Caring Communities Program - Project Overview/Main Messages

Organisation: Silver Chain Nursing Association Inc.

Name of Project: Kalgoorlie-Boulder Palliative Care Co-ordination Project

Length of Project: 2 years

Project Summary:

Kalgoorlie-Boulder is a city of over 33,000 people located 600km east of Perth in the Goldfields region of Western Australia. Over 27% of the population (9,000 people) in the city and surrounding areas are indigenous.

The aim of this project is to develop a co-ordinated, integrated and co-operative palliative care service in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area that will provide quality palliative care in the community.

Project Objectives:

Primary Objectives

[x] to support the educational needs of the specialist palliative care workforce and primary health practitioners and enhance the skills of both groups in working collaboratively across professional boundaries

[x] to support the co-ordination of care for the person who is dying and their family

[x] to develop strong partnerships between palliative care service providers, other health service providers and the service system infrastructure to ensure the delivery of palliative care is geographically accessible and integrated across service delivery settings

Secondary Objectives

[x] to improve the knowledge and skills of families, carers and community groups so they can better support relatives, loved ones or individuals within the community who are dying, and work optimally through their bereavement

[x] to enhance community awareness of the role and benefits of palliative care in meeting the needs of people who are dying and their families

[x] to improve awareness of a broad range of health care providers the role of palliative care as an integral part of the health care system and their role in this area

ACTIVITIES

Activity 1 The employment of an experienced part-time palliative care co-ordinator and the provision of a vehicle, computer and office support.

Activity 2 The employment of a part-time indigenous liaison worker to support dying indigenous people and assist other providers to give culturally appropriate care.

Activity 3 Silver Chain will establish and facilitate the Kalgoorlie-Boulder Palliative Care Advisory Group.

Activity 4 The co-ordinator will actively support the establishment of strong relationships and co-operation.

Activity 5 Education of carers, volunteers and health care professionals

Part D – Main Message

What you did:

- Coordinated a multi-agency multidisciplinary team to support palliative clients and their families.
- Organised and implemented educational programs to build capacity.
- Implemented an awareness campaign using media and the community.
- Engaged Indigenous groups for liaison and cultural support.
- Recruited, trained and supported volunteers to provide home-based support.
- Strengthened partnerships by co-ordination of an Advisory Committee with key service providers to enhance the opportunities for a seamless transition of care for palliative clients and their families.

What has been learned?

- Multidisciplinary teams enhance the overall outcomes for palliative clients.
- Volunteers need support, training and resources.
- Education programs in remote areas are resource depleting and very costly to participants.
- Community awareness programs are essential in high turnover areas, to ensure people are informed of the scope of services available to them.
- Understanding the specific cultural issues surrounding palliative care for Indigenous people.
- A strong partnership among key providers creates opportunities to strengthen the range and quality of services offered and patient care outcomes.

What is useful to other projects/communities?

- The resources and service user guidelines developed for this project can be used either directly or with some modification in other communities.

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

- Describing the scope of services available, the investment in building knowledge and resources in palliative care for the community, and the importance of the role of volunteers in the community.
- Volunteers with a desire to support their communities have been drawn to the service through media articles and have in turn increased awareness among their own networks.
- Dissemination through the media and community groups improves the understanding of the role of palliative care in people's lives.

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

- Continued co-ordination of a multidisciplinary and multi-agency team is needed to ensure cooperation and communication and support for palliative clients and their families.

- Continuing professional development in palliative care is essential in ensuring quality care for the palliative client and their family.

- It is important to maintain the support of the palliative care service through the continued recruitment and training of volunteers and positive media stories.

- Continued investigation and collaboration with Indigenous groups is necessary to improve palliative care for Indigenous clients.

- Recurrent funding is required to cover coordination, education, equipment resource management and volunteer costs such as travel and telephone.

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

- We developed a training program for volunteers, utilising existing material and material from a number of other agencies, brochures and posters specific to this service, and resources in this town. All the resources developed are specific to Kalgoorlie.