

## CONTINUING CARE: IMPROVING WELLBEING

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**Aim of Abstract:** To present details of Palmerston Association's innovative new aftercare program for individuals recovering from alcohol or other drug abuse related concerns.

**Conclusions or results that are significant:** Whilst short-term therapeutic interventions are helpful, there is now a strong recognition that consumers require longer term support following formal services. Increasing the availability and variety of aftercare services has the potential to shorten relapse-cycle and increase the wellbeing of consumers, thus increasing lasting change with regard to drug use behaviour.

**Audience for which this presentation is relevant:** AOD and Mental health services/ consumers

**How the topic relates to the conference:** The prevention and consumer support focus of this program reflects the WA Mental Health and AOD Services current 10 year plan and as such would contribute to discussion of the provision and further development of AOD services in WA.

**Statement of the purpose of the project:** Palmerston's Continuing Care Program is focused on the need to provide a more holistic follow-up service that assists consumers to develop positive community links and improve wellbeing. This program seeks to engage AOD clients, families and other service providers. It is hoped the program will contribute to the growth of recovery communities in WA.

**Description of the issue/program, technique that will be presented:** This program has focused on the development and provision of three evidence-based services: SMART recovery groups, consumer-driven social groups and Telchecks, a structured 12 week phone-based support program. This program has been implemented at each of Palmerston's branches and made available to all of its AOD clients.

**Summary of the major conclusion/s researched:** The program was designed to respond to a growing body of evidence that suggests the care provided to consumers after formal treatment is complete has a significant impact on the relapse cycle and the long term wellness of the individual.

**Significance and implications for practice:** Success of the project in shortening the relapse cycle and improving long term wellbeing of participants might suggest greater attention needs to be paid to this area of service provision if the AOD sector is to effectively improve consumer outcomes with regards to measures of wellbeing and substance use behavior change.

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