

## TITLE: Health literacy capacity building 2016

### BACKGROUND

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60 percent of Australians don't know how to find, understand and use information about their health and health care. A person's individual health literacy needs to be considered in the context of the demands that they face when accessing and using our complex health system.

Earlier health literacy needs assessment in the EMR identified that partner organisations were looking for ways to improve their health literacy practices in order to improve access and equity for consumers.

**Aim:** To build the capacity of agencies to respond to health literacy at both a client and an organisational level.

**Target Group:** Agencies and practitioners across the EMR, particularly managers, coordinators and team leaders from reception or first contact with clients, communications, quality, health promotion, and service delivery.

### PARTNERS

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#### Health Literacy Development Course:

- Access Health & Community
- Annecto
- DHHS (regional)
- Eastern Palliative Care
- EACH
- Eastern Health
- EMPHN
- Inspiro
- Link Community Health
- Maroondah City Council
- Outer East PCP

#### HELPER (Health Literacy Practice in the Eastern Region) newsletter:

110 subscribers from over 60 organisations

### METHOD

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The **Health Literacy Development Course**, developed in partnership with the IEPCP and OEPCP, and delivered by the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health, ran for 6-months in 2016, with four full-day workshops held bi-monthly. Following each workshop, participants undertook a project of approximately 40 hours within their organisation. The purpose of the projects were to integrate health literacy practice across the organisation to embed learnings and create sustainable change.

East region PCPs developed a partnership with CEH to enable the course to be delivered in a context specific to the eastern region making it easier for our partners to attend. The PCPs

supported the engagement of regional partners in the training by partially funding training costs, communicating with partner organisations to support their activity over the duration of their project work, and promoting the work that eastern organisations were doing in health literacy through the creation of two videos.

The PCPs also developed support for course participants through the HELPER newsletter after their training had finished, and have become the 'go to' organisation for help with health literacy projects that are under development.

The HELPER newsletter is distributed bi-monthly to over 110 recipients. The newsletter contains a range of latest news and resources on health literacy, as well as local opportunities and updates – to support organisations.

## **OUTCOMES**

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The benefits for the two PCPs included: positioning PCPs as health literacy champions in the region; building stronger relationships with participating partners; and contributing to their organisational capacity to improve access, and better health outcomes for their communities.

For participating organisations the benefits were many. There is an evaluation report available on each PCP's website with more detail about the outcomes of the course, but in short, our partners found they had:

- Increases in knowledge
- Improved communication within their organisations
- Strengthened partnerships across the EMR
- Increased action and progression of health literacy work within their organisations.

Evaluation Report available on the IEPCP website <http://iepcp.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Health-Literacy-Development-Course-2016-Report.pdf>

Evaluation Video available on the IEPCP YouTube channel <https://youtu.be/OXbOqIYe1Mc>

## **LEARNINGS**

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Organisations need to be supported to build capacity and create change towards becoming 'health literate' organisations, to support their community to become more informed.

Projects that promote the building of health literate environments in organisations will be most effective in delivering outcomes with executive level support.

Each organisation will start their journey at a different point depending on organisational readiness, levels of executive support, and the passion and dedication of the health literacy project worker.