients in the western region from Aboriginal and culturally diverse backgrounds to explore their experiences in accessing and receiving bereavement support and to identify gaps in services.

6. The information derived from focus groups will be incorporated into planning of education programs and services for bereaved people from these communities.

7. Provide education sessions for community health workers involved in providing palliative care concerning bereavement needs of people from Aboriginal and other culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

8. Develop resource bereavement packages containing information re bereavement needs of Aboriginal and culturally diverse populations.

9. Facilitate the provision of bereavement resource packages to all key stakeholders in the western regions involved in providing palliative care, including GP's, RDNS, Phillip Kennedy Centre, Domiciliary Care and community health services

MAIN MESSAGES

What you did

- Collaborated with key stakeholders, peak bodies and organisations from Aboriginal, Italian and Vietnamese communities to identify needs, gaps, barriers and resources to enable access to culturally appropriate palliative and bereavement services.
- Established links and partnerships with Aboriginal, Italian and Vietnamese communities to improve access to culturally appropriate palliative and bereavement services.
- Raised awareness of palliative care and bereavement services in Aboriginal, Italian and Vietnamese communities to build capacity to access palliative and bereavement services.
- Aboriginal and multicultural cultural competency training was provided to palliative care and mainstream hospital and community health professionals.

What has been learned?

- There is a culturally respectful process of engagement with Aboriginal communities.
- Need to develop relationships with key organisations and peak bodies in order to build trust and connection with Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- Need to work together with Aboriginal and ethnic organisations and workers in the provision of culturally appropriate care.
- Aboriginal and cultural diversity cultural competence training is required for mainstream health providers to ensure cultural safety in the provision of mainstream services.

What is useful to other projects/communities?

- Model of engagement with Aboriginal community can be adapted by other projects / services / communities

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

- Raising awareness of the needs of Aboriginal people in palliative care.

- Providing a model that other metropolitan palliative care services could adapt to engage with local Aboriginal and multicultural communities.
- Unexpected outcomes
  - the development of a working group of palliative care and Aboriginal peak bodies to continue to focus on needs of Aboriginal palliative care
  - submitting an application for funding for training for Aboriginal and mainstream workers in Aboriginal grief counselling.

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

- Commitment from palliative care services to continue to network and work in partnership with Aboriginal and ethnic organisations.
- Commitment from peak bodies to Aboriginal palliative care working group

What resources did you develop and are they available to others?

- Banner painted by local Aboriginal Elders group to be displayed in The Queen Elizabeth Hospital's palliative care in-patient unit and a replica banner to be used in other hospital departments and in local Aboriginal services.
- Pamphlets 'Aboriginal Palliative Care Doing things the Nunga way...' and posters 'The Nunga Palliative Care story', using artwork created by the Elders group that will be circulated throughout South Australia via the Council of Aboriginal Elders of South Australia.
- Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse cultural protocols to be used by mainstream health providers working with patients / families from these communities. This information will be included in the SA Companion Book of Providing Culturally Appropriate Palliative Care for Indigenous Australians Resource Kit.
- Article about the Model of Engagement used with Aboriginal community to be submitted for publication in palliative care journals.
- Article about Aboriginal palliative care to be submitted for publication in a palliative care journal and Aboriginal Health journal.