Innovative Practice:
Sustainable Allied Health Workforce

Cindy Mathers
RN Health Educator
Co-ordinator
Aboriginal Mentoring Program
West Gippsland Healthcare Group

September 2013
Closing The Gap Using a Culturally Responsive, Innovative Approach with Aboriginal Trainees in Allied Health Assistance …

Affiliations:
Sharon Kingaby
Mentor
Indigenous Employment Program
Latrobe City Council

Lisa Price
Closing the Gap Pathways Project Officer
Baw Baw Latrobe Learning & Education Network

Lyn Leigh
Head Teacher
Hair, Beauty and Wellness
Health and Community Department
Chisholm TAFE
Overview..

Aim: to create a work place based training model in Cert IV Allied Health Assistant for Aboriginal trainees.
Key Concepts... we considered

- Substantive equality ...

  treating people differently to get the same outcome

  “It’s doing stuff to make the playing field level because the playing field hasn’t been level”

Key Concepts... we considered

- Cultural responsiveness
- Reasonable adjustment
- Holistic approach
Aboriginal Concept of Health
How did the project come about?

- Engagement with the local Aboriginal community however still reluctant to access our services.

- Traineeships and mentoring in the workplace were seen as a pathway into employment for Aboriginal people.

- The Karreeta Yirramboi policy aims to have 1% Aboriginal people working in the public sector by 2015.

- Working collaboratively with the Indigenous Employment Program.
What we hope to achieve...

- Work place based model of delivery allowing for substantive equality and reasonable adjustment.

- Collaboration with Chisholm TAFE to develop projects which allow for holistic assessment.

- Increase the capacity of the organization to support Aboriginal people in the workplace.

- Fostering of transferable skills in the trainees to positively impact their familie, community and employers.
Methods...

- Discovering a delivery mode that catered for the trainees learning styles.
- Active participation
- Increasing cultural responsiveness of the organisation
- Accessing existing mainstream training programs in the organisation
Choice of Electives....

We chose electives to promote transferable skills that could be used in community as well as in the hospital... we focused on:

- Cultural responsiveness
- Mental health / managing personal stressors in the workplace / promoting positive lifestyle
- Working with disability / community rehab / home visits
- Responding to behaviours of concern and delivering group based learning.
Findings...

- Creating a program that meets the needs of Aboriginal learning styles has enhanced retention.

- Intensive mentoring, tutoring and support in the workplace is essential in retention of trainees.

- After six months trainees showed a clear improvement in learning, literacy and numeracy skills.

- Soft skills need to be developed early in the training to enhance retention.
Limitations...

1. Very labour intensive and multiple submissions for funding required.
2. Finding an RTO that understood substantive equality took six months.
3. There is no Aboriginal specific study area for the trainees.
4. There is no template for this program – we are creating it as we go.
Summary of Key Points...

1. Project based learning helps to develop relevant skills and allows for holistic assessment.

2. The program has enhanced cultural responsiveness in the organisation and in the community.

3. Creating a program that incorporates training across several areas capacity builds the trainees and their communities.
Learning activities in community and in the healthcare setting...
Recommendations...

- More funding required for research and development of this model of delivery.

- Collaboration between interested stakeholders and sharing of our learnings.

- Incorporating the Core Spine of Competencies in future program development.
Resources

- Department of Health (2013) The Core Spine of Competencies  
- Guidelines for Assessing Competence in VET and other useful guidelines  