

Peninsula Volunteer Coordination Network

Partners

The Peninsula Volunteer Co-ordination Network consists of three community organisations: Peninsula Support Services, the Mental Illness Fellowship and IMPACT Community Options and Support. All organisations provide support to people with mental illness in the Frankston / Mornington Peninsula area.

Why collaborate?

To more systematically coordinate the recruitment and training of volunteers.

The collaboration story

The three organisations, having used only a small number of volunteers or not used them at all, were keen to increase access to quality volunteers to provide client support. A relationship of trust had already been established between the partner organisations during previous collaboration initiatives including a shared staff training program.

A steering committee was established with management from each of the three project partners represented. CSO network funding was used to appoint a Project Worker for twelve months to support the steering committee, facilitate common policies and guidelines, initiate targeted recruitment drives, develop a volunteer database and coordinate a training program for all volunteers (new and existing).

Achievements

- Cost savings associated with sharing the Volunteer Coordinator position salary and increased volunteer assistance freeing paid staff for other duties. A number of new volunteers have been recruited and trained to assist with client support activities like bushwalking, one-on-one support in rehabilitation programs, helping with social groups for older clients, and supporting drop-in services.
- Policies, forms and the database have been produced at a higher quality than if completed individually
- Structured training has improved the quality of volunteer services (for both new and existing volunteers)
- Volunteers are able to work across the network, potentially reducing the number of volunteers who 'drift away'
- Clients can receive support from the same volunteer across a range of services
- The recruitment drive has raised the profile of the partners in the community

Success factors

- History of collaboration and established trust between partner organisations
- Taking the time to establish common ground and develop common policies and protocols
- Physical proximity as volunteers look to work close to home
- Desired outcome to provide better services for local people with mental illnesses was shared by all partners
- Shared need for quality volunteer services

Challenges

Reaching agreement on common policies and guidelines took longer than anticipated

Future / sustainability

The network has the potential to expand to include other organisations who have expressed interest in 'coming on board'. New volunteers continue to be recruited and trained.

Further information

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