

AMHB Summer Employment Research Program 2008

Compendium of Projects

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Background



PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

This Program is designed to build and support capacity for mental health research, evaluation, and quality improvement activities. Similar to the STEP program, ASERP offers subsidized wages to health service providers, non-profit mental health organizations, and Aboriginal communities to employ undergraduate and graduate students over the summer. Under the employer's direction, students work on projects aimed at advancing the evidence-based mental health goals of the organization.

ASERP 2008

To date, 65 students have been supported through ASERP, resulting in a direct increase in the capacity of organizations to perform mental health research and evaluation activities.

- 2006 – 20 students
- 2007 – 21 students
- 2008 – 24 students

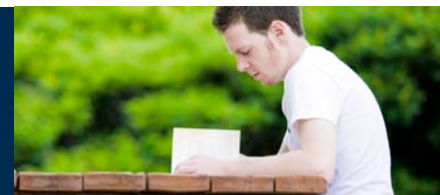
The AMHB Summer Employment Research Program (ASERP) was offered for a third year in 2008. This year, 29 organizations applied to the program but we were only able to support 26 of those applications: 18 from health service providers, six from non-profit organizations, and two to Aboriginal organizations. Unfortunately, two of these positions remained unfilled, for a total of 24.



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New to 2008, as a funding requirement ASERP supervisors were asked to submit a summary of their research/evaluation project, which was used to compile this compendium. The compendium showcases the work accomplished by the ASERP students and their supervisors. A summary of this year's evaluation precedes the compendium. More detailed reporting of the ASERP evaluation is available upon request.

Evaluation Summary



STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS (*n* = 13)

Institution in which students were enrolled

University of Calgary: 5 students
 University of Alberta: 3 students
 Grant MacEwan College: 1 student

University of Lethbridge: 3 students
 Athabasca University: 1 student

Major field of study

Psychology: 10 students
 Social work: 1 student
 Education: 1 student

Public Health: 1 student
 Health sciences (addiction counseling): 1 student

Level of study being pursued

Undergraduate Degree: 8 students
 Diploma: 1 student

Master's Degree: 4 students

Number of years completed in current program

One year: 3 students
 Two years: 1 student

Three years: 6 students
 Four years: 3 students

LEVEL OF AGREEMENT STATEMENTS

In addition to answering various open-ended questions, students and supervisors were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement for several statements using a five-point scale. Average ratings are presented below, with higher numbers indicating strong agreement and lower numbers indicating strong disagreement with the statements. As demonstrated in the table below, there was generally a high level of agreement from both students and supervisors for all items.

Supervisors		Students	
The ASERP student demonstrated the skills necessary to complete the project in a satisfactory manner.	4.5	The student research position increased my knowledge of research and evaluation processes.	4.7
The ASERP project provided the student with a good opportunity to increase his/her capacity in research and evaluation	4.7	My capacity to do research and evaluation was increased as a result of the ASERP position.	4.8
The ASERP project provided the student with a good opportunity to become more aware of mental health issues.	4.7	The student research position made me more aware of mental health issues.	4.7
N/A		The student research position increased my interest in the field of mental health.	4.6
I would consider hiring the ASERP student once he/she completes his/her education.	4.4	I am considering pursuing a career in the mental health field.	4.7
N/A		My supervisor/organization provided me with the resources to do my job effectively	5
As supervisor, I was available to answer the ASERP student's questions.	4.5	My supervisor was available to answer my questions.	4.8
As supervisor, I provided the ASERP student with direction when needed.	4.4	My supervisor provided me with direction when needed.	4.8
I would consider applying to the ASERP program again next year.	4.8	I would participate in the student research position again.	4.8
I would recommend the ASERP program to other organizations.	4.9	I would recommend the student research position to other students.	4.8

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the results of this and previous years' evaluations, the following is a list of recommendations for the AMHB Summer Employment Research Program.

Renew ASERP funding for an additional three years:

- Overall, both supervisors and students found ASERP to be a valuable resource and would like to see it continue in the future. Evaluation results have been very positive, with both supervisors and students expressing gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the Program.
- More funding is required in order to continue the ASERP Program.

Increase the ASERP subsidy rate:

- In Alberta's current labour market, competitive wages are required in order to attract enough qualified students to fill all ASERP positions. This year, three organizations were unable to hire a suitable candidate.
- In comparing the employer contributions to the students' wages, the average contribution from health service providers was higher than those of the non-profit and Aboriginal organizations (\$8.96 compared to \$7.09 and \$6.33, respectively). This may suggest the need to provide a higher wage subsidy for non-profit and Aboriginal organizations.
- With a \$1 increase in the subsidy wage for all participating organizations, \$144,000 would be required annually to support 25 students.

Increase advertising efforts to Aboriginal communities:

- The number of Aboriginal organizations that apply each year has been quite low. Advertising for this population may require more word-of-mouth and written materials as opposed to electronic or online advertisements.

Explicitly make addiction programs or organizations eligible for ASERP funding:

- ASERP has supported research projects related to addiction programs/services in the past but has not explicitly stated that such organizations are eligible.
- Updating the ASERP guidelines and promotional material to include addiction represents an opportunity to highlight the integration of mental health and addictions in Alberta.

Support knowledge exchange activities for students and supervisors:

- There was general agreement and enthusiasm among supervisors for a knowledge exchange event, where students would briefly present their projects, followed by group discussions around "lessons learned". However, supervisors had several resource and time-related concerns (i.e., transportation, timing with respect to vacations, financial support).
- Such an event would need to be planned far in advance with dates confirmed before the release of the application package. This would allow supervisors (and students) to plan their vacations around the event.
- Every effort should be made to financially support an in-person gathering, however, a videoconference should be offered to those who cannot take time out of their schedules to travel to the event's location.
- This event could be held in late August, or it could precede the annual Mental Health Research Showcase in November or be its own concurrent session during the conference.

Promote ASERP to human resource leaders as an attraction and retention strategy:

- Evaluation results indicate that ASERP has helped to attract and retain employees, and therefore should be disseminated to human resource leaders of health service organizations.
- Attraction and retention are paramount in building a mental health workforce committed to using evidence in practice and policy-related decision-making, which will ultimately result in better mental health outcomes for Albertans.

Compendium of Projects



SUPERVISOR: Carol Connolly

TITLE: Regional Manager, Research & Evaluation

ORGANIZATION: Alberta Health Services – Aspen Health Region

STUDENT: Andrew Willsher

Project Title or Purpose

Evaluation of Children's Telemental Health Services as provided by Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health Services (CASA) within Aspen RHA.

Importance of the Project(s)

Evaluation of services delivered is important for public accountability purposes; particularly when using a new method of service delivery. Aspen RHA partnership with CASA is strengthened by our ability to support mutual projects. This multi-level evaluation of Children's Telemental Health Services included telephone surveys to clients, family members, and mental health therapists determining satisfaction with telemental health consultations. Following instruction and practice with telephone surveying, the summer students completed the surveys, summarized results and submitted to CASA for inclusion in the final report.

Key Findings or Impacts

As this evaluation is still underway we are awaiting final results and report from CASA.

Conclusions

N/A

SUPERVISOR: Carol Connolly
TITLE: Regional Manager, Research & Evaluation
ORGANIZATION: Alberta Health Services – Aspen Health Region

Project Title or Purpose

Lighthouse Program Evaluation

Importance of the Project(s)

Evaluation of services delivered is important for public accountability purposes. Understanding from the client's perspective how a service maybe strengthened is key to ensuring the service is truly meeting client's needs.

Description of the Project(s)

The Lighthouse program is a member driven day program for individuals living with mental illness, their family members, and others who wish to volunteer. An evaluation of client satisfaction with the program was undertaken including surveys of members, interviews with the program director and mental health staff. A written report of the evaluation including a literature review and specific recommendations was completed by the summer student.

Key Findings or Impacts

Mental health day programs serve a unique clientele and provide a safe environment for increasing awareness of mental health services and networking with others. Specific recommendations to continue and improve the Lighthouse program were developed based on client and professional feedback. The Lighthouse program evaluation results reflect the value of the program to participants. The recommendation to continue the program was based on the strengths identified by program participants. Improvement recommendations included increase variety of programs offered, ensure timely advertising of programs to increase participation, and develop specific groups to reflect the needs of the varied clientele that access the day home.

Conclusions

The evaluation report has been shared with the Regional Mental Health Coordinator. The impact of the evaluation on services offered with be reviewed in six months, January 2009.

SUPERVISOR: Sophie Macrodimitis
TITLE: Registered Psychologist & Adjunct Assistant Professor
ORGANIZATION: Alberta Health Services – Calgary Health Region
STUDENT: Cristina Bigras

Project Title or Purpose

This was a development / quality improvement initiative.

Importance of the Project(s)

The main project was incredibly important for the management of the Clinical Psychology Service in the Calgary Epilepsy Programme. We are now able to track patients through a database and, as a result, will be able to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the program. The other work completed will help with maintaining the database. Finally, our completing some analyses of the data also contributed to our first steps towards understanding the need of our patient population.

Description of the Project(s)

The ASERP student completed the following projects:

1. Populated a clinical tracking database to support the psychology service in the Calgary Epilepsy Programme to evaluate the service.
2. Transferred psychology chart information to the departmental chart towards improved continuity of patient care.
3. Created a User Manual for the clinical tracking database.
4. Conducted frequency analyses / data checks of all data entry.
5. Completed literature review and summary for a specific grant proposal.
6. Used the data she entered towards an abstract / poster presentation submission to the 2008 Mental Health Research Showcase.

Key Findings or Impacts

The findings of the student's analysis of inpatient data revealed the need for ongoing mental health support, either within neurology departments or in community mental health programs, particularly for individuals diagnosed with non-epileptic events.

Conclusions

We successfully met our targets for the summer studentship and even went beyond them with the submission of an abstract to a scientific meeting and completion of a literature review towards a larger grant proposal.

SUPERVISOR: Kerry Mothersill
TITLE: Program Facilitator, Outpatient Mental Health Program
ORGANIZATION: Alberta Health Services – Calgary Health Region

Project Title or Purpose

Research and Program Development Assistant.

Importance of the Project(s)

The project enabled the development of the CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) Basics group to be developed and initial program development data was analyzed. The assistant also provided support for several other research projects and conducted literature searches to enhance the provision of therapeutic services on the team.

Description of the Project(s)

A number of CBT Basics Groups were completed during the time frame of this position. Data was analyzed in preparation for the development of a larger multi-site randomized control trial on the efficacy of the CBT Basics Group. The program was also developed and modified for use with patients in other specialty physical health programs (epilepsy, stroke, cardiac wellness, brain injured, etc) who have mental health issues as well as physical symptoms.

The research assistant collected and analyzed pre, post and follow-up data (measures of depressive and anxiety symptoms as well as knowledge of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Techniques) from patients who participated in 6-week CBT Group Therapy. The groups are designed to teach the cognitive behavioural conceptualization of symptoms and the basic therapy techniques of self-monitoring and modifying negative cognitions, assumptions and beliefs, relaxation, mindfulness meditation, exposure methods, etc to patients with depressive and anxiety disorders.

A number of groups were run over the summer at a number of sites within the CHR and the assistant was involved in analyzing previously collected data as well. The CBT Basics Groups are designed to be a cost effective method of delivering treatment services such that the need for and length of individual therapy will be reduced.

The assistant helped to prepare the treatment and patient manuals for the group and facilitate the patients' entrance into the program. Literature searches were conducted to facilitate the development of materials for patients with physical health problems. Research assistance was provided to other research and program development projects within OPMH.

Key Findings or Impacts

The CBT Basics group significantly reduces depressive symptoms and negative thinking patterns and increases participants' knowledge of the CBT model, skills and strategies for change.

Conclusions

The CBT Basics model can be used as an effective pre-treatment component for clients with depressive and anxiety symptoms.

SUPERVISOR: Janice Godbout

TITLE: Quality Improvement Coordinator, Adult Psychiatry

ORGANIZATION: Alberta Health Services – Capital Health, Alberta Hospital Edmonton

STUDENT: Emily Zahn

Project Title or Purpose

Staff and patient attitudes toward a smoking ban in a psychiatric facility. The purpose of the study was to evaluate issues related to the implementation of a smoking ban with the aim of improving programs to help patients reduce or quit smoking.

Importance of the Project(s)

Smoking rates in the psychiatric population is more than double that of the general population (approx 50% compared to 19% respectively). Many workplaces are implementing smoking bans to help reduce smoking among employees and the bans have shown to reduce cigarette consumption. In October 2006, Capital Health, Alberta Hospital Edmonton introduced a site wide smoking ban, banning smoking on all property, including lots and vehicles. We took this opportunity to evaluate if quality of life changed for inpatients since the smoking ban. Both patients and staff input were obtained in order to assess issues and attitudes related to the ban.

Description of the Project(s)

Two smoking surveys were developed (one for patients and one for the staff) to assess issues and attitudes related to the smoking ban and tobacco reduction. Data was collected from June 2007 to August 2007. Patients completed the survey themselves and two psychology interns were available for assistance. Surveys were delivered to the staff via general mail distribution and personal mailboxes. Surveys were mailed back to the psychology interns' office. Patient data was mostly quantitative. Staff data were qualitative and summarized. Results were presented in two poster presentations and journal articles.

Key Findings or Impacts

The significant changes reported in patients' perceived quality of life were related to nicotine withdrawal symptoms. Outdoor compliance was not important to staff or patients because the ban was not enforced. Staff understanding of nicotine withdrawal and the use of NRT contributed to conflicts and under treatment of nicotine withdrawals.

Conclusions

The implication of this research is that education on tobacco reduction options ought to be provided to staff as well as patients. Efforts to reduce tobacco usage and addressing nicotine withdrawal must be incorporated into standard patient care. Smoking bans must be properly enforced to have an effect on smoking behaviours.

SUPERVISOR: Denise Ledi & Andrew Burke

TITLE: Clinical Care Coordinator & Forensic Therapist

ORGANIZATION: Alberta Health Services – Capital Health, Forensic Assessment & Community Services (FACS)

STUDENTS: Erin Karman & Angele Theroux

Project Title or Purpose

The Counterpoint database is a computerized, multi-variable program developed in collaboration with multidisciplinary staff group from Alberta Hospital's Forensic Psychiatry programs and a professional computer programmer within Capital Health. The database is comprised of 152 variables retrieved from the clinical files of past residents of the sexual offender treatment program offered at Counterpoint House. Prior to the commencement of this project in May 2008, research variables from approximately 60 out of 175 clinical files were retrieved, entered, and checked for accuracy.

Importance of the Project(s)

The information generated and compiled in this project will provide an organized set of data that will be used on multiple levels for several objectives. These include: program evaluation and quality improvement; determining, maintaining and implementing evidence based 'best practices' in our service delivery to an 'at risk' population. Knowledge translation; the active dissemination and uptake of research findings by examining the relationships and variables involved in understanding, reducing, and managing an adolescent's risk of sexual recidivism. Evidence of this is demonstrated through past research articles utilizing Counterpoint data: (e.g., Aylwin, Reddon, & Burke, 2005; Aylwin, Clelland, Kirkby, Reddon, & Johnstone, 2000).

This project will also provide valuable information that will improve the effectiveness of Counterpoint's capacity to present current and relevant information to stakeholders such as Alberta Justice, Alberta Solicitor General & Public Security, Correctional Services Division; thereby impacting treatment, supervision, and policy decisions. Finally, it is anticipated that this information will be used in the future to examine factors associated with the change from the former Young Offenders Act, (YOA; Government of Canada, 1984) to the current Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA; Government of Canada, 2003). An examination of this shift can help policy makers evaluate the effectiveness of the YCJA and future amendments that may be needed in response.

Description of the Project(s)

The Counterpoint database project involves two phases. The first phase involves a retrospective file review of Counterpoint House clinical files from 1992 to 2007. A structured, 152 item multivariate coding sheet was completed on each file, inputted into the database, and rechecked for accuracy.

The second phase of the project is a study examining the effectiveness of Counterpoint's treatment approach on adolescent sexual and non-sexual offending behavior. There are two stages to this phase. The first stage involves comparing post-discharge recidivism rates between program treatment completers and non-completers. Ideally, random assignment of participants to treatment and non-treatment groups yields the strongest methodology. Although the use of a control group was not possible, an attempt to assess equivalency between the treatment and comparison groups is being made by measuring factors thought to play a role in recidivism using actuarial and empirically guided risk assessment instruments for juvenile sexual offenders. In order to do this, three standardized risk assessments for juvenile sexual offenders were employed for previous Counterpoint residents using retrospective file review. As this is an empirical research project, reliability is a key issue and each file was coded twice (once by each rater) and then assessed for level agreement. This stage of the project is still underway. It is hypothesized that no significant difference exists between groups in such factors and, as such, reasonable comparisons can be made between completers and non-completers.

The second stage of the project includes comparing the post discharge recidivism rates between program completers and non completers utilizing information obtained from the CPIC national offender database, COMIS, and ACOM provincial databases.

Key Findings or Impacts

The first phase of the project, data retrieval and database entry, is complete. The second phase of the project is still underway and no conclusions are yet available.

Conclusions

We estimated that approximately 1985 hours were required to complete this project. Since two Research Assistants were used the previous year, we aimed to do so in 2008. As one FTE Research Assistant at 620 hours was approved, we utilized two 0.50 FTE's to address our needs. We are currently halfway through stage one of phase two.

SUPERVISOR: Yanina Jackson, PhD.

TITLE: Research and Evaluation Coordinator

ORGANIZATION: Alberta Health Services – Capital Health, Regional Mental Health Program

STUDENT: Teddy Cosco

Project Title or Purpose

Vocational rehabilitation for individuals with mental illness: Impact on health services utilization

Importance of the Project(s)

Individuals with mental illness (MI) identify employment as an integral component of their recovery, and 90% express a strong desire to work. However, employment rates among the mentally ill rarely exceed 10%, demonstrating the need for programs and services that facilitate the acquisition and retention of competitive employment. Numerous studies have demonstrated the beneficial effects of vocational rehabilitation on both vocational (e.g., higher employment rates) and non-vocational (e.g., symptom improvement) outcomes. What remains unknown is whether vocational rehabilitation affects the utilization of health services. In this study we report, for the first time, the effect of vocational rehabilitation on health services utilization in individuals with MI.

Description of the Project(s)

Using a pre-post study design we compared health services utilization in 37 individuals with MI prior to and during their engagement in a social enterprise- a form of vocational rehabilitation. Health services utilization events were categorized as follows: emergency department visits (EDV), ambulatory care visits (ACV), hospital admissions (HA), and hospital length of stay (HLOS).

Key Findings or Impacts

Individuals with MI had significantly less EDV ($p=.01$), ACV ($p=.01$) and HA ($p=.05$), but no difference in HLOS ($p=.39$) during engagement, compared to pre-engagement in a social enterprise.

Conclusions

The reduction in health services utilization found in this study may reflect symptom and overall health improvement, highlighting the importance of vocational rehabilitation programs for individuals with MI.

SUPERVISOR: Dwight Jones

TITLE: Coordinator

ORGANIZATION: Alberta Health Services – Chinook Health, Mental Health Program

Project Title or Purpose

Satisfaction survey of community mental health clinic in Cardston, primary care initiative data generation and analysis, innovation project information management.

Importance of the Project(s)

In 2008, Chinook Health's ASERP student was actively involved in three separate projects. Satisfaction surveys are being conducted on a rotating basis on all Chinook Health Mental Health Programs and are required by Accreditation Standards. The Cardston Community Mental Health Clinic (CMHC) was due for surveying this summer and became the primary responsibility of the ASERP student. In addition, the monthly data collection tools for the Low German Speaking Mennonite - Mental Health Liaison project which is a component of the Community Based Children's Mental Health Innovation project required revision and this process also became the responsibility of the ASERP student. Finally, the ASERP student took an active role in Chinook Health's (CH's) office practice redesign project which has a goal of balancing supply and demand issues within our Community Mental Health Clinics across the Region.

Description of the Project(s)

The satisfaction survey consists of: 1) generating an up-to-date client list that displays their mailing address. 2) preparing mail out materials (editing the introductory letter, printing it, hand addressing envelopes, applying stamps, and mailing them) which include the introductory letter, the CSQ-18b Satisfaction Questionnaire, and a reminder letter 3 weeks after the questionnaire mail-out. As questionnaires are returned the responses are tabulated using SPSS 14 and a report is prepared describing the level of satisfaction and a summary of client comments. Survey results are still being received; however formative results were shared with senior administration.

The Innovation Project data collection tool needed revision and the Mexican Mennonite program required development of a data collection tool. In addition to refining the data collection tools to better reflect the evaluation outcome indicators, training of staff in the utilization of the new tools was required.

The Primary Care/Office Practice Redesign project consisted of two chart reviews at the Lethbridge Adult CMHC and Transition Program. The first identified the number of client cases potentially available for inactivation and the second to determine the cycle time for the documentation process. Tables and graphs were used to illustrate the data collected and management. The results are being used to redesign the processing of dictation and filing of documentation within the CMHC. The data is also being presented at the CH's Primary Care Learning Sessions. The student has been offered and accepted a casual position as a health analyst within the Mental Health Program so his valuable work can continue.

Key Findings or Impacts

Conclusions

SUPERVISOR: Hau Chow, Ph.D & Maureen O'Connell, Ph.D

TITLE: Registered Psychologists

ORGANIZATION: Alberta Health Services – David Thompson Health Region, Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury

STUDENT: Virginia Dennehy

Project Title or Purpose

Psychosocial group program review in Adult inpatient Psychiatry at the Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury

Importance of the Project(s)

The initiative has multiple purposes directed toward quality improvement and utilization of best practices for the treatment for this population.

Description of the Project(s)

We reviewed current practices regarding psychoeducational workshops/groups offered in the Adult Inpatient Program at Red Deer Regional Hospital and at the Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury. This project gathered information on existing best practices for workshops/groups from empirical literature and made suggestions for aligning current practices with those practices. Staff input for this initiative was elicited through the use of a brief survey created for this project. Additional groups were also developed that were tailored to the needs of this population based upon best practices. Furthermore, information obtained assisted in the development of a process to evaluate future workshops/treatment interventions and created resources for staff to utilize to inform their practice.

Key Findings or Impacts

Major findings include the following: Psychoeducational groups can be adapted to inpatient populations for diverse cognitive capacities and individuals with severe and persistent mental illnesses can benefit from psychosocial interventions provided in a group format. Focusing interventions on different subgroups can increase effectiveness (i.e. groups based on symptom acuity, cognitive functioning level or readiness for change). Additionally, adapting written patient materials and delivering materials for groups/workshops to match the different cognitive/reading levels of patients is beneficial.

Conclusions

Implementation of consistent comprehensive treatment protocols based upon best practices across modalities throughout a hospital system is vital. This requires changing the culture of inpatient units to be more consistent with empirically based treatment protocols (e.g., utilizing cognitive behavioural therapy principles/interventions throughout all formal and informal interactions with patients). A beginning step is the formation of linkages with ongoing staff education initiatives.

SUPERVISOR: Russell Hemingson

TITLE: Patient Care Manager

ORGANIZATION: Alberta Health Services – David Thompson Health Region; Halvar Jonson Centre for Brain Injury

Project Title or Purpose

Behaviour Change in Brain Injury

Importance of the Project(s)

To improve and refine the program using research evidence gathered on-site.

Description of the Project(s)

Psychotropic drug analysis – Following a continuation of a drug analysis study the year prior, the SPSS data from the project was interpreted and written into a results section looking at whether there was a reduction in negative behaviours, and/or medication during the period between patient admission and discharge. Included in this results section was an interpretation of the data that explored medication prescription and physician characteristics. SPSS was then employed to illustrate the findings in a series of bar graphs.

Dynavision – A pilot investigation looking to examine a patient’s progress regarding visual neglect deficits via their exposure to the Dynavision 2000 apparatus, a training system that has been credited with improving one’s visual skills such as gaze shift, peripheral vision and tracking. Motor impairment may be assessed in regards to eye-hand coordination, reaction time, range of motion, coordination, and motor planning. One aspect of the position involved administering the Test of Everyday Attention (TEA), the Behavioural Inattention Test (BIT), and the Rey Complex Figure Test and Recognition Trial test in order to determine the prospective candidacy of participants. Following this the position involved conducting a series of Dynavision treatments with various participants and putting the data from each session into an Excel format for future analysis. The student assisted with aspects of data collection.

“Fancy Friday” literature search – A literature search was conducted in regards to the potential benefits of the program’s Fancy Friday event. The activity involved soothing music, encouraged social interaction between patients, and was aimed at enhancing patient self-esteem and mood.

Key Findings or Impacts

Psychotropic drug analysis - findings: Patients are admitted with too many meds to modify behavior; patients admitted to our program are placed on a different family of drugs and "inappropriate" behavior reduced while cared for. Slight variances noted depending on which physician care for patient.

Dynavision - This study is ongoing.

"Fancy Friday" - Results of study showed attention given to brain injured individuals appearance and grooming positively impacted their positive sense of self.

Conclusions

SUPERVISOR: Isleta Ricketts
TITLE: Healthy Workplace Facilitator
ORGANIZATION: Alberta Health Services – East Central Health

Project Title or Purpose

- 1) Healthy Workplace Team Resource Binder
- 2) Supporting the Shift worker

Importance of the Project(s)

- 1) Very important – A useful tool to assist Healthy Workplace Teams to implement activities and initiatives that promote teamwork, employee appreciation /recognition, personal health practices, and fundraising.
- 2) Important

Description of the Project(s)

- 1) A compilation of various activities and initiatives that were implemented by Healthy Workplace Teams during the two-year Healthy Workplace Initiative. The student compiled all the activities in a consistent format and organized them into categories teamwork, employee appreciation /recognition, personal health practices, and fundraising. This is part 2 of a two-part resource tool that will be provided to all Healthy Workplace Teams across ECH region.
- 2) A review and summary of the literature was done on shift workers – the focus was the identification of best practice activities / initiatives that support the well-being of healthcare shift workers. This information will be used as a resource in the Healthy Workplace program when developing strategies to support shift workers.

Key Findings or Impacts

- 1) A useful resource tool that will be available to workplace teams to improve the health of their workplace.
- 2) Readily available information / resource that is current and practical to assist in the development of initiatives that promote shift worker health and well-being.

Conclusions

N/A

SUPERVISOR: Isleta Ricketts
TITLE: Healthy Workplace Facilitator
ORGANIZATION: Alberta Health Services – East Central Health
STUDENT: Holly Whyte

Project Title or Purpose

- 1) Implications of Stress While at Work on ECH Employees
- 2) New Employee Handbook

Importance of the Project(s)

- 1) Very important as it helps identify priority areas for the development of the Healthy Workplace Program.
- 2) Important – A useful tool and resource to new employees. As they have easy access to current information and policies that are needed as a new employee. It helps to reduce stress often associated with a new employer as they can get the information they need.

Description of the Project(s)

A research based Workplace Survey identifying the prevalence and implications of work related stress within ECH employees. As well the workplace factors that contribute to stress experienced while at work. Two questions that are addressed through the survey are: 1) What is the impact of stress on ECH employees? 2) What are some programs and initiatives that would be beneficial to ECH staff?

All ECH employees were sent a 43 question quantitative survey to complete electronically or in paper format. The survey examined 5 sections including: work organization, health effects, Healthy Workplace, job satisfaction and demographic information.

- 2) A new employee handbook was developed that provides a summary and links to key policies that are relevant to all new employees i.e. OH&S, Infection Prevention Control, Payroll, Confidentiality etc.

Key Findings or Impacts

- 1) Ten main areas of focus were identified: Communication, compensation, education, employee-managerial relations, interpersonal relations, recognition, recruitment, retention, work-life balance and workload factors.
- 2) Having an easily accessible tool that is current and available to all staff and managers will help reduce the stress and confusion that is often associated with new employment.

Conclusions

- 1) The research project was part of the ASERP student's research class. The data collection, tabulating and summarizing of the survey was done during her workplace placement. The remainder of the project will be completed in Feb. 2009 as part of her class project.

SUPERVISOR: Paula Bennett-Payne
TITLE: Manager, Mental Health Services
ORGANIZATION: Alberta Health Services – Northern Lights Health Region

Project Title or Purpose

“Bridging the Gaps in Children’s Mental Health Services”

Importance of the Project(s)

To identify services in the community of Fort McMurray that assist with offenders between the ages 12-16. Mental Health Services have not been treating these individuals in terms of mental health assessments or intervention. Is this particular population receiving the appropriate services? Could Mental Health Services be doing more work with these individuals?

Description of the Project(s)

The main focus of the research project involved researching and contacting local community resources as well as the parties involved in the justice system. The goal was to get an inside perspective of the judicial processes in Fort McMurray.

The aim was to determine what is happening to the youth in Fort McMurray. Also to determine if the treatment and services are appropriate for the youth offenders in Fort McMurray.

Key Findings or Impacts

Mental Health Services will need to work more closely with Probations, AADAC, RCMP, Victim Services, in order to assist and treat these youth offenders in the hopes that early intervention will decrease the likelihood of further offenses.

SUPERVISOR: Debra Best; George Harris

TITLE: Regional Supervisor – Community Mental Health; Regional Supervisor – Mental Health Outreach Services

ORGANIZATION: Alberta Health Services – Palliser Health Region

STUDENTS: Ian Taylor & Tysen Heller

Project Title or Purpose

To assist Mental Health Services with Policy & Procedure manual updates. Collating and collecting data for Mental Health Acute Care/Outreach Services. Perform other research duties as assigned.

Importance of the Project(s)

To be able to provide dedicated time/skills to intensive projects that was not within our capacity in our department.

Description of the Project(s)

To collaborate and disseminate information from other health regions/best practices to update our Policy & Procedures.

Collection and dissemination of best practices for Mandatory Non-Violent Intervention Training, Standardized Violence Definitions and Incident reporting, Standardized Risk Assessment Tool for Violence, and Serotonin Syndrome.

To provide support for staff involvement in education and knowledge transfer in review of current practice and standards for numerous policies. Focus group facilitation provided within the mental health department.

Key Findings or Impacts

Discussion papers for Mental Health Manager and Supervisors to evaluate and look at policy and organizational changes if required.

Conclusions

As an organization, we are very pleased to have this opportunity to assist with students in their learning capacities in regards to knowledge transfer and research. This also helps Palliser Health with recruitment/retention strategies for future staff/ASERP students.

SUPERVISOR: Debra Samek
TITLE: Program Lead North, Adult Mental Health Services
ORGANIZATION: Alberta Health Services – Peace Country Health

Project Title or Purpose

Conduct a program evaluation of our Assertive Outreach Program.

Importance of the Project(s)

This is important to the overall review of mental health programs. This will enable us to plan and develop services and allocate staff appropriately.

Description of the Project(s)

The project included the design and administration of a satisfaction survey to service users, staff and primary stakeholders involved with the Assertive Outreach Program.

A survey for clients, family members, physicians, staff members and agencies was completed. Staff, family members and clients have been surveyed to date. Results have not been tabulated.

Key Findings or Impacts

Project not completed.

Conclusions

SUPERVISOR: Dennis Stavrou
TITLE: Clinical Health Policy Advisor
ORGANIZATION: Alberta Health Services – Peace Country Health, Regional Mental Health Services

Project Title or Purpose

Housing Initiatives at Peace Country Health

Importance of the Project(s)

As housing is rare in the areas currently serviced by the Peace Country Health Region, identifying all resources available in the communities enables mental health providers to ensure that clients are receiving the best that is available. At the same time, in order to make that determination, mental health has to be aware of resources that are actually available in the community. The role of the student was to identify all available resources and gaps in order for PCH to develop a strategy to address issues in the future.

Description of the Project(s)

A third year Social Work student was hired to identify housing initiatives available in our communities. As part of that project, she was tasked with attending local agency meetings, such as ground-zero, and meeting with agencies one by one in order to develop a list of resources that are available in our communities and identify any gaps. As part of this project, she was supposed to develop a housing initiatives request for proposal that would go to our partners and the public in order to identify solutions to our supportive housing shortages within PCH, across our communities. Unfortunately, our student became ill and was unable to complete her project.

Key Findings or Impacts

The one key finding was that shortage of supporting housing options is real in our area.

Conclusions

As it is understood, housing options are limited in our communities. This conclusion has tremendous effects on our discharge planning in mental health. As we are trying to switch from a care model that is more hospital based to one that is more community based, lack of housing in the community is one of the most significant roadblocks. Unfortunately, although our student completed the environmental scan and was able to identify existing community resources, she was unable to complete her work due to illness.

SUPERVISOR: Robbie Babins-Wagner
TITLE: Chief Executive Officer
ORGANIZATION: Calgary Counselling Centre
STUDENT: Kara Cirwin

Project Title or Purpose

Understanding the Relationship between Addictions and Family Violence in a Community Based Treatment Program.

Importance of the Project(s)

This project focused on a number of projects intended to evaluate the effectiveness of services focusing specifically on addictions and family violence.

Description of the Project(s)

The ASERP student:

- Built on work that was begun by the Calgary Counselling Centre, some, of which was done in 2007. She extended the analysis of addictions and family violence, expanded the data set, and included client outcomes as part of the analysis
- Developed the template of the 2nd phase of the trauma and addictions screening at Calgary Counselling Centre
- Completed a psychometrics analysis of the session rating scale.
- Began an analysis of clients requesting addictions services at Calgary Counselling Centre's programs
- Prepared and input data for statistical analysis
- Prepared a report to disseminate findings to stakeholders

The ASERP program provided the student with exposure to research in a community-based setting as well as provide hands-on experience in a variety of research projects and methodologies including literature searches, data entry, quantitative data collection, analysis, and report writing. The student also learned about the importance of outcomes and research in a community-based non-profit setting.

A highlight of the experience was completing the data analysis and preparation of an abstract for the Mental Health Research Showcase. The abstract was accepted for oral presentation.

Key Findings or Impacts

Conclusions

SUPERVISOR: Jill Armstrong

TITLE: Project Manager, Workplace Mental Health & Wellness

ORGANIZATION: Canadian Mental Health Association – Calgary Region

Project Title or Purpose

The Copernicus Project Workplace Mental Health and Wellness Research and Data Library (WWRDL) was created to address challenges in managing substantial and diverse datasets. The WWRDL enables us to catalogue, search and retrieve data in an efficient manner.

Importance of the Project(s)

As expressed by Dr. Neufeldt in 2004, “Examination of the literature [regarding mental health knowledge and workplace practice] reveals little that could be called an over-arching conceptual framework. A major challenge is that much existing knowledge is subject to [...] ‘isolated pockets syndrome’. The different kinds of research [...] are published in different types of journals, with cross referencing infrequent.” Synthesizing knowledge from these related but separate areas is both essential and problematic.

Description of the Project(s)

The WWRDL uses Endnote 9 Bibliographic Software, chosen for low cost, ease of use and program compatibility. Our onsite library is catalogued in Endnote with physical copies of materials placed in binders corresponding to material type. Literature in the WWRDL includes but is not limited to, medical sciences, sociology, occupational health and safety, employee assistance, unions, political science, business development, human resources, economics, and popular culture. New information is added weekly.

Key Findings or Impacts

With materials easily organized, retrieved, and searched we can stay abreast of current trends and emerging research, ensuring that program materials are evidence-based, relevant, current, and comprehensive. The library enables a quick response to request for specific information.

Conclusions

The need for a protocol to manage the literature became clear during the early stages of development of The Copernicus Project. In the absence of “an over-arching conceptual framework” the WWRDL has given our workplace mental health education program, The Copernicus Project, a solid and credible foundation.

SUPERVISOR: Panteha Khalili
TITLE: Director of Research
ORGANIZATION: CASA, Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health
STUDENT: Vanessa Wong

Project Title or Purpose

Research and Program Evaluation Assistant

Importance of the Project(s)

The projects evaluated and the data analyzed by the ASERP student were all components of important ongoing evaluation and research projects at CASA and her summaries will assist the service providers in evaluated programs in planning for a new round of programs in fall.

Description of the Project(s)

The ASERP student has assisted research department in preparation of evaluation reports as well as database summaries for children mental health programs at CASA. Her work has also included conducting health record reviews and literature searches, routine data entry, as well as, coordinating information displays and creating pamphlets.

Key Findings or Impacts

The ASERP student's reports and summaries have provided valuable feedback to service providers within the evaluated programs about the quality of services provided over the past year. Furthermore, her assistance with data analysis and preparation of outcome summaries as well as literature searches has helped other research team members meet important deadlines for various other research projects including proposal submissions that were happening during this time.

Conclusions

Although the ASERP student has been in this position for only 2 months so far, she has accomplished a tremendous amount in such a short time and has assisted our research summaries and data analysis as well as some basic concepts in the field of children's mental health.

SUPERVISOR: M. Jeannette Hansen
TITLE: Analysis Researcher
ORGANIZATION: Miywasin Society of Aboriginal Services (Medicine Hat)
STUDENT: Brittney Thompson

Project Title or Purpose

Program Analysis Researcher

Importance of the Project(s)

We needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and services we delivered in our community. The catalyst for this was due to the increase in the number of clients accessing our counseling services with the Mental Health and Addictions issues, and the fact that they were only being serviced by one staff member.

Description of the Project(s)

The project was to conduct an Aboriginal needs assessment and program evaluation on the services Miywasin currently provides to our clients. The assessment took a dual-faceted approach as it directed surveys toward both individual clientele who have/may access Miywasin services, as well as other agencies who share the responsibility of providing community services to Aboriginal clients. An eight part client questionnaire was developed by our student, with a general goal to learn more about the clients in which our organization actually and may potentially serve; what current programs are appreciated and being accessed regularly; and what additional programs would be beneficial to implement. One hundred and twenty-three client questionnaires were completed between July and August, and a final comprehensive report completed based on the findings from the survey.

Key Findings or Impacts

As a result of the work our student did over the summer in conducting this needs assessment, it has shown that our organization has the potential to broaden and serve a lot more of the community than is able to do presently; a significant and obvious barrier to this goal is funding, which would provide essential staff, and allow for the introduction of new programs. The most significant needs in the Aboriginal community is for an addiction counseling program, develop more Youth and Elder connectivity programming so that the wisdom of the Elders may be passed on, greater advertising for our services and programs so that the community knows what is happening (special events, programming, new developments, etc.) and a significant portion of the surveys discussed the need for additional transitional and affordable housing.

Conclusions

We can now proceed to improve our programming/services we currently deliver to the community; further develop new programs/services that will benefit the Aboriginal community based on their most current needs; and, apply for the funding needed utilizing this most valuable research document that has been developed.

SUPERVISOR: Sharyn Youngchief
TITLE: Owner
ORGANIZATION: Sunrise Wellness Centre
STUDENT: Pauline John

Project Title or Purpose

Data collection

Importance of the Project(s)

To analyze children's behaviors and outcomes.

Description of the Project(s)

Collect data, intake, provide goals and objectives towards controlling behavior, using culturally appropriate ceremonies and natural resources. Help find their true identity because of shift in homes, and resolve family issues that plague residents.

Key Findings or Impacts

Residents were responsive, working hand in hand, worked rather than asking them to be involved or to complete a task.

Conclusions

More direct involvement, showing respect to residents, they learned through hands on, praising and providing them with counseling and working collectively with stakeholders, staff, community, and schools.

SUPERVISOR: Amy Chaves
TITLE: Director of Research / Research Manager
ORGANIZATION: Wood's Homes
STUDENT: Tina Kim

Project Title or Purpose

Reporting to the Research Management of the Department, the Research Assistant is responsible for the promotion, development and coordination of the agency's research and program evaluation activities, and for the amalgamation of clinical expertise with research activities.

Description of the Project(s)

Participated in agency activities that enhance research work. Consulted with agency staff regarding research and program evaluation issues. Performed literature searches relating to the formation, development and restructuring of agency programs. Took responsibility for agency data collection activities and analysis performance indicators and measurement of outcomes. Provided training to agency staff regarding research and program evaluation activities.

Assisted agency staff with preparation of presentations, workshops, and publications. Prepared Research Department reports for publication. Delivered presentations and workshops for agency staff and the broader community. Liaised with external researchers. Assisted in long range research planning. Assisted other Research Department staff as directed by the Research Director.

Key Findings or Impacts

Conclusions



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