

## Promoting a learning culture: implementing a model to build confidence and skills of clinical supervisors

### Project summary

The project aimed to provide current and future clinical supervisors from all disciplines and sectors across the Eastern Clinical Placement Network (ECPN) with professional development in the area of clinical supervision.

Through the use of the training program 'Teaching on the Run' (TOTR), the project aimed to consolidate and further develop core skills required to supervise students, foster a strong sense of self-confidence in supervisors and enable a sustainable model of supervision to be implemented to support student learning environments whilst maintaining quality patient/client health outcomes.

### Drivers and challenges

Significant increases in professional-entry university places and accompanying growth in demand for clinical placements require an increased number of skilled clinical supervisors. This growth in demand for clinical placements in an increasingly complex and changing clinical environment, together with workforce shortages and resource constraints, impacts on the ability and willingness of clinicians to take on additional student supervision. Supporting the increasing numbers of student health professionals completing clinical learning programs places a significant burden on educational providers and health care personnel. A lack of adequate clinical supervision education and confidence in clinicians has proven to be a major barrier in increasing the quality and quantity of student placements across the health sector.

### Arriving at a solution

This project implemented the TOTR program, a nationally evaluated clinical supervision training course developed by the University of Western Australia and detailed in Health Workforce Australia's 2010 Clinical Supervision Support Program (CSSP) discussion paper. The program has four modules, each designed to be delivered as a two to three-hour workshop or conducted together as part of a longer session. There are also a range of practical teaching resources which support the learning. The program was initially developed to assist doctors who had little or no teaching experience to increase their skills and confidence in teaching and supervising in the clinical environment. The program has been expanded to include a broader audience of health professionals including nurses and allied health professionals. Evaluation of the program indicates a significant increase in the confidence of participants to teach and supervise effectively.

The project was developed with the following aims:

- Facilitation the development of positive learning environments for student health professionals;
- Promotion of organisational cultures that foster learning;
- Recognition of the roles and responsibilities related to clinical supervision;
- Creation of a sustainable supervision workforce that provides opportunities for career development and succession planning;
- Increase of the capacity of clinical placements across network, in particular in areas that are currently under utilised such as aged care, community and general practice.

## **Implementation process**

The project involved the delivery of five TOTR workshops to 148 health professionals across the ECPN. TOTR workshops were held at Deakin University in June, September, November 2011 and February 2012.

Participants were from a range of health professions including nursing, dental health, community health and allied health disciplines.

Participants took part in two full days of interactive training. The first half-day of training consisted of a TOTR clinical teaching workshop. This workshop aims to provide a small group training framework and involves exploring the role of facilitator within the clinical teaching setting. The TOTR Facilitator Training Program (FTP) was run over the following one-and-a-half days. The FTP workshop prepares participants to run TOTR workshops in their own settings, for their own colleagues and potentially a broader network of health professionals.

Upon completion of the one-and-a-half-day FTP, participants are provisionally accredited to deliver licensed TOTR workshops and are encouraged to run a TOTR workshop in their own setting within a year. Following delivery of a TOTR workshop and associated evaluations the participant becomes a fully accredited TOTR facilitator with ongoing access to TOTR resources. Facilitators will deliver TOTR workshops to groups of health professionals at their site, increasing the number of health professionals who have the confidence and skills necessary to support students during their clinical learning programs and a mechanism to provide sustainability of supervisors across ECPN.

## **Outcomes and impacts**

It is envisaged that approximately 30% of the 148 participants will facilitate workshops to groups of up to twenty staff members at their workplaces and across the ECPN during the next twelve months, forming the model for a cost effective and sustainable training model that will enable training for staff on an ongoing basis.

In the final months of our project a number of workshops were being scheduled across settings in the ECPN.

In most cases two participants will work together to facilitate their workshop. Participants who initially were reluctant to consider delivering a workshop in their workplace were significantly more positive and confident about the possibility of delivering a workshop with a partner.

## **Limitations and management strategies**

- In November 2011 industrial action across the nursing sector restricted staff from release to attend training.
- A significant number of nurses withdrew from the workshop at very short notice. The majority of these nurses then attended December or February workshops. The November TOTR Workshop was attended by nineteen participants rather than the expected forty.
- The project team were presented with a range of reasons from potential participants reluctant to enrol in the workshops. These reasons mainly related to time commitments or a lack of confidence around delivering workshops in the workplace and hence a reluctance to attend the TOTR workshop.

## Evaluation

After attending the two-day TOTR program participants were asked to rate how they perceived their motivation, confidence and effectiveness in clinical supervision prior and post workshop. The results were positive and were also reflected in the comments of participants that attended.

On a scale of 1 – 5 (1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = average, 4 = good, 5 = excellent).

	Question	Average rating
Rate FT program	Overall reaction to the program	4.33
	(Prior) Facilitation effectiveness	3.45
	(Prior) Motivation to facilitate	3.05
	(Prior) Confidence in my ability to facilitate	2.99
	(Post) Facilitation effectiveness	3.64
	(Post) Motivation to facilitate	3.89
	(Post) Confidence in my ability to facilitate	3.71

## Future directions

The project team found that to support the work of clinical facilitators in the provision of high-quality clinical education to students from all disciplines across ECPN, a robust approach to engage key stakeholders such as, middle and senior management from health sites is required.

Following completion of the TOTR workshops, participants have encountered barriers to delivering clinical supervision workshops to their colleagues which have impacted upon the sustainability and viability of increasing student clinical placement numbers across the network. These barriers include time release to prepare and organise workshops across multiple sites and disciplines, the ability to build a supportive network of clinical supervisors and most importantly a commitment from management to make operational the clinical supervision model. Strategies are needed to address these challenges and provide a framework to build a sustainable clinical supervision model.

Deakin University is the lead agency for the newly funded project 'Implementing a sustainable clinical supervision model' which builds upon the 'Promoting a learning culture' project. This project will support TOTR participants to deliver workshops in their workplaces and across the ECPN. It is expected that TOTR facilitators will become leaders in clinical education across the ECPN, playing a pivotal role in implementing a sustainable model of clinical supervision.

## Further information

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