

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ED-LINQ CROSS-SECTORAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT JULY 2013 – MAY 2014

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Executive summary

A key focus area of Ed-LinQ is enhancing capacity. Enhancing capacity refers not only to increasing the knowledge and skills of individuals and systems to identify cases of emerging mental illness in children and young people, but to enhancing the capacity of server systems to work collaboratively to support access to appropriate early intervention services.

In order to achieve enhanced cross-sectoral capacity the Ed-LinQ cross-sectoral workforce development strategy takes a longitudinal and systemic approach to workforce development building up the mental health knowledge and skills of key groups in a stepwise fashion over time. The workshops have the dual aim of increasing participant's mental health knowledge and skills, whilst at the same time, enhancing cross-sector collaboration by improving local interagency knowledge and working practices.

From July 2013 to June 2014 fourteen two-day cross-sectoral workforce development workshops were delivered across Queensland. This comprised:

- six workshops on the topic of Non-Suicidal Self Injury in adolescents (NSSI)
- five workshops on the topic of Assessment and management of anxiety in children and young people (Anxiety)
- three pilot workshops on the topic of Diversity: mental distress and well-being in three groups of young people (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people; Same Sex Attracted (SSA) young people; Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) young people). (The results of the pilot Diversity workshop are not included in this report)

Evaluation outcomes indicate the training was successful across a number of domains. Participants reported a high degree of satisfaction with both the Anxiety and NSSI workshops.

For the Anxiety workshops:

- 97% of participants reported that the training would **help them deliver a better service to their clients.**
- 95% of participants reported that they would **recommend the training to a colleague.**
- 94% of participants reported that the training was **relevant to their role.**
- 99% of participants reported that the **trainers' presentation was of high quality.**
- 89% of participants reported that the training provided an **opportunity to meet and better understand the role of local services** that support the mental health and well-being of young people.

For the NSSI workshops:

- 97% of participants reported that the training would **help them deliver a better service to their clients.**
- 96% of participants reported that they would **recommend the training to a colleague.**
- 92% of participants reported that the training was **relevant to their role.**
- 97% of participants reported that the **trainers' presentation was of high quality.**
- 94% of participants reported that the training provided an **opportunity to meet and better understand the role of local services** that support the mental health and well-being of young people.

Qualitative feedback from participants and service managers echoes this high level of satisfaction with the training and suggests there was a considerable improvement in cross-sectoral knowledge and understanding.

Approximately half of survey participants indicated their interest in delivering a brief cascaded version of the training within their workplaces, increasing the reach and impact of the training on the local service community. The cascade version has been customised for nonclinical school staff. Such workers provide an important role in initial detection of possible mental health difficulties and disorders affecting students as well as ongoing support to students that ensures crucial ongoing school participation and integration. The potential of this package to increase mental health

awareness and literacy of front-line school personnel is an area for future consideration and is discussed further below.

The current series of professional development workshops has demonstrated steady improvements in interagency relationships. The earlier phase of the program highlighted considerable tensions and misunderstandings between and within the education and health sector participants. As well as improved interagency conditions, further additional opportunities to strengthen and consolidate local interagency capacity, knowledge and working practices were identified during training. A number of ongoing actions have been recommended to address these issues after the workshops. These can be summarised according to the following key areas and include:

- HHS Ed-LinQ Action Plans (comprising core issues that require dedicated action, planning and reporting)
- Procedures and processes to enhance early intervention and collaborative practice
- Target audience and promotion of training
- Cascade Training and building capacity of non-clinical stakeholders
- Coordinator role
- Organisational support

Recommendations

There are a number of lessons that can be learnt from the administration and evaluation of the cross-sectoral training workshops. The following recommendations are based on both participant quantitative and qualitative feedback and a report from the training facilitators. The Ed-LinQ coordinators and Queensland Mental Health Commission have also helped shape these recommendations. The rationale and relevant background information for the recommendations is included in the full *Evaluation report for the Ed-LinQ Cross-sectoral Workforce Development Program 2013 – 2014*. These recommendations are consistent with studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of interagency training programs in child and adolescent mental health in improving participant self-reported knowledge, skills, confidence and interagency collaboration, for example McAlpine and Hillin, 2008¹. The discussion and recommendations are presented under the following headings:

- Coordinator level recommendations.
- Organisation level recommendations.
- Partnership level recommendations

Coordinator level recommendations

HHS Ed-LinQ Action Plans

Recommendation: HHS Ed-LinQ Action Plans

The establishment of HHS Ed-LinQ Action Plans led by each HHS Ed-LinQ Coordinator would have the advantage of providing a structured approach to addressing those issues relating to recommendations in this report that most directly align to the scope and mandate of the Coordinators. An action plan provides a systematic way of standardising the approach to determining the level of specific HHS need and relevance of the various issues². An action plan also provides a means of coordinating and monitoring the actions taken. These actions fall into 2 categories – workshop related and integrated service delivery related.

¹ McAlpine, R., Hillin, A. and Montague R., 2008, The NSW School-Link Training Program: the impact of training on mental health service provision to adolescents in New South Wales, Australia, *International Journal of Mental Health Promotion* 10: 5-13.

² Whilst some commonality in approaches across different HHSs may be advantageous, it is acknowledged that there may be some constraints in standardisation of approaches as HHSs are diverse, Coordinators bring different skill sets to their role and Coordinators may be employed on a full or part-time basis.

Workshop related:

Undertaking actions in consultation with key education and health stakeholders to plan and support the delivery of Ed-LinQ workshops, according to the intent of the Ed-LinQ cross-sectoral professional development strategy. These may include:

- Consultation with local stakeholders about preferred workshop format and timing
- Uptake of the Ed-LinQ Cross-sectoral Workforce Development Program
- Promotion for workshops
- Mapping the need for future workshops
- Ensuring cross sector attendance
- Training for non-target group staff, i.e. cascade delivery
- Data about cascade training, including the extent of rollout, effectiveness, joint cross sector delivery and promotion of cascade training.

Integrated service delivery related:

- Ongoing cross sector networking and mapping pathways to care
- Regular local interagency forums
- CYMHS feedback to referrers

Local Ed-LinQ Stakeholder Consultation

Recommendation: Local Ed-LinQ Stakeholder Consultation

Arrangements for local Ed-LinQ stakeholder consultation should be reviewed to assess the effectiveness of the different arrangements in place in different HHSs and promote shared learning about the advantages of these different arrangements. This should include attention to the range of agencies represented in local Ed-LinQ Steering Committees and the seniority of committee members.

Partnership processes during and following the training

Recommendation: CYMHS feedback to referrers

A consistent feature of good practice approaches to collaborative and integrated care is timely and appropriate communication of relevant information between service providers. In locations where there is a perception that there is a lack of feedback from CYMHS when a referral is made, consideration should be given for CYMHS trialling a template Mental Health Care Plan, as used by some clinicians in private practice, which includes permission to report to the referrer. This would involve generating a template letter to the referrer, which thanks them for the referral and informs them that the young person attended CYMHS. It would not however disclose information about the content of the session. An additional recommendation below, which suggests that Department of Education, Training and Employment clarify confidentiality and reporting requirements of education staff might help CYMHS workers feel more confident in providing feedback to referrers. Also, other recommendations below, which recommend providing regular interagency meetings and clarifying pathways to care, will provide opportunities to discuss and address these issues.

Recommendation: Ongoing cross-sector networking and mapping pathways to care

Activities by HHS Ed-LinQ coordinators to support cross-sector networking should be supported, monitored and reviewed. Evaluation data from workshops prior to July 2012 indicated universal agreement amongst participants about the need for and their willingness to engage in greater interagency collaboration. In addition, participant discussion during workshop activities occurring between July 2013 and June 2014 also point to the need to improve knowledge about accessing mental health support for young people, carers and schools. Thus, the willingness and need to address these issues have been identified. Although some Ed-LinQ Coordinators have addressed these issues,

leadership from Ed-LinQ coordinators to facilitate interagency activities, such as mapping pathways to care, may well still be needed. Coordinators should be supported in assessing the need for this in their HHS.

Recommendation: Regular local interagency forums

Where interagency forums are not held regularly these should be organised at least annually or according to need. These meetings could focus on CYMHS and key education staff. The meetings could include case presentations to highlight examples of good practice and issues needing attention in interagency working; updates about service provision, staffing levels and wait lists; and professional development activities including further discussion of the learning materials accompanying the Ed-LinQ Cross-sectoral Workforce Development Program.

Structure of the training

Recommendation: Consultation with local stakeholders about preferred workshop format

It is recommended that the two consecutive day workshop format be maintained, as this format has shown better continuity of attendance compared to non-consecutive days, unless information emerges suggesting otherwise. Ed-LinQ Coordinators may continue to consult local stakeholders about their preferred format for future workshops.

Target audience and access to training

Recommendation – Uptake of the program

Although there is good attendance at training by the target audience in most HHSs, where this was not the case, consideration should be given to facilitating uptake of training by key staff. This could include some follow up with staff such as guidance officers and CYMHS staff who do not attend training in order to explore the reasons for non-attendance and identify options to help facilitate their attendance at future workshops.

Recommendation: Promotion for future workshops

Workshops should be notified to the target group of participants well in advance and promotional material describing the relevance to their role should be circulated. Selected quotes from participants and outcomes from the evaluation of previous workshops should continue to be included in the workshop flyer.

Recommendation: Mapping the need for future workshops

Ed-LinQ Coordinators should continue to be invited to map the number of potential participants within the target group and the number of courses required for their HHS. This will help facilitate planning for the efficient rollout of workshops across the State.

Recommendation: Ensuring cross-sector attendance

Attempts have been made to make the attendance of key groups, such as CYMHS and appropriate education personnel, a condition for allocation of workshops. Ongoing consideration should continue to be given to this issue in planning the rollout of future workshops.

Recommendation: Geographic equity in provision of future workshops

Strategies to ensure that relevant staff in all HHSs have access to Ed-LinQ Cross-sectoral Workforce Development Program workshops should be considered. This might include, for example, inviting local stakeholders to host a workshop in HHSs which do not have a coordinator.

There should be transparency and consultation with local stakeholders about decisions not to host Ed-LinQ Cross-sectoral Workforce Development workshops. This may help promote involvement in and a sense of ownership of the Ed-LinQ initiative by local stakeholders.

Training for non-target group staff

Recommendation – training for non-target group staff

In order to preserve the advanced level learning environment of the workshops, applications from non-target group staff should not be accepted. The interest in young people's mental health and well-being by these staff should be

encouraged by directing them to appropriate professional development. The CD-ROM presentation, mentioned, below was specifically developed to address the learning needs of non-clinicians such as teachers.

Given the limited number of staff in remote locations, it is appropriate for Ed-LinQ coordinators, in consultation with the workshop facilitators, to be flexible regarding the acceptance of applicants from non-target group staff for workshops in these locations.

CD-ROM presentation for cascade training

Approximately half of the workshop participants expressed an interest in delivering/co-facilitating the cascade training package, provided to participants on a CD-ROM. The presentation is designed to be delivered by guidance officers/school counsellors to school staff and can be adapted for other settings. Where possible, joint presentation with a CYMHS or other mental health worker (eg headspace) is encouraged. Feedback from guidance officers/school counsellors has included that delivering this presentation improves the status of their counselling/psychological expertise in the eyes of school staff and promotes better use of this expertise within the school community.

Recommendation: Data about the extent of rollout of cascade training

Ed-LinQ Coordinators should be encouraged to gather data about the number of presentations and the number of participants attending cascade training.

Recommendation: Data about effectiveness of cascade training

Consideration should be given to Ed-LinQ Coordinators coordinating the collection of data about the effectiveness of cascade training. For this purpose participant feedback forms have been made available. In addition, longitudinal follow-up to review how participants and their agencies subsequently dealt with incidents of self harm, or recognised and supported students experiencing anxiety, should be considered.

Recommendation: Joint cross-sector delivery of cascade training

Depending on local priorities, Ed-LinQ Coordinators may support and facilitate the delivery of cascade training. Joint delivery of cascade training by CYMHS and other staff, for example guidance officers or school-based health nurses, should be encouraged. This will help model cross-section working and deepen interagency understanding.

Organisation level recommendations

The Ed-LinQ coordinator role

Recommendation: HHS support for the professional development of Ed-LinQ coordinators

The Ed-LinQ coordinator role should be supported at the HHS and State level. Given the difficulty of providing expert, role-specific consultation and support at the HHS level, coordinators should be afforded mutual peer consultation opportunities through face-to-face forums and teleconferences. This will require HHSs to:

- release coordinators to attend at least four teleconferences and one face-to-face meeting per year
- fund travel costs and accommodation to attend an annual face-to-face meeting.

Support for local Ed-LinQ consultation processes, including Steering Committees

Recommendation: Support for local Ed-LinQ consultation processes, including steering committees

HHS and Education sector managers support local Ed-LinQ consultation processes by encouraging staff to participate and ensuring that Steering Committee members have the appropriate level of seniority to progress the initiative at the local level.

Support for the workshops and cascade training

Recommendation: HHSs and Education Queensland release staff to attend training

HHSs and schools (State, Catholic and Independent) should release target group staff to attend the Ed-LinQ Cross-sectoral Workforce Development Program. Given the significant emphasis on enhancing cross-sectoral working in these workshops, consideration should be given to exempting attendance at Ed-LinQ Cross-sectoral Workforce Development workshops from staff PD quotas.

Recommendation: HHSs and Education Queensland release staff to deliver brief cascade training

A CD-ROM resource is provided to workshop participants with the aim of facilitating cascading of key messages about NSSI or Anxiety to a wider audience, for example, school staff. The brief presentations are designed to be delivered jointly by two presenters, ideally from both education and health, for example, a guidance officer/school counsellor and a CYMHS worker, in order to model interagency working. Approximately half of participants expressed interest in presenting this information. Many participants anticipated that competing demands on their time would be an impediment to delivering cascade training sessions. Staff interested in delivering these presentations should be released for this purpose by HHSs and Education Queensland. This will enable the positive impact of the Ed-LinQ Cross-sectoral Workforce Development Program to reach a considerably larger workforce, beyond the immediate target group. It should be noted that the delivery of staff in-services may be beyond the normal role of some workshop participants and for this or other reasons, some participants may prefer not to present the cascade training.

Recommendation: Education Queensland support school staff to attend brief cascade training

Education Queensland support teaching staff to attend brief presentations designed to cascade key messages about NSSI or Anxiety in young people to a wider audience. These presentations have been developed specifically for teachers and could be delivered during meetings and staff development days.

Recommendation: Promoting cascade training for school staff

Consideration should be given to offering the cascade training to groups of Directors and School Principals (for example at conferences or other regional meetings). In New South Wales, school requests for cascade training increased significantly following such presentations. (It should be noted that these presentations were delivered by highly skilled and experienced presenters.)

Support for cross sector collaboration

Recommendation: HHSs and Education Queensland release staff to participate in ongoing local cross-sector forums and activities

HHSs and Education Queensland allow and encourage relevant staff to participate in ongoing local cross-sector networking forums and activities to map pathways to care. These forums and activities would not need to be too time consuming, for example they may comprise one meeting per term. (These forums and activities will help maintain and build on the interagency connections and goodwill developed during training).

Recommendation: CYMHS feedback to referrers

To address perceptions in some locations about a lack of feedback when referrals are made to CYMHS, HHSs should encourage and support CYMHS to provide timely and appropriate feedback to referrers. Such feedback may be facilitated by CYMHS trialling a template Mental Health Plan, which includes permission to report to the referrer.

Qualified school staff to support and treat mental illness

Recommendation: Qualified school staff to support and treat mental illness

Queensland Government, Catholic and Independent school sectors consider strategies to increase the support available to students experiencing, or at elevated risk of developing, mental illness. This could include:

- employing additional suitably qualified staff, eg psychologists, social workers, mental health nurses
- supporting those existing guidance offices/school counsellors who wish to undertake a mental health support and treatment role. This may require amendments to policy regarding the role of these staff and providing opportunities for such staff to develop their skills and confidence in providing mental health assessment and treatment.

HHSs consider ways they can support their local schools to develop a workforce with appropriate mental health qualifications eg through consultation, mentoring, joint assessment, co-therapy etc. Such support may best be coordinated through Ed-LinQ coordinators and could provide synergies with existing Ed-LinQ activities.

Education sector policy clarification

Recommendation: Policy clarification

Differences in understanding of policy matters among education staff should be brought to the attention of the Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment and clarification sought. Whilst variation in understanding of policy was most evident among QE staff, this issue should also be brought to the attention of the Catholic and Independent school sectors.

HHS level memorandum of understanding

Recommendation: HHS level memorandums of understanding

HHS and regional education managers should agree and implement a Ed-LinQ memorandum of understanding. Ed-LinQ coordinators together with local education and health stakeholders should play a key role in shaping these MOUs.

Given that HHS and Education District boundaries do not always align, in some locations MOUs will need to be between a HHS and more than one Education District.

Partnership level recommendations

Formal arrangements and structures for joint work between health and education

Recommendation: Formal arrangements and structures for joint work between health and education

Formal arrangements and structures should be established and monitored at the state level to promote and guide joint work between health and education, including through the Ed-LinQ initiative. These arrangements should include ongoing monitoring and review of a statewide Ed-LinQ memorandum of understanding.

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Anthony Hillin and Rob McAlpine, Statewide Ed-LinQ training coordinators

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