

CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Healthy Strong Communities: added capacity for dealing with "wicked issues"

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Introduction: The concept of additionality evolves from the important idea that agencies working together in collaboration with communities have added capacity to deliver sustainable change particularly when dealing with "wicked issues". These intractable issues are not amenable to change when agencies work alone in silos or in the absence of active community partnerships.

The Healthy Strong Communities Consortium has been formed to address the issues of some of the most vulnerable populations within an inner city area of Sydney Australia. It aims to address accommodation needs of people living with mental health issues; intergenerational trauma and disadvantage; and workforce capacity and capabilities.

These issues are addressed through strong relationships founded on working together.

Change Implemented: The Healthy Strong Communities Consortium comprises over 14 state and local government and non-government organisations representing health, community services, education, family and community services, a primary health network, police, the university sector and consumers.

Major changes include:

A shared vision, agenda and workplan;

Establishment of "Redlink" which is a community development model of care implemented within an inner city public housing estate;

Healthy Homes and Neighbourhoods a coordinated multiagency initiative targeting vulnerable families especially those with parents with mental health illness;

A boarding house improvement forum designed to address care and quality of accommodation for people living in inner city boarding houses; and

A youth suicide forum to identify intersectoral strategies to address the rising rate of youth suicide, including Aboriginal people.

Blunden; Healthy Strong Communities: added capacity for dealing with "wicked issues".

Major factors influencing success include strong trusting relationships between agencies; high level leadership to provide vision and resources for initiatives; commitment and capacity building; community engagement and accountability; and equity between partners.

Targeted Population: The Healthy Strong Communities Collaboration's vision is to ensure that people who experience difficulty as a result of significant mental illness live in stable homes within safe, inclusive communities and receive better targeted and integrated services in the community. Target groups are people living with mental health issues, vulnerable families and youth.

Timeline: The consortium first commenced in early 2015 and continues to evolve and adapt to emerging issues.

Highlight: This multiagency partnership has been championed by Chief Executives from health and human services, as well as senior leaders from a broad range of non-government organisations. Other highlights include a multiagency strategy addressing boarding house issues; and a youth suicide prevention forum attended by over 100 representatives from government and non-government agencies, consumers and community groups.

Sustainability: Significant changes have been reflected at all levels of service delivery from the frontline to governing boards. Collaboration of staff of across all agencies has witnessed positive results for our targeted population. While it is acknowledged these issues are challenging and complex the solution must be approached through a long term commitment.

Integral to sustaining this important collaboration is consistent leadership; attention to relationships; and support for resources.

Transferability: This multi-agency and community collaborative approach to explore, design and implement preventative and early intervention strategies could easily be adopted both locally and internationally.

Keywords: leadership; collaboration; partnership; trust; intersectoral
