

THE CONNECTING, COACHING AND CHANGING LIVES PROGRAM: MENTORING NURSE PRACTITIONERS IN ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS TREATMENT

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Background:

The Connecting, Coaching and Changing Lives (CCC) program was conceived as a mentoring and education program for nurse practitioners throughout Australia, new to alcohol and other drug treatment (AOD), and those encountering individuals who use drugs in their daily practice. The aims of the program were to 1) provide participants with the opportunity to gain confidence and competency in AOD treatment and connect with expert AOD nurse practitioners, 2) address the needs of participants in the provision of evidence-based AOD services, and 3) transition and develop participants through mentoring, peer collaboration, support and professional development opportunities.

Description of model of care/intervention/program:

The program comprised six webinars on alcohol, illicit drugs, and hepatitis C treatment which were facilitated by an experienced nurse practitioner. Peer support webinars after the educational webinars gave participants the opportunity to discuss clinical scenarios with the experienced nurse practitioner, and monthly small-group mentoring, where participants met with an experienced nurse practitioner mentor. After each session, participants were required to complete online quizzes to provide immediate formative feedback on learning.

Effectiveness:

Feedback from the 15 participants in the 2022 pilot CCC program indicated that clinical learnings geared towards complex presentations were welcome, and support provided by peers and mentors was highly valued. Several of these relationships were reported to continue beyond the completion of the program, providing an informal 'community of practice' for participants to obtain clinical support and guidance. The inclusion of hepatitis C content indicated an increase in the willingness and competence in diagnosing and managing hepatitis C.

Conclusion and next steps:

The 2024 program has been extended to include clinical nurse consultants and clinical nurse specialists who are either interested in transitioning to the nurse practitioner role or wish to learn about the management of AOD presentations in different healthcare settings.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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