1997 Awards for Innovation and Excellence in Primary Health Care - Direct Care

Intensive Adult Psychiatric Rehabilitation Program of the Central Highlands (APROTCH)

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The Intensive Adult Psychiatric Rehabilitation Program of the Central Highlands (APROTCH) is a psycho-social rehabilitation program which aims to address the needs of young adults who have recently experienced the onset of serious mental illness. The program was developed in 1996 in consultation with the Early Psychosis Prevention and Intervention Centre (EPPIC) Victorian statewide services, in response to a significant change in the characteristics of referrals received.

Critical to the success of the Intensive APROTCH is the positive collaborative relationships with consumers and their carers. A feature of the program is the level of consumer and carer participation in the initial design of the program, its implementation and review. A number of vitally important strategies were used during the developmental stage of the program. These included research of consumer and carer needs, documentary research of relevant literature, program research involving EPPIC, establishment of formal networks and other communtiy service providers, and the establishment of an affiliation with the School of Mines and Industries Ballarat (SMB), a tertiary education facility.

The Intensive APROTCH assists individuals in community living through the development of mental health awareness, medication management, personal effectiveness, independent living and peer support. Further, the Intensive APROTCH focuses on preparing consumers for the workforce by offering educational and vocational support incorporating the Certificate in Work Education at SMB. The curriculum for the six month work education course provides each participant with an opportunity to develop their work skills and obtain further work experience, improve their education, and consider additional study.

In 1997 the Intensive APROTCH was successful in receiving an Innovative Practice and Development grant to complete the evaluation of the program. The grant will enable this particular model of best practice in early intervention in psychosocial rehabilitation to be adapted to suit local needs in order to be replicated in other regions.

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