

Positive Living in Aged Care Awards

Mental Health Promotion Project in Residential Aged Care Facilities

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Feedback from the judging of the Positive Living in Aged Care Awards applications 2011

The Project Partners thank all applicants for submitting their strategies and wish to acknowledge the time and effort that this takes. Whilst all applicants cannot win an award it is acknowledged that all the strategies submitted add value to the lives of residents in your facilities.

This feedback from the judging panel of the applications for 2011 is provided to all applicants as a quality improvement activity and may be valuable to you when considering a future application for the Positive Living in Aged Care Awards. This feedback is of a general nature only and identifies specific areas where there are opportunities to improve future applications.

General comments:

Before completing an application it is important to read all the application information provided noting:

- Word limits - Word limits are a guide to the amount of information to be included in an application.
 - If you are not using the word count it may be an indication that there is insufficient information.
 - If you are significantly over the word limit your application will be culled as it may be too much information for the judges to read.
- The underpinning concepts behind the project which need to be addressed. For example, one of the objectives of the Positive Living in Aged Care Awards project is consultation with the community and collaboration with relevant professionals. It is essential that this is included in your application.

Program design:

This section should clearly describe your strategy. It should outline the project model (methodology), state the objectives, define the target group and outline the overall plan to implement and evaluate the strategy. Some applications did not provide the reader with a clear picture of the strategy and the overall plan. This did not assist the panel to understand the strategy.

When designing a strategy it is important to identify the scope of the target population including size and specific characteristics. For example, it may be all residents diagnosed with depression; all residents admitted in the past six months etc.

A number of applications did not make the linkage between the strategy and the mental health and wellbeing of residents. The inference may have been there, but it was left for the judging panel members to make these linkages. It is important that these links are clearly identified in the program design and throughout the application.

Where your strategy is based on another model, references from relevant literature would strengthen your application. There was minimal use of referencing in applications.

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Some applications were seen as core business for a residential aged care facility. When describing the program design it is important to clearly identify why this strategy is innovative/creative and adds value to the already existing services which must be provided for residents.

Needs analysis:

Several applications did not clearly identify where the need for this initiative was identified and how this was verified. For example:

- Why was this strategy implemented:
 - Was it in response to the findings of a survey, audit activity or results of trend analysis of key indicators?
 - Was it the result of attending a conference and identifying a similar need in your facility?
 - Was it from a staff or resident suggestion?
- How did you verify this need?
 - Did you consult with staff, residents and / or their representatives?
 - Did you review relevant performance indicators, consult with relevant stakeholders to verify the need?
- Was a literature review conducted to see if work has been done in this area which can be built on? If so, use references to support the need for this strategy.

Outcomes and effectiveness:

This was a problematic area in several applications. Several applications did not provide clear outcome data. There were generic statements of overall improvement with minimal linkage to the original objectives of the strategy. It is important that outcome measures are determined at the commencement of the project and are linked back to the stated objectives.

Outcome measures may be qualitative (descriptive) and / or quantitative (numerical data). In most instances it may be suitable to have a mix of both. If using quantitative data it is important that sample selection is consistent throughout a project to ensure that data is reliable. This should be clearly evidenced within the application. It is also important that if graphs are being used for quantitative data, that these graphs are clear to read and understand

When planning the outcome measures for your strategy consider:

- the vast range of data which is already collected as part of the quality program. For example, results from resident surveys, clinical indicator data such as levels of depression, falls incidents, aggression incidents and hospital admissions. These could have been used in some applications to strengthen the evaluation.
- the use of validated tools to measure outcomes. For example if measuring anxiety, depression, Quality of Life.
- if using tools describe how staff are trained in their use to support reliable measurement.

Consultation:

One of the underpinning concepts of this project is to promote strong involvement and consultation with the target group, their representatives and other stakeholders. Several applications did not include and demonstrate consultation throughout the process with these groups, in particular the specific target group which may have been residents, staff or members of the broader aged care community.

Consultation should be evident throughout the development, implementation and evaluation of the initiative.

Note: Consultation involves more than advising people of a strategy, the panel was looking for evidence of consumer input into strategies.

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Partnerships and collaborations:

One of the key objectives of Positive Living in Aged Care Awards is to develop collaborative partnerships with professional and community groups. This was clearly demonstrated in some applications whilst others did not go outside their organisation to develop relationships to strengthen their initiative/project.

Transferability:

Transferability is another key objective underpinning this Awards project. Whilst most applications were reasonably strong in this area and outlined supports to implement the strategy in other facilities some did not clearly identify how the project could be transferred. This in some instances related to the availability of highly specialised personnel as well as financial implications.

Sustainability:

Sustainability is also a key principle underpinning this Awards project. This question was addressed well in most applications.

We hope that this feedback is useful and the Project Partners encourage you to apply in 2012. There is also support available to advise you in development and completion of an application. This can be accessed by contacting Diane Herr, Project Officer on 02 8754 0400 or email plac@agedservices.asn.au.

Early Bird Applications received by 31st May 2011 will be provided with feedback and the opportunity to improve the application by the closing date (30th June 2012)

Thank you for participating in the 2011 Awards.

Yours sincerely

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