

May 7th 2020 GOOD NEWS STORY – Reverse PEPA – improving knowledge, skills and confidence in palliative care.



Samantha Payne is a Registered Nurse from Westmont Community Aged Care Services, in regional Victoria. Samantha completed a Reverse PEPA placement in February this year at Westmont.

The outcomes she achieved were outstanding and demonstrate how PEPA can lead to organisational change that will benefit many people living with life limiting illness. Samantha saw a gap in care delivery and developed processes to achieve an outcome that improved the care of not just one person, but all the people Westmont Community Aged Care Services have in their care.

Samantha identified that in community care staff do not generally discuss end of life wishes and advance care planning with their clients. She raised this at a care manager's planning day scheduled after her PEPA placement. The people attending included the business development coordinator and the quality and compliance officer. She advocated that the Office of the Public Advocate (Vic) publication "Take Control" booklet, which outlines processes for appointing a Medical Treatment Decision Maker and developing advance care directives, should be given to all new clients on signing up for home care services. A conversation is started at the time the Take Control Booklet is given to the new client.

However, she didn't stop there – She introduced a policy that requires the care managers to continue advance care planning conversations with the people in their care, and refer them to a registered nurse to assist in completing an Advance Care Directive.

Further, she has developed a process of Advance Care Directive review – annually or when significant changes occur in the client's health status.

Samantha has reviewed the organisation's policies for "The Deteriorating Patient" and "End of Life Care". Previous policies focused only on people living as residents in the aged care facility, but now it includes the community care people.

Samantha has also developed and implemented a palliative care resource folder to guide her colleagues, and has included many topics and brochures that were shared with her during her R-PEPA placement.

Resource folder topics include:

- Palliative Care principles/scope

- The dying process
- Understanding grief
- Advance care planning
- Appointment of a medical treatment decision maker
- Names of local palliative care services and how to contact and refer to them

Lastly Samantha has included communication to staff and volunteers about the benefits of end of life discussions and advance care planning.

*....“The aim of the above activities is to provide staff and clients with appropriate resources and information to have meaningful and necessary discussions about end of life wishes, this gives carers the necessary tools and information to appropriately care for a client who has a life-limiting illness. It not only makes the staff feel more confident and comfortable in providing end of life care but it will also aim to make the client feel more comfortable and dignified throughout the dying process”
(Samantha Payne)*

Sam continues to provide education to care staff as needed and is monitoring care plans, reviewing patients approaching end of life or deterioration and taking referrals for advance care planning discussions – what a star!

(Outcomes report written with permission from S Payne by Fiona McLeod PEPA project officer PEPA Vic. For inclusion in PEPA National newsletter – good news story)