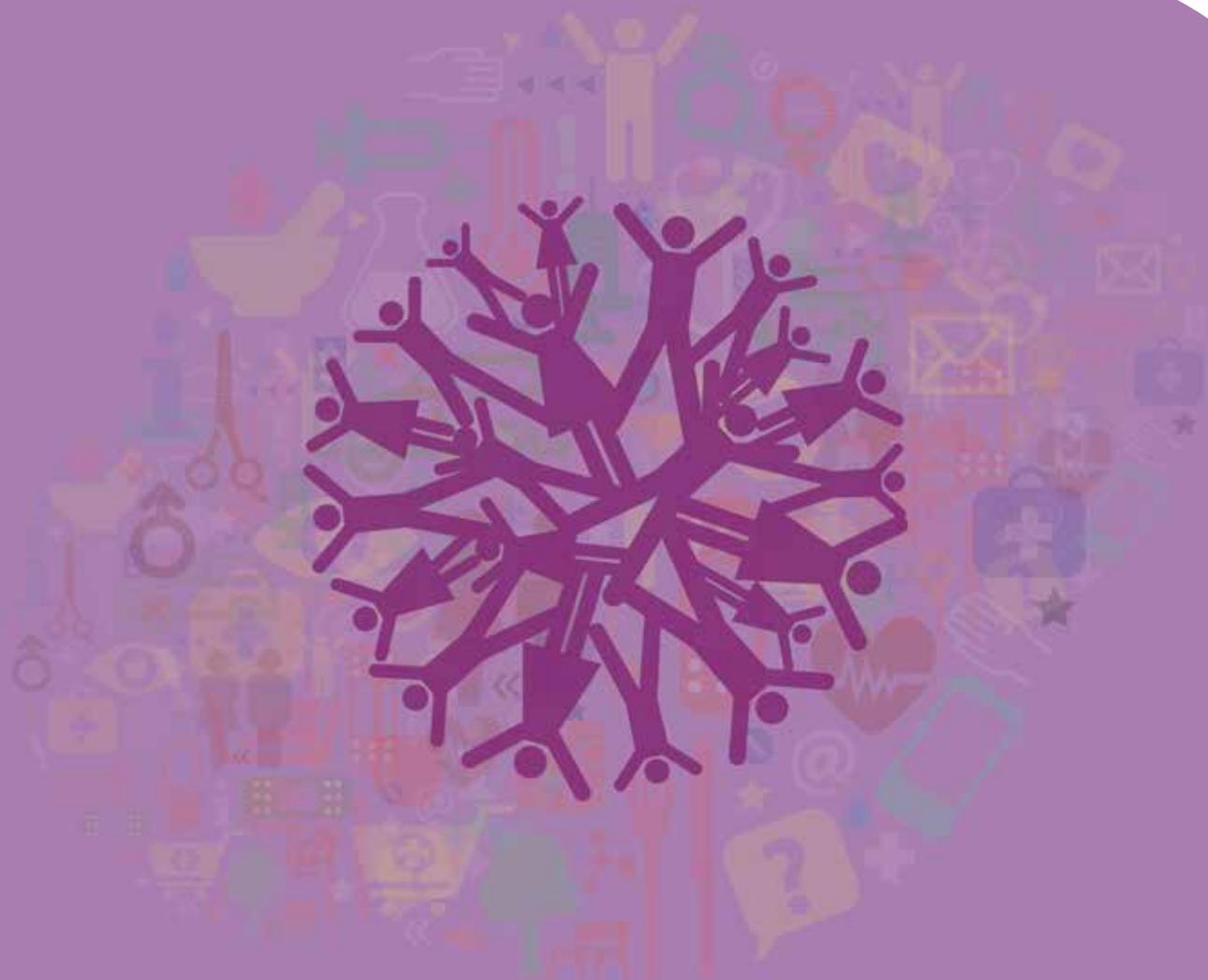


CHCCCS007

Develop and implement service programs

Release 2



Learner guide

CHCCCS007

Develop and implement service programs

Release 2

Learner guide

Aspire version 1.4



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Version control and modification history

| Version | Release date | Modification |
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| Release 2, version 1.1 | April 2017 | First release |
| Release 2, version 1.2 | January 2019 | Minor corrections as part of our continuous improvement program |
| Release 2, version 1.3 | July 2019 | Updated to reflect the new Aged Care Quality Standards |
| Release 2, version 1.4 | April 2020 | Updated table on page 18 |

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Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCCCS007 Develop and implement service programs*, Release 2. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this learner guide

This learner guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the learner guide you need to read, and which practice tasks and learning checkpoints you need to complete. The features of this learner guide are detailed in the following table.

| Feature of the learner guide | How you can use each feature |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Learning content | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Read each topic in this learner guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake. |
| Examples and case studies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Examples of completed documents that may be used in a workplace are included in this learner guide. You can use these examples as models to help you complete practice tasks and learning checkpoints. ▶ Case studies highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations. |
| Practice tasks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete. |
| Video clips | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Where QR codes appear, learners can use smartphones and other devices to access video clips relating to the content. For information about how to download a QR reader app or accessing video on your device, please visit our website: www.aspirelr.com.au/help  |
| Summary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic. |
| Learning checkpoints | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There is a learning checkpoint at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt. |

Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

The following table outlines specific foundation skills noted for your learning in this learner guide.

| Foundation skill area | Foundation skill description |
|-------------------------|--|
| Learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understanding your job role, organisational procedures and legal responsibilities ▶ Managing your work and seeing how well you are going and making goals for yourself at work ▶ Seeking professional development opportunities for continuous improvement |
| Reading | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understanding how documents are presented and being able to navigate through documents ▶ Understanding industry- and job-specific terminology ▶ Interpreting key information in relevant documents ▶ Understanding routine workplace checklists and documentation |
| Writing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Planning, drafting and writing reports and documents ▶ Communicating through written letters, email and online ▶ Recording progress; reporting incidents |
| Oral communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Clarifying instructions ▶ Providing information ▶ Supporting others through encouragement, negotiation and conflict resolution ▶ Using body language to model desired behaviour and responding to others' body language |
| Numeracy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Calculating costs, weights, measurements of height and distance ▶ Interpreting measurements |
| Teamwork | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Working well with other people by cooperating, collaborating, encouraging and building rapport |
| Planning and organising | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Planning your workload and commitments ▶ Implementing tasks ▶ Completing work on time ▶ Knowing how to deal with hazards and risks |
| Making decisions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understanding and applying decision-making processes ▶ Reviewing the impact of your decisions |
| Problem-solving | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identifying problems ▶ Working out how to fix a problem using problem-solving processes and reviewing the outcome |
| Innovation and creation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Recognising opportunities to develop and apply new ideas ▶ Generating ideas by thinking of new ways to do something ▶ Making suggestions to improve work |

| Foundation skill area | Foundation skill description |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Technology and digital literacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Efficiently using digitally based technologies and systems correctly and safely ▶ Accessing, organising and presenting information ▶ Using equipment correctly and safely |

What do you already know?

Use the following table to identify what you may already know. This may assist you to work out what to focus on in your learning.

| Topic | Key outcomes | Rate your confidence in each section |
|---|---|--|
| Topic 1 Engage consumers in the analysis of service needs | 1A Develop a plan for consumer participation | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 1B Investigate the needs of individuals | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 1C Recognise processes and communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 1D Interact and consult with people | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 1E Consult and collaborate with other services and networks | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 1F Evaluate the broader organisation context | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |

| Topic | Key outcomes | Rate your confidence in each section |
|--|---|--|
| Topic 2 Develop programs | 2A Facilitate input into program development | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 2B Engage people accessing programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 2C Incorporate consideration of individual differences | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 2D Integrate internal and external services | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 2E Determine resource requirements | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 2F Develop supporting systems and procedures | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 2G Develop and integrate service evaluation methods | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 2H Document the program identifying priorities, time lines and responsibilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| Topic 3 Implement and monitor programs | 3A Communicate roles and responsibilities to relevant stakeholders | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 3B Facilitate provision of training to support implementation | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 3C Monitor service delivery | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 3D Use feedback and interactions in monitoring | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 3E Identify and address problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |

| Topic | Key outcomes | Rate your confidence in each section |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| | 3F Maintain relevant program and service delivery documentation | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| Topic 4 Evaluate programs | 4A Assess the capacity of programs to meet objectives | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 4B Seek and evaluate feedback | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 4C Modify programs to meet changing requirements | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |



Topic 1

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 1A Develop a plan for consumer participation**
- 1B Investigate the needs of individuals**
- 1C Recognise processes and communications**
- 1D Interact and consult with people**
- 1E Consult and collaborate with other services and networks**
- 1F Evaluate the broader organisation context**

Engage consumers in the analysis of service needs

Good practice in community services is based on the needs of the service user. In some areas, participation is straightforward with the person receiving support requesting a service directly from an agency or being referred voluntarily from one agency to another for a specialist service. Examples of these types of service delivery include aged and disability care services.

Sometimes people are not seeking a service but have been referred through a statutory body and are involuntary users of the service. Examples of this type of service delivery include child protection and youth justice.

Regardless of whether a person is voluntary or involuntary their needs must be understood and systems put in place to ensure they are engaged in the planning, monitoring and evaluation aspects of the service.

1A Develop a plan for consumer participation

Including consumers in decisions about service provision happens effectively when there is a formal procedure in place that is included in the organisation's program planning and policy documentation.

A participation plan may be as simple as asking questions at the end of a service and ensuring feedback is actioned as part of continuous improvement. In large complex organisations a more structured approach may be needed and resources may need to be set aside to ensure the work is done.

Engage the person receiving support in decision-making

It is important to include the person receiving support in the planning process to ensure the service plan addresses their individual needs. Strength-based practice assumes service users have strengths as well as weaknesses, and suggests that outcomes are better if people are encouraged to have a say in the planning process.

The extent to which a person can be involved in decision-making depends on the nature of the service; however, all planning should include some capacity to engage people in the decisions that are being made about their lives.



Service users can be engaged at the level of their own case plan and at the broader level of organisational feedback about the way a service is delivered.

These two aspects of engaging the person receiving support need to be considered separately in service planning.

Develop a consumer engagement plan

All organisations should have a consumer engagement plan that allows for input by service users across all aspects of service delivery. The plan should be linked to all individual staff performance plans, management reports and governance reviews.

The following steps can be used when involved in developing a plan for your organisation.

Identify stakeholders

The key stakeholders usually include service users, staff, managers and board members. Sometimes funding bodies require evidence of plans and consumer engagement activity. Consumer engagement plans may also be required in accreditation processes and are an essential part of continuous improvement and quality assurance.

Identify methods

Depending on the role of the stakeholder, there are a variety of methods to choose from when planning to consult. Service users are usually engaged through participation in the case planning process, responding to follow-up surveys, using a feedback forum or attending focus groups. Managers and boards are usually involved through reports and presentations.

Identify relevant areas

All areas of an organisation engaged in activities that directly affect service delivery should be aware of and involved in the consumer engagement plan. These can include reception, finance (if payments are involved) and administrators of other relevant service areas such as residential or respite services. Direct care workers should always be involved in the consumer engagement plan.

Develop protocols

Policy and procedures should be written to ensure the consumer engagement plan is embedded in strategic plans, performance plans, board reports, quality assurance and continuous improvement strategies.

Develop tools

The tools used will depend on the nature of the engagement and the relevant stakeholder. Case plans should be set up to show evidence of service user engagement. This includes information given, questions asked and service-user input. Tools for organisational input may include satisfaction surveys, phone follow-up or use of suggestion boxes.

Ensure review

Evaluation should be built in to the planning process and monitored to ensure ongoing compliance. Regular review of service-user input can be included in casework supervision. Regular collection of material for management and board reports can also reinforce regular evaluation.

Ensure response

For the consumer engagement plan to be effective it must be part of a closed loop that includes implementation of action in response to service-user feedback. Types of actions may include changing appointment times, involving other family members in the planning process, or reducing waiting time for appointments. Reports to management and boards should always include the action taken to respond to the feedback. Plans need to acknowledge that some service users may not be satisfied with the actions taken or their level of involvement in decisions.

Program planning principles and processes

Consumer engagement should fit within the organisation's program planning principles and processes and encourage the development of plans that are comprehensive, efficient and inclusive. When developing plans to involve service users you should be aware of and follow these principles and process.

Examples of relevant workplace policies and principles include:

- ▶ using plain English in written and spoken contexts
- ▶ ensuring service users understand complaints/appeal processes
- ▶ showing identification before interviewing the service user
- ▶ providing interpreters or other communication aids
- ▶ recording information and outcomes
- ▶ sharing written summaries with the service user for verification.

Example

Service-user involvement in assessment of service delivery

Each year, a community health services agency completes an internal assessment of service delivery. Feedback comes from a sample of service users and/or their family members or significant others who have used the service in the past year. They participate in a forum to give feedback about their experiences, facilitated by an external consultant, and complete an anonymous survey before the forum. The facilitator asks questions about the experiences of these people using the service. There are questions about how people found out about the service; the intake process; staff ability, skills and attitude; and whether the service met their needs. They are also asked for suggestions for how services can be improved.



After the forum, the facilitator collates the responses and presents the management committee with a report showing patterns in responses, repeat issues and a response summary.

The management committee meets to review the report and consider an action plan to respond to the feedback. The report clearly shows a pattern that people are dissatisfied with the ability of some staff. The committee compares the report with reports from the previous two years to see which areas have improved and whether there are any ongoing issues. A summary of the report and action plan is then included in the organisation's annual report.

Practice task 1

1. List the steps to take when developing a consumer engagement plan.

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2. List three organisational policies or procedures that may be relevant when consulting with consumers.

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3. Name three factors that may impact on service-user participation.

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1B Investigate the needs of individuals

People using services have needs and rights that must always be considered as a priority when planning service delivery. While organisations should have clear consumer participation policies and procedures there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to including individuals.

A variety of factors affect individual participation, and strategies need to be developed to address them as they arise.

Organisations need clear plans and well-developed support systems that ensure the service users' individual rights and needs are the basis for service provision.



Understand people's rights

It is important to be aware of people's rights when identifying and assessing their needs. Rights are the minimum conditions a person should have in order to lead a reasonable life. International and Australian law protect the rights of all people. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights guides and reflects the laws of many countries. More information about the Declaration can be accessed at the United Nations website at:

- ▶ <http://aspirelr.link/udhr>

The Universal Declaration of Human rights states (among other things) that all people:

- ▶ are born free and equal
- ▶ should be protected from cruel treatment
- ▶ should be protected from discrimination
- ▶ have the right to a decent life including food, housing, clothing and medical care.

Uphold the rights of service users

Workers at all levels of the organisation are responsible for ensuring the basic rights of service users are upheld. Essentially, individual needs in terms of disability, culture, language, gender, age and location must be met.

As a community services worker you must ensure:

- ▶ you understand the person's culture and know how they wish to be treated
- ▶ aids are provided to help people communicate if they have language difficulties
- ▶ people can access services, particularly if they have no transport or live far away
- ▶ privacy and confidentiality are maintained and you are discreet in all your dealings with service users
- ▶ you treat people with dignity and respect and work to maintain their independence
- ▶ people know they have the right to an advocate, to help them understand information and make decisions

- ▶ people receive a service that does not pose a risk of injury or harm to them or their property and their home is safe if services are to be provided there
- ▶ you consider the person's condition and mobility when assessing their suitability for a service.

Individual needs

Each person using a service brings with them a range of individual needs. The following outlines some of the major issues to be mindful of when making assessments for service planning and gives examples of the needs that may be involved.

Disability

A person with a vision impairment has requested information about your service but all the available information is in written form.

Language

You are working with a young woman who is homeless. She has brought her grandmother in who she says has agreed for her to stay in her flat. The grandmother does not speak English.

Gender

An older man has requested that a male worker provide his personal care assistance for showering.

Culture

A father has asked about his children being able to continue their cultural practices while in foster care; they require Halal meals and time to pray each day.

Age

A person is able to complete activities of daily living independently without support providing she is allowed additional time; she explains that she prefers to do things herself even if it takes a bit longer.

Location

A person would like help to access local services, such as the GP, greengrocers and library, as she wishes to remain in a familiar community and environment.

Environment

An older woman you are visiting states she never leaves her flat because she is frightened of all the gangs in the neighbourhood.

Support participation

There are many ways that the worker and their organisation can support greater participation in service planning by individuals, as listed below.

Support checklist

- ▶ Include observation, questions and research in assessment
- ▶ Refer to experts when needed
- ▶ Use a person-centred approach when planning
- ▶ Be culturally sensitive
- ▶ Be aware of individual rights
- ▶ Offer a variety of ways for people to provide feedback
- ▶ Take action in response to service-user feedback
- ▶ Keep service users informed about changes

Engage service users at all levels of program planning

A consumer engagement plan should be integrated into planning at all levels of the organisation. It is not enough to rely on the case worker or other direct care workers to ensure the service user's voice is heard. Responsibility starts at Board level and should be filter through the organisation at every level.

Strategic plan

A strategic plan is a fundamental planning document for all organisations. Service-user engagement should be included as a strategy within the plan itself.

Policies and procedures

Organisations should develop policies and procedures to ensure consumer engagement. They should also ensure that other relevant policies and procedures are developed with feedback from consumers integrated into the planning process.

Budget

Consumer engagement should ideally be included as a budget item to ensure adequate resources and supports are provided.

Performance plans

Program and individual performance plans need to include service-user consultation, inclusion and feedback as measurable targets within the plans.

Human resources

The human resource plan should be developed with individual consumer needs included to guide staffing qualifications and experience, staff training needs and performance reviews.

Management

Managers are responsible for supporting staff to engage service users in planning, monitoring staff performance, providing resources to assist participation and reporting to the Board about feedback and action taken to respond to consumer needs.

Governance

The Board is ultimately responsible for ensuring that consumer participation occurs at all levels of service planning. It is also responsible for ensuring that action occurs in response to the feedback received.

Example

Supports and services for different needs

Fatima is 14 years old. She came to Australia as an asylum seeker from Sri Lanka with her parents five years ago. She lives in public housing in a regional city. The area has a reputation for being unsafe owing to high levels of drug and alcohol use. Fatima's mother is now her sole carer. There are five other children in the family.

Fatima's mother washes dishes at a local restaurant 12 hours a day and does not speak English. Recently, Fatima was picked up by the police at 3am during a drug raid at a nearby house. She has also not been attending school for the past six months and often stays out all night.

A child protection worker interviews Fatima at the police station. She says she does not want to go home because her mother hates her.

The child protection worker contacts a worker from a city-based multicultural organisation, who speaks Sinhala and can interpret for Fatima's mother. She agrees to visit Fatima's mother with the child protection worker. The visit reveals that Fatima's mother is very angry with Fatima. She has been trying to keep her locked in the flat when she is at work, but the other children have been helping her to escape. The mother is relieved to finally be able to speak to someone in her own language who understands the importance of young women maintaining their good reputation. The interpreter is able to make links for Fatima's mother with other women from Sri Lanka parenting children alone. Fatima returns home and is also connected to an agency supporting young women to stay in school. Fatima and her mother agree to have three sessions with the child protection worker to talk about the future. The interpreter is included in these Skype sessions to assist.



Practice task 2

1. List four rights that are outlined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

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2. Identify four ways you can act to ensure people's rights are upheld.

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3. List five examples of individual needs that may affect service planning.

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4. Identify four areas of program planning that should include consumer engagement.

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1C Recognise processes and communications

Take a 360-degree approach to recognising barriers and communications that may affect users of the service you are delivering.

How things are said, the way they are written down, the mood at reception, the inclusivity of images and promotional materials need to be considered, along with the usual barriers relating to physical access, cultural and gender awareness and learning difficulties.

Most workers understand what needs to be addressed in these areas without even consulting service users. Well-managed organisations don't wait for consumers to complain; they plan ahead.



Barriers to participation

Barriers to participation can arise from the service user, the organisation or the environment within which the service is being delivered. Here are some examples of barriers.

Individual barriers

Individual barriers include physical or mental disabilities, fear and lack of knowledge, mistrust and learning or language difficulties.

Organisational barriers

Organisational barriers include lack of signage, lack of privacy, translation gaps, complex procedures, a failure to provide communication tools, lack of access and a culture of excluding service users from planning.

Environmental barriers

Barriers found in the environment include poor public transport, lack of suitable housing, low or no income, gender and age discrimination and a lack of cultural awareness.

Remove barriers to participation

There are a range of strategies that can be used to remove barriers to participation. Some, such as building access, are obvious and organisations should have systems in place to address them prior to seeking feedback from service users.

Others barriers, like offering culturally sensitive display materials, may only become an issue when a service user highlights the issue or makes a complaint.

Strategies to remove barriers

Physical and mental disabilities

- ▶ Intake and assessment procedures that focus on identifying individual needs
- ▶ Communication aids and tools
- ▶ Accessible spaces
- ▶ Clear signage

Language and learning barriers

- ▶ Provision of interpreters
- ▶ Use of plain English

Fear and mistrust

- ▶ Provision of clear information
- ▶ Good communication
- ▶ Welcoming environments
- ▶ Independent advocates
- ▶ Open and inclusive planning

Transport

- ▶ Public transport timetables
- ▶ Supported transport

Cultural

- ▶ Staff cultural awareness training
- ▶ Culturally sensitive display materials
- ▶ Inclusive use of language on signs
- ▶ Welcoming reception space

Environmental

- ▶ Adequate access to services
- ▶ Organisational involvement in local issues
- ▶ Gender awareness training for staff
- ▶ Referrals to other support organisations

Example

Address barriers to participation

Liam comes to a community health centre focus group organised to gain feedback from the local community about its services.

The group of 10 participants is diverse in terms of age, cultures and gender; however, Liam, who is visually impaired, is the only person there with an identifiable disability.

The group coordinator has not been told about Liam's disability. This is problematic, as the session depends entirely on people reading information from handouts and contributing to written comments on butcher's paper.

The coordinator approaches Liam and apologises. He tells her not to worry as it happens all the time. She asks him about how these things have been solved for him in the past and what he would like to do. He tells her that if the others read what is being written down out loud, he should be able to keep up.

Liam picks things up very quickly and proves to be one of the main contributors, identifying ways services can be improved. His input relates mainly to ways the service can attract young people.

The coordinator reports on the group at the next team planning session and suggests that requests to participate in focus groups in the future include a question about special needs.



Practice task 3

1. Where would you look for barriers that may affect individual participation?

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2. List five supports an organisation could put in place to address barriers to participation.

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1D Interact and consult with people

Monitoring changing needs is part of an organisation's quality assurance or continuous improvement procedures. Planning should ensure that there is an ongoing cycle of interacting and consulting with service users to monitor the needs linked to addressing the changes that need to occur in response to feedback.

There are many formal and informal ways of interacting and consulting with service users. Managers and coordinators need to ensure that the interaction occurs as part of a planned process that is accountable and measurable.



Interact with service users

In order to evaluate whether a service is meeting the needs of the client, it is important that interaction occurs both formally and informally. The service user must always remain the focus of all assessment, delivery and review processes. Here are some examples of methods to facilitate service-user interactions.

Meetings

Regular meetings are essential to review case plans. They may take place once a year or more frequently if needed. The meetings should focus on any developments or changes in a situation that mean services need to change. These meetings are an opportunity to review the plan and goals and see where changes have occurred. They are also an opportunity to ask people for feedback on the service.

Informal feedback

Comments about the service from families or significant others can be obtained informally by phoning them or inviting them to visit the service. Encourage feedback by making the service user and their families feel welcome. Make sure you are approachable and reassuring. Try to address their concerns or questions. Through this informal feedback process, you may hear that a service user does not get along with a community services worker; that the person's preferences and goals have changed; or that service times are no longer suitable.

Committees

Committees, such as resident action groups, allow people who use a service to directly contribute to the policies and procedures of the service. Depending on the skills and needs of the service users, committees can be supported by a staff member. However, the committee and its decisions must reflect only the users' needs. Some committees run by service users have been able to access separate funding to employ an advocate (who is independent of the service) to assist them with running the committee.

Two-way communication

Good communication is essential when interacting with service users. Spend time listening to and getting to know your service users. This is invaluable in terms of being attuned to how the service is meeting needs. Regular informal feedback, such as observations and chats, and making sure staff are accessible and available, helps collect ongoing feedback from people who use the organisation's services. If people feel they know the staff and the staff value their feedback then they are more likely to pass on constructive comments.

Monitor changing needs

Regular, meaningful consumer feedback is one way to ensure the services provided by the organisation or agency stay focused on the people who use the service. There are many methods to obtain service-user feedback to monitor changing needs, as in the example below.

Suggestion boxes

Suggestion boxes can be placed in community services facilities or other services to encourage people to provide feedback. Suggestion boxes may be used by service users and others who access the service, such as family members and friends. Suggestion boxes provide an opportunity for anonymity if this is preferred, which may be the case when a person has complaints or concerns about the quality of services.

Complaints processes

A complaints process must be established in any organisation delivering community services. The standards that underpin community services organisations stipulate that service users, family members, advocates and carers have the right to complain without losing access to the service or having it reduced. All organisations must have a complaints policy and process that service users can easily follow. They must make sure that users understand what they need to do if they wish to complain.

Feedback forms

Many organisations have feedback forms available for people to record positive and negative comments about the organisation or agency providing a service. Feedback forms can be completed anonymously. However, it is often a good idea to encourage the person to sign their feedback forms. If the organisation knows who is making the comment, they can arrange a meeting with the person and resolve any issues that have arisen.

Surveys

Surveys can be conducted annually to obtain feedback about specific aspects of service delivery. Surveying a range of stakeholders, including other service providers that your agency works with, can be an effective mechanism to obtain feedback about how well the service is meeting peoples' needs. For example, an agency may receive feedback from another agency stating that their referral processes are cumbersome and hard to understand and that this is making it difficult for older people to access the service.

Service-user assessments

Service-user assessments can be conducted regularly by agencies. A formal service-user assessment of the service can form part of the agency's funding agreement. During an assessment, an independent facilitator meets with a sample group of people who are receiving services and asks them a range of questions about the quality of the service, etc. Individual responses remain anonymous and a summary report is provided to the agency. Depending on the structure of the service, the agency may be required to submit this report to their board of management or the government department they are funded by.

Example

Monitor changing needs

A residential facility has been running for 20 years. In the first 15 years of operation residents moving into it came from other long-term institutional placements. In recent years more respite placements have been integrated into the program and the residents are more likely to have been living at home with families before moving in to live in the facility.

The facility has always employed an activities officer on site to organise sport and leisure activities for residents. A recent residents' survey provided a lot of negative feedback about the sport and leisure activities offered, with people wanting more variety and preferring to join local events in the community rather than attend activities on site.

Follow-up on the feedback results in the facility outsourcing their sport and leisure management to a local organisation focussed on integrating older people or people with disabilities into local mainstream clubs.



Practice task 4

1. List three ways of interacting with service users to assess changing needs.

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2. Identify three tools that can be used to assess changing needs.

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1E Consult and collaborate with other services and networks

If you are a community services worker or manage people who are working in this field, you need to consult broadly when developing service programs for the people you support. Engaging with service users and gaining their input into planning is important; however, it is also important for you to understand and be able to engage the wider network of community services. Your agency is unlikely to be able to meet all the needs of the person you are working with. Having knowledge of and good links with other agencies improves the service you are able to offer.



Consulting and collaborating with other services and networks can occur in a variety of ways at all levels of your organisation. Boards will often network with members of boards delivering similar services; CEOs and managers usually meet together through formal and semi-formal networks to advocate, broker service partnerships and share knowledge. At the worker level there are many ways to be involved: through conferences and professional development workshops, professional associations, local planning meetings, shared casework and service partnerships.

Learn about other organisations

Community services workers need to keep up to date with what is happening in their field and the in local service community. Learning about other organisations and keeping up to date with changes that are occurring is an important aspect of a community services worker's role.

Methods of maintaining knowledge of other services include:

- ▶ participating in community services agency networks with professionals from other services
- ▶ attending conferences to receive up-to-date information about models of service delivery
- ▶ subscribing to email lists that disseminate information about developments in community services
- ▶ reading government publications and websites that relate to community service provision
- ▶ reading magazines and journals your organisation or agency subscribes to
- ▶ developing a good working relationship with a representative from your organisation's funding body
- ▶ attending professional development and training opportunities
- ▶ keeping a list of service providers and the type of services they offer.

Work with other organisations

Coordinators and supervisors must have a good knowledge of current service options and recent developments in the community services industry and sectors. As a coordinator, you need to have a comprehensive knowledge of all available services, the target clients, the cost, who is eligible and the frequency of service delivery. It is often difficult for one agency to meet all the needs of an individual. Being well connected with other organisations and the wider community provides access to resources that assist in meeting different people's needs.



Work with diverse groups

The diversity within groups of people with support needs may include a range of differences, with various organisations in place to provide specific support. The skills and knowledge that relate to understanding the differences are as diverse as the groups themselves. It is impossible to be an expert across all groups and it is therefore important stay informed about the different specialist groups that support these diverse needs. Keeping up to date, establishing effective referral systems and developing service partnerships with other service providers is an important extension of the service you deliver to the person you are working with.

The following information outlines key areas of diversity linked to agencies that offer them specialist support. You can find services in your local area by doing an internet search.

Disability

Most areas of physical and mental disability have peak bodies working to advocate on their behalf. Specialist agencies also offer targeted residential, education and support services.

Gender

Agencies focused on gender have tended to emerge from women's support services – women's health centres, violence against women refuges, sexual assault services and women's information exchanges.

Agencies targeting men include men's sheds, men's behavioural change programs and men's support groups.

There are also organisations focused on supporting transgendered people.

Sexual health support

There are an increasing number of support groups and agencies focused on same-sex and gender diverse groups. Sexual health support is provided by other specialist organisations including family planning and sexual health clinics.

Language

Interpreting, translation and language support is often provided through multicultural organisations as well as neighbourhood houses and individual cultural support networks.

Culture

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have support networks in every state providing health and cultural support and services.

There are a variety of other multicultural and culture-specific groups available, sometimes connected with neighbourhood houses or adult education.

Age

Age services are usually focused on youth and older people. They are often linked to local government and are involved in advocacy and service delivery.

Location

Communities often have neighbourhood houses and health centres which, along with local government, provide support to people living in particular neighbourhoods.

Environment

There are a growing number of organisations working in communities to combat environmental problems and encourage sustainability and better use of natural resources, including food.

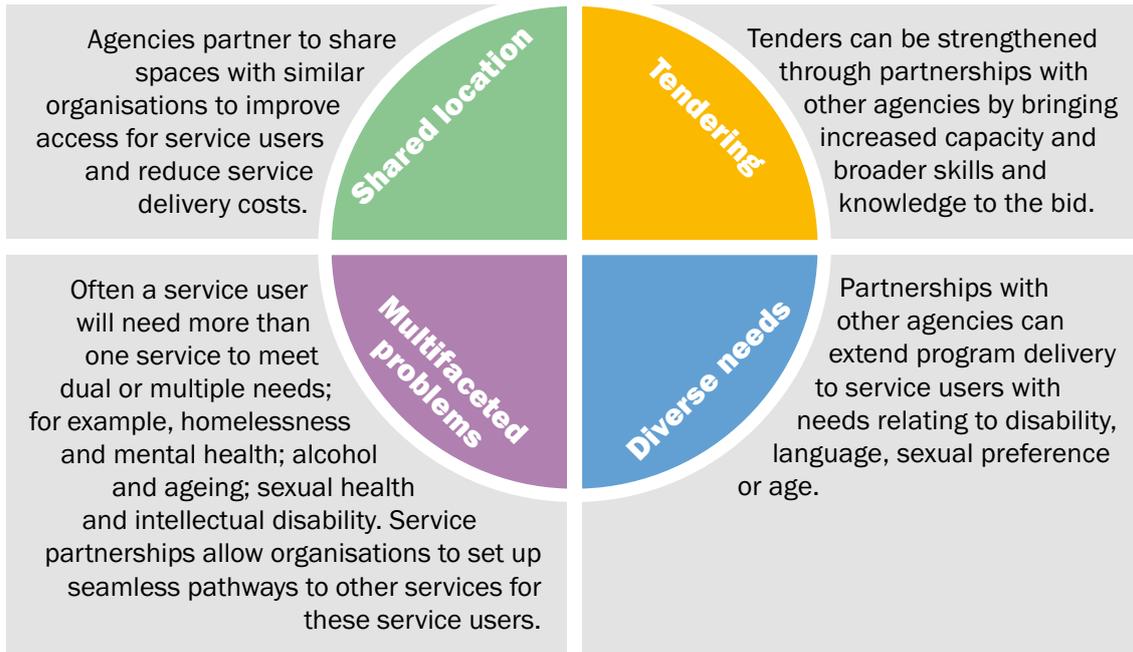
Develop service partnerships

Managers and workers in community services organisations need to liaise and work with a range of organisations offering similar or complementary services. Relationships between agencies can range from networking to collaborating to developing partnerships. In recent years both government and philanthropic funders have encouraged organisations to partner together when applying for funding grants.

The most important aspect of service partnerships is the opportunity to enhance the service you offer people in need.

Partnerships can be informal arrangements but will usually require memorandums of understanding or contracts if shared resources are involved.

Here are some examples of situations where service partnerships may be sought.



Example

Consult and collaborate

There are a range of tools available online to assist with consulting, collaborating and developing partnerships in the not-for-profit sector.

One that has been used widely was developed by VicHealth, a Victorian based health advocacy and promotion organisation, which ‘considers partnerships an important mechanism for building and sustaining capacity to promote health and prevent illness ... particularly ... when working across multiple sectors and with a range of organisations’.

VicHealth warn that in order to be successful they must have a clear purpose, add value to the work of the partners, and be carefully planned and monitored.

The partnership analysis tool developed by VicHealth is designed to assist organisations to assess, monitor and maximise the effectiveness of partnerships they enter into.

The tool can be accessed at:

- ▶ <http://aspirelr.link/partnerships-analysis-tool>

The checklist is designed to help organisations:

- ▶ develop a clearer understanding of the range of purposes of collaborations
- ▶ reflect on the partnerships they have established
- ▶ focus on ways to strengthen new and existing partnerships by engaging in discussion about issues and ways forward’.

Practice task 5

1. Describe some ways to maintain your knowledge of other organisations.

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2. List three circumstances when it could be beneficial to develop a partnership with another agency.

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1F Evaluate the broader organisation context

Service plans for individual service users or program plans for multiple service users are all developed within the broader organisational context of the agency. They also need to fit within the industry standards, codes and relevant government legislation.

It is important for these plans are consistent with organisational:

- ▶ strategic plans
- ▶ policies and procedures
- ▶ performance plans
- ▶ work health and safety plans
- ▶ budgets
- ▶ building and resource plans
- ▶ risk management plans
- ▶ governance frameworks.

Organisational context

When identifying and assessing a person's need for a service, keep in mind the organisational requirements you must follow. All organisations have their own policies and procedures. You must be aware of and understand these policies and procedures, to be effective in your program planning in the workplace.

Examples of workplace policies and procedures:

- ▶ Use designated forms for assessing or recording information.
- ▶ Show your identification before proceeding with an interview.
- ▶ Telephone a person if you are going to be late for an interview.
- ▶ Provide communication aids, such as an interpreter or a communication board.
- ▶ Ensure the person you are interviewing has an advocate, if required.

Standards

Different community services industry sectors have different obligations and standards. The following information explains some of the standards and principles that govern the community services sector. You should consult with your manager to identify further standards specific to your sector.

Aged Care Quality Standards

- ▶ Quality of Care Principles set out the responsibilities of providing services in aged care.
- ▶ The Aged Care Quality Standards relate to dignity in choice for consumers in regards to:
 - planning
 - personal and clinical care
 - supports for daily living
 - guidelines for services in terms of the environment that they provide
 - obtaining and actioning feedback and complaints
 - human resources.

National Standards for Disability Services

- ▶ The National Standards for Disability Services were developed to ensure clients receive services that are consistent with the principles and objectives of federal, state and territory disability legislation. The standards apply to rights, participation and inclusion, individual outcomes, feedback and complaints, service access and service management.

Australian Privacy Principles

- ▶ The Australian Privacy Principles (APPs), contained in the Privacy Act, regulate the management of personal information by organisations. Principle 11 is related to the security of personal information. All organisations must protect staff and client personal information from misuse, interference, loss and unauthorised access or disclosure.

Codes of conduct

Working within the bounds of legislation and service or accreditation standards is compulsory for all community services workers and organisations. However, establishing codes of conduct and codes of ethics (how staff are expected to behave and represent the organisation) is voluntary.

Codes of conduct are useful to clearly define the values and expectations of workers in upholding the rights and needs of clients. Home and community care, other agencies and residential services can all have their own code of conduct or ethics that reflects the values of the agency or organisation.

It is essential that the codes of conduct are compatible with legislation and service standards. Developing a code of conduct may present an opportunity for service providers to aim for a level of service that exceeds accepted practice.

Professional groups often develop their own codes of conduct and ethics; for example, the Australian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics 2010, can be accessed at:

- ▶ <http://aspirelr.link/aasw-code-of-ethics>

Duty of care, negligence and dignity of risk

Negligence occurs when duty of care has been breached and people or property are harmed. It is the legal and ethical obligation of any community services worker or supervisor to ensure that people who are using services are not exposed to unnecessary or unreasonable risk.

However, the rights of clients to dignity and choice are rights upheld in legislation and service standards, and duty of care should not be used as a reason to limit a person's freedom or personal choice. A worker's adherence to duty of care and safety must also be coupled with the concept of 'dignity of risk', which means a person has the right to make their own choices and to take risks. Community services workers must ensure clients are aware of and understand any risks they may be taking, and should always assist clients to make informed choices.



Legislative requirements

Always keep in mind the legislative requirements that all services must adhere to. There are laws and statutory requirements to protect the service provider and the client, as listed here.

Relevant legislation:

- ▶ *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)
- ▶ *Disability Services Act 1986* (Cth)
- ▶ *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- ▶ *Age Discrimination Act 2004* (Cth)
- ▶ *Aged Care Act 1997* (Cth)
- ▶ *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* (Cth)
- ▶ *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth)
- ▶ *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)

Legislation relevant to community services work

Community services workers must understand the legislation that underpins the work they do, as well as the organisation's policies and procedures. They must know which piece of legislation supports particular areas of their practice. Workers also need to know where to go to obtain further information about their responsibilities and the organisation's responsibilities under the legislation. Consider some of the legislation and obligations relevant to community services work and a worker's duty of care, as detailed below.

Privacy legislation

The *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and other state- and territory-based privacy legislation is significant to the community services sector because:

- ▶ privacy and confidentiality are legislative requirements
- ▶ people have the legal right to access their own medical records (each state and territory in Australia has laws and regulations regarding these records)
- ▶ you have a duty of care to protect a person's privacy and to ensure that their documentation such as case notes or incident reports (which are legal documents) are collected and archived according to your workplace's policies and procedures, which are guided by legislation.

Freedom of information

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) is significant to the community services sector because:

- ▶ freedom of information gives people the right to access government documents
- ▶ when collecting or documenting information, workers should keep in mind that everyone has the legal right to view all that has been written about them
- ▶ workers have a duty of care to provide clear, factual and accurate information.

Anti-discrimination legislation

Anti-discrimination legislation is significant to the community services sector because:

- ▶ workplaces must promote equality for everyone, regardless of their age, gender, race, disability or sexual preferences; it is unlawful to discriminate against people on these grounds
- ▶ you have a duty of care to ensure that people have equal access to services and are not discriminated against on the basis of disability, race, gender, age or sexual preference
- ▶ you must provide all people with equal access to services and treat everyone with respect and courtesy.

Work health and safety legislation

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth) legislation is significant to the community services sector because:

- ▶ work health and safety legislation ensures a safe working environment
- ▶ this legislation is designed to reduce work-related incidents and illness and their related costs
- ▶ community services workers have a duty of care to ensure they adhere to safe work practices to avoid injury or harm to themselves or others.

Mental health legislation

Each state or territory has a mental health Act that is significant to the community services sector because:

- ▶ it has been designed to protect the rights of people with mental illness and outline the circumstances in which a person may involuntarily be taken for treatment; that is, when they pose a risk to themselves or others
- ▶ workers have a duty of care to recognise the signs of acute mental illness and to act to protect the person and others, when necessary.

Criminal laws

Criminal laws in Australia are significant to the community services sector because:

- ▶ suicide is no longer a criminal act in any state or territory; however, it is a criminal offence for someone to assist a person to suicide
- ▶ workers should always act in the person's best interests, which may require reporting someone who is attempting to assist a person to suicide.

Example

Evaluate the broader organisational context

Legislation, standards and codes have implications in many circumstances of service provision, for employees and for people using the services. Here are examples of legislation as they apply in work environments.

Comply with requirements by doing the following:

- ▶ Provide a safe work environment for all staff and volunteers; attend to environmental hazards such as uneven floors or poor lighting.
- ▶ Treat everyone equally and fairly regardless of age, race, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation or personal background.
- ▶ Inform people with support needs of all appropriate aspects of the service and information about the service provider.
- ▶ Include people with support needs in the planning process.
- ▶ Ensure people have access to an advocate.
- ▶ Let people with support needs know they have the right to complain if the service does not meet their needs.
- ▶ Keep service user information confidential but ensure people have access to their own care plan.
- ▶ Ensure clients receive quality service; for example, service providers follow their duty-of-care requirements.

Practice task 6

1. Identify four organisational plans that need to be followed when planning a program.

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2. List three pieces of legislation that impact community services work.

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3. What is a code of conduct?

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Summary

1. Engaging service users in planning is an important part of program planning at both the individual service plan and program level.
2. To involve service users in planning it is important to understand and respond to their individual needs as well as the organisational and external barriers to their engagement.
3. A consumer engagement plan should include collecting feedback from service users in a variety of ways, analysing the feedback and implementing changes to service delivery in response to the feedback.
4. Community services workers need to collaborate and consult broadly with other agencies to ensure they are able to respond to the multifaceted needs of service users.
5. When engaging service users in planning, workers need to be mindful of following organisational policies and procedures.
6. All program planning needs to be developed within relevant standards, codes and legislation.

Learning checkpoint 1

Engage consumers in the analysis of service needs

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in engaging consumers in the analysis of service needs.

Part A

Read the scenario, then answer the questions that follow.

Scenario

You are a community services worker working in a youth hostel. The people you work with are aged between 16 and 25.

1. List four strategies you may use to engage the young people you are working with and gain their feedback.

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2. List three individual needs to consider when collecting feedback.

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3. List the stakeholders you should involve when developing a program plan.

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4. At what level should service-user feedback be shared in the organisation?

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5. List three barriers that may prevent young people from giving feedback.

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6. Explain two obligations that organisations have in relation to complaints procedures.

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7. Identify two ways you can make it easier for the people you support to engage in two-way communication.

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Part B

Read the scenario, and then answer the questions that follow.

Scenario

A neighbourhood house has set up a program to provide employment support to local refugees. You are investigating their needs.

1. How would you try to engage the refugees?

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2. How would you assess their needs?

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3. Who might you consult and collaborate with?

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4. How would you make sure you properly adhere to a code of conduct?

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5. What legislation should you be mindful of?

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Topic 2

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 2A Facilitate input into program development**
- 2B Engage people accessing programs**
- 2C Incorporate consideration of individual differences**
- 2D Integrate internal and external services**
- 2E Determine resource requirements**
- 2F Develop supporting systems and procedures**
- 2G Develop and integrate service evaluation methods**
- 2H Document the program identifying priorities, time lines and responsibilities**

Develop programs

Community services programs have a better chance of being successful if they are well planned. There is a large body of knowledge available to assist workers to plan effectively when engaging stakeholders, planning resource requirements and applying evaluation methods to programs.

While organisations usually have a commitment to maintaining key stakeholder engagement and integrating evaluation into their service delivery, they often fail to do the planning work that is needed to make these things happen.

As a community services worker you are required to use a planned approach to delivering service programs.

2A Facilitate input into program development

Program development involves assessing needs and developing service strategies, as well as implementing, evaluating and continually monitoring and reviewing service delivery.

A key aspect of program planning involves consulting with and including key stakeholders from within and external to the organisation.

The program development process operates right through an organisation's operations, from the strategic plan to individual service plans, and engages everyone from the Board to service users.



Internal stakeholders

Internal stakeholders are the people and programs that operate within the organisation you are working for. Sometimes community services workers don't understand the importance of including staff who are not part of direct care in their planning for and with service users. Staff from finance, human resources and transport can offer a valuable contribution to program planning. They are the people who understand what resources are available to support workers and service users, and the more they understand the context in which resources are being used, the better they can plan to provide them.

The Board that governs the organisation signs off strategic plans and budgets, and needs to be kept well informed to operate effectively.

The following list outlines some key internal stakeholders linked to strategies for engaging them.

Internal stakeholders and engagement strategies

The Board

- ▶ Reports, presentations, subcommittee meetings

Management

- ▶ Reports, presentations, management meetings

Finance

- ▶ Reports, program planning meetings, budget planning meetings

Human resources

- ▶ Reports, program planning meetings, recruitment and staff development planning meetings

Reception staff

- ▶ Reports, staff meetings, program planning meetings, reviews

External stakeholders

Organisations cannot operate in isolation from the community within which they work. Engaging funding providers, partner organisations, service users and other community representatives strengthens the service capacity of your own organisation.

If, as a community services worker, you are involved in planning for a new program or reviewing an old program that needs updating, input from external stakeholders is vital.

The following lists some key external stakeholders with suggested strategies for engaging them. Where service-user groups exist, they can be engaged by being invited to speak at meetings of the organisation; to participate in strategic planning; and engaged at conferences and workshops.

External stakeholders and engagement strategies

Funding bodies

- ▶ Attend briefings by funding bodies, provide reports to them, invite them to attend the annual general meeting

Service users

- ▶ Share service planning, seek feedback on service delivery, participate in strategic planning, invite service users to join committees or to attend the annual general meeting

Partner organisations

- ▶ Attend network meetings and planning meetings; have a guest speaker at a staff meeting, invite them to attend the annual general meeting

Peak bodies

- ▶ Engage with workers from peak bodies at conferences and workshops, have them as a guest speaker at staff meetings, invite them to attend the annual general meeting

Specific service-user groups and individuals

Some individual service users may require special consideration when planning a program. It may be because they cannot access public transport, do not speak English or that they belong to a minority group that does not have representation in the community.

Planning to include these individuals needs to be flexible and responsive to when and where the need arises. If good assessment processes are operating on referral and/or during intake, needs should be recognised and acted upon as part of the organisation's general procedures.

Often service users will have support groups that offer extra assistance to organisations. Assistance can include advocacy for individuals, awareness training for staff and participation in planning processes.

Example

Facilitate input into program development

A residential facility has been providing its own recreation services internally since it began operation 10 years ago. When the service was first established, it provided a home for young people moving out of institutionalised care into community care.

In recent times the organisation’s population has changed with some of their residents moving in to live independently as young adults leaving home. These residents are more interested in individualised recreation events outside the centre.

The change to accommodate these needs will cost a great deal and may make the current recreation officer redundant, so a series of meetings are planned by management to address the issue. The first one is for internal stakeholders involving managers from residential support, finance and human resources along with residential workers and the recreation workers. The second meeting includes managers, residential and recreation workers, service users and a representative from a local sporting peak body that is focused on integrating young people with disabilities into mainstream sporting activities.

Practice task 7

Re-read the previous example, then answer the questions that follow.

1. What is the changing need that is being addressed in the case study?

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2. List two internal stakeholders and explain why they are involved in the planning meeting.

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3. List two external stakeholders and explain why they are involved in the second meeting.

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2B Engage people accessing programs

Whilst engaging service users in the planning processes at the community worker level is important, it is essential that the engagement occurs at all levels of the organisation. If management processes don't include service-user input, programs may be planned without taking their individual needs into consideration and will most likely be less effective.

When people using the service are engaged right through the management process of an organisation, planning and decision-making is more responsive to people's needs.



Management processes

The management processes of an organisation extends from the service worker level right through to the governance that happens at Board level.

In a well-governed organisation, the Board will ensure that management processes are guided by sound policies and procedures that are constantly monitored and reviewed. It will also monitor the actions taken to address feedback arising from the review process.

The following information identifies ways service-users can be engaged in management processes.

Governance

- ▶ The Board requests regular reports from management that summarise service-user feedback. Some Boards create Board positions for service-user representation. Service users may also be asked to present directly at a board meeting or as a guest speaker at the annual general meeting.

Strategic planning

- ▶ Service-user engagement should be a major part of the strategic planning process to both collect their input about needs and comment on the sort of service delivery required to meet them.

Quality assurance

- ▶ As part of continuous improvement, organisations survey service users for feedback that will guide improvement.

Management meetings

- ▶ Managers should report on service-user feedback at their meetings on a regular basis. Managers may meet with service users to resolve disputes. They may also engage service users in discussion about service delivery as part of performance planning for staff.

Develop formal arrangements

Formalising input into management processes from service users requires strong policies and procedures to ensure compliance continues.

The following information identifies some ways organisations can formalise input.

Formalising involvement in management processes

- ▶ Create positions on the Board with clear terms of reference.
- ▶ Ensure procedures for strategic planning include consultation with those using the service.
- ▶ Develop service planning policies and procedures that ensure people are consulted.
- ▶ Include service-user feedback in monthly Board reports.
- ▶ Make service-user reporting a regular agenda item in management meetings.
- ▶ Implement regular review processes to ensure feedback is collected and responded to.
- ▶ Build audits of user feedback into the continuous improvement cycle.

Example

Engage people accessing programs

A women's refuge has employed a consultant to assist with developing their five-year strategic plan. When the consultant suggests involving service users in the planning process she is advised that it would be difficult owing to the women who use the service not staying long and needing space and privacy while in the refuge.

The consultant asks if it is possible to follow up with women who have used the service before to ask if they could participate in a focus group. This is agreed and eight women respond positively and attend a focus group.

The Board receives a briefing from the consultant about the focus group findings and one of the Board members suggests that it would be beneficial to have a service user regularly participating in governance discussions.

The Board formally creates two service-user positions and two of the women who attended the focus group accept an invitation to join the Board.



Practice task 8

1. List the four management processes that people using a service can be included in.

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2. List three ways people using a service can be formally included in management processes.

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2C Incorporate consideration of individual differences

Individual human needs and differences include a complex range of abilities, preferences and attributes. While individual rights apply equally to all people, their needs and differences can be multifaceted and nuanced.

Community services workers and their managers need to understand the range of individual needs and differences they may be presented within their work, and ensure planning processes are responsive to them.

Awareness training about particular needs and preferences, along with broad consultation and engagement with specialist peak bodies supporting individual differences can assist workers to incorporate these considerations into the planning process.



A person-centred approach to care

A person-centred approach to service delivery focuses on individual differences and ensures the person accessing the service is central to service delivery. The service responds to the whole person and focuses on a social model of care rather than a medical model of care. A social model of care considers all factors that affect or influence a person's life (social, psychological, physical, and economic, etc.); whereas a medical model focuses on a problem or illness.

In a person-centred approach, planning is individualised, based on who that person is and their unique aspirations. The resulting service provides solutions that consistently meet the needs of the individual.

Individual rights

Organisations have a legal obligation to ensure the individual rights of all people using the service are upheld.

Community services workers need to understand these rights and integrate them into practice.

Specific rights may be more important in particular community services environments, as described below.

Individual rights

Privacy

Information collected about people using the service must remain confidential, be stored securely and must not be accessed by unauthorised others.

Duty of care

Duty-of-care requirements include collecting information courteously and informing people what has been written about them.

Discrimination

Workers must not record discriminatory or unnecessary information.

Freedom of information

Freedom-of-information requirements should be followed to ensure service users are able to access information held about them.

Multifaceted needs and preferences

People have multifaceted needs and preferences. These can relate to sexuality, gender, physical and mental abilities, addictions, physical health, culture, literacy and numeracy, education and access to resources.

Community services workers need to be well informed about these needs and preferences and be able to incorporate them into planning.

Strategies for developing good practice can include the following.

Response to multifaceted needs can be improved by:

- ▶ training in awareness of gender, homophobia, culture and disability
- ▶ use of plain English
- ▶ consulting peak bodies
- ▶ developing partnerships with organisations that focus on needs different from your own
- ▶ engaging special interest groups in planning
- ▶ providing advocacy support from special interest groups
- ▶ making inclusion of multifaceted needs and issues part of the strategic plan.

Example

Incorporate individual differences

In the aged care field there has recently been much discussion about same-sex couples seeking accommodation in residential services as couples struggle to find services that meet their needs. In some cases, the values of organisations and workers are being tested.

Some organisations are claiming that they can't accommodate same-sex couples on religious grounds. The government has not yet mandated to address this discrimination and require all funded agencies to accept people of all gender and sexual preferences, thus acknowledging their right to be treated with dignity.

As society overcomes the prejudice that exists in relation to same-sex partnerships all organisations will need to develop clear policies to ensure workers do not discriminate on the grounds of sexual preference.



Practice task 9

1. What is meant by a person-centred approach to planning?

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2. List four areas where legislation binds workers to uphold individual rights.

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3. List four ways that worker responses to multifaceted needs can be improved.

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2D Integrate internal and external services

The community services sector is made up of a huge range of organisations varying in size from a few workers to hundreds. Often organisations are one of a network of agencies delivering the same service; for example, aged care, child welfare or community health. Sometimes organisations may be specialist and may be the only one delivering a particular service in their region; for example, transgender support, AIDS awareness or multicultural support.



Community services workers in large organisations need to factor in all the service delivery areas in their own organisation when planning. These can include services like finance, transport, human resources and reception.

All community services workers need to integrate external services into their planning process so service users can benefit from the specialist services and extra support offered.

Internal services

In large and medium sized community services organisations, service delivery is backed up by an extensive internal service network that supports the workers engaged directly with service users.

Effective service delivery planning integrates these services into the planning process to achieve outcomes that are affordable, fully costed, staffed efficiently and well organised.

Organisations will vary as to the breakdown of service areas but the more common ones are listed below.

Internal services include:

- ▶ finance
- ▶ fleet management
- ▶ reception
- ▶ human resources
- ▶ marketing
- ▶ project management.

External services

Workers in community services acknowledge the benefits of networking with other workers and their organisations. At the local level networks are formed for information sharing and partnership approaches. There are also many professional networks in each state and territory that meet and share information. The focus and structure varies from network to network, but the overall goal of sharing information to support clients is common to all. Consider the types of networks listed below.

External networks

Support and advocacy groups

Support and advocacy groups assist people experiencing the same issue/s; for example, Arthritis Victoria. Part of the support may include providing information and training to service organisations.

Professional associations

People doing the same job form associations; for example, the Australian Community Workers Association.

Service-user groups

Sometimes service users form their own advocacy or peer support groups; for example, Transgender Victoria.

Project groups

Project groups are working groups or committees focused on a particular project. The focus of such group are usually on current issues such as young people with disabilities in nursing homes, policy changes in social housing, or legislation review.

Consortiums

Consortiums are groups of organisations that develop formal arrangements for working together to share service delivery.

Example

Integrate internal and external services

Youth services in the Barfield region have been meeting for five years under the banner of the BYSN (Barfield Youth Services Network).

The group has been planning towards the creation of a one-stop youth service where they can all be located in the one building. They believe this will benefit the people using their services by improving access, and that by sharing costs and integrating service delivery money can be saved and funnelled back into programs.

The plan is a product of many years networking, collaboration and partnership.

The steering committee for the project has finance, human resource and direct service managers from each organisation working with youth workers and young service users to complete the plan.



Practice task 10

1. List four typical internal services you would expect to find in a large organisation.

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2. What benefits can be gained from engaging with external services?

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2E Determine resource requirements

When planning a new program, the first things that need to be considered are what are the costs involved; what are the staffing needs and what are the other resources required.

While the plan for designing a new service is the central focus, it can't be delivered efficiently if other business planning is not developed, implemented and monitored.

Funding bodies, boards and senior management will all need to evaluate budgets, human resources strategies and accommodation plans before approving a new project.



Funding frameworks

Finding a funding source is usually the first big challenge for any new program. While you will usually have supervisors and finance managers supporting the process, it is good for community services workers to understand their funding sources and how funding is managed.

The two main sources of funding supporting community services are described below.

Government funding

- ▶ Government funding can be granted at the federal, state or local level.
- ▶ Since the 1990s almost all government funding is made available through a competitive tendering process.
- ▶ Tenders are advertised and organisations are invited to submit tenders outlining how they would deliver the service and what it would cost.
- ▶ Some funding is granted on a fixed-term basis for organisations to deliver a service such as community health or residential care, and is ongoing.
- ▶ Other funding is one-off and project-based with the funding ceasing at the end of the contract.
- ▶ Accountability is rigorous when government funds are involved.

Philanthropic funding

- ▶ Philanthropic funding comes from private individuals or companies that provide funds to support particular projects.
- ▶ Grants can be delivered by the organisation itself and are often a tax deduction.
- ▶ Community foundations have been developing over the past 15 years offering philanthropists an organised way to donate without physically managing the grants themselves.
- ▶ Funding is usually project-based and time-limited. Organisations need to submit applications to the trusts or foundations to engage their interest.
- ▶ Accountability for funding is not usually as rigorous as government funding but is still required.
- ▶ Some philanthropists like to stay anonymous, while others like to get 'hands-on' with projects.

Financial requirements

Understanding financial requirements assists community services workers to be more effective program planners and managers.

There are some simple frameworks to use in when assessing financial requirements. The simplest and widest used is an income against expenditure budget. This simple tool can be used to measure financial requirements and monitor financial progress over the life of a program.

The following outline of a basic program budget indicates the most common cost centres to be included. Budgets will vary according to the nature of the program and the type of service being delivered.

| School support program budget | |
|---|------------------|
| Income | |
| Grant | \$500,000 |
| Fundraising | \$5,000 |
| Fees | \$20,000 |
| Total income | \$525,000 |
| Expenditure | |
| Salary and wages | \$350,000 |
| Accommodation | \$30,000 |
| Travel | \$20,000 |
| Infrastructure (includes phone, gas, electricity, incidentals etc.) | \$100,000 |
| Resources (laptops for service users) | \$25,000 |
| Total expenditure | \$525,000 |

Human resources requirements

It goes without saying that the people delivering the program are the most important asset to a community services organisation.

Getting the right people, with the right qualifications who believe in the values and purpose of your organisation can sometimes be difficult. An effective staff recruitment strategy is required for the organisation as a whole, and for specific programs.

Here are some strategies to use to identify and manage effective people.

Human resources management strategies

- ▶ Be clear and concise when writing position descriptions.
- ▶ Make sure job ads clearly communicate who you want.
- ▶ Seek advice when planning recruitment strategies.
- ▶ Follow effective, accountable selection procedures.
- ▶ Provide a good orientation to new staff.
- ▶ Develop effective performance enhancement procedures.
- ▶ Provide regular professional development.
- ▶ Celebrate staff achievements.
- ▶ Provide career planning advice and support.

Physical resource requirements

Physical resource requirements vary greatly according to how established your organisation is and the service you will deliver. For example, large established organisations may be able to add a new program for relatively little extra cost.

Some programs require staff and/or service users to travel; some require complex residential facilities; and others may require just one room. You need to carefully map out activities to identify the physical resources required.

Here is a list of some of the most common physical resources to factor in when planning a new program.

Physical resources:

- ▶ An office or other meeting space
- ▶ Furniture
- ▶ Telephones
- ▶ Computers
- ▶ Internet connection
- ▶ Vehicles
- ▶ Reception space

Example

Determine resource requirements

A counselling service has been successful in gaining funds from the philanthropic trust to set up a free counselling service for newly arrived refugees.

The budget they developed when submitting the grant application for the program included the employment of one extra staff member. A memorandum of understanding has been developed with a multicultural services organisation to rent one of their offices three afternoons a week to deliver the service.

The counselling service needs to advertise for a new counsellor as none of its existing employees have the necessary background knowledge. Most refugees coming to the area are from Sudan so 'understanding Arabic and the Sudanese culture' is listed in the position description as 'desirable'.

The counselling service invites a worker from the multicultural services organisation to assist with the recruitment.

The funds granted by the trust won't cover refugee social events, which a worker from the multicultural services organisation suggests will be effective in encouraging service users to develop their own support networks.

The board of the counselling service is approached and agrees to fundraise and include this extra expenditure in the budget.



Practice task 11

1. Name the two most common funding sources for community service organisations.

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2. List three expenditure items you would expect to find in a community services budget.

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3. Identify three strategies that will assist good human resource management.

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4. Name three resource requirements most new programs will need.

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5. How did federal government funding change in the 1990s?

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2F Develop supporting systems and procedures

Community services workers need to ensure they have good support systems around them if they are to plan and deliver services effectively.

These systems ensure safety, financial security, continuous improvement, provision of resources, review and evaluation, and maintenance of standards and equipment.

Developing and maintaining effective support systems relies on the provision of effective policies and procedures to guide them.

Policies and procedures need to be in place to guide everything from social media use to security in reception. While community services workers sometimes rail against the bureaucratic approach of developing and following set procedures, most people agree they are needed.

The secret is to engage workers and service users in developing and maintaining policies and procedures.



Support systems

As a community services worker you will rely on a large number of support systems to be able to work effectively with the people you are supporting.

You will need an office to meet in, a phone to be contacted on, a website to introduce your service, a social media account to promote activity and connect people – the list goes on. Reception staff, and procedures followed in that first point of contact, can create a respectful, fair, orderly, predictable and supportive structure. Procedures in relation to reception usually focus on customer service and security.

The more you know about the policies and procedures your organisation has put in place to guide these support systems the better you will be at implementing them.

The following information outlines some typical support systems with a description of what their policies and procedures may cover.

Information technology (IT)

IT policies and procedures guide access and security for:

- ▶ email and websites
- ▶ shared knowledge systems
- ▶ troubleshooting
- ▶ equipment maintenance.

Social media

Most organisations use social media and should have procedures to cover such things as content, permissions, risk responses and social media marketing techniques

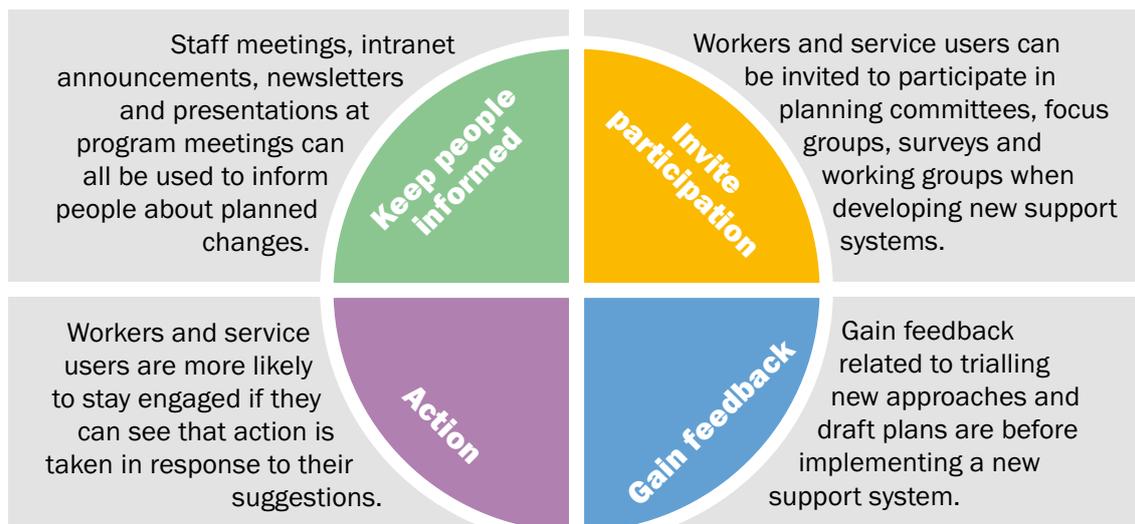
Finance

Finance policies and procedures ensure that spending is planned, monitored and accounted for. Delegations, spending limits and reporting requirements should be covered in these documents along with petty cash use and reimbursements of expense guidelines.

Develop supporting procedures

If organisations want workers and service users to follow policies and procedures, they need to make sure they are known and supported.

The following strategies can be used to ensure engagement when developing new policies and procedures.



Example

Develop support systems

Bill works for a remote regional drug and alcohol services organisation. He is out on the road visiting some young people that had been referred to his organisation after a party got out of hand at a local cattle station and a young woman was injured. Bill hasn't had much time to get a background on the young people, so he stops by the side of the road and logs into his network in Alice Springs to read the files he has been sent. When he goes to start his car, it won't turn over. After trying unsuccessfully for five minutes he checks in the glove box to find out what he needs to do to get help. There is a clear set of guidelines for him to follow including out-of-hours phone numbers, the closest town for assistance, the automobile club number and instructions on how to stay cool when stuck in a car in the desert.



He gets help and is back on the road within two hours. On his way, Bill rings his supervisor, Bec, and asks her to let the group know he will be late. Bec also checks how long he has been driving that day and what time he expects to get home that night. She reminds him of the organisation policy of staying overnight after driving more than 500 km in a day, so she books Bill into a nearby sheep station that provides accommodation for travellers, and texts him the details.

The meeting with the young people goes well and Bill leaves believing they will adhere to the restrictions placed on them through their diversionary order.

While the day has its setbacks, Bill realises it would have been a lot more difficult without the support system that kicked into place when needed.

Practice task 12

1. Why is it important to understand the procedures relating to reception?

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2. List three types of supports that may be important for a community services worker doing home visits.

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2G Develop and integrate service evaluation methods

The best ways to evaluate a service involves feedback from service users, and measurements of outcomes.

It is important to gather regular feedback from clients and other stakeholders. For some agencies this is a requirement of their funding agreement.

There must be a clear plan regarding what to do with feedback. If feedback is not recorded, analysed and responded to promptly, the process is meaningless.

Setting objectives for a service provides a measurable outcome that can be monitored and reported on. Integrating independent service evaluation into programs is often another requirement of funding bodies. Extra funds are sometimes provided to ensure this occurs.



Service evaluation methods

Service evaluation needs to start when the program is being planned. Identifying clear objectives, strategies and tasks that are measurable is an important first step towards developing appropriate evaluation methods.

Use the SMART acronym to guide your approach to objective setting and measurement:

| SMART GUIDE | |
|---|---|
| An easy to remember guide for setting objectives: | |
| S | Specific Target and clearly define a specific area that you want to improve. |
| M | Measurable Suggest an indicator of progress; quantify if possible. Determine how you will know the goal has been achieved |
| A | Attainable Agree what the goals should be and keep them achievable in the time frame. |
| R | Realistic Identify what results can realistically be achieved given the available resources, knowledge and time. |
| T | Time framed Specify when the result can be achieved; make sure there is enough time to achieve the goal, but not too much time. |

Integrate feedback into service planning

Feedback is not a valuable resource if it is not acted upon. Consider the steps outlined below to make good use of feedback.

Record feedback

All feedback received must be documented. A written record of service-user feedback (whether hard copy or electronic) is a reference that enables organisations to review and reflect on the service they provide. It also shows patterns that can assist you when analysing the feedback.

Analyse feedback

To be responsive, you need to analyse all feedback, decide on a response, and act on it. Complex issues may require time to resolve, and the collaboration of a number of people. For less-complex issues, analysis may be brief and the action obvious. You may need to involve other people, such as health professionals, agency members and family members, to help you analyse the information.

Categorise feedback

You need an efficient and ordered way of analysing feedback. Placing feedback in specific categories is useful. For example, the facilitator of a service user-assessment process may provide a comprehensive report to the service, grouping feedback that relates to the same issue. Once a pattern has been established, it is easier for the service to interpret the feedback and to take the actions needed to respond to the feedback.

Isolate feedback

While it is important to analyse the patterns in service-user feedback, you shouldn't discount feedback that is 'one-off'. Significant and serious feedback may not always emerge from a pattern of feedback. It may be that an isolated client survey or phonecall from a family member highlights an important issue for clients and the service. If you are not sure how to respond, seek advice.

Involve others

Analysis of feedback should involve more than one person in order to obtain a range of perspectives and avoid any possible conflict of interest. For example, if a client survey shows half the respondents receiving physiotherapy are unhappy with the way their treatment occurs and the only person analysing the feedback is the manager of allied health services, then the analysis may be biased.

Example

Develop and integrate service evaluation methods

Marieke works in a disability support organisation. She has been asked to assist with planning a new program for Laurie, a 14-year-old boy who has recently migrated from Syria. Laurie lost both legs when a bomb was dropped on his house.

Laurie needs to be fitted with prosthetic legs and taught how to walk with them. He also needs to attend English classes before he can attend school in three months' time.

Marieke sets up the program in consultation with Laurie, his aunty who is his primary carer, the physiotherapist and the ESL teacher. They develop a plan to ensure Laurie is ready for school. The objectives that are set for the plan are specifically related to Laurie learning to walk. Sessions with the physiotherapist are built in, with review dates each month to measure progress. Laurie is enrolled for individual and group ESL classes and systems are set in place to measure which, if either, is more effective.

This is the first time Marieke's organisation has worked with a refugee from Syria and she has set up a system to document the process for later evaluation and planning.



Practice task 13

1. What does SMART stand for when developing objectives?

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2. List the steps that can help when processing feedback from service users.

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2H Document the program identifying priorities, time lines and responsibilities

Standard approaches can be used to design programs that are clearly documented and therefore accountable and measurable.

Documents include work plans that identify priorities, time lines and responsibilities, and can be used to monitor and review programs.

The information you collect and store about client service delivery must be relevant and up to date in order to facilitate the delivery of appropriate services. Documentation varies between organisations.

Program design

If programs are well designed they are far more likely to succeed. As a community services worker you should be part of designing and reviewing programs.

The following simple program design framework demonstrates the steps to follow. Consultation needs to be built into every stage of the program.

After approval has been obtained for the program, the final stage is implementation. Part of a successful implementation is establishing continuous improvement processes to ensure the program is regularly reviewed and updated in response to feedback.

Program design framework

- 1 Define purpose**

The first step to take when designing a program is to clearly state what is to be achieved and why. Make sure the new program fits within the organisation's strategic plan, including its purpose and priority focus.
- 2 Scan environment**

Before starting a new program, it is good to review what else is happening that may impact at local, state and national levels.
- 3 Engage internal stakeholders**

It is essential that the board approves and supports new programs if they are to be funded and included in the organisation's planning. Finance, human resources and other key resource areas should also be engaged at the early planning stage.
- 4 Engage external stakeholders**

Some external stakeholders will be actively involved in the program delivery and they also need to be engaged from the beginning.
- 5 Scope the work**

Scoping the work involves articulating what service will be delivered, how often, to whom and where.

- 6

Develop objectives

Objectives should be specific and measurable.
- 7

Draft a work plan

Work plans involve mapping out what will be done and who will be responsible against time lines and performance indicators.
- 8

Draft a budget

A budget needs to include all costs including in-kind costs from the organisation.
- 9

Develop evaluation

A framework for evaluation needs to be set against the agreed objectives.
- 10

Review staffing and resource needs

A recruitment strategy will explore the skills, qualifications and position descriptions of the staff required to deliver the program.

Identify resources already available and cost out the extra resources required.
- 11

Write up the program plan

The program plan may be a simple expanded work plan or an extensive business plan, depending on the size of the project.
- 12

Seek Board and key stakeholder approval

Approval includes establishing accountability and reporting frameworks.

Document the work plan

A simple work plan can be used to document the program.

The leaders in this case include the chief executive officer (CEO), the program manager (PM) and the project worker (PW).

| Sample work plan | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Tasks | Wk 1 | Wk 2 | Wk 3 | Wk 4 | Wk 5 | Who leads | Performance indicator | Resources needed |
| Identify stakeholders | x | | | | | PW | Stakeholders identified | Nil |
| Conduct scan | x | x | | | | PW | | Software |
| Meet with board | | x | | | x | CEO | | Nil |
| Stakeholder meeting | | | x | | x | PM | | Catering |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

Example

Document the program

A social housing cooperative has received funding to develop a community housing project targeted at female couples wanting to retire into a shared housing situation.

Jacob is the housing worker leading the project planning. He prepares a draft work plan to present to the Board for approval. Two of the women from the group are invited to present with him to the Board. The plan outlines a two-year time frame with the objective of building six new units. It clearly outlines who is responsible for each stage of the project and has been costed by the finance manager in consultation with builders. The Board establishes a reporting process to ensure they are kept up to date with the project.



Practice task 14

1. Why is it important to document a program plan?

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2. List three aspects of a program design framework.

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3. What are the three main things being mapped in a work plan?

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Summary

1. Both internal and external stakeholders need to be engaged in the program development process. Stakeholders can be individuals or specialist services and/or user groups.
2. It is important to formalise service-user engagement at all levels of the program management process. This can be done in a variety of ways including formal positions on committees, regular listing on meeting agendas and inclusion in policies and procedures that guide the management process.
3. The planning process needs to incorporate practices that uphold basic human rights as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It also needs to factor in individual differences, needs and preferences that will vary according to each individual's life experiences.
4. A range of services need to be included in the planning process. Some are internal, like finance, reception and human resources; others are external, like service users, funding bodies, peak bodies and partner organisations.
5. Good program planning needs to get the costs, staffing and resource requirements right. Other service staff should also be consulted when developing budgets and planning staffing needs.
6. Programs need to be supported by a range of systems including finance, information technology, transport and human resources. Community services workers need to make sure the relevant policies and procedures are followed when engaging support systems.
7. Evaluation should be built into the program plan to monitor outcomes against objectives, costs, time frames and service-user feedback.
8. Well-designed programs are underpinned by work plans that drive and monitor the programs time lines, staffing, costs, performance and use of resources.

Learning checkpoint 2

Develop programs

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in developing programs.

Part A

1. List four of the internal stakeholders you would include when developing a new program.

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2. Identify three strategies to integrate service evaluation into programs.

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3. How can you support special user groups when engaged in program planning?

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4. How can service users contribute to an organisation's strategic plan?

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5. What is difference between human rights and individual differences when integrating them into program planning?

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Part B

Read the scenario, then answer the questions that follow.

Scenario

You are a community services worker developing a new transgender support program in a community health service. You have received funding from a philanthropic trust but need to develop a budget. A local sexual health service is partnering with you to deliver the program. You need to set up an evaluation process for the program and are required to document the outcomes.

1. Identify two internal services you should include in the planning.

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2. Where does philanthropic funding come from?

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3. How can human resources assist you when developing a new program?

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4. List two external services you might engage in the planning.

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5. List the steps you might take as part of designing this new program.

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6. What type of document can be used to document a program?

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7. In order to use an organisation's support systems effectively, what do you need to familiarise yourself with?

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Topic 3

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 3A Communicate roles and responsibilities to relevant stakeholders**
- 3B Facilitate provision of training to support implementation**
- 3C Monitor service delivery**
- 3D Use feedback and interactions in monitoring**
- 3E Identify and address problems**
- 3F Maintain relevant program and service delivery documentation**

Implement and monitor programs

Once a program has been developed and approved for implementation, a systematic approach is needed to ensure that objectives are met on time and within budget.

These systems need to operate within and promote organisational policies and procedures. Staff and other stakeholders need to be clear about the roles, and their performance needs to be supported and enhanced.

Progress and performance must be monitored regularly with a focus on engaging service users and other key stakeholders in the feedback process.

Problems identified from feedback need to be addressed and the whole program process documented well.

3A Communicate roles and responsibilities to relevant stakeholders

The stakeholders that need to be included once a program is implemented are a mix of internal and external individuals and services. For a program to run smoothly ensure everyone who needs to be is engaged and that roles and responsibilities are clear.

Ultimately, the Board is accountable to the funding body and responsible for successful delivery of the program.

Reporting to the Board and funding bodies is usually the responsibility of the program manager. Team leaders and direct care workers are responsible for collecting information on the program's progress and reporting to managers.

Responsibility for reporting back to service users and other key stakeholders is shared across all levels of staff.



Roles and responsibilities

The management, delivery and evaluation of a program usually involve many different roles that each have a range of responsibilities. As a community services worker you should understand where your role fits in the bigger picture and what that means you are responsible for.

The person managing the program is responsible for communicating roles and tasks and making sure they are achieved.

Here are some of the key roles that are needed to deliver a program with a description of typical responsibilities. The responsibility for general governance lies with an organisation's Board.

Program responsibilities of people in different roles:

- ▶ Senior managers: resourcing and reporting on the program
- ▶ Program manager: leadership, appointing staff, developing plans, monitoring, communicating
- ▶ Program workers: delivering the program, collecting feedback
- ▶ Finance: developing and monitoring the budget, facilitating payments
- ▶ Human resources: selecting, training and supporting staff
- ▶ Reception: welcoming service users, making appointments, supporting program staff
- ▶ Partner organisations: providing services
- ▶ Service users: using the service and providing feedback

Communicate with program workers and service users

Communication with large groups of busy people can be difficult and problematic. Making time at the beginning of a project to ensure roles and responsibilities are clearly understood will pay off at a later date.

Follow the organisation's policies and procedures when recruiting, selecting and managing staff. People need to not only know what they are expected to do, but should also be aware of the grievance procedures to follow if something goes wrong.

On the ground, program workers and service users may comprise the largest groups. Communication between service users and the people running a program can occur through meetings, feedback tools and reports.

Program workers can give and receive information through:

- ▶ position descriptions
- ▶ performance plans
- ▶ work plans
- ▶ supervision sessions
- ▶ planning meetings
- ▶ reports.

Communicate with other stakeholders

The following information outlines sample strategies for communicating responsibilities to other possible program stakeholders.

Strategies for communicating with stakeholders:

- ▶ The Board: reports, presentations, meetings
- ▶ Senior managers: supervision sessions, performance and work plans for program manager
- ▶ Program manager: performance plans, position descriptions, supervision sessions, planning meetings, reports
- ▶ Finance: finance reports, planning meetings
- ▶ Human resources: planning meetings, reports
- ▶ Reception: planning meetings, staff meetings
- ▶ Partner organisations: memoranda of understanding, planning meetings, reports

Example

Communicate roles and responsibilities

A neighbourhood house has won funding to establish an English as a second language class for newly arrived refugees.

Dave is the program coordinator responsible for setting up the project. He is keen to get roles sorted as the partner agency involved, which will provide the teaching and room bookings, will have to be managed carefully to fit the running of the program into the centre’s daily schedule.

Dave consults with the partner agency to check the roles and responsibilities of the teachers. He contributes to their position description and arranges an orientation for them to ensure they understand the organisational requirements of the neighbourhood house.

He organises a meeting between the two finance managers to set up systems for payments to be made. Dave meets with reception staff and draws up a schedule for fitting the new classes into the timetable. He also talks to the manager about cultural awareness training for staff of the neighbourhood house to prepare them for the new service users.

Finally, Dave invites the Boards of both organisations to an afternoon tea with staff and community representatives to launch the program.



Practice task 15

1. List four key roles needed to implement a new community services program.

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2. List one responsibility for each of the following roles – Board, manager and service user.

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3. What strategies are suitable for communicating with a partner organisation?

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3B Facilitate provision of training to support implementation

New programs often require new skills and knowledge to be delivered. These skills and knowledge requirements may relate to things such as cultural awareness for a particular group, homophobia awareness, knowledge of employment opportunities and new therapy approaches.

Training can involve anyone from the front desk to the boardroom, depending on the roles people will have in the program.

There are three basic steps to follow in facilitating training:

- ▶ Conducting a training needs analysis to map current skills and knowledge against those required for the program, and to identify gaps
- ▶ Planning training to fill the gaps
- ▶ Providing and evaluating training

Identify training needs

Training specialists use a training needs analysis (TNA) to identify skill and knowledge gaps present in an organisation or program. Wherever possible, link training to an accredited course so the trainee can gain a formally recognised qualification.

If the program is large, program managers should consult with human resource personnel and people experienced in doing the work required when identifying skill and knowledge gaps. They should also engage training experts to assist with mapping the skills and knowledge against current training qualifications.

If the program and the agency is small, as is often the case in community services, the program manager should still follow the TNA framework and engage assistance if available. The training may just be one professional development session for the program workers, or a workshop for the whole agency. The same principles apply as they would when implementing an accredited training course.

A framework to identify training needs

Here is a framework that can be used for training needs or skill gap analysis.

Steps in a training needs analysis

- 1 Identify the new work or changing needs to be addressed.
- 2 Consult with people who are experienced at doing the work involved.
- 3 Map the skills and knowledge required to do the work.

4

Link the skills and knowledge to a training qualification, if relevant.

5

Map the current skills and knowledge of those who will be working in the program.

6

Identify gaps between current and required skills.

Plan a training program

There are a range of factors to take into account when introducing new training to an organisation, group or individual.

Trainers need to understand who they are training and prepare what they deliver in response to the individual and their needs, wherever possible. Individual needs can relate to learning styles; physical abilities; language, literacy and numeracy; cultural background; and previous training experience.

Trainers also need to be mindful of the method of delivering training. Will it be in a classroom or on the job? How can trainees be encouraged to participate? What resources will be required?

Program planning principles and processes

When planning a training program, planning principles and processes that are followed elsewhere in community services planning may apply, depending on the size of the program.

A well-planned program:

- ▶ is inclusive; stakeholders and service users are involved
- ▶ involves people who understand the process, as efforts have been made to make the process transparent
- ▶ supports the strategic plans of an organisation, and Board and management approval is sought
- ▶ results in activities that support clear objectives
- ▶ is organised to avoid wasting time or money
- ▶ takes place after the environment has been scanned to assess what else is happening
- ▶ considers relevant options and their impacts
- ▶ ensures the people involved have the opportunity to come to an understanding of the results.

Steps in setting up a training program

The following guide outlines the basic steps to take when setting up a training program.

Setting up a training program

- 1

Recruit and appoint trainers.
- 2

Consult and timetable the training to suit stakeholders.
- 3

Identify and book a training facility.
- 4

Assess the learning needs of participants.
- 5

Consult with trainers and modify training as required.
- 6

Collect resources and make them available for trainers.
- 7

Promote training.
- 8

Provide training.
- 9

Evaluate training.
- 10

Acknowledge completion with a celebration and, if relevant, a certificate of achievement.

Example

Facilitate provision of training

Felicity is a caseworker with a family care agency. She has been asked to review and prepare the training requirements for a new parenting program that is being established for fathers of newborn babies.

In reviewing the program plan she identifies a need for staff to understand basic care requirements for a newborn baby. After consulting with staff she finds half of them have had children themselves and a few caseworkers have been foster care workers with newborns.

Felicity reviews current accredited training options but finds they are not relevant for the staff being trained who already have diplomas in community services work.

She contacts the local maternal and child health nurse and together they develop a one-day workshop that will accommodate all workers using a peer training model.

The training is discussed with two of the senior case workers who also agree to assist with its delivery.

After the training is successfully delivered, Felicity organises an afternoon tea where certificates of achievement are presented to the participants.



Practice task 16

1. List five steps you would expect to find in a training needs analysis framework.

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2. What are some individual needs a trainer may need to take into account when planning a training program?

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3. List five factors to consider when setting up a training program.

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4. Identify three program planning principles.

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3C Monitor service delivery

Service delivery can be monitored in a variety of ways. Usually the things to be measured and monitored are articulated in the program plan. We monitor for a variety of reasons, the most important being to know we are doing what we said we were going to do. Other questions we ask in monitoring are: Is it having the effect we planned? Are we achieving the outcomes we are being funded to deliver? Is our spending on target? Are we keeping within agreed time lines? Are the users of the service happy with what we are doing?



It is important to have clear measurable objectives stated in the program plan, with performance indicators attached to them that will monitor progress. It is equally important to have a detailed achievable budget that can be monitored to ensure spending stays on track.

Define objectives

The goal of a project is a statement of its purpose. A sample goal may be 'To reduce the rate of young women attending Maryvale South Secondary College leaving school at a young age'.

Objectives are developed from goals. They are the quantitative or measurable statements that define how you are going to fulfil the goal. An example may be 'By providing homework clubs three nights a week'.

When developing objectives, there are three basic questions that need to be addressed.

Three questions to guide objective setting

What are the management requirements?

- ▶ This relates to the expectations from funding bodies, Boards and senior management about what the project will achieve and how it will run. It also includes organisational requirements as expressed through the organisation's policies and procedures.

What information will we collect and how will we collect and analyse it?

- ▶ This is the what, when, where, how and who part of the objective-setting process. Objectives need to be action statements from which performance indicators can be developed.

What are the constraints?

- ▶ The constraints are the things that may make it difficult to achieve a goal. Constraints can be lack of resources, geographical issues, difficulty in collecting data or lack of qualified staff to undertake analysis of data.

Develop budgetary frameworks

Budgetary frameworks are used to match expenditure against income. They are usually developed when applying for funding for a program and, if successful, they become the budget that is used to monitor spending and income achievement.

Budgets need to take in a range of factors and it is advisable to seek assistance when developing them. Budgets are action plans that guide how money is spent, and are vital in community services where funding and budgets are usually tight, and money needs to be carefully spent and accounted for.

Factors to consider in budget planning:

- ▶ What do we want to achieve with the money?
- ▶ Public versus philanthropic funding
- ▶ Fundraising
- ▶ Setting revenue goals
- ▶ Ensuring reliability of funding source
- ▶ Is the purpose of the funding clear or restricted?
- ▶ Can the project be achieved within funding expectations?
- ▶ Revenue sources; what alternatives are available?
- ▶ When should the budget be prepared?
- ▶ How much is needed for staffing?
- ▶ What other costs can we expect?
- ▶ Is the organisation contributing anything in kind?
- ▶ How will we monitor spending and income achievement?

The monitoring process

Once objectives have been established and the budget set, you need to establish the monitoring process. To start the process you need to ask, What do we want or need to know? and How will we collect and analyse the data?

You need to know how the program is progressing against the objectives that have been set for both service delivery and expenditure.

Here are some questions that will assist in setting up the monitoring process.

The monitoring process

- ▶ What are you going to measure and how will you set up the process?
- ▶ Can you easily develop performance indicators from objectives?
- ▶ Are performance indicators measurable?
- ▶ How will you know if service users are happy?
- ▶ How will you know if policies and procedures are being followed?

- ▶ How will you know how much money you have spent and how much is left?
- ▶ Will the money last until the end of the project?
- ▶ How will you report on monitoring to key stakeholders?
- ▶ Who will analyse the data and how?
- ▶ How will you respond to feedback?

A summary of the monitoring process

In short, the monitoring process follows these stages.

- Stages of the monitoring process**
- ▶ Performance indicators are developed to measure activity outcomes against objectives.
 - ▶ Data collection and reporting procedures are developed to test performance indicators.
 - ▶ Data is analysed and results reported to the planning group.
 - ▶ Adjustments are made to the program as required and monitoring continues.

Example

Monitor service delivery

Louise is a program manager setting up a new project to support young women at risk of dropping out of school.

Louise works with the finance manager to develop a budget that lists income and expenditure, with projections to the end of the year. The finance department provide her with monthly reports showing income and expenditure to date against the budget. Louise uses this, along with her quarterly statistics on service delivery, to report to the Board.

Here is a sample from the program plan she has developed to guide ongoing monitoring.

| Objective | Performance target | Who is responsible | Resources required | 1st quarter update | 2nd quarter update | 3rd quarter update | 4th quarter update |
|------------------------|--|--------------------|------------------------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Provide homework clubs | 3 nights a week with 6-12 people attending | Teacher | Extra staffing hours in the budget | Operated 3 nights Average 4-7 attending | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

Practice task 17

1. What are the three questions to ask when developing objectives?

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2. List three factors that should be taken into account when developing a budget.

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3. List three questions that will guide the monitoring process.

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3D Use feedback and interactions in monitoring

Ongoing monitoring involves measuring and analysing service delivery using a well-planned and documented framework. It also requires procedures to ensure the monitoring occurs and is responded to.

Sometimes workers establish excellent program plans with very well developed monitoring processes; however, once the program starts everyone is so focused on program delivery that they forget the documenting and monitoring process.

While organisations are often very keen to ensure users receive a good service, they often don't follow through with seeking and acting on feedback.

The Board and management need to prioritise the importance of service-user feedback and ensure that workers are resourced to be able to make it happen. Boards and management also need to ensure they receive reports summarising feedback and that the feedback is acted upon.

User interaction and feedback

It can be helpful to map all the points of contact a service user may have with the organisation and check to see if these points of contact allow service users to provide feedback. Points of contact will vary depending on your organisation and the sort of service it delivers. Consider the following information.

Reception

- ▶ Reception is often the first point of contact for a new service worker and may be where they experience the most frustration trying to make an appointment or waiting for someone to see them.
- ▶ Reception workers can chat informally to gather feedback. Suggestion boxes inviting comment placed near reception can encourage people to provide feedback. Having a complaints procedure available for service users to see when they are not happy can alleviate tension. Service-user surveys or focus groups should include reception as one of the services reviewed.

Case or project worker

- ▶ Service user feedback to caseworkers can be very complex. In some circumstances service users are not voluntary and may be angry about the situation they are in.
- ▶ Case workers can use informal chats to gather feedback; they can also include questions about satisfaction with the program into the service users' formal interviews.
- ▶ Sometimes it is easier for service users to give feedback to an independent party and/or in a group situation.

Transport and facilities

- ▶ When surveying service users for feedback it is important to factor in things like location and accessibility of the service as well as the standard of the facilities being used.

Ongoing monitoring

Monitoring can be embedded into a range of procedures to ensure it is ongoing. If the organisation you work for has a strong culture of continuous improvement it will be relatively easy to integrate systems for monitoring your program.

Procedures that can assist with ongoing monitoring:

- ▶ Integrate your program into quality assurance procedures
- ▶ Get your program integrated into the strategic plan
- ▶ Make monitoring part of performance plans for managers and workers
- ▶ Include service feedback in monthly reports to management and the Board
- ▶ Include service-user feedback in the annual report
- ▶ Make service-user feedback an agenda item on staff meetings
- ▶ Include failure to seek feedback as a risk in the risk management plan
- ▶ Include service-user feedback when creating professional development plans
- ▶ Include service-user feedback in newsletters and on your website
- ▶ Use social media to promote and report on service-user feedback

Example

User interactions, feedback and ongoing monitoring

Marianne is a team leader in an aged care service. Following feedback from the Board she has been asked to investigate ways of making the integration of service-user feedback part of regular monitoring.

Marianne starts by reviewing the current monitoring procedures that are used in the organisation to maintain standards. She identifies the way information is collected and how it is reported on.

She also consults widely with service users and staff for their input.

Her final report maps a range of strategies that can ensure service-user feedback is integrated into regular monitoring. These include:

- ▶ putting it on the agenda for staff meetings
- ▶ including it as an agenda item in handover meetings
- ▶ building it into individual staff performance plans
- ▶ integrating it into monthly reports to management and the Board
- ▶ including it as a section on the website
- ▶ including it in the annual report as part of continuous improvement
- ▶ monitoring it through quality assurance audits.



Practice task 18

1. Which two service areas are service users likely to have the most contact with?

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2. Identify two ways service users can be encouraged to provide feedback at reception.

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3. List three strategies that can be used to integrate service-user feedback into ongoing monitoring.

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3E Identify and address problems

Feedback from service users may be positive or negative. While it is important to acknowledge and celebrate the good feedback, it is also important to address any problems that arise and work together to resolve them.

Sometimes problems arise from organisational procedures not suiting the service users' individual needs; for example, a person may prefer a male or female worker but the procedures don't allow for choice or change of worker.

Sometimes the service doesn't offer what the service user really needs and the response may involve referring them to another program.

In a continuously improving organisation procedures should be reviewed regularly so they are responsive to user needs. Flexibility should exist for one-off responses to procedural or program changes.



Identify service-user problems

Using a person-centred approach ensures the client is central to service delivery. Knowing the person and their individual hopes and goals is essential. The needs and preferences of people accessing services can change as they age, find and lose jobs, meet new partners, improve their health, lose faculties or need more challenges in their lives. Community services workers must respond to the current needs of the person they are working with. They must also ensure that the service the person is receiving meets their needs. Common to most service users is an ongoing need for respect, privacy and choice.

Here are some key tasks that will assist you to identify service-user problems.

Monitor changing needs

- ▶ A community services worker must be aware of their service users' changing needs. This can be achieved through informal chats and observation with the person, their family or significant others. Workers should be alert for communications, events and incident reports that may indicate a person's condition is worsening or that their behaviour has changed. They should also be monitoring if the program no longer meets the person's needs and must be adjusted.

Review plans

- ▶ Workers should also factor in review dates when writing plans. They should not wait for formal reviews to check that individual plans are still relevant. Checking-in should become a component of each contact and some formal reviews should be built in as part of program evaluation.

User-friendly approaches

- ▶ Simple user-friendly templates written in plain English (or translated if relevant) should be used to collect feedback from people who are receiving services from an organisation. Methods used to collect feedback need to suit the service users' abilities, language and literacy skills, age and be responsive to their emotional state.

Address service-user problems in accordance with organisational procedures

Once it has been identified that changes need to be made, they should happen as quickly as possible. Remember that community services workers' duty of care is to provide appropriate care and support at all times. How you do this depends on the organisation you are working for and its procedures. You may have to organise a meeting with your manager or another professional to identify what needs to be done to resolve the situation. When you have identified the action to take, discuss it with the service user before taking action. Sometimes changing plans will incur extra costs or changes to worker routines. Approval is required from all key stakeholders before taking action.

Here are some strategies that may assist when responding to individual service-user feedback.

Strategies for responding to feedback from service users:

- ▶ Alter appointment times or locations
- ▶ Provide the worker delivering the service with more support
- ▶ Change workers
- ▶ Change activities
- ▶ Provide assistance with transport
- ▶ Integrate cultural requirements
- ▶ Provide information in plain English
- ▶ Improve the waiting area
- ▶ Be more age responsive
- ▶ Use technology for better efficiency
- ▶ Provide support with technology
- ▶ Expand service provision
- ▶ Allow the service user more input into decision-making
- ▶ Refer the person to another service

Example

Identify and address service-user problems

Alan has been attending behaviour management sessions at a counselling service for three months. During an informal chat with his case worker he suggests that he may get more out of the sessions if he had other men to talk to who shared the same problem. The service he currently attends provides individual counselling, but the local community health centre provides men's behaviour management group sessions.

Alan is attending counselling sessions as part of a diversionary order from court and his counselling fees are being paid for through program funding. The community health centre men's behaviour program charges a small fee that may create a barrier to Alan attending. The counsellor reports on the situation to her supervisor. After discussions with the finance department, it is agreed that the service will pay for Alan to attend the community health session from the programs special resource funding, which has some unallocated funds in it. This will enable Alan to attend both the individual counselling and the group program.



Practice task 19

1. Identify three ways of identifying service-user problems.

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2. List three strategies that may be needed to address service-user problems.

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3. Identify at least two ways that organisational procedures may impact on providing appropriate care and support at all times.

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3F Maintain relevant program and service delivery documentation

Completing documentation is often not the favourite part of a community services worker's job. It can become a burden and over the years organisations have struggled with being compliant and keeping workers motivated.

Simple, clear documentation that is developed in consultation with those who use it is very helpful. As is keeping documentation to a minimum, so it meets requirements across a range of service areas, as this may increase efficiency.

Documentation is required to support both program planning and individual service planning.

Reasons for documentation in community services work:

- ▶ Legal requirements
- ▶ Funding compliance
- ▶ Organisational requirements
- ▶ To provide a record
- ▶ To summarise agreements
- ▶ To articulate a plan
- ▶ To map progress and monitor activity and outcomes
- ▶ To measure effectiveness

Program documentation

When developing program documentation it sometimes helps to identify who 'owns' and is responsible for implementing and maintaining it.

Here are some examples of common documents and their owners.

Who 'owns' the document?

The constitution

The constitution or company rules belong to the Board and they are responsible for ensuring the organisation is compliant with them.

The strategic plan

The strategic plan also belongs to the Board; although its completion is usually delegated to senior management.

The budget

Once again the Board owns the organisational budget but delegates to senior management for implementation. Program budgets can be delegated to and owned by program managers in consultation with the finance manager.

Program plans

Program plans usually belong to the program manager who reports on them to senior management and the Board.

Staff performance plans

Performance plans are usually shared by the human resources manager and the program manager but should be delegated to the staff member who is responsible for implementation.

Service delivery documentation

Information that is collected and stored about service users must be relevant and up to date in order to facilitate the delivery of appropriate services. Documentation varies between organisations.

Documentation types include:

- ▶ referral, intake and assessment forms
- ▶ service-user profiles
- ▶ case notes
- ▶ care plans and service delivery plans
- ▶ communication books for health professionals, family members and significant others
- ▶ medication documentation
- ▶ incident or injury forms, and WorkCover forms
- ▶ feedback forms, surveys and questionnaires.

Example

Maintain documentation

Kaylene lives in a hostel where Angela is the team leader. Kaylene is able to shower herself and receives limited support from staff to complete her activities of daily living. Today when a personal care worker enters Kaylene’s room, she finds Kaylene crying on the floor of her ensuite bathroom. Kaylene’s knee is swollen and red. When the worker goes to help Kaylene up, Kaylene lashes out, hits the worker on her face and leaves her with a cut lip.

When Kaylene has calmed down, Angela speaks with her and asks her what happened. She says that as she was getting out of the shower, she slipped. Angela makes sure Kaylene is feeling okay and then together with the personal care worker, they go to the office to complete the relevant documentation, which includes:

- ▶ an incident report detailing the injuries to Kaylene’s knee and the worker’s face
- ▶ a WorkCover report regarding the worker’s injury and the treatment given
- ▶ a hazard report requesting a review of the floor and shower area in Kaylene’s bathroom
- ▶ a progress note in Kaylene’s file objectively detailing what happened so patterns, such as regular falls, can be noted.



Practice task 20

1. List four reasons for maintaining program documentation.

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2. Who 'owns' the organisational strategic plan?

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3. Identify five documents used in service delivery.

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Summary

1. Roles and responsibilities need to be clearly articulated and communicated to ensure smooth program delivery and avoid role confusion.
2. New programs often require the provision of training to new staff or those undertaking new roles. A training needs analysis identifies skill and knowledge gaps and the training required to fill them.
3. Setting measurable objectives and a balanced budget provides a good framework for monitoring service delivery and expenditure.
4. While organisations may be committed to involving service users, they often fall short in integrating their feedback into practice. It is essential to integrate service-user feedback into a range of organisational policies and procedures to ensure the best care and support is provided.
5. Once service-user problems are identified they need to be acted on quickly. Actions need to comply with current organisational procedures; however, sometimes feedback may result in procedures being reviewed and updated.
6. Documentation is completed for a broad range of reasons. Although completing documentation is often not the most popular part of a community service worker's job, it is a requirement, and can bring great benefits to programs when implemented effectively.

Learning checkpoint 3

Implement and monitor programs

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in implementing and monitoring programs.

Part A

1. Whose role is it to give feedback to service users?

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2. What is a training needs analysis?

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3. Why would you undertake a training needs analysis when introducing a new program?

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4. What are 'objectives' in a training plan?

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5. What is a budget?

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6. How can you ensure that service-user feedback is continually monitored and integrated into service delivery?

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7. Whose responsibility is it to communicate roles and tasks involved in a program?

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8. Identify two program planning principles.

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Part B

Read the scenario, then answer the questions that follow.

Scenario

You are a team leader in a youth support organisation. A recent service-user survey identified dissatisfaction with the facilities being used for a games competition that is held each week in a room at the back of your two-storey building. You have also just become aware that one of the staff is helping participants carry a wheelchair up the stairs so one of the young women can attend the event. The staff member in question has recently taken a day off because of a bad back.

1. Identify the needs you must respond to in this scenario

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2. How would you respond to the needs you identified?

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3. What documentation might you need to complete?

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Topic 4

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 4A Assess the capacity of programs to meet objectives**

- 4B Seek and evaluate feedback**

- 4C Modify programs to meet changing requirements**

Evaluate programs

Program evaluation is a way of systematically collecting data so you can answer questions about and measure the progress and effectiveness of a program. The data collected depends on the questions asked and the things you need to measure to know you have been successful in meeting your objectives.

When evaluating programs you need to establish the evaluation process at the beginning of the program. This ensures that service delivery is measurable and relates to the agreed objectives of the program.

Feedback needs to be included from all key stakeholders and if an action research approach is used the program can be monitored and modified in an ongoing cycle.

4A Assess the capacity of programs to meet objectives

Program capacity is influenced by a range of factors. It is important to be as that you have the right resources and the right plan to achieve what you are funded to do.

Capacity can be assessed across many different aspects including resources, time, skills, knowledge, funding and management. You need to make sure you are measuring the right things to assess the capacity of the program to meet the objectives you have set.

Factors to consider when assessing capacity:

- ▶ Are the objectives clear?
- ▶ How well do the planned activities match what is to be achieved?
- ▶ Can we measure what we are doing?
- ▶ Do we have enough staff and all the required resources?
- ▶ Do staff have the required skills and knowledge and can we train staff if needed?
- ▶ Have we budgeted for everything we need?
- ▶ Can we monitor spending?
- ▶ Will the program location match purpose?
- ▶ Have we engaged service users in the planning?
- ▶ Do we have systems to continue service-user engagement?
- ▶ Have we consulted widely and included all stakeholders?
- ▶ Has the Board approved the project?
- ▶ Are our time frames realistic?
- ▶ Do we have an evaluation framework and can we conduct the evaluation?

Access capacity in relation to objectives and staffing

To assess capacity you need to be able to answer the questions raised about the factors affecting the program's capacity to meet objectives and be adequately staffed. You need to take action to assist you to measure and assess these factors.

Here are actions you can take to assist you to gain a clearer understanding.

| Factors affecting capacity | Assessing capacity |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Are objectives clear? ▶ Do planned activities match what is to be achieved? ▶ Can we measure what we are doing? ▶ Do we have enough staff? ▶ Do staff have required skills and knowledge? ▶ Can we train staff if this is needed? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Check that objectives are they specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely. ▶ Consider the outcomes of activities and assess if they will help achieve objectives. ▶ Can you develop performance indicators related to the activity: how many, what date, where etc.? ▶ Quantify workloads and measure what outputs can be expected. ▶ Conduct a training needs analysis. ▶ Check funding and capacity to train staff. |

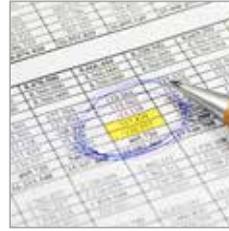
Assess capacity in relation to finance and resources

Reports, records and templates may also provide you with the information you need.



Factors affecting capacity

- ▶ Have we budgeted for everything we need?
- ▶ Can we monitor spending?
- ▶ Do we have all the resources we need?
- ▶ Will the program location match purpose?



Assessing capacity

- ▶ Compare with budget templates that give you examples of standard costs.
- ▶ Check if the finance department can provide reports.
- ▶ Compare with similar programs to review resources.
- ▶ Visit the location and review it in relation to activities.

Assess capacity in relation to consultation and evaluation

Consultation and evaluation are essential. In community services the principles of continuous improvement are embedded in many organisational processes. Service provision that is focussed on the needs of service users, and that is planned, implemented and monitored with provision for collecting feedback on how effectively the program meets objectives, is following principles of continuous improvement. This information can be used to improve activities to make them more efficient, as the program progresses.

There are a number of checks you can make to assess capacity in these areas.



Factors affecting capacity

- ▶ Have we engaged service users in the planning?
- ▶ Do we have systems to continue service-user engagement?
- ▶ Have we consulted widely and included all stakeholders?
- ▶ Has the Board approved the project?
- ▶ Are our time frames realistic?
- ▶ Do we have an evaluation framework?
- ▶ Do we have the capacity to conduct the evaluation?



Assessing capacity

- ▶ Check that service-user feedback has been included.
- ▶ Identify engagement processes and include them in the program plan.
- ▶ Seek evidence of broader consultation.
- ▶ Check for Board approval with senior management.
- ▶ Develop a work plan to map activities against time.
- ▶ Check for evidence of an evaluation framework.
- ▶ Identify who will evaluate and how.

Meet objectives

The most important part of the program involves meeting objectives. Measuring achievement against objectives requires sound performance indicators.

Here is an example of matching performance indicators to objectives.

| Objective: To reduce the level of reoffending by young men facing their first criminal charges | | |
|---|--|--|
| Activity | Performance indicators | Who will monitor? |
| Provide education support through peers as tutors | Number attending Number of sessions attended Impact on school attendance Feedback re attitude to school | Tutors Tutors Teacher Teacher |

Example

Assess capacity to meet objectives

Peter and Mark are community services workers in a meeting with management to discuss the new 'Fix a bike' program that is starting at their neighbourhood house the following week.

They are concerned that the funding involves strict requirements about evaluating the program against its objectives, but to-date no plan has been developed to ensure the evaluation will occur. They are also concerned that they don't have enough bikes for the children to work on.

They discuss the objectives of the program, which are linked to raising children's self-esteem by providing them with old bikes and helping them to do them up and take them home. Mark asks how they will know if working on the bikes has raised their self-esteem. Peter says in another project he worked on they linked the outcome to school attendance. It is agreed that that would be a good performance indicator to link to the objectives.

After the meeting Mark is charged with developing a plan outlining performance indicators for each objective and Peter plans to review the resource plan with the finance manager and project worker to make sure they have sourced enough bikes to meet projected demand.



Practice task 21

1. List four things that may affect program capacity to meet objectives.

2. Identify ways to address each of the factors you identified in question 1.

3. What do you need to measure achievement against objectives?

4. Identify two principles of continuous improvement.

4B Seek and evaluate feedback

When seeking feedback as part of an evaluation process, the processes used to collect information should be accessible for all service users.

Feedback needs to be treated confidentially and all documentation should be stored according to the requirements of privacy legislation. Permission needs to be sought to use feedback from stakeholders and the processes used to collect data need to be transparent and respectful.

Accessible feedback strategies

The people who use or benefit from your service will have a range of needs and backgrounds. Some will have the necessary language, literacy and cognitive abilities to complete a written survey; others may have language difficulties and require different ways to provide feedback. For feedback to be genuine, it must be accessible to all services users.

Consider the following options.

Options to ensure feedback is accessible

Suggestion forms and service-user feedback forms should be available in a range of languages, if required.

Information about the availability of independent advocates should be readily available to service users, their families or significant others.

Ensure there are easy-to-use procedures in the service for booking a sign language or spoken-language interpreter.

Provide support to people who use augmentative and alternative communication systems, such as communication boards, so they can participate in feedback forums.

Ensure there are clear policies and practices that promote a person's right to complain without any fear of negative consequences.

Use inclusive approaches to gathering information and giving feedback.

Report feedback

The type of service determines who needs access to the feedback and there are policies relating to internal reporting mechanisms. For example, an annual summary of service-user feedback may be reported to the management board or a senior management committee, while staff may be given the results at team meetings.

In order to be transparent and accountable, an organisation may also develop a mechanism for reporting a summary of feedback to the service users and other people who have contributed. The feedback summary may be in the form of a specific report, an article in a regular newsletter or a section in the annual report. Transparent reporting of feedback demonstrates a commitment to analysing and following up service-user feedback and can reassure people that their opinions are valued by the organisation.

Feedback evaluation also needs to be shared through reporting and presentations to Boards, funding bodies, partners and other stakeholders.

Example

Seek and evaluate feedback

Mark works for a neighbourhood house and has just completed an evaluation of the 'Fix a bike' program that has been operating at the house for the past six months. It has been a great success with 50 children reconditioning bikes and 70 per cent of them already showing improved attendance at school.

The kids (who are the main service users) have already had a party during which they all got to contribute one thing they thought was good about the program and one thing they would like to improve, using a bike-related circling game.

Mark also organises a BBQ at the house and invites the Board, the mayor from the local council who provided the funds, the children and their parents, the teachers, the project workers and other key stakeholders. He presents a video evaluation made during the party and also distributes a written one-page summary of outcomes relating to objectives.



Practice task 22

1. List two things that can make the evaluation process more accessible.

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2. Name two ways of sharing feedback from a feedback evaluation.

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3. Name two stakeholders that should be included in the feedback evaluation process.

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4C Modify programs to meet changing requirements

Establishing good processes to gain feedback from stakeholders and evaluate achievements against objectives is an important part of delivering community services.

Feedback and monitoring usually provides information that is both positive and negative.

Positive feedback gives cause for celebration but also confirms that the program is working effectively. Positive feedback and evaluations can form the basis for new ways of doing things. Sometimes it is appropriate to share findings with others through publications or presentations at conferences.



Negative feedback provides an opportunity to use the information to improve the service being delivered. In extreme cases programs may be cancelled if they are not achieving objectives or providing the services that users require. A majority of the time negative feedback allows you to modify the program or service delivery and improve it so future feedback is positive.

Modifications always need to fit within policy and budgetary guidelines unless more funds can be found or policies are changed.

When planning or modifying programs you need to understand the principles of risk, regulatory and sustainability mechanisms.

Change requirements

Sometimes minor changes may be made to the way the service is delivered to improve it for service users. For example, changing the times or days that programs are offered or simplifying the referral processes. Such minor changes require little effort on behalf of the service but may make the service and programs more accessible to users. Monthly and daily reviews can bring about improvements and changes in service provision, as outlined below.

Monthly reviews

- ▶ Reviewing should not wait until annual planning time. The way reviews are undertaken depends on the organisation. For example, there may be structured, formal weekly team meetings or case conferences with health professionals and other service providers. These ensure the client's progress is discussed in relation to their needs and rights and the service's capacity to continue. The outcome of these meetings depends on the situation; for example, whether the service is no longer meeting needs and should be discontinued; whether small adjustments can be made; or whether the person's situation or changed needs require a completely different service.

Daily reviews

- ▶ It is critical to respond promptly if services are not meeting service-user needs. Feedback should be routinely gathered from information in communication books, progress notes, telephone discussions with family members, observation and information passed on by other service providers. As soon as you become aware that a service is not meeting a person's needs, inform your supervisor and discuss how to remedy the situation. When gathering feedback, make sure you note any changes or issues that have arisen, if they have occurred more than once, and note any other factors that may have led to the change.

Evaluations

- ▶ More-detailed evaluations of programs may lead to significant changes like new staff, increased resources, changes of location, training for workers, partnerships with other providers and complete new programs.

Modify budgets

Budgets are used to plan and monitor income and expenditure. They help shape what can be done by assessing how much money can be acquired and what it can be used for in terms of staffing and other resources.

Budgets are usually set at the beginning of a program or the start of the financial year. Budgets are important accounting tools and must incorporate good accounting principles in the way they are developed and managed. There are also many legal compliance issues that need to be met by companies and associations in relation to how income and public funding is managed.

For these reasons is always wise for community services workers to seek advice when developing and managing budgets. Your organisation may have a finance manager or a treasurer; both should be able to assist with developing budgets.

Modifications can be made to budgets with approval from management, the Board or funding bodies. This usually involves moving funds that aren't going to be spent from one cost centre to another.

Risk, regulation and sustainability

When introducing new programs or modifying old ones it is important to link planning and changes into systems that are already operating within the organisation to monitor risk, ensure sustainability and comply with regulations. Failure to manage risk can harm service users, employees and the reputation, accreditation and funding of the organisation.

The following information provides examples of what is involved with these processes and how they fit into organisational practice, policies and procedures.

Risk

Most organisations should have risk assessment procedures in place that assess likely risks that may occur and their level of importance. They should also have a risk plan that monitors how the organisation responds to risks when they occur and acts proactively to put things in place to decrease the chance of them occurring.

When developing a new program risks should be identified as part of the planning process and integrated into the organisation's risk assessment policies and procedures and management plan.

Sustainability

Sustainability relates to the long-term future of programs. Organisations usually include sustainability as part of their financial planning. When developing new programs workers need to check viability in consultation with the finance department and other senior managers. Viability is about assessing income and expenditure over time as well as forecasting whether there is an ongoing need for the program. Viability can also be impacted on by availability of qualified staff and alignment with the future direction of the organisation.

Regulation

Compliance with legal requirements, codes of practice and organisational standards are usually monitored by management and are part of quality assurance. Organisations often need to audit service delivery as part of their accreditation requirements. New programs need to be audited to make sure they comply with the standards maintained across the organisation, and should be included in the organisation's quality assurance or continuous improvement plans.

Example

Modify programs

Mark has completed his evaluation of the neighbourhood house 'Fix a bike' project and presented his report to the Board and local council that provided the funds. The house has received funds to continue the program, but a number of suggested modifications have arisen from the evaluation, and these need to be acted on.

The modifications include finding a new location so more children can participate; changing the time snacks are offered so the children get to eat before they start work on the bikes rather than after; translating the information kit (supplied with the bikes for the children to take home) into languages other than English; and moving unspent funds in the travel part of the budget into purchases so more bikes can be bought.



Practice task 23

1. How often should you review service delivery to seek feedback from users?

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2. In your role as a community services worker, can you just change things you think need changing in a program?

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3. Why shouldn't budgets be modified without consultation?

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4. How can you ensure that risk, regulation and sustainability are taken into account when planning a new program?

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Summary

1. All programs need to be achievable and outcomes need to be measurable. Assessing the capacity of a program to meet objectives should occur at the outset of a program. Capacity can relate to staffing, measurable objectives, realistic budgets, location and clear performance indicators that will assist with measuring outcomes.
2. The processes used to seek and evaluate feedback need to be accessible for all service users and other stakeholders. Feedback needs to be analysed and reported on.
3. Some modifications that relate to individual service delivery can be actioned quickly, but most need to be processed and approved to ensure they are compliant with policy and budget requirements.

Learning checkpoint 4

Evaluate programs

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in evaluating programs.

Part A

1. What is program evaluation?

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2. Which service areas in an organisation can help you measure a programs capacity?

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3. How would you measure if you have enough staff for a program?

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4. How would you find out if staff have the required skills and knowledge needed to deliver a program?

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5. What is a performance indicator?

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6. Identify two principles of continuous improvement.

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Part B

Read the scenario, and then answer the questions that follow.

Scenario

You work in child protection running a program for women and children who are experiencing violence against them by the men in the lives. Although you try to ensure you never make appointments for perpetrators at the same time as those for the women and children, there has recently been two occasions when they have met in the building. As a result, the women have reported feeling very unsafe.

1. What service user issues do you need to respond to?

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2. What needs to be modified about the program?

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3. How could your organisation respond to this?

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4. Explain two reasons why the organisation should seek to manage risks in this situation.

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