

Abstract Time: Assistant abstract submission coaching to harness innovation in patient care

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Background

SA Pharmacy - Assistant Workforce

SA Pharmacy provides medication services from 16 different hospital and associated outreach sites along with a range of Out-of-Hospital based Services across metro and country South Australia. Currently, pharmacy assistants make up 26% of our workforce and are a vital part of our patient services. SA Pharmacy is undertaking a 5-year multifaceted workforce redesign program to ensure that we have a sustainable, responsive, contemporary workforce model which is adaptable to patient needs.

In order to ensure that we are utilising our pharmacy assistant workforce to their utmost potential within legislative boundaries we are working towards an enabled career progression pathway for pharmacy assistants via integrated, coordinated and strategic supported staff development.

A number of opportunities have been extended to the assistant workgroup including supported in-house education via delegation projects and also attendance at professional development events.

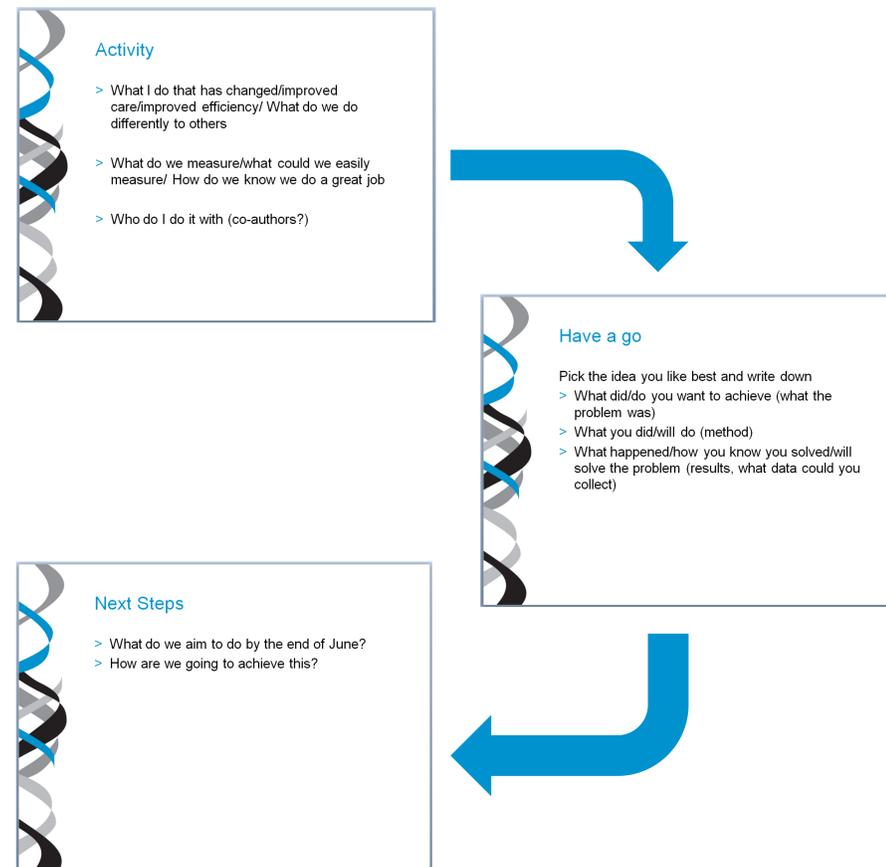
Pharmacy Assistant Networking Event

Inline with these developmental goals, and after identifying a lack of networking of our pharmacy assistants between sites, a voluntary pharmacy assistant networking breakfast was organised in July 2018 on a Saturday morning.

Twenty four pharmacy assistants attended the half day event. The event showcased the varying roles performed by pharmacy assistants around the state, included a Q&A session with our Executive Director and incorporated an interactive abstract writing session.

The abstract writing session was a 40 minute interactive, activity based workshop facilitated by five seasoned conference contributor coaches and was aimed at building confidence and competence in the process. A short PowerPoint presentation was given by the lead facilitator. The presentation outlined some of the different types of presentation formats available, introduced common submission criteria requirements and provided activities aimed at stepping assistants through the process.

During the workshop participants brainstormed ideas in groups of 6-8 with a coach to form an abstract skeleton. Over the following two weeks the coaches supported authors to finesse abstracts through to submission.



Outcomes

Event Feedback

Two methods of feedback collection were used to analyse the overall impact of the event. Feedback sheets were provided for all attendees to complete on the day and an online survey was sent to all pharmacy assistants one month after the event.

The event feedback sheets had a 73% completion rate, with all responders providing positive feedback of the event and expressing that the opportunity to network with their colleagues was appreciated.

The online feedback survey was sent to all assistants within SA Pharmacy including those who did not attend. Of the responders 58% did not attend the event, however all responders indicated that they would be interested in future similar events.

Abstract Writing Workshop Feedback

At the beginning and the conclusion of the session participants were asked to score their feelings from 1 (calm), 3 (worried) through to 5 (acting out/running for the hills) towards preparing an abstract.

Of the participants two had previously submitted abstracts to any conference and only two were intending on submitting an abstract to the SHPA 2018 Medicines Management Conference in the following three weeks.



Source: <https://sociallanguage.wordpress.com/2014/09/30/anxiety-scale/>

At the beginning of the session the average feeling towards abstract preparation was 2.3 (between concerned and worried). After the brainstorming and coaching the average feeling was 1.8 post indicating an overall improvement by 22%.

At the end of the session there were 8-10 strong ideas likely to be submitted to the SHPA Medicines Management Conference

Abstract Submissions

In the three weeks following the networking event nine abstracts were submitted to the Society of Hospital Pharmacists Australia (SHPA) Medicines Management Conference either authored or co-authored by event attendees. Seven of these were submitted for consideration for posters or oral presentations and two for oral presentations only. Of these nine submissions four were accepted for presentation at the conference.

Two abstract submissions were made to the Australasian Pharmaceutical Science Association (APSA) Annual Conference where one was accepted for a poster presentation and the other was accepted for an oral presentation.

A total of eleven abstracts were submitted by pharmacy assistants post abstract submission coaching, with a 54% rate of acceptance.

Conclusion

A coaching model for assistants enhancing confidence in preparing and submitting abstracts has successfully been utilised. The skills gained by assistants from this method of development have the potential to be utilised in many diverse scenarios to critically review, innovate and evolve processes and ensure the transference of evidence into practice.