

**Embedding Drug and Alcohol Screening into Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Care**

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The adverse effects of alcohol and other drugs such as tobacco, psychostimulants and opioids on fetal and early childhood development are well known. Pregnancy has been described as the opportune time to address maternal alcohol and other drugs use: studies have found that interventions provided during this time of heightened motivation to change have the potential for stopping or reducing alcohol and other drugs (AOD) use.

St John of God Raphael Services are dedicated to treatment, prevention, early intervention and health promotion. They provide secondary level specialised mental health (including psychiatric) services to families in the perinatal and infancy stages, from conception up until the child’s fourth birthday.

In 2017 Raphael Services in Western Australia secured funding through the Western Australia Primary Health Alliance to improve the capacity of Raphael Services mental health caregivers to screen, assess and where relevant, provide an intervention to clients with co-occurring perinatal mental health and mild to moderate AOD issues. The project aimed to improve outcomes for families in the perinatal period by increasing client understanding of the risks of alcohol and other drug use and improve referral pathways to alcohol and other drugs services.

In 2018 the project was extended to provide capacity building for general practitioners, midwives and nurses working with families in the perinatal period to undertake AOD assessments, provide appropriate referral and access resources; and to develop an eLearning package to support Raphael Services caregivers.

To date we have provided capacity building for over 200 allied health, medical practitioners, midwives and nurses. We have provided individualised training, established new assessment processes, regular supervision, and implemented referral pathways across all Raphael Services nationally.

This presentation will provide an overview of the planning, implementation and resources developed to support health professionals to embed AOD screening when indicated into routine client care.