



User Guide for Health Services Providing care for People with Mental Health Issues

July 2018

The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) is the national association of the dietetic profession with over 6000 members, and branches in each state and territory. DAA is a leader in nutrition and advocates for food and nutrition for healthier people and healthier communities. DAA appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the consultation draft of the *User Guide for Health Services Providing Care for People with Mental Health Issues* by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care.

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| Position: | Senior Policy Officer |
| Organisation: | Dietitians Association of Australia |
| Address: | 1/8 Phipps Close, Deakin ACT 2600 |
| Telephone: | 02 6189 1202 |
| Facsimile: | 02 6282 9888 |
| Email: | policy@daa.asn.au |

DAA interest in this consultation

As the peak body for the dietetic profession, the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) has an interest in the health and wellbeing of all Australians, including those with mental issues. Access to healthy food and nutrition care are significant factors in both mental health and physical health for people being supported by health service organisations.

The Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) program is the basis for self-regulation of the dietetic profession. APDs have an important role in providing medical nutrition therapy to individuals, providing direction on food service in health service organisations, leading group and health service programs for prevention and treatment of mental health issues, and building the capacity of health professionals and others in the community to use healthy food as a cornerstone in wellbeing.

Recommendations

DAA agrees that the actions identified in the guide will support health services to deliver health care to people with mental health issues and that the information provided in the guide will be useful to implementing the NSQHS Standards (second edition).

Discussion

APDs working in mental health have reviewed the Guide and support its application. The guide appropriately places importance on physical health in people with mental health issues, and on holistic health care.

We emphasise that food and nutrition are fundamentally important in the prevention, treatment and management of physical and mental health issues, and suggest that the attention of readers be drawn to the resource *Nutrition Standards for Consumers of Inpatient Mental Health Services in NSW 2013* by the NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation.

https://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0013/201091/ACI-Nutrition-Mental-Health-Inpatients-web-final.pdf

Aspects of the Guide which are particularly relevant to the delivery of nutrition care are

- Monitoring of the safety and quality performance of the organisation p9
- Measuring nutrition indices, services and outcomes to support quality improvement p15
- Including reporting systems for nutrition indices, services, and outcomes, along with feedback from consumers p21

Discussion (cont)

- Incorporating carers in the planning, delivery and evaluation of health care p35 as they frequently have a role in the nutrition care of patients
- Partnering with Consumers p31, and allowing time to genuinely partner with consumers p38 as communication and building relationships is important in the therapeutic alliance
- Medication Safety Standard p40, with emphasis on documentation of patient information regarding medications because many psychotropic medications have metabolic side effects or will influence nutrition status.
- Comprehensive screening p46 of physical health is routine and staff are trained to have the skills to implement screening for holistic care
- Development of comprehensive care plans for patients p51, and collaborative delivery of the comprehensive care plan p53
- Communication for Safety Standard because communication of food and nutrition plans is important within the health service organisation and when transferring to another organisation p75.