



Agents of Change

Creating National Quality Collaboratives to improve dementia care

Newsletter #3

Issue 3, September 2018

Welcome

Welcome to the latest newsletter for the *Agents of Change* project. As many of you will know it has been a busy few months applying for research governance approvals to conduct research at the many sites across Australia. Thank you for assisting us with extra details when requested.

We recently held start up meetings for members of the Collaboratives in Adelaide and Sydney. It was wonderful to hear from people from such diverse backgrounds. The one thing everyone had in common was their genuine commitment to improve quality of care within their organisation. The collaboratives offer a great opportunity for you to meet and learn from other leaders in the field. We're looking forward to the next stage of the project when our participating clinicians will start completing the online training package.

- Dr Kate Laver, project lead

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Progress update

Recruitment: We have been really pleased with the level of interest in participating in the *Agents of Change* project. We are welcoming a new group of 14 clinicians on board, bringing the total number of participating health professionals to 40. Our Collaboratives include a range of health professionals and are spread across all states and territories of Australia; a truly National initiative.

Data collection: Our participating clinicians have been incredibly diligent with sending us snapshots of their practice to date. This information is being used to give us a baseline understanding of current practice. We will use this to understand what changes are possible with a Quality Improvement Collaborative. It also gives our clinicians a chance to reflect - what am I doing well? What could I be doing better?

Start up meetings: Our start up meetings were a great success with health professionals using the opportunity to network with their peers. In Sydney, Professor Anneke Fitzgerald shared her wisdom about what works and what doesn't in terms of implementation in health care settings. Dr Jane Thompson shared her personal experience in caring for her husband and described how interactions with health professionals can make a big difference (and her top tips). Professor Sue Kurrle spoke about dementia care in 2018 and beyond, current knowledge about prevention and the power of non-pharmacological interventions in dementia care.

In Adelaide, we were fortunate to hear from Mr Ian Gladstone, who lives with young onset dementia. He shared his views about how health professionals can take a proactive and positive approach in their practice. Professor Maria Crotty shared her wisdom regarding leadership in health care and focussing on strengths (rather than looking for problems). Dr Kate Laver provided an overview of the latest evidence in dementia care drawing on information in Clinical Practice Guidelines and the Lancet Commission.

Despite all this, it seemed to be the Agents of Change 'swag bag' that was most popular (see right)!



Meet the team—Dr Monica Cations



In each edition of our newsletters, we will introduce you to a new member of the *Agents of Change* team. Next up is Dr Monica Cations:

"I am the co-ordinator of the *Agents of Change* project, which means that I oversee recruitment, ethics requirements, participant management, data collection, and reporting. I am the main point of contact for any questions or concerns about *Agents of Change*. I am also an early career researcher, and am passionate about conducting research

that is clinically relevant and translates directly to better lives for older people. My PhD research and the work I have done since is particularly focussed on young onset dementia. I have written about non-genetic risk factors for this group as well as their service needs and experiences.

In addition to my research role, I am also a provisional psychologist and working towards my endorsement as a clinical psychologist. I have worked in psychoeducation and support roles at Alzheimer's Australia and the Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Services, as well as conducting clinical assessments for drug trials for Alzheimer's disease.

I absolutely love my role on this project, because I am able to support inspiring clinicians to improve the services they provide to people with dementia. It's collaborative and applied research like this that can make a real difference."

Project progress

	Nov 2017	Mar 2018	Jun 2018	Aug 2018	Dec 2018	Apr 2019	Dec 2019
Ethics approval	X						
Implementation clinician recruitment		X					
Data collection begins			X				
Start up meeting				X			
Training package opens					●		
Implementation of plans						●	
Results dissemination							●

● = Expected, X = Completed

Involving the public when implementing research in practice

We are increasingly aware of the importance of involving end users, that is the people who will be using a health service or impacted by research, in the design and delivery of health services and research. Their involvement improves the quality and relevance of our work, and helps to bridge the gap between research evidence and clinical care.

The *Agents of Change* project is fortunate to benefit from the oversight and guidance of a group of people with dementia and carers of people with dementia. These experts bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise that enriches the project day to day. Dr Jane Thompson, who cared for her late husband with dementia, is a member of the project investigator team. She shares with us her top tips for successfully involving the people who will be impacted by research and implementation into practice:

"1. Involve people early. This allows for input at the earliest stages, time for relationships to develop, and means involvement isn't an after-thought or tokenistic.

2. Identify and address any barriers to involvement, such as travel or working hours. Also make sure that education, training, and accessibility needs are met.

3. Clearly define roles and responsibilities. Make sure everyone understands their role (which may evolve over time).

4. Use clear communication and feedback. Use plain language for timely, two-way, and targeted communications. Public contributors should get regular updates on the progress of the project and feedback on how their contributions are making a difference.

5. Look for new people to be involved. Don't always rely on the same people; look for new perspectives.



There are some great resources available to help you, especially from the UK. [HERE](#) is a good place to start."

Selling yourself with internal media

We recently contacted our participating clinicians to encourage them to make contact with the internal media departments at their organisation. Internal media that tells the rest of the organisation about a project can identify the clinician as a leader of innovation. Other staff members can offer their support and expertise.

Of course, selling yourself is a skill. The Flinders University media department gave us some good tips to follow when creating a media release:

- The first sentence should be about the end user or benefit. It should be a summary but as detailed as possible in terms of what the benefit will be.
- Facts, numbers, specifics are great where available
- Include only one sentence per paragraph so the information is quick and easy to read
- If there are other partners (like Flinders University or other organisations), name them in your release. They might like to share the release too.
- Include a good picture of you in an appropriate setting. A friendly media shot (with an appropriate prop or with a client, for example) is better than a professional headshot.
- Include a link to broader information about the project (like a website)

Give it a go! Learning to sell yourself and your work is a skill that will serve you well in any organisation.



Contact

For any questions or comments about *Agents of Change*, contact Monica Cations on (08) 7221 8338 or at monica.cations@sa.gov.au

To remove your name from our mailing list, please [click here](#).

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