

Interventions and Outcomes- what are Social Work documenting at Western Health?

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Background

Social Work at Western Health identified a long standing issue of difficulty achieving consistency and clarity of documentation of social work assessments, interventions and outcomes. Specifically, a lack of documented social work intervention and outcome formulation was apparent.

In 2012, led by social work management, a framework of social work Practice was developed to guide social workers in their clinical practice at Western Health. The new framework covers four domains of clinical practice: welfare, therapeutic, education and statutory. To address the documentation challenges a new template was developed from the framework and was implemented in stages across the department, with the final stage rolled out in June 2014.

Methodology

Drawing on a sample of file audits (n = 90), the project used a mixed methods approach of quantitative clinical data mining (Epstein, 2011) and qualitative thematic analysis (Patton, 2002) to search and examine the nature of clinical social work interventions and outcomes.

Results

Since implementation of the template, feedback has indicated that the new framework has assisted with consistency and clarity of the social work role. However, there remain ongoing challenges regarding documentation of interventions and outcomes. Data is currently being analysed with final reporting by September 2015.

Discussion

Consistency and clarity of documentation is an ongoing challenge for Allied Health Practitioners. Frameworks of practice enable evidence-based guidance in implementation of clinical roles and documentation. This project adds vital knowledge in addressing this challenge from a social work perspective.