The importance of an Indigenous Rehab Assistant

Community Rehab nQ

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Indigenous Rehabilitation Assistant
Community Rehab nQ
Outline

• Background

• Indigenous Rehabilitation Assistant
  ▪ Role
  ▪ Benefits for:
    » Participants
    » Allied health Students and staff
    » Indigenous Rehab Assistant

• Summary
High rate of disability for Indigenous people

- Indigenous people of northern Queensland
- e.g. Stroke (paralysis, unable to communicate)

- Need rehabilitation services that work for Indigenous people
  → Drive the brain to recover

- Indigenous rehabilitation assistant to support Indigenous people
Background

Indigenous people often isolated from community and family
- Disengage during therapy sessions
- Leave rehab prematurely – brain primed for recovery
- Miss out on rehab – poor recovery

After returning home
- Can be isolated – only one who understands what to do to recover
- Families often fearful and overprotective
- Don’t continue with rehab → recovery stops
Community Rehab nQ

- People with neurological conditions & older people
- People from regional, rural, remote nQ communities
- Inter-professional, student-assisted service
- Indigenous Rehab Assistant position
- Families welcome
Social Worker
Exercise Physiologist
Speech Pathologist
Occupational Therapist
Physiotherapist
Neuropsychologist
Registered Nurse
Dietitian
Indigenous Rehab Assistant
Rehab Assistant
The role of the IRA

• Travel with the indigenous participant along the rehab journey
  – Before referral → → during rehab → → home again → → ongoing review
  – Connect emotionally, spiritually, and culturally
  – Assist families and community to be a part of the participants journey

• Run the My Story Program

• Initiated and developed the Palm Island service with clinical director

• Share with Allied Health Team - students & staff
  – Indigenous participants story
  – Most appropriate intervention to ensure participant and student are comfortable.
Delvene’s Rehabilitation Journey

- **Referral**
  - IRA – met with Delvene & family at CRnQ

- **Assessment**
  - IRA is present in the assessment – familiar face

- **Rehab Programs**
  - Introduction to the programs – allied health staff & students
  - Getting to know Delvene’s community
    - Yarning with Delven and family about home
  - Contact with Delvens Community service providers for support when returning home

- **Getting ready to return home**
  - Linked with family community
Susie

54 year old Aboriginal woman
Supportive husband & daughters
Grandchildren are everything
Administration assistant
My Story

• My story cards
  – a culturally safe image based therapeutic tool

• Helped establish what really mattered to Susie

  To play with my grandchildren
I am now able to ....... even spend time with my grandchildren on the floor

For me this was one of my greatest goals .....and I was able to achieve it
My Story Time

- My story cards
  - a culturally safe image based therapeutic tool

- Indigenous participant interaction
- Reflection, Planning & Direction

Palm Island Physical Activity Program

- Business director and clinical leader
- Visited Palm island → talked to people & community service providers
- Work with the Palm Island community
- Morning in PCYC
- Afternoon out and about
Benefits of IRA for Indigenous participants

- Learn about service
- Welcomed & supported
- Their story is important
Participant Quotes

“The moment I was introduced to Marayah her warm bubbly personality, she makes you feel welcome the moment you walk through the door”

“Having an Indigenous Rehab Assistant makes it so much easier to talk and ask for help”

“Marayah has assisted me in various ways like checking to make sure I am doing my exercises correctly”

“Marayah introduced me to the Story Telling program where indigenous people are able to talk about their injuries, their family background and their goals. The program made it easy for me to talk about my own injuries”
Benefits for staff and students

• Learn to be flexible and adapt to work on what really matters to each and every person

• How to make each person comfortable

• Enjoy cultural differences

• Mutual respect
Benefits for Indigenous Rehab Assistant

- Gains skills & knowledge about Physio, Speech Pathologist, Occupational therapist, Exercise physiologist, Dietician, social work, and Nursing

- Support for training as Allied Health Assistant

- Inspire Indigenous Rehab Assistant to become an Allied Health Professional
Summary

• **Recognise** - we all don't fit perfectly into a box

• **Refine** - the method of practice and make it meaningful to the participant and their family;

• **Respect** - mutual - for cultural and social diversity.
Thank you to participants
of Community Rehab nQ
who shared their stories
Questions?