

CLIENT JOURNEY MAPPING: Improving Mental Health pathways and service access

BACKGROUND

In 2018, the Outer East PCP was engaged by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to work with local services to better understand the impacts of reforms, such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and recommissioning on the community based mental health service sector.

An initial consultation with key stakeholders (acute mental health, EMPHN and community mental health) indicated:

- emerging service gaps particularly for those with moderate mental illness requiring support with psychosocial needs;
- increasing demand on the clinical mental health system;
- uncertainty about referral and service pathways.

While it was clear that the service system was evolving and changing, it was uncertain whether the system could continue to meet the support needs of mental health clients. It was this that led to focus on the client experience and to use client journey mapping as a mechanism for gaining a deeper understanding of the impacts of system change for mental health clients.

PARTNERS

- Department of Health and Human Services
- Outer East Primary Care Partnership
- EMHPHN
- Eastern Health
- EACH
- NEAMI
- NDIS
- Mentis assist
- Eastern Mental Health Service Coordination Alliance (EMHSCA)
- Alcohol and other Drug (AOD) Planning Council
- Wellways

METHOD

The project was initiated by the PCP conducting a broad service sector consultation. This led to a focus on gaining a deeper understanding of how mental health clients are experiencing changes to the mental health services system.

The PCP in partnership with Mesh Communications:

- Developed four mental health client personas, two which were based on personas previously developed by EACH.
- Conducted further consultations to validate the personas.
- Engaged key mental health providers (practitioner and management) to participate in two client journey mapping workshops.
- Conducted additional consultations with specialised service providers to fill data gaps.

- Conducted client consultations to ensure that the journey maps were true representations of the client experience.
- Continue to ensure the personas and journey maps are updated and widely accessible to stakeholders across the region to inform planning and service system review.
- Continue to promote and present the outcomes and engage new stakeholders to ensure the work remains relevant and current.

This process unpacked key “pain” points (e.g. service availability, access, continuity etc.) for client cohorts represented by these personas. The personas and the client journey maps are being used by the sector to develop a common understanding of the challenges faced by clients as they journey through the mental health service system, the current and emerging service gaps and how best to respond to them in a coordinated and integrated way.

OUTCOMES

This work has been used by the Primary Health Care Network and local service providers to understand how new psychosocial services in the region will impact on a particular client group represented by one of the personas. “This is a powerful way to visualise the different process a client experiences as they move through the mental health service system” (workshop participant)

The Eastern Region Mental Health Service Coordination Alliance has integrated this work into their regional agenda seeing it as foundational to strengthening a more coordinated and client centred approach.

This work will continue to benefit mental health clients, as service providers will have a deeper, shared understanding of how respond to key “pain points” clients experience as they travel through the mental health service system.

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