



Agents of Change

Creating National Quality Collaboratives to improve dementia care

Newsletter #5

Issue 5, May 2019

Welcome

It has been an exciting start to 2019 for the Agents of Change team. We have watched with anticipation as the clinicians participating in Agents of Change started working through the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) and developing their quality improvement plans. The clinicians are creative and innovative with their ideas, and have done a great job of consulting with colleagues and other leaders to make their change happen. So much can be achieved as the clinicians implement their plans and make tangible improvements to their services. Keep up the good work!

- Dr Kate Laver, project lead

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Meet the team — Prof Anneke Fitzgerald

In each edition of our newsletter, we will introduce you to a new member of the Agents of Change team. Next up is Professor Anneke Fitzgerald:



"I am one of the chief investigators of the Agents of Change project. As an organisational behaviouralist, I assist the team with the implementation phases of the project as well as delivering some educational sessions on "how to get people to do what you want them to do". Before becoming an academic, I have over 20 year's experience in the health industry as a registered nurse and health services manager.

Whilst working as a operations manager in Critical Care, I developed an interest in the business of health and completed my PhD in Commerce in 2003. Since then my research focus has been on organisational behaviour change and leadership in health service management with a focus on closing the research to practice gap through knowledge translation, implementation and sustainability in healthcare contexts. As a busy mum and nanna, I thoroughly enjoy undertaking applied research impacting how Australians (young and old) experience their social world, including when they are unwell. There is much work to do to ensure good research is brought into practice and the Agents of Change project is one way of achieving this."

Progress update

The Agents of Change clinicians have done a great job of working through the online training package (or 'MOOC') so far. More than half of the clinicians have completed the package and submitted their quality improvement plan to the research team. These clinicians have each received tailored feedback from a clinical expert, an expert in health care quality improvement, and a person living with dementia and/or an informal carer of a person living with dementia. Feedback allows the clinician to identify any gaps in their plan and ensure it will meet the needs and preferences of their clients with dementia. From now until the end of 2019, the clinicians will meet together monthly via videoconference to share their progress and brainstorm barriers to implementing their plan.

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

● = Expected X = Completed

What does a 'plan' look like?

The Agents of Change online training program takes each clinician through the steps of developing their own quality improvement plan. Clinicians are encouraged to be innovative but pragmatic - we ask: what improvements are feasible within the time and resources available in your service?

Here's an example from our collaborative focussed on physical activity in dementia care. This Clinical Nurse Consultant noticed that the aged care services at her hospital (including memory clinic, ACAT, psychogeriatric service, and transitional care program) do not routinely promote exercise to people with dementia. Her plan is to:

- Include assessment of exercise goals at first contact with the service
- Provide each client with information about available exercise programs in the area
- Provide each client with a chart to track their progress against goals
- Referral to a community strength training program where indicated

You'll notice that the plan is not to revolutionise the whole service. It is to make incremental improvements that add up to help people with dementia using the service to increase their physical activity.

Implementation Clinician Spotlight

We will be introducing you to our implementation clinicians in each issue of our Newsletter. Next up is Emma Baldwin from Victoria and Wendy Brown from Queensland.

Emma Baldwin - Adapting to Life Occupational Therapy (Carer Support Collaborative)



Tell us about yourself

I am an Occupational Therapist working both in the public and private health sector for the past 15 years. For the purpose of this project I am focussing on my role as a private Occupational Therapist working with clients in the community over the age of 65 years. The clients I see are compensable clients (DVA), clients receiving support through Home Care Packages, clients needing local government HACC services and clients under GP Management/Chronic Disease Management Plans. My referrals are received from either GPs, Council Home Care Service Coordinators, Allied Health from Acute/Sub Acute Hospitals or self referrals. I specialise in providing recommendations for home modifications, falls prevention education, carer advice and training, and enjoy being able to offer advice on environmental design to optimise an individuals' ability to manage at home when they have dementia.

Why did you choose to join Agents of Change?

The Agents of Change project was an exciting and compelling prospect to participate in a national collaborative research study. As a sole practicing therapist, I was eager to expand my professional skills and network with other professionals in the area of dementia care. Ultimately what drives my motivation is providing a comprehensive occupational therapy service to my clients and their primary supporters. It has become increasingly apparent in the community that carers are under significant pressure and I have not felt equipped to address their needs nor understood how best to improve my service. I have had ideas and visions for improving my practice but I needed help to understand how to best align these ideas with the Clinical Practice Guidelines for Dementia in Australia and a strategy to actually achieve practice change (step by step)!

How has your experience been so far?

Motivating! Intriguing! Challenging! The Agents of Change project has provided a great balance of online training modules, interactive and reflective learning. I have been able to channel my ideas to a realistic and achievable plan for my work place. I love that everyone's workplace and their idea set is different and it is fantastic to be able to communicate within teams to hear and offer feedback to other clinicians about their ideas for change. The support from the Agents of Change project team, a consumer of dementia care, and a clinical specialist has been invaluable in enabling me to shape my project idea for change.

Wendy Brown - Redcliff Hospital (Occupational Therapy Collaborative)

Tell us about yourself

I am a Senior Occupational Therapist working on the Acute Medical wards at Redcliffe Hospital. My current caseload is largely patients with dementia and/or delirium.



Why did you choose to join Agents of Change?

I joined the collaborative because I saw it as an opportunity to participate in rolling out evidence based practice in clinical practice, so that is often quite difficult to do. I am passionate about the care of people with dementia and giving them a voice in their health care.

How has your experience been so far?

I have found the experience to be very positive so far. I have enjoyed learning more about change management and the quality activity cycle. I am finding myself carrying over aspects of the program to different areas of practice, in particular patients who have delirium.

Dissemination opportunities

Clinicians who complete the Agents of Change project will have access to reimbursement of up to \$1000 to support dissemination of their work. Major conferences are being announced for 2020 and are amazing opportunities for clinicians to spread the word about their quality improvements. We'll share more events as they are announced.

34th International Conference of Alzheimer's Disease International (www.adi2020.org)

Singapore 19-20 March 2020



International Dementia Conference (www.dementiaconference.com)

Sydney 11-12 June 2020

Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (the Commission) begun proceedings on 18 January 2019 in Adelaide. The Commission will review all aged care services and make recommendations for legislative and policy change.

The Agents of Change team will be making a submission to the Commission about the Clinical Practice Guidelines for Dementia in Australia and policy measures that could be put in place to support clinicians to improve their adherence to the guidelines.

All providers and users of aged care services are invited to make a submission to the Commission. You can find more details and make a submission at www.agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au.



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