



ACON is a community-based non-government organisation promoting the health and wellbeing of a diverse lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community in New South Wales, and a leading agency in HIV/AIDS policy development and program delivery.

Building on the success of its long history of alcohol and other drug (AOD) work, ACON established an Alcohol and Other Drugs Program in 2006. For more information about ACON visit: www.acon.org.au

Project Overview

ACON is currently building the capacity of the organisation to better identify and effectively treat people in the GLBT community with coinciding mental illness and substance use issues.

Project Highlights

To date, ACON has conducted an agency wide training needs analysis, including an analysis of the current level of qualifications and training previously undertaken, and collating feedback from staff regarding gaps in their training.

Following a review of available training programs, ACON determined the need to develop its own training package to meet the varied needs of its diverse staffing establishment (150 people) and volunteer base (700 people).

ACON's two comorbidity specialist staff members completed the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, to develop the organisation's capacity to produce an internal educational training resource that covers the issues of mental health and substance and is relevant to all ACON staff.

In order to achieve consistency across all of its seven branches, ACON determined the need to implement appropriate and specific mental health and substance use screening and assessment tools across all of its programs. This has now been completed.

Statewide consistency is also being supported through a review of all ACON policies and procedures that relate to clients who may experience comorbidity. New guidelines for working with clients who experience comorbidity have been developed.

The Comorbidity Capacity Building Project staff provides counselling to ACON Clients experiencing comorbidity, trialling innovative therapeutic innovations. Both staff

members are at capacity which has shown the need for the service at ACON and the importance of building the organisation's capacity to respond to comorbidity issues.

2010 Project Activities

The focus for 2010 is to deliver the recently developed internal training package at all seven of ACON's sites to all staff and volunteers. This training will be delivered on at least two occasions at each site by the comorbidity capacity building project staff.

We will continue to attend and present at all relevant conferences, attend the NADA improved services forums, and continue to participate in relevant committees and service provider forums.

The comorbidity staff will also continue to maintain small case loads of clients and evaluate the success of the innovative therapeutic interventions they are trialling.

Contact Details

For more information about any aspect of the Improved Services Initiative, contact:

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