



FLINDERS CLOSING THE GAP PROGRAM™ OF CHRONIC CONDITION MANAGEMENT

IMPLEMENTATION INTO PRACTICE – A GUIDE FOR PRACTITIONERS

August 2012

Flinders Closing the Gap Program™

Flinders Human Behaviour & Health Research Unit (FHBHRU)

A GUIDE FOR PRACTITIONERS

This guide is for Aboriginal health workers, allied health professionals, GPs, nurses and other professionals using the Flinders Closing the Gap Program™ of chronic condition management.

It is designed to help practitioners use the Flinders Tools and provide follow up coaching and coordination with clients in practice, on an organisational wide scale.

It complements the *Flinders Closing the Gap Program™ Implementation into practice – a practical guide for managers of change* which is designed to be used by managers who are looking to bring about organisational change.

Practitioners using this guide may like to discuss it with their managers to assist in bringing about wider organisational change.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Administered through the [Flinders Human Behaviour & Health Research Unit](#) (FHBHRU) the Flinders Closing the Gap Program™ of Chronic Condition Management is funded through the Commonwealth 'Closing the Gap: Helping Indigenous Australians Self-Manage their Chronic Disease' Program as a measure within the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes.

WHAT YOUR ORGANISATION CAN DO

It is suggested that your organisation develop a plan for implementing the Flinders Closing the Gap Program™. This guide helps you to start thinking about the process for implementation. When you implement, FHBHRU asks you to provide some evaluation data about what you are doing in your organisation. This data can contribute to national patterns and trends on chronic condition management. What is needed is outlined in the *Flinders Closing the Gap Program™ Implementation into practice – a practical guide for managers of change*.

WHAT FLINDERS UNIVERSITY CAN DO

FHBHRU provides support to organisations in the following areas:

- Implementation support
- Training delivery and follow up
- IT support
- Research
- Links to resources around managing change

TWELVE STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

This document gives you some guidance about the process for implementation of the Flinders Closing the Gap Program™ within an organisation. However, it is important to remember that the process will be different in your organisation because it will reflect your organisation's needs.

Implementation is presented as a cyclical process because it is recognised that all organisations will start at different points in the cycle. If it works for your organisation, the recommended place to start is the bright pink circle – 'consider developing a chronic care model for your organisation'.

We suggest reading the guide in conjunction with Figure 1 which outlines the Twelve Step Process.

Before attending training, it is important that you speak to your manager about the potential to implement the program, and what changes might be required in your organization in order to do so.

1. CONSIDER DEVELOPING A CHRONIC CARE MODEL FOR YOUR ORGANISATION

The starting point is understanding the difference between an acute care model of delivery and chronic condition management and the need to explicitly address chronic condition prevention and management in your organisation. The next step is in recognising the benefits of the Flinders Program™ to your health setting and establishing organisational intent to implement the Flinders Program™ as a strategy for chronic condition management.

2. INTENT TO IMPLEMENT THE FLINDERS PROGRAM™ AS A STRATEGY FOR CHRONIC CONDITION MANAGEMENT

Importantly, the Flinders Closing the Gap Program™ should be implemented as part of a wider chronic condition management strategy or chronic care model within your organisation. This involves assessing where your organisation is currently at and what needs to be done before the Flinders Closing the Gap Program™ is implemented. Your manager or clinical leadership team will need to have committed the organisation and appropriate resources including support for staff being involved in this. Discussing the steps for implementation, including examples of successful implementation and the assistance that is provided by FHBHRU before training and important.

3. OBTAIN MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Management support has been identified as a crucial step to implementing chronic condition management services into an organisation ([Lawn 2010](#)). Managers may wish to attend part of a Flinders Closing the Gap Program™ workshop to get some background to the project. This can be arranged by contacting FHBHRU.

4. CONDUCT AUDIT/S

An audit allows you to look at what your organisation is currently doing and what it needs to do to move towards implementing the Flinders Closing the Gap Program™. Examples of audits include an Agency Health Systems Audit, a Skills Audit, Process Mapping and a Clinical Audit. Further information can be found in *Flinders Closing the Gap Program™ Implementation into practice – a practical guide for managers of change*.

5. DEVELOP AN ORGANISATIONAL ACTION PLAN

In response to the findings from the audit/s, your organisation will develop an Action Plan which will identify steps forward. This Action Plan will consider key questions including what are you trying to improve and what needs to change?

6. TEST THE PLAN

Once you have developed an Action Plan, it is important to test it, to discover what works well and what doesn't work well. The Action Plan can then be refined based on what was learnt in the testing phase.

This represents the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle. More information about this can be found in [Navigating self-management: A practical approach to implementation for Australian healthcare agencies](#)¹. This cycle was originally developed by the [Institute for Healthcare Improvement](#).

7. TRAINING FROM FLINDERS UNIVERSITY

Plan training of staff by FHBHRU as part of the implementation process: contact fctgp@flinders.edu.au.

8. TRAIN KEY STAFF

It is a good idea to identify which staff to train first in your organisation; this might be might be Chronic Condition Coordinators/ Practice Nurses/ Aboriginal Health Workers but will vary from organisation to organisation.

9. STAFF OBTAIN A CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION/ COMPETENCE

Obtaining a Certificate of Completion and preferably a Certificate of Competence is the process by which health professionals and Aboriginal Health Practitioners become accredited to use the Flinders Program™. This is achieved by participating in a Flinders Program™ workshop and completing two or three Care Plans with clients. Two Care Plans are completed with volunteer clients at the workshop, the other one or two with clients following the workshop.

10. SELECT STAFF BECOME ACCREDITED TRAINERS (SUCCESSION PLANNING)

¹Kubina N & Kelly J (2007) [Navigating Self-Management: A practical approach to implementation for Australian health care agencies](#). Melbourne, Whitehorse Division of General Practice.

It is recommended that after completing Flinders Closing the Gap Program™ training, health workers undertake further training to become accredited trainers. This allows chronic condition management training to be provided to other staff within your organisation. This is particularly important to consider where a high staff turnover occurs and forms part of succession planning for implementation of the program within your organisation.

11. USE FLINDERS TOOLS WITH CLIENTS

When using the Flinders Tools with clients, it is suggested that each Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander client has an initial care plan conducted using the Flinders Tools. It is suggested that follow up sessions for coaching and assistance with coordination of services occur within one to two weeks of care planning and monthly initially with a minimum of five follow-up sessions within a 12 month period.

12. EVALUATION AND ONGOING REVIEW

Evaluation is an important part of implementation. FHBHRU request some basic, deidentified data from your organisation regarding implementation of the Flinders Program™. This information includes number of clients seen and care plans completed, how you go about implementing the program, how many people are trained within your organisation and health data from clients (eg Hba1c, weight, cholesterol). This information will contribute towards evidence about the effectiveness of implementation of the Flinders Program™ on the health and wellbeing of clients.

IN SUMMARY

We hope that this guide is useful for you as you endeavour to implement the Flinders Closing the Gap Program™ into practice. We welcome any feedback that you may have about this guide. Furthermore, if you have any queries or would like some support to implement the program, please contact the Flinders Closing the Gap Program™ team on (08) 8404 2607.