

CONSUMER PARTICIPATION– VOICES HEARD, CHANGES MADE

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Introduction / Issues:

Historically, consumer participation has occurred on an ad hoc basis within specialist public drug and alcohol services (DAS). In response to this gap, the Consumer Participation Project was implemented in South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) DAS in 2013.

Method / Approach:

Outcomes, successes and challenges to date will be discussed. We will outline the policy, management and implementation approaches that have led to a well-accepted, integrated and sustainable consumer participation program.

Future directions will also be discussed.

Key Findings: DAS staff has been involved in all stages of project development, helping to ensure its acceptability amongst staff.

Over 300 client interactions offering peer support, referrals and assistance to unwell clients navigating through SESLHD DAS. DAS clinical staff now actively approach consumer workers for their assistance with clients.

The service hosts regular client gatherings for clients to participate in discussions on client activities, improvements to the service & environment and building a respectful culture.

Discussions and Conclusions: Establishing the Consumer Project has resulted in client empowerment as they are able to participate in Drug and Alcohol Service development. Recognising our success, the service a finalist in the 2015 SESLHD Improvement and Innovation Awards.

Implications for Practice or Policy: As one of the first local health districts in NSW to implement this type of DAS Consumer Participation program, we hope to provide a benchmark in DAS consumer participation within NSW and interstate.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: None