In focus Improving patient outcomes

Continuum of care

Currumbin Clinic safely transitions patients back into the community with outpatient programs

With a commitment to safely transitioning patients back into the community, Currumbin Clinic on the southern Gold Coast has extended its suite of evidence-based outpatient programs, further enhancing its continuum of care.

Joanne Levin, director of clinical services, contends the clinic’s sustained success in the treatment of acute mental illnesses, substance misuse and dependency issues, and older persons’ mental health concerns is due to its “continuum of care model”, whereby inpatients are encouraged to participate in group therapy programs, and outpatients are supported back into the community to minimise the likelihood of relapse.

“We adopt a holistic approach to treatment focused on positive patient outcomes. By utilising group therapy, patients are treated as either an inpatient or outpatient, depending on their individual requirements.”

Inpatients

Inpatients are referred to the clinic’s day patient programs by their treatment team, as part of the discharge planning process. According to Ms Levin, records indicate a distinct correlation between attending a day patient group following an inpatient admission and relapse.

“On review of 40 patients who participated across a range of our day programs for a minimum six weeks after discharge versus 40 who didn’t, seven as opposed to 13 were readmitted, respectively.”

Data also indicates that whilst attendance minimises the possibility of relapse, the length of stay for inpatients who do relapse is reduced on any subsequent readmission.

The typical length of an initial inpatient admission at Currumbin Clinic is three weeks. From the same patient data, those patients who attended day programs but required readmission stayed an average 14.2 days on readmission. For those patients who did not attend day programs, the average length of stay on readmission was 22.3 days.

Programs

All Currumbin Clinic programs deliver evidence-based therapies that cater for a variety of needs and diagnoses. The efficacy of all programs is thoroughly evaluated on an annual basis by constantly reviewing and refining the quality and content of program offerings.

“Our programs are facilitated by a multidisciplinary team of mental health personnel, and aligned with their special area of interest to ensure optimum service delivery. Our programs are facilitated in a safe and supportive environment, and provide patients the resources, education and clinical support to change the way they think, feel and behave in the community – again, lessening relapse.”

Ms Levin confirms new programs are continuously under review and development to meet the ongoing needs of patient. Most recently, Currumbin Clinic has introduced the Women’s Group, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT). The three-week CBT program provides patients with skills and strategies for anxiety and depression and supports their transition to community following discharge from hospital.

Facilitated at Currumbin Clinic’s outpatient premises at Bundall on the central Gold Coast, the six-month DBT program is designed for people with Borderline Personality Disorder and combines standard Cognitive Behavioural Techniques for emotion regulation, and reality testing with concepts of Mindful Awareness, Distress Tolerance and Acceptance; whilst the 12-week Women’s Group program promotes social connection with other women.

Patients who have not previously been admitted to the Currumbin Clinic as an inpatient can also enrol in Currumbin Clinic day and evening programs. They simply require a general practitioner referral for assessment with one of the clinic’s consultant psychiatrists prior to commencing a program.