

Keeping Families and Children in Mind: COPMI Mental Health Worker Educator Resource

Survey of the Workforce Educator Training

Undertaken by Consumers Consultants, Carer Consultants and Peer Educators

Report - June 2010

COPMI National Initiative

The aim of the Australian COPMI national initiative is to promote better mental health outcomes for children of parents who experience a mental illness. Key performance indicators of the current phase of the initiative include an increase in access to quality workforce development resources for people working with children and families regarding the promotion of factors to enhance children's resilience and the reduction of risk factors for children in relation to parental mental illness.

The Keeping Families and Children in Mind: COPMI Mental Health Worker Education Resource

The COPMI national initiative was funded by the Department of Health and Ageing to develop a learning resource for mental health workers in Australia (from psychiatry, nursing, occupational therapy, social work, psychology and general medical practice) about working with families (and in particular children) where a parent experiences mental illness.

The *Keeping Families and Children in Mind: COPMI Mental Health Worker Education Resource* is a flexible learning tool. The content of the training is web-based and can be utilised by workforce educators to deliver training to mental health workers in a group-based learning environment or by individual learners. The resource consists of six online modules (*'Mental Health and Families'*, *'The Parent'*, *'The Child'*, *'The Family'*, *'Carers'* and *'Putting it into Practice'*) requiring approximately six hours in total learning time. A seventh module for workforce educators provides materials and resources to assist with understanding how to implement the online modules for group training and facilitate a face to face workshop.

Workforce educators wishing to use the resource are required to finalise the following tasks to complete the training process:

1. Fill out an online application form.
2. Complete the online resource including all assessment tasks in the six modules.
3. Attend a one day training workshop.

Upon completion of the training tasks, participants receive a certificate, have access to an 'Educator tab' in their online resource (that provides materials for workforce educators and access to an online discussion board that provides a forum for maintaining networks), as well as support for workforce educators who are implementing the *Keeping Families and Children in Mind: COPMI Mental Health Worker Education Resource* in their workplace.

The COPMI national initiative encouraged Consumer and Carer Consultants and Peer Educators to apply to be workforce educators if supported by their employing organisations to do so.

Survey

During May-June 2010 a survey was conducted with the Carer Consultants, Consumer Consultants and Peer Educators who had completed the training. The purpose of the survey was to gain feedback to enhance future training programs involving these educators and to publish the findings on the COPMI website in order to assist future Carer Consultants, Consumer Consultants and Peer Educators who are involved in workforce education and the organisations that support them.

Method

A total of six Consumer and Carer Consultants and Peer Educators have completed all aspects of the training to utilise the *Keeping Families and Children In Mind: COPMI Mental Health Worker Education Resource*. These individuals were invited to provide information by telephone and/or hard copy survey relating to the support they have received from their sponsoring organisations. The survey required approximately 30 minutes to one hour. Four individuals completed the survey and received a thirty dollar gift voucher for their participation in the survey.

Findings

Support

- All participants heard about the resource through their workplace and received support from their organisations prior to attending the training.
- Since completing the training the participants have received ongoing support and encouragement from their workplace.

Format

- All four participants provided extremely positive comments on the online examples and video clips that were used throughout the resource.
- Although one participant was initially concerned the training could be too emotional, the information was presented in such a professional manner that the participant was pleasantly surprised and did not feel emotional.
- The 'freshness' of the resource was considered helpful, particularly as older and often outdated materials previously were used (due to the lack of availability of current resources).
- The quality of the resource was noted as 'excellent'. One participant felt it was helpful to have access to such a high standard of information that was positive from a consumers' perspective and a professional perspective.
- "The content is respectful, honest and very accurate (and features facts)".
- The opportunity to be kept up to date via the webpage was seen as favourable.

Training and Promotion

- Although the participants did not have an opportunity to use the resource in a training program at the time of the survey, they all intend to use the resource for training purposes in the future.
- All of the participants have been promoting the resource wherever possible.

Suggestions and Recommendations

- Modifying the pre-training paperwork into a more consumer friendly format.
- Introducing the option of completing the pre-training paperwork in hard copy (instead of the online option).
- Altering the pre-training preparation as it is currently time intensive (particularly as the work is done in addition to people's usual work). This was considered a limitation.
- Providing a contact person in each state to assist with the resource implementation, delivery and post training.
- Offering assistance with designing training packages (ie developing program content and selecting relevant modules) both before and after subsequent training is undertaken.
- Providing a refresher course or a second training day would be helpful as it would allow time for participants to create an actual training course and select the course content. The additional time would build participants confidence to design and create a training package as it is currently difficult to squeeze this information into one day.
- Providing information regarding who to contact for assistance with developing training packages would be useful. Although local support is available, a central point of contact would be helpful.

- Promoting the resource to create additional exposure to the relevant people working in the various areas.
- Providing support if the information presented during the training is too personal or sensitive to the participants.
- Conducting a debriefing session if the content stirs participants' emotions.
- Promoting the resource as a way to assist with recovery, instead of exclusively promoting the resource for workforce development purposes.

Summary

All of the participants thought the resource was helpful and valuable.

A teleconference with the survey participants will take place on Tuesday 15 June 2010 to review the survey findings and provide an opportunity to have an open forum/discussion to identify ways Consumer and Carer Consultants and Peer Educators could be further supported to undertake the training in the future.

Additional information on the survey is available from the COPMI national initiative upon request.