

## **Networking for Court Support**

### **Collaboration, Confidence, Court Support and Case Notes**

### **Forum Feedback Report**

**25 July 2012**  
**Citigate Sebel, Sydney**

#### **Event Summary**

The Networking for Court Support: Collaboration, Confidence, Court Support and Case Notes Project aims to increase the skills, knowledge, capacity and confidence of drug and alcohol staff in the NSW non government sector to better support clients in navigating the NSW court system.

The project is a partnership project between the Network of Alcohol and Drug Agencies (NADA), Legal Aid NSW and Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre, Victoria. The forums will provide practical guidance on writing case notes and court reports as well as an overview of the court system and networking opportunities across the drug and alcohol and justice sectors. A panel including representatives from the Intellectual Disability Rights Service, Community Restorative Court Support Program, Justice Health Connections Program, Legal Aid NSW Drug Court Solicitor and the Drug Court (Parramatta) provided an opportunity for an open question and answer session on the day.

The project is jointly funded by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education Community Education and Engagement Grants Program and the NADA Practice Enhancement Program.

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**Number attended: 37**

**Number of feedback forms received: 25**

#### **Participant demographics based on feedback submitted:**

Participants at the event included 10 people from drug and alcohol non government organisations and 4 people from other non government organisations. Representatives from Justice Health, Drug Court, the Compulsory Drug treatment Correctional Centre and other drug and alcohol government services also attended.

Participants at the event included 3 in management roles, 17 in direct client services / client support, 1 person in an administration role and 4 people who identified their role as other including health promotion, quality improvement, court support volunteers and drug and alcohol student placement.

#### **Event Feedback**

##### **Knowledge, confidence and capacity**

Before the event, **60%** of participants rated their knowledge of the topic area as good or very good. Following the event, **92%** of participants rated their knowledge of the topic area as good or very good.

**96%** of participants reported that the event improved their awareness of how to support clients to navigate the court system.

**92%** of participants reported that the event improved their capacity to support clients in navigating the court system.

**88%** of participants reported that the event improved their confidence in navigating the court system.

### **Resources and further information**

**92%** of participants reported that the event improved their knowledge about where further information on navigating the court system is available.

**88%** of participants thought they would definitely use the information and resources provided during the event in the future. **12%** of participants thought they would possibly use the information and resources in the future.

### **Improvements in work practice**

**100%** of participants reported that it was very or somewhat likely that the event would lead to some improvement in their work or their approach to their work.

**84%** of participants reported that it was very or somewhat likely that the event would lead to some improvement in the work of their organisation. (One individual noted they hope it leads to a change in practice.)

### **Feedback on the presenters**

**100%** of participants reported that based on their presentations the presenters were very or somewhat knowledgeable on the topic areas.

**100%** of participants reported that based on their presentations the presenters were very or somewhat engaging.

### **Overall value of the event**

**100%** of participants reported that the event was very or somewhat worthwhile overall.

### **Participants listed that the most useful things that they got out of the event were<sup>i</sup>.**

- Overview of the criminal justice and court system / information on the structure of the legal system x 9. "The legal presentations gave me a better understanding of the legal system particularly the court structure and sentencing options".
- Presented from a legal perspective x 2. - "Andrew's (Andrew Bide, Solicitor, Legal Aid NSW) whole presentation from a legal aid perspective".
- Explanation of the courts and what they are responsible for / better understanding of court processes x 4. "Improved knowledge of the legal system – I learned things I was unclear on after many years working with offenders!"
- Explanation of sentencing.
- Legal information helpful for future reference x 2. "Legislation and how it applies and affects my clients, myself, my organisation".
- Where to find further information on navigating the court system.
- Information on court reporting.
- Adult drug court x 2.
- Understanding of the courts; functions and other programs inclusive of forum sentencing, MERIT, circle sentencing etc. x 4.
- Diversionary programs / overview of diversion very clear x 4.
- Case notes / how to write a case note x 7. "Great to receive information generated by research re: professional / ethical conduct in case noting."
- Two models of case note writing x 3.
- "The presentation on case notes made me think more about who might be reading my notes".

- Specific examples of what constitutes good case notes.
- Networking.
- Panel x 2.
- Awareness.

**Additional activities, resources, or information participants indicated they would like / find useful as a follow-up to the event**

- Raise the profile of the Compulsory Drug Treatment Correctional Centre.
- Future training or resource development around clinical audit.
- Time to work on case notes in a group.
- None / not that I can think of x 2.

**Other comments (including suggestions for improvement and any follow-up suggestions)<sup>ii</sup>**  
*(Note some brief responses to suggestions / queries in italics)*

- Great topics that relate well within industry / great presentations, materials very informative (x 9) “Very good presentations really did cover what was on the program, good strong presenters, in-depth information – well done”.
- Great venue and catering / organised. x 3 / “Well organised, ran on time, engaging speakers. All relevant – great pitch level spoke to participants well.”
- Great resources x 5 / “Love the information in the folder as we tend to end up with piles of literature – this can be easily found and read”. / “The resources were fantastic! I will be talking with my manager about ordering more”. / “Thank you for fantastic folder! Such a great resource for me to use in ongoing role”.
- “No. I am very happy to have been in attendance and look forward to further involvement in these activities. I am sure the variety of topics will be of benefit to my work practice.”
- “On a practical level, I also thought the facility was comfortable (although a little cold) and food requirements were met more that satisfactorily.”
- Examples of court reports etc. x 2
- Explain the process between arrest and sentencing, example client in cells at court, Silverwater remand etc.
- More time allocated to case notes topic / case notes would ideally be full day training.  
*(Turning Point is developing a full day training package which should be available by the end of 2012.)*
- It was good to have the two case note models put forward, but there was not much room to discuss any disagreements or recognise practice difficulties, in particular the SOAP model.
- Case notes session identified as basic by more experienced participants.
- Case notes: Every department has their own policies on writing case notes (government).
- Involve university students for study purposes. Hold this seminar at university campuses.
- Adding information on client file audits.
- More group involvement x 2.
- Thank you x 5.
- Being a free course made it easier to attend, Thank you.

**For more information contact [Ciara@nada.org.au](mailto:Ciara@nada.org.au)**

*NB: Please note all percentages have been rounded up/down to the nearest whole number.*

<sup>i</sup> These points have been summarised and may not be direct quotes.

<sup>ii</sup> These points have been summarised quotes are identified.