

We've got SWAGER (Social Work and Groups Enhancing Rehabilitation)

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Background

Social work in the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service (GCHHS) has not utilised group work as a clinical intervention with inpatients. The focus was individualised case management and discharge planning. An opportunity to implement group work as a specialised social work intervention with inpatients was identified, and in 2012 the rehabilitation social work team at Robina Hospital began developing a psychosocial educational group work program. Unlike traditional reminiscence groups or functional rehabilitation programs, the purpose of the social work group is to provide psycho-education and facilitate self-directed mutual aid. The aim was to also address common referrals to social work for issues of anxiety, decreased motivation and adjustment to new or chronic illness.

Methods:

A literature review found evidence regarding the benefits of group work for a variety of patients including those living with disease, older people, and those experiencing depression, anxiety & bereavement. Groups established and trialled in one rehab setting. An evaluation tool is used to gain qualitative feedback from each group participant prior to discharge. The evaluation tool utilises qualitative feedback using a phenomenological framework and a Lichert scale with a focus on the effectiveness on both the delivery of the model and the impact on patient's social and psychological wellbeing.

Results:

Data Analysis

- New phenomenological approach
- Thematic analysis

Global themes emerging from evaluations:

- Increased motivation
- Decreased social isolation on the ward
- Enhanced patient engagement in wellbeing
- Positive group experience

Affirmation of the benefits of the social work group program has led to expansion across rehabilitation units in the GCHHS.

Discussions:

Feedback from initial state-wide discussions with other rehabilitation social workers has led to identification for future research and requests for the development of a training package to assist in conducting social work group therapy within rehabilitation.

