

PILOTING A YOUTH CATALYST THERAPEUTIC DAY REHABILITATION PROGRAM

SHANNON BELL¹

¹Uniting ReGen, Melbourne, Australia

Introduction:

Since its establishment in 2009, Uniting's Catalyst Therapeutic Day Rehabilitation (TDR) program model has been consistently shown to be effective with adults, but has been recognised as not adequately appealing to (or addressing the specific needs of) young people.

ReGen aimed to fill an identified service gap with a TDR model that provides youth appropriate intensive support while keeping young people connected to their support networks.

Approach:

ReGen committed to the development of an evidence based 'Youth Catalyst' model in 2016, incorporating research evidence, examples of good practice and input from young people who use ReGen's services. A two-episode pilot of the resulting six-week model (targeting young people aged 16-22) was implemented in early 2017.

An Action Research methodology was adopted to inform ongoing review and quality improvement. Due to a small sample size (n=11), data collection focused on staff observations, participant, family member and service partner feedback.

Findings:

The Youth Catalyst model appears sound: retaining the core elements of the adult program (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Mood Management, individual Motivational Enhancement Therapy and a range of adjunctive content), while providing a level of flexibility that is attractive to young people. Participant and family member feedback indicates positive experiences of the program and meaningful participant outcomes.

Implications for Practice:

The pilot highlighted the need for a higher level of staffing than for the adult Catalyst model and more intensive supports for participants and family members.

Incorporation of a consumer participant in program delivery was identified as a significant feature of the model by participants and staff.

Integration of other service types (vocational counselling, headspace) within the program model provides clear opportunities for future development.

Implication for Translational Research:

Future program delivery will require a robust outcomes evaluation to compare with findings for the adult Catalyst model.