Rural and Remote
Allied Health Competencies
PROFESSIONAL
Oct 2008
Rural and Remote Allied Health Competencies

Professional

The Rural and Remote Allied Health Competencies – Professional (RRAHC-P)\(^1\) is a framework and tool for facilitating continuing learning, development and planning for entry level (P1) allied health professionals within WACHS. It is designed to assist in identifying developmental needs and areas of strength and proficiency.

The RRAHC-P reflects a collation of competencies generic to level 4/6 allied health professionals (AHPs) in the rural and remote context. The tool is designed to compliment existing competency frameworks; most notably discipline specific competencies of relevant professional associations or competencies designed for specific areas of practice such as public health or mental health. It is not presumed that level 4/6 AHPs require proficiency in all identified competencies. Neither is it presumed that this document reflects all competencies required within the rural and remote context. The RRAHC-P should not be seen as absolute. Rather the RRAHC-P aims to provide a resource and tool for entry level AHPs practicing rural and remotely, and their managers. It can be used to:

- Confirm strengths
- Identify learning opportunities to improve skills
- Identify and prioritise skills and competencies for growth and development
- Build a plan for learning and development.

Whilst the task of attempting to define core allied health competencies for level 4/6 staff in the rural and remote context has been a challenge, the reward of a common framework that encompasses the skills necessary for level 4/6 rural and remote practice is significant. This list of competencies, which transcends discipline specific boundaries, is but the first step towards a comprehensive competency framework to guide allied health workforce skill and development requirements in the rural and remote context. The tool should be considered a dynamic document, which evolves and adapts to new learning and insight regarding level 4/6 allied health competencies.

Tool Overview

The RRAHC-P framework is comprised of 60 competencies central to the role of level 4/6 AH professionals within WACHS. The competencies are organised under eight domains:

- Service Delivery
- Equity and Diversity
- Professional Skills
- Ethical Practice
- Development and Support
- Quality and Safety
- Clinical Management
- Clinical Skills

\(^1\) This resource has been produced by WA Country Health Service (WACHS), in collaboration with the Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health (CUCRH). If you are using this information in its entirety or in the development of another package please ensure that you acknowledge the source. Acknowledgement is provided to Nicole Beattie (CUCRH), Ivan Lin (CUCRH), Alex Mattson (WACHS), Dawn Logan (WACHS), Danielle Kilmurray (WACHS), Suzanne Spitz (WACHS) and the WACHS allied health professionals and managers who contributed throughout the project.
How to use this tool

The RRAHC-P is an important tool to support the career development of Level 4/6 AHP. Potential applications include use within: performance development; professional supervision; 360 degree feedback; continuing professional; development planning; and mentoring and coaching, to name a few.

The use of the tool involves five steps to be undertaken independently, with peers or with managers:

**Step One.** Identify the competency areas most relevant to current work role (not all will be relevant).

**Step Two.** Assess competency in the areas of most relevance to the workplace.

*Consider level of proficiency and skill in the specific competencies relevant to the current work role. Select the descriptor that most reflects ability in this competency.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMERGENT</th>
<th>A skill or practice that you are not yet confident in, but should be included in your role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEVELOPING</td>
<td>A skill or practice in which your confidence is growing, but needs continued development</td>
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<tr>
<td>REFINING</td>
<td>A skill or practice in which you are confident and feel good at</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIGHLY DEVELOPED</td>
<td>A skill or practice in which you are very confident and feel you excel in</td>
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It is recommended that a mix of self-assessment and collaborative-assessment (e.g. peer, mentor, supervisor, manager, senior etc) be used. Collaborative assessment: Fosters a feeling of ownership for learning; Motivates and encourages active involvement in learning; Encourages autonomy in learning; and Creates a shared learning environment with exchange of ideas.

Assessment is carried out by studying the evidence and matching it against criteria. A range of methods can be used to determine your competency levels including self-reflection, observation by others, clinical practice audit, questioning, simulation etc.

**Step Three.** Identify priority competency areas and document in the Summary of Priority Competencies Table within the document.

**Step Four.** Integrate the priority competency areas into relevant lifelong learning plans (e.g. performance management plan, supervision plan, mentoring plan, individual learning plan, departmental/team learning plans etc).

**Step Five.** Reflect and review on progress on a regular basis.
## Summary of Professional Competency Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Delivery</th>
<th>Equity and Diversity</th>
<th>Professional Skills</th>
<th>Ethical Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philosophies of Practice</td>
<td>Cultural Security / Proficiency</td>
<td>Generic Skills</td>
<td>Legal and Ethical Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Planning</td>
<td>Rural and Remote Context</td>
<td>Self Care</td>
<td>Professional Standards and Competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Delivery</td>
<td>Consumer Involvement</td>
<td>Information Management</td>
<td>Consent, Confidentiality and Complaints</td>
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<td>Service Evaluation and Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service Partnerships and Integration</td>
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| Development and Support                 | Quality & Safety                           | Clinical Management                      | Clinical Skills                        |
| Self Development                        | Safe Practice and Risk Management          | Client Management Systems                | Consolidation of discipline specific skills |
| Professional Networks                   | Quality Improvement                        | Evidence Based Practice                  | Consolidation of program specific skills |
| Developing Others                       | Policy and Procedure                       | Client Participation                     |                                         |
|                                       | Operational and Strategic Planning         | Inter-professional Practice              |                                         |

| Consolidation of discipline specific skills |

| Consolidation of program specific skills |
# Rural and Remote Allied Health Competencies

## Service Delivery

**Philosophies of Practice**
- Applies contemporary principles of practice to service delivery, including:
  - Primary health care
  - Client/family centred practice
  - Best practice and Evidence-Based practice
  - Community development
  - Self management
  - Other ___________________________

## Service Planning
- Participates in service planning
- Develops an understanding of the principles of service planning

## Service Delivery
- Understands the system of healthcare delivery locally, regionally and state-wide
- Participates in the development and implementation of health programs and services
- Employs a range of service delivery methodologies appropriate to local context, including:
  - Visiting and outreach services
  - Allied health assistants
  - Telehealth
  - Other ___________________________

## Service Evaluation & Research
- Participates in the evaluation of health activities/programs and service delivery methodologies
- Understands and applies the principles of evaluation and research in practice

## Service Partnerships and Integration
- Works collaboratively with health services, community and other relevant stakeholders (Service, community, educational and others)

## Equity and Diversity

### Cultural Security / Proficiency
- Provides culturally secure services to meet the needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds
- Provides culturally secure health services to Indigenous people
  - Applies principles of the WA Cultural Respect Framework to provide culturally secure services to Indigenous people and ensure cultural respect is maintained
  - Applies principles of cultural security/proficiency to service delivery
  - Participates in staff orientation and ongoing cultural awareness/safety/security education
  - Works in partnership with key local Indigenous organisations and individuals
Critically reflects on the cultural security and proficiency of own practice
- Works collaboratively with Indigenous staff

**Equity and Diversity (continued)**

**Rural and Remote Context**
- Understands the rural and remote context in the delivery of health services, considering:
  - Access (geographical/cultural/socio-economic)
  - Models of rural health delivery (Telehealth/allied health assistants/Multi-purpose sites)
  - Rural health context / epidemiology
  - Overlapping relationships within the community (personal/professional)
  - Cultural security and proficiency
  - Inter-professional team practice
  - Other __________________________

**Consumer Involvement**
- Provide clear, relevant and accurate information to the consumer and community on health services and programs
- Develops knowledge of the local area and people, and builds community relationships
- Gathers feedback and information provided by consumers and communities
- Develops skills in consumer and community engagement

**Professional Skills**

**Generic Skills**
- Demonstrates generic professional skills including:
  - Communication and negotiation
  - Teamwork
  - Supervision
  - Delegation
  - Mentoring and coaching
  - Emergent leadership and management
  - Time and workload management
  - Other __________________________

**Self Care**
- Identifies own self-care needs
- Works to ensure the well-being of self and others
- Is aware of, and utilises knowledge and support services when necessary (e.g. employee assistance program)

**Information Management**
- Understand and complies with relevant information management strategies in service delivery including:
  - The collection of statistical data (HCARE)
  - Client record systems (including local databases and paper based records)
• Utilises technology to support service delivery including:
  o WA Health Library Network
  o Telehealth, including videoconferencing

**Ethical Practice**

**Legal and Ethical Practice**
• Demonstrates ethical and legal practice in accordance with:
  o Professional and organisational code of conduct and ethics
  o Legislative requirements (Freedom of Information Act, Occupational Heath and Safety, Equal Opportunities Act, Disability Service Act etc)
  o Public sector standards

**Professional Standards and Competence**
• Maintains professional competence and credentials
• Maintains and adheres to professional standards
• Understands, works within and responds appropriately to the limits of professional practice
• Demonstrates sound clinical reasoning and professional judgement

**Consent, Confidentiality and Complaints**
• Understands and applies the principles of informed consent
• Adheres to organisational and professional standards relating to confidentiality
• Understands and applies policies and procedures for complaints management

**Development and Support**

**Self Development**
• Identifies and actions professional development goals
• Identifies and works towards career goals and pathways
• Actively engages in professional development
• Participates in regular performance development
• Participates in clinical supervision
• Seeks mentoring and coaching when required
• Actively engages in critical self reflection
• Participates in self-directed learning

**Professional Networks**
• Demonstrates knowledge of existing professional support and development networks
• Establishes and engages in networks with professional colleagues

**Developing Others**
• Supports the development of others, including peers and allied health assistants
## Quality and Safety

### Safe Practice & Risk Management
- Identifies, reports and manages health and safety risks to self, clients and community
- Maintains personal safety at all times
- Demonstrates basic competencies in the following:
  - Occupational Health & Safety systems
  - Manual handling
  - Fire and emergency
  - First aid (including CPR)
  - Infection control
  - Aggression and bullying management
  - Other __________________________

### Policy and Procedure
- Understands and complies with organisational policy and procedure (WA Health, WACHS, local)

### Operational and Strategic Planning
- Contributes to local level planning
- Demonstrates an understanding of the organisational vision, structure and strategic intent

### Quality Improvement
- Participates in quality improvement activities
- Understands and applies the principles of quality improvement

## Clinical Management

### Client Management Systems
- Understands and follows existing systems for effective client and caseload management:
  - Referral
  - Prioritisation
  - Intervention
  - Discharge
  - Outcome measures
  - Other __________________________

### Evidence Based Practice
- Understands the principles of evidence based practice
- Demonstrates an ability to source and incorporate evidence in practice
- Applies evidence based practice to the rural context
Clinical Management (continued)

### Client Participation
- Participates in a client/family centred partnership approach in the delivery of health care

### Inter-professional Practice (Incorporating Multi and Trans Disciplinary Practice)
- Understands and applies the principles of inter-professional practice
- Understands job role, responsibilities and competence, and that of others
- Works with others to negotiate and provide integrated care responsive to client/family needs, perspectives and values
- Establishes and maintains effective working partnerships with other professionals, families, patients/clients, other teams, organisations and individuals to achieve common goals

### Clinical Skills
- Demonstrates, and continues to develop, discipline specific clinical competency
- Demonstrates, and continues to develop, program area specific (adult, chronic disease management, early intervention etc) clinical competency

*This tool focuses on competencies shared across allied health professionals. Discipline specific and program competencies are an essential part of rural and remote practice, and should form an integral part of any competency and learning framework. Please refer to discipline specific competencies provided by the relevant professional associations. Space is provided below to insert priority discipline specific competencies*
## Additional Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Relevance</th>
<th>Highly Developed</th>
<th>Refining</th>
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## Summary of Priority Competencies

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WACHS RRAHC - P (Oct 2008)
# Development Plan

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<tr>
<th>Competency Area Identified</th>
<th>Learning Goals <em>(specific learning needs – skill, knowledge, attitude, behaviour)</em></th>
<th>Methods <em>(strategies and resources)</em></th>
<th>Evidence of learning</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
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