Introduction to Positive Behaviour Support Planning for Allied Health Professionals

Report on Workshops

Workshops held at:

- **Hobart** 1st May, 5.30 – 7.30 pm
- **Launceston** 3rd May, 5.30 – 7.30 pm
- **Burnie** 9th May, 5.30 – 7.30 pm

Supported by the Australian Government Department of Social Services
Background

Three regional workshops on positive behaviour supports (PBS) were delivered as part of a priority strategy from the Tasmanian Allied Health Disability Workforce project:

- Implement strategies to skill the allied health workforce in positive behaviour supports in order to reduce and eliminate restrictive interventions

The project is delivered by National Disability Services (NDS) and is supported by Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services via National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Sector Development Funding until the end of June 2018.

During the project timeframes the national NDIS Quality and Safeguarding guidelines for the training and oversight of allied health professionals (AHPs) providing behaviour supports had not yet been released. Therefore these workshops were introductory in nature. The workshops aimed to provide a sound introduction to the topic for AHPs who may not have experience in positive behaviour support, particularly in relation to reducing and eliminating restrictive practices.

Workshop Delivery

NDS developed the workshops through collaboration with Dr Kristen Foss, Senior Clinical Service Development Consultant and Psychologist at Anglicare. Kristen also holds the substantive role of the Tasmanian Senior Practitioner. Efforts were made to ensure that content was practical in nature, and attendees were given the opportunity to contribute and ask questions.

Dr Kristen Foss facilitated all workshops and attendees were provided with hard copies of all resources discussed during the workshops.

The sessions were 2 hours in length.

Session overview

- Philosophy and evidence base for PBS and reducing and eliminating restrictive practices
- Elements of PBS planning
- Discussion of the disability sector and plan implementation
- Assessment tools - examples of resources
- Interactive session - example plans, discussion regarding best practice.
- Individual case studies and discussion
- Links to best practice articles & tools for evaluating plans.

Attendees

A total of 33 people attended the workshops which included: 8 in Burnie, 15 in Launceston and 10 in Hobart. Twenty eight attendees were NDIS registered providers.

Almost half of the attendees were not of an AHP or educator background. These attendees are not likely to be involved in any PBS planning process as per the pending quality and safeguarding guidelines. This was interesting given that the events were clearly targeted to an AHP audience. A number of those attending from disability service organisations (DSOs) stated they wanted a better understanding of the PBS planning process so that they would be able to provide the appropriate support to participants. A significant number of coordinators of supports (CoS) also attended, with the majority stating they did not have a clear understanding of PBS planning. They also valued the networking aspect of the sessions.
Feedback Summary

Positive feedback was received following these sessions. When asked to identify the most useful part of the events, many attendees spoke to the practical tools and handouts provided. Networking and communicating with other services was also noted by many as being a valuable part of the events. Another strong theme identified was the value of the time allocated for discussion and problem solving between attendees and the facilitator.

“Discussion around how to pitch for and what to ask for NDIS plans to enable us to produce (and implement) a good PBS plan”

“Learning about others experiences with getting adequate behaviour support funding through NDIS”

The overview and introductory nature of these events was also noted as a positive aspect of the event.

“Structured overview, good material, good knowledge of speaker”

“A taster for igniting interest in the area”

Some attendees identified areas for future focus, noting that the sessions were too short to go into any great detail or to comprehensively address any issues that were raised during the sessions.

“Though the information is handy, more practical examples and chances to discuss may have been more useful”

“Lacked info on how to negotiate limited hours in the NDIS plan to achieve all of this”

Implementation of Changes to Services at a Result of Workshops

Many attendees were able to identify practical changes they planned to make as a result of the introductory workshops. A brief overview of attendee responses is provided below:

“Implementation of more structured protocols & templates for our staff/clinicians to utilise” (from an allied health practice)

“Encouraging support staff to use positive support behaviours when dealing with different situations rather than being reactive” (From a DSO representative)

“Training for support staff in documentation during observation/assessment process” (From a DSO representative)

“Exploring ways to have PBS included in a participants plan when relevant” (From a CoS)

“I will think more about the implementation of support plans & being cognisant of target audience” (From an AHP)

Further Supports

Attendees were asked what further support they would need in order to write PBS plans, many indicated they need more support and training before being able to start the planning process.

“Mentoring feedback opportunity when plan completed”

“Perhaps more specific info having targeted at paediatric & adult clients”

“More training with practical examples, might need a 2-3 session program with homework (competency based training)”
Follow Up

All attendees have been invited to participate in an online community of practice (CoP) facilitated by Dr Kristen Foss. This will run as a pilot for a period of 6 months initially (to end 2018).

This CoP is an opportunity for attendees to seek and share further information, feedback and support regarding PBS planning as they implement their knowledge and skills in the workplace. It will also be a conduit for information sharing and updates regarding the NDIS quality and safeguarding framework, and any future training opportunities that arise in the space.

Future Recommendations

For behaviour support practitioners

Details of national quality and safeguarding certification requirements for registered behaviour support practitioners are yet to be released. It is likely that only AHPs and teachers will be eligible, with a competency framework to address for registration. This competency framework will need to be taken into account when planning any future training. Training will need to be competency based and it should be practical in nature with a focus on the application of skills in the workplace.

It is likely there will be a requirement for supervision of registered behaviour support practitioners within the certification process, from those who are experienced in this area. Given the current shortage of skilled PBS practitioners in Tasmania, the CoP that is being facilitated by Dr Kristen Foss could be one possible conduit through which this supervision is offered. Funding will need to be sought to continue this initiative beyond the end of 2018. The Tasmanian Office of the Senior Practitioner may also be involved in this supervision/oversight role.

For associated and support roles

In early 2018 NDS worked with the Tasmanian Office of the Senior Practitioner to run a forum in Launceston and Hobart and to produce a document to guide DSOs to prepare for the NDIS quality and safeguarding frameworks relating to the use of restrictive interventions. This can be accessed here http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/disability/senior_practitioner.

There is a need for information and advice around PBS and reducing and eliminating restrictive interventions to be offered to participants and other NDIS related roles such as CoS, planners, NDIS partner roles such as local area coordinators and early childhood partners. These sessions should focus on the knowledge required to identify when a PBS practitioner might be needed, and how to ensure this is incorporated in the planning and implementation of supports.

There is also a need for training and supports to be offered to the disability support workforce who implement PBS plans. Dr Kristen Foss is working with TasTAFE to develop and offer a skill set entitled “Implementing Positive Behaviour Support Plans” to support workers, which includes the following two units of competence:

- CHCCCS021 Respond to suspected abuse
- CHCDIS002 Follow established person centred behaviour supports

This skill set will likely involve 3 days of face to face learning delivery and ongoing facilitation through an online platform. NDS has facilitated this connection and will actively promote this opportunity amongst member networks once it becomes available.