



ATTACHMENT (ONE A)

Telephone Help-line Element

Summary

The Emotional Support Help-line Programme has been operating statewide within Queensland since June 2001. The Programme is auspiced and supported by Queensland Health and the Gynaecological Cancer Society.

Operationally, the system we developed sees callers seeking assistance on our free-call 1-800-700-288 help-line number talk to a trained Society operator. The operator assesses the caller's needs and, if appropriate, records their first name; contact details; age group and cancer type for caller/councilor matching purposes. Callers are advised that a trained volunteer councilor will return their call as soon as possible.

The telephone operator then chooses a matching volunteer (cancer type and age) and telephones her with the contact information. Volunteers make the follow-up telephone call as soon as possible. Most contact is limited to telephone calls rather than personal visits; however exceptions are made in the case of hospitalisation or nursing home locations. An empathic experienced listener is what most callers really need and for this the telephone works very well.

Development

To avoid duplication of effort and in the interests of efficiency, the Society sought the assistance of other non-profit organisations to implement the Emotional Support Telephone Help-line. The chosen organisations, each with proven expertise in our areas of need, were:

- Karuna Hospice Service
(Development of Course content and training manual)
- Queensland University of Technology's Family Therapy & Counselling Clinic
(Professional counselling for volunteers and patient-callers)

To develop the specialist volunteer training Programme required, the Society approached Karuna Hospice Service. Karuna has an enviable reputation in the field of volunteer training and management.

Following many hours of detailed discussion, Karuna used the Society's Programme model to develop a specialised volunteer training course. The course incorporates specialised induction, training and evaluation of volunteer's progress throughout the course.

The current course consists of a total 4 hours of interview and evaluation followed by 32 hours of intense training and 2 hours of debriefing following completion of the training. Twice yearly debrief and supplemental training sessions are also conducted for volunteers.

Queensland University of Technology's Family Therapy & Counselling Clinic has been retained to provide ongoing advanced volunteer training, volunteer debriefing and professional counselling support for both volunteers and patient-callers as required.

Outcomes

The Telephone Support help-line currently has 16 fully trained volunteer workers. Debriefing and ongoing training courses are held every six months. New intakes of volunteers occur as the need dictates.

To date over 5,000 contacts have been initiated through the Help-line. Current caller profiles show that 90% are patients (95% in 2004/05), 5% carers/partners/family (2% in 2004/05), 4% friends of patients (2% in 2004/05) and 1% unidentified (consistent). The Society recommends or refers an average of 10% of callers for higher level professional assistance.

Conclusions

There is no doubt that the system we have developed of matching callers to our Help-line with emotional support councilors who are:

- all past gynaecological cancer patients
- had the same type of cancer as the caller
- are the same age group as the caller
- training to Certificate Level 3 in emotional support

is what the callers (patients) want.

The system is efficient and very effective and, because it is telephone based, can be instantly expanded.

ITEMISED BUDGET FOREMOTIONAL SUPPORT HELP-LINE NATIONAL ROLLOUT

(Year One)

Item	Function	Allocation	Comment
Telephone Infrastructure & Equipment	Receive & Distribute Calls	\$10,000	Updating Equipment to meet increased load & Backup
Volunteer Training & Support	Training Additional Councillors	\$ 5,000	Training & Support Needs
Staff Wages	Call Operators	\$60,000	Proportional Allocation
Administration	Overheads Including Telephone Call Costs	\$30,000	Proportional Allocation
Total		\$105,000	

Over the initial five (5) year rollout phase of the Emotional Support Telephone Help-line Programme the total expenditure would be as follows:

(Five year)

Year	Budget	Comment
Year One (1)	\$105,000	Including implementation expenses
Year Two (2)	\$ 95,000	Lower equipment expenses
Year Three (3)	\$100,000	As above plus allowing for inflation
Year Four (4)	\$100,000	Stabilised numbers and running costs
Year Five (5)	\$110,000	Allowing for new equipment costs
Total	\$510,000	