



NorthWestern Mental Health

Treatment Plans: An Inpatient Clinician's Perspective

Dr David Muirhead

Deputy Director of Clinical Services
North West Area Mental Health Service

david.muirhead@mh.org.au

Timeliness

Providing consumer with a Treatment Plan within a reasonable timeframe and with regular review.

Problem is the competing demands of workload that interfere with getting Treatment Plans done in timely manner. This includes outcome measures as well as the actual clinical work.

There is a danger of communicating better with consumers by spending less time with them.

Meaningfulness

Providing consumer with information they can understand which actually tells them about what to expect in their situation.

Problem is that management plan is usually unable to be spelled out in great detail at time of admission and commonly evolves over time according to the clinical progress of the consumer. This leads to a situation where Treatment Plans are usually worded in a vague and general manner to allow room for day-to-day modification of medications, observation levels, leave entitlements etc

Understandability

The information about diagnosis and treatment may be either not understandable or not acceptable to the consumer at that point of time due to their mental state and associated factors including “insight”, attention and concentration.

Carers may be overwhelmed by such information early in admission.

Treatment Plan does not replace face-to-face education and counselling by treating clinicians.

Understandability (cont.)

Treatment Plans are not CALD sensitive

Treatment Plans are written in English and many consumers and carers are unable to read them.

Having an interpreter read the Plan to the consumer or carer results in it ceasing to be a written communication and functionally it becomes another verbal communication .

Key Issues / Challenges

Making Treatment Plans timely

Enabling Treatment Plans to be developed quickly and easily

Making Treatment Plans meaningful

Need for clear consensus about what should be included in a Treatment Plan

Making Treatment Plans CALD sensitive