

Homeground Pilots New Dual Diagnosis Resource!

Robyn Bixby, HomeGround Services and
Kevan Myers and Simon Kroes, St Vincents Hospital Melbourne

While dual diagnosis affects many people experiencing homelessness, there are few evidence based interventions that specifically try to explore the function and impact of drug use on mental health. The *Reasons for Use Package (RFUP)* was developed locally to do just that. The RFUP combines a screening tool with pathways to interventions. It aims to assist staff to explore dual diagnosis issues with their consumers and develop appropriate treatments that are consumer centred.

HomeGround staff were involved in a quality improvement pilot with Nexus Dual Diagnosis Service to see if training followed by mentoring in the RFUP increased confidence and knowledge in dual diagnosis interventions based on the five domains of the RFU Scale. The *Reasons for Use scale*¹ is a 26-item self-report instrument originally designed as part of the Managing Mental Health and Substance Use Collaborative Therapy program. It includes items from the Drinking Motive Questionnaire² and additional motives specific to symptoms of mental illness. It is administered to better understand a consumer's reasons for use and thus tailor intervention(s) to meet the individual's needs.²

Simon Kroes and Kevan Myers of Nexus Dual Diagnosis Service drew on practice wisdom from various fields to create the RFUP. The RFUP is a compilation of existing tools, interventions and information that may be used following the administration of the RFU scale. The RFUP had been previously piloted in 2012 and 2013 with staff from Neami National, St Vincent's Mental Health, ReGen and Youth Support and Advocacy Service (YSAS) with positive results.

HomeGround Services Justice Housing Support Program (JHSP) implements an

assertive outreach case management model to address the holistic support needs of the client group.

Outreach support is focussed on empowering clients to work towards readiness for positive change and all of which begins by meeting the person in their own environment. The RFUP has complimented the outreach practice model by allowing clients to be the experts of their own experience in driving their own case plan goals and actively participating in their own intervention plan.

HomeGround staff felt that the RFUP assisted them in a variety of ways to engage with consumers around dual diagnosis issues. HomeGround workers who participated in the pilot made the following comments:

'The RFU questionnaire speaks the language of the client and allows them to take ownership of the process. This has made a real difference for engaging with the client to address their substance use issues.'

'The resources that make up the RFUP provide validation for the worker to know that you are 'on the right track' with introducing appropriate interventions that meet the needs of the client. And I have been able to apply these resources to other needs of the client such as situations of family violence and addressing the hoarding behaviours of a client so the RFUP can be used for other purposes as well as working with the client to address dual diagnosis.'

'The clients that I have used the RFUP with to date, have all responded really well to completing the questionnaire and considering the resources and interventions that we have come up with together based on the results. It has been a really

productive and inclusive process for the client/worker relationship'.

Future Plans for RFUP at HomeGround Services

The RFUP is being integrated into the Justice Housing Support Program's (JHSP) assessment and case planning procedure to be used as a tool for navigating intervention plans. One hundred per cent of clients within the JHSP have identified as having dual diagnosis with support needs related to problematic substance use behaviours as well as mental health issues. It is therefore anticipated that the RFUP will be greatly benefit the JHSP by providing workers with additional resources for their 'tool kit' in working with clients. In doing so, the RFUP will improve outcomes by empowering clients to address the underlying issues of their complex support needs, as well as enhance participation in the case planning and intervention process.

Future Plans for the RFUP

Nexus is currently collaborating with Neami National on a national trial of the RFUP which is due to commence in 2015. They are also investigating converting the RFUP from its current PowerPoint medium to an online medium which will aid its accessibility to a wider variety of services.

Contact Information:
Simon.Kroes@svha.org.au;
Kevan.Myers@svha.org.au;
RobynB@homeground.org.au

Endnotes

1. Spencer C, Castle D, Michie P 2002, Motivations that maintain Substance Use among Individuals with Psychotic Disorders, *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, vol. 28, no. 2.
2. Cooper M L 1994, Motivations for Alcohol Use among Adolescents: Development and Validation of a Four-Factor Model, *Psychological Assessment*, vol.6, no.2, pp. 117-128.
3. Spencer et al op cit.