

*Housing and Accommodation Support
Initiative in the Illawarra*

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Background

Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) 3 way partnership:

- NSW Health
- Department of Housing
- Accommodation Support providers

Project Goals

- Unblock acute beds and reduce need for admission by providing community based support
- Address housing and accommodation support issues in a sustainable way
- Maintain and improve the functional status and mental health of people with high support needs
- Allow improvements in community participation for people with high support needs through system change

Partner Roles

- Illawarra Mental Health – funder and provider of clinical support
- NEAMI Illawarra – provider of accommodation support
- Illawarra Housing Trust – Housing provider and tenancy management

Service Model

- Long term housing
- Targeted support to 8 individuals
- 8-12 hours a day with 24 on call availability
- Outreach clinical care and rehab provided by mental health staff
- Provision of accommodation support within psychosocial rehab framework by NEAMI

Who is the service for ?

- 16 to 65 years
- Diagnosed with a mental disorder and moderate to severe level of psychiatric disability
- Not in acute phase of illness requiring inpatient care
- Capable of benefiting from provision of disability support services and
- Capable of informed consent to participate in the program

Who is the initiative targeted at ?

- Consumers residing in inpatient bed because of difficulties accessing high level accommodation support
- Homeless or at risk of homelessness or inappropriately housed
- Have the ability and desire to live in community
- Are unlikely to be able to maintain a mainstream tenancy agreement

Local Partnership arrangements

- Illawarra Housing Trust
- Northern and Southern Teams of area health service
- Private psychiatrists
- Fernhill
- Kalparrin
- Lifeline
- Mental Health Court Liaison Officer
- Probation and Parole

Profile of NEAMI

- Not for profit, community managed.
- Providing Psychiatric Disability Support and Rehabilitation Services in Victoria for the past 16 years.
- 3 Service sites in NSW, Illawarra, South West Sydney, South East Sydney providing services to 37 consumers.

Consumer Profile

- Average bed stay of 185 days in the 12 months prior to being accepted into the program.
- 5 men, 3 women
- Majority of Consumers with a diagnosis of Schizophrenia

Challenges and Opportunities

- Large waiting lists for a small program
- Keeping it alive in people's minds when so few can access the program
- Develop a greater understanding of each others role

Future Directions

- To strengthen partnerships
- More collaborative work e.g. joint ISP's
- To develop research to show outcomes
- Develop greater consumer participation opportunities.
- Develop a new service in South Australia using learning from NSW.

Profile of a Consumer (or why we need strong partnerships)

- Male under 30
- ATSI background
- History of Frequent and Lengthy Hospitalisations
- History of Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- History of Violence
- History of Unstable Housing
- History of involvement with the Police

*Profile of a Consumer
(or why we need strong
partnerships)*

- Was placed in a correctional institution for 2 months not long after being accepted to the program then released to hospital
- Temporary accommodation was arranged until permanent housing was found

And Now

- Signed a lease with IHT in mid-December 2003
- Has had no further hospitalisations
- Has had a number of physical and dental health needs addressed
- Has developed a better relationship with his carer and is gaining relationship skills

And Now

- Has enrolled in a TAFE course
- Has a clear unwellness plan
- Has been attending appointments with;
 - Case Manager and Aboriginal worker
 - Psychiatrist
 - D & A worker
 - Counsellor
 - Probation and parole
 - G.P.
 - Dentist

Process

- Consumer involved in decision making, case meetings and being always informed
- Communication with all of the individuals and services involved in the life of the consumer on a regular basis
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all of the parties.
- Maintaining partnerships is ongoing and the responsibility of all.