

Shelter Tas Inc.
Workforce Development Strategy 2015-17

Evaluation Report #9
Best Practice in Case Note Writing
28 February & 1, 2, 3 March 2017





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Supported by the Crown through the Department of Health and Human Services.

Background

Shelter Tas has received funding from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) for the development and implementation of a Workforce Development Strategy (WDS) for Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS), the purpose of the WDS being 'to support SHS's in developing their workforce to meet the current and future service delivery demands in a changing environment.' (Workforce Development Strategy, page 9).

Feedback was collected from Tasmanian SHS organisations to ascertain the sector's main priorities for training, as well from WDS Reference Group members. The request for training in case note writing was received from individual services as well as Housing Tasmania. Interest in this training resulted from the Department of Health and Human Services introduction of the Outcomes Reporting Framework and SHIP reporting consistency requirements across Type 1, 2 and 3 services. It was considered a priority training topic due the relevance to the whole homelessness sector and due to the overwhelming interest in attendance from services.

'Best Practice in Case Note Writing' training was delivered by Tracey Harris from Amovita Consulting. Amovita was selected as they have for some time delivered a one-day training course dedicated to case note writing, and have a thorough understanding of the homelessness sector due to their ongoing involvement with Shelter Tas as a training provider. A consultation was held with Amovita, services and Housing Tas at the SHS State-wide forum in December 2016, to establish content that would be most relevant to services and to gain input from HT regarding the Outcomes Framework requirements.

Initially 2 sessions were scheduled in Hobart and one in the North West, but due to the amount of interest, a second session was booked for the North West to accommodate demand in that region. Best Practice in Case Note Writing training was held on the 28th February and 1st March at the Waterfront Function Centre in Devonport, and the 2nd and 3rd March at Hadley's hotel in Hobart. Of the total 102 participants, 53 people attended the two training sessions in Devonport and 49 in Hobart over 2 days.

Training Overview

102 people attended the 4 training sessions. Of the 98 evaluation forms received, 96% of respondents rated the training day as good – excellent.

The training was rated as a successful event by attendees, and it met priorities 1 and 2 of the Workforce Development Strategy recommendations.

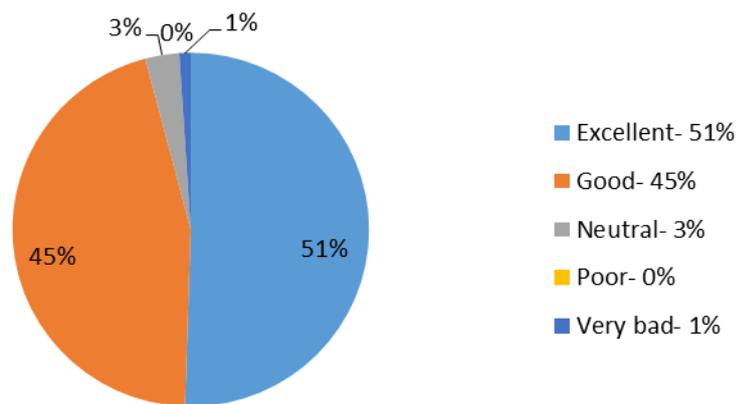
1. ***Increasing the skills and competencies of the SHS workforce.***

Attendees reported improvement in their understanding of best practice principles in case note writing and their ability to apply them to their work after attending the training session. Smaller class sizes for these sessions also maximised participant involvement and engagement.

2. ***Increasing the accessibility of training and professional development to the whole of the sector.***

Training was held in Hobart and Devonport, which provided increased training opportunities to workers State-wide. After consultation with members, it was decided to offer 2 sessions in both regions, which again maximised opportunities for people to attend on different days and split workplace absence on one day. This training was offered at a heavily subsidised rate, costing services only \$65 per person, thus increasing accessibility to more workers from a variety of services.

OVERALL RATING OF CASE NOTE WRITING TRAINING



Feedback received from discussions during the sessions indicated that attendees found the training highly valuable, and participants were engaged and interested in the subject matter. The majority of suggestions received on the evaluation forms were that more practical examples would have improved the session. A small number of people wanted to be stepped through writing a case note from beginning to end. This will be discussed in the recommendations section, but in short, it is impossible to cater for the skill level and preference of every attendee. As the vast majority of people felt that this training was highly valuable, it would be reasonable to conclude that the training was a success.

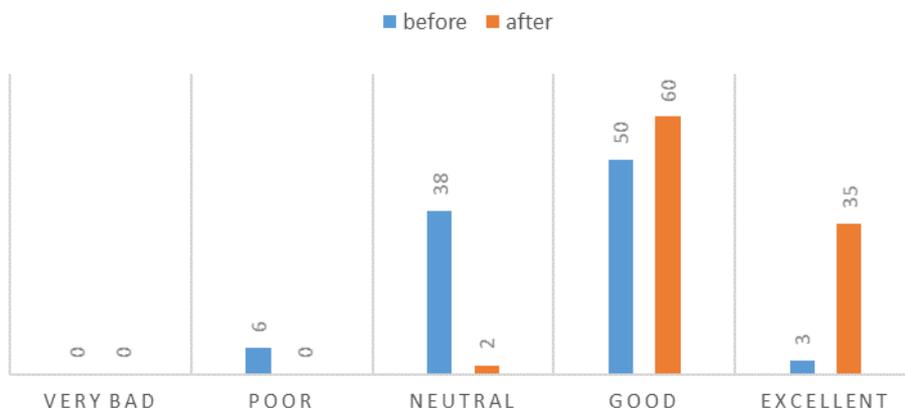
Participant Evaluation

Evaluation questions were rated on a scale of 1 – 5.

1. Rate your knowledge of case note writing principles and techniques before the training session
2. Rate your knowledge of case note writing principles and techniques after the training session
3. Rate your ability to apply case note writing best practice at your work before the training
4. Rate your ability to apply case note writing best practice at your work after the training
5. Overall, how do you rate today's training?

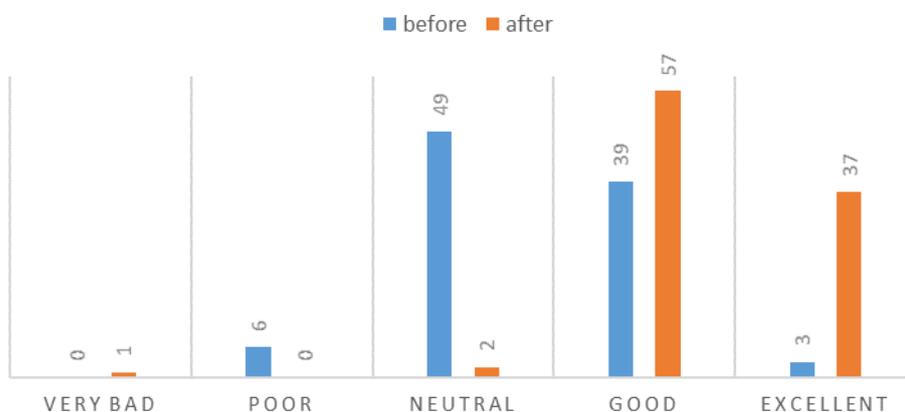
6. Do you have any comments about this training session?
7. Please note any suggestions you may have for future training topics.

KNOWLEDGE BEFORE AND AFTER TRAINING



Question 1 & 2: Rate your knowledge of case note writing principles and techniques before and after the training session. This graph shows that all ratings of poor and most of neutral increased to good or excellent. 38 participants rated their ability as neutral, which reduced to 2 after training, whilst some participants did not change their rating of good after training, the majority did, with ratings of excellent increasing from 3 to 35 after the training.

ABILITY TO APPLY BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES TO WORK



Question 3 & 4: Rate your ability to apply case note writing best practice to your work before and after the training. Whilst a very small number (3) of people rated their ability as very bad or neutral after the training, all other ratings indicated an improved ability to apply principles of case note writing by attendees. 88 of the 97 respondents rated their ability as neutral to good before training, with only 3 people rating their ability as excellent. After training this number

improved to 37 and the rating of neutral reduced from 49 to 2. This reported improvement in ability demonstrates the value the attendees found from attending this training session.

Question 6: Comments from evaluation forms included:

- ‘Very engaging and informative training. Tracey was a wonderful and knowledgeable presenter and is very clear in her explanations’.
- ‘I did not know what to expect but did not at all anticipate such an in-depth look at assessment and how this links to case notes. This was such a pleasant surprise and I feel like this is a holistic approach which is very refreshing - today was excellent. Who knew case notes could be so interesting. I'm excited to implement our new assessment tool’.
- ‘Made the subject come alive’.
- ‘Writing skills are definitely helpful in our daily work! Thank you - will pass it on to our team. Great guidelines, clear, concise and comprehensive’.
- ‘Very well presented - I'm terrible at sitting in training all day - did not get bored at all today!’
- ‘I enjoyed the training session and was enlightened about things I'd either forgotten or not known. Thanks so much’.
- ‘SHIP concerns overpowered some of the case note training. Thanks Tracey, always interesting, fun and informative training’.

Organisations/programs represented via geographical region.	
North/North West	South
8 Anglicare 10 CatholicCare 5 Karinya 7 Launceston City Mission 9 Launceston Women’s Shelter 5 Salvation Army 4 Youth, Family and Community Connections 2 Youth Futures 4 Warrawee	11 Anglicare 1 Annie Kennie 2 Bethlehem House 7 CatholicCare 9 Colony 47 2 Common Ground 1 Hobart City Mission 2 Hobart Women’s Shelter 7 Jireh House 1 Launch 5 Salvation Army

Recommendations for Future Training

Actions for implementation by Shelter Tas:

1. Originally, only one session in Devonport was planned (and two in Hobart). Upon consultation with members, it was felt that there was enough interest to run a second N/NW session. The decision was also made in part due to the feedback from the previous Motivational Interviewing training that indicated that some participants felt the Hobart session was overcrowded and rushed. Capping attendance numbers and running multiple sessions alleviated this problem and no feedback of this nature was received. Smaller numbers also helped participants contribute and engage with the rest of the group. Although this arrangement would be ideal for all training topics where there is sufficient interest, the cost of running multiple sessions could be prohibitive.

The option of running smaller sessions over 2 days will be considered in future if the topic is considered significant to the sector to sector development and the scale of interest is determined at an early stage.

Broader Considerations:

2. The feedback was very positive from this training. Only a very small number of people indicated that they had different expectations or needed a more introductory-level course. After delivering training for the WDS project for nearly 2 years, Shelter Tas has learned that there are diverse skill levels within the sector workforce, and it is impossible to cater to everyone, regardless of the preparation that goes into making training accessible to workers with different levels of experience.
3. Shelter Tas held a consultation with Tracey Harris from Amovita, workers and managers from the homelessness sector and Housing Tasmania via Skype prior to the training, to ensure the training was pitched appropriately to the services attending. This was a very valuable session for all parties involved, and improved the content of the training, as it meant training was tailored to the Tasmanian homelessness sector and took into account the SHIP/Outcomes Reporting training requirements for workers as well. After discussion with the WDS reference group, it was decided that this was a valuable step and should be repeated if the proposed training warrants broader consultation beyond reporting through the WDS Officer.
4. Shelter Tas has partnered with Amovita on a number of occasions to deliver training. Whilst there is value in working with trainers and an organisation which are known, in terms of expectations, procedure and quality of service, it is also important to not 'overuse' one particular service and maintain a variety of trainers utilised for the Project. This will be considered when booking upcoming training.
5. There have been preliminary discussion between Shelter Tas and Amovita to either allow broader access to the existing training resources for the sector that were supplied at the case note writing training, or to develop a new set of resources which would be Shelter Tas property. These would be available online, via the Shelter Tas website. Further consultation with Amovita and the sector are required, as well as identifying the WDS budget limitations. Further meetings are scheduled with Amovita, and Shelter Tas will be seeking consultation with the sector and Housing Tasmania on the development of this resource if it is to proceed.