

Teaching Allied Health Professionals to Delegate – Never Assume!

Whelan, L.

Background

As the Allied Health Assistant (AHA) workforce grows in number and expands scope of practice, the need to delegate well becomes increasingly important. AHAs are the Allied Health workforce of the future. Delegation is not an element focused on in undergraduate Allied Health professional (AHP) training. It tends to be assumed knowledge on the part of employers of AHPs and AHAs. But, should it be?

Aim

To improve delegation practice between AHPs and AHAs across Monash Health.

Method

Stephen Duckett and colleagues have been advocating the cost efficient nature of the AHA workforce for the last decade with a view that in order to meet future healthcare demands in Australia, AHAs will need to be performing 20% or more of the Allied Health workload.

With Stephen Duckett's 2014 Grattan Institute report in mind, alongside many other initiatives for AHA governance, between mid 2016 and mid 2018, delegation training workshops were offered on an ad hoc basis to several groups of staff. These staff groups were either new to delegating (graduate groups) or new to having an AHA (where a new AHA role had been introduced within a program) or where there had been large transition of staff in a department.

These workshops were offered as an interactive learning experience with a view to the following learning objectives:

- Define delegation and describe examples of appropriate delegation in a health care professional team
- Identify the limits to scope of practice of an AHA working at Monash Health.

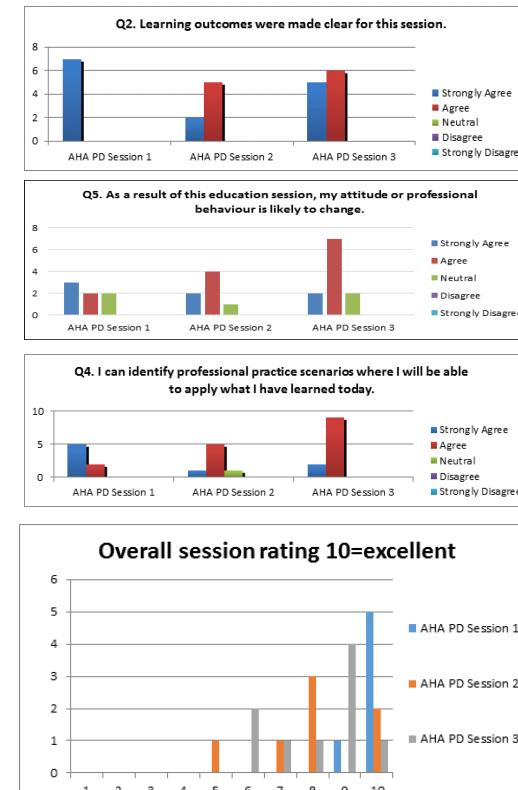
Results

Over thirty workshops have been delivered in the two year window with the following results as per evaluation.

- 100% of participants report the session to be relevant to their learning needs.
- 100% of participants report learning outcomes were clear.
- 75% strongly agree or agree that they had acquired new skills as a result of the training.
- 100% were able to identify professional practice scenarios where they would apply the learning gained from the session.



Figure 1. Delegation Training Evaluation Cumulative Results.



Future

It appears delegation training is useful to teams working together in better utilising their AHAs. More extensive evaluation may better identify barriers to delegation and allow the training workshops to target these specifically. In the short term, by way of starting working relationships early, AHAs have commenced delivering the training to the AHP new graduate program. Ideally, longer term evaluation of change in delegation practice would evidence the need to formalise this training for all AHPs and AHAs working together in order to further the capacity for time-efficient, high quality delegation, culminating in better patient care.

References

- Duckett, S. & Breadon, P. (2014). *Unlocking skills in hospitals, better jobs, more care*. Grattan Institute Report No. 2014-8, 2014. Accessed online at: <https://grattan.edu.au/report/Unlocking-skills-in-hospitals-better-jobs-more-care>