

HACC Case Study 'I feel important'

health

Gaining community recognition as an older person

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About this story

This case study reflects a person-centred approach to care. It identifies the client's strengths and support networks and builds on these to improve capacity and maintain interest in a planned activity group setting.

Meet Maria

Maria is 82 and one of the oldest members of her community. She is treated as a 'matriach' and everything is done for her as a mark of respect. She attends a social planned activity group (PAG) fortnightly and has home care from other services. She is supported in her care by a number of family members including daughters-in-law and nieces.

Maria had a fall a year ago and became fearful of leaving her home alone. She began only going out when a family member could escort her. She has arthritis in her hands, diabetes and had a minor stroke two years ago, which affects her mobility. When Maria attends the PAG with other members of her cultural group, she is immediately seated and other members and staff bring her food and coffee. She doesn't need to do a thing. Maria enjoys the attention and hardly has to move during sessions.

Reigniting Maria's passion

During a home visit Maria was extensively assessed using a new agency assessment tool. It came out that Maria had been a professional singer (soprano) in her younger days in her country of birth. She had a pitch-perfect singing voice and was able to sing unaccompanied in three languages.

The assessment staff told another staff member about Maria. This staff member was about to begin a music program, playing an organ for 'singalongs' during the service's PAGs. He asked Maria to help with program. Maria was delighted and immediately took to the task. She now works closely with the staff member, choosing music and helping to lead the sessions. They have also introduced folk dancing.

Recognised for her talents

Since taking on this new role staff have noticed that Maria is far more physically active and mobile and attends the sessions without her walking frame and mostly without a family member to accompany her. Staff (including bilingual staff from her own cultural background and community), believe Maria is able to gain a sense of recognition and status through her role in leading the music sessions and recognition of her skill and talent. In turn this has allowed her to be more active – being 'ill' was formerly her most effective way of gaining the recognition she needed as an older person.

Reflection

What contributed to the successful outcome in this case study?

Do your current assessment practices (and tools) allow a client's background, strengths and real interests to be identified?

Do you share these assessment findings regarding strengths when making referrals?

Do you currently use a similar approach with clients?

Are there opportunities for you to adapt or strengthen this type of approach in PAG?

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