

Margins 2 Mainstream Submission Template

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS: INFLUENCE AND IMPACT OF PARTNERSHIPS IN MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION

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ABSTRACT

The South Metropolitan Area Health Service, Mental Health (SMAHS, MH) has an ongoing commitment to mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention. SMAHS, MH is faced with a number of challenges in maintaining a focus on mental health promotion. The service is part of the fastest growing health service in Western Australia; the estimated population of approximately 740 000 people is projected to grow to over 960 000 by 2022. SMAHS, MH covers urban, suburban and rural settings, which has an impact on the equitable allocation of resources within the catchment. Accordingly, there is limited capacity for dedicated mental health promotion resources and growing demands for acute, community based and rehabilitative service delivery.

As a result, progress toward mental health promotion goals has been achieved through coalition building, co-facilitation of awareness raising initiatives with agency partners, and delivery of projects designed to address the risk and protective factors for mental health.

This paper will describe the SMAHS, MH approach to mental health promotion with partnership as the core; the structures, relationships, frameworks and philosophies that embed promotion and prevention into practice and require strong interagency relationships which exist on multiple levels.

Long-term partnerships with sectors such as education, housing, local government and multicultural services have provided a platform for SMAHS, MH to advocate for the need to address mental health risk factors and to support consumers and carers. This multi-sector coalition made a significant impact on the provision of affordable secure housing.

SMAHS, MH has used interagency coordination relationships to facilitate awareness raising and stigma reducing public events, and to deliver education programs to school students.

Collaboration relationships have been used to develop resources for young people with parents with mental illness, and to support schools to implement a universal early childhood development measure.

Strategic planning and stakeholder reference group outcomes, together with district program snapshots will illustrate how a large metropolitan mental health service uses partnerships and workforce development to enhance supportive environments, reduce stigma and increase mental health literacy.