

Mental health Support program for people involved in Criminal Justice System at Pine Rivers Magistrates Court



PIR Agency:	Neami National
Date:	Date range: May 2014-Currently operational
Key issue(s)	<p>The system gap of no support for people experiencing a mental health condition engaging with the justice system here at Pine Rivers Magistrates court causes inappropriate sentence options and does not address some of the fundamental issues contributing to offending.</p> <p>This means that re-offending is likely and may even occur at increased levels unless issues like mental Health treatment, support and management are in place.</p>
Main Objective(s)	Changes that the organization hopes to accomplish through the activities of the project include: improved access to mental health services, support and management for people engaging with the Justice system with a mental health condition, reduction in re-offending, reduced imprisonment rates, improved community support for people engaged in the justice system for homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse, training, employment and financial issues.
Summary of Impact or Result	
Context	
Stakeholders/Partnerships	<p>The main partnership has been direct engagement with the Department of Justice and Attorney General through the Queensland Court Referral program that operates in the Magistrate's Courts across the city in various locations.</p> <p>Other stakeholders and partners were community organisations such as: Neami National Strathpine, Department of Health Strathpine, Chermside, HealthyOptions, Headspace Nundah and Drug Arm.</p>
Project Management	<p>The project arose because of the lack of support identified for people with mental health issues engaged in the justice system. The Justice and Attorney General's department (JAG) had indicated a possible expansion of the Queensland Court Referral program to the Pine Rivers court house. The project was managed by JAG who established the program with a nominated officer of the court providing referrals information and co-ordination of the program activities.</p> <p>JAG provided documentation to report activities to the court program which were delivered to mitigate decision making by Magistrates in hearings before the court. Some revision of the documentation was developed to most effectively provide report out comes for the court.</p>
Description of Activities	<p>The expected outcomes of the project were to provide improved access to mental Health services for those people engaged with the justice system experiencing mental health conditions. About 17 referrals were made, PIR at Neami assessed and worked with about 7 clients.</p> <p>These numbers although low level indicate increased access for people experiencing mental health conditions that were supported by PIR in a diverse range of referrals and activities.</p>

These activities included referral to GPs, specialist Mental health providers, Community and clinical health services, family and single person counselling services activities based programs and community based programs supporting participants as well as other agencies addressing Drug and Alcohol abuse, treatment etc. This is beneficial in defining any occurrences of scope creep or whether a project may not have been completed as planned. This is helpful information for lessons learned and for future project teams conducting similar projects.

Project Impact





I think that court located support program and diversion to PIR has required low level financial obligations from agencies. No new funding has been required beyond current funding,
A permanent change to the system will require ongoing funding support beyond the existence of current programs eg. Partners in Recovery but many services are currently funded to deliver support services.
Unsure if this project has resulted in a permanent change to systems. However this service was not available prior to PIR involvement. The QCR program will continue from the court at Strathpine as this is funded by JAG.

Is the project now self sustaining? NO

Lessons Learned

The project has a steady implementation process that required only time and worker resources from already funded bodies.
Additional resources might be useful, there are insufficient resources dedicated to the QCR program as they need a dedicated and funded worker at each site to focus on these activities.
What were the key barriers and challenges and limitations which hindered effective implementation of the system reform project? Currently court workers have taken on the QCR referral process as part of their work activities. This may be only 5% of their usual activities.
The referral process worked well.
Improvement might be around the reporting documentation and how this report s formatted.
Critical elements that supported effective implementation of the project were the co-operation and relationships between JAG and community organisations.
SF is unsure if there were elements of best practice in this project or the governance and management structures that were used.

Appendices

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