

**Shelter Tas Inc.**  
**Workforce Development Strategy 2015/16**

**Evaluation Report #4**

**Complex Clients and Self Care: best practice for  
workers**

**26 & 29 February 2016**





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## Background

Shelter Tas has received funding from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) for the development and implementation of a Workforce Development Strategy (WDS) for Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS), the purpose of the WDS being ‘to support SHS’s in developing their workforce to meet the current and future service delivery demands in a changing environment.’ (Workforce Development Strategy, page 9).

In order to ascertain the sector’s main priorities for training, data was collected through surveys and interviews with Tasmanian SHS organisations. The results of these consultations and later feedback from the WDS Reference Group raised the issue of self-care for workers when dealing with clients with complex needs who may be dealing with trauma. Providing self-care strategies to allow workers to effectively deal with challenging circumstances and situations at work was considered an important way to address concerns about employee wellbeing within the sector.

The training was held on 26<sup>th</sup> February at The Cherry Shed in Latrobe and the 29<sup>th</sup> February at the CatholicCare training rooms in New Town. ‘Complex Clients and Self Care’ was delivered by Amovita Consulting, a Queensland-based company. On advice from the Reference group, Shelter Tas requested a specific trainer, which made a great difference to the success of the training. Tracey Harris is the Executive Director of Amovita, and has worked in the human services industry for many years and specialises in leadership and performance, amongst other things. Tracey was able to provide expertise and local knowledge, and provide flexibility in the course structure to accommodate the people attending. At the request of Shelter Tas (upon advice from the Reference Group) Amovita changed the name of the training and altered elements of the course to best meet the needs of Tasmanian homelessness sector workers.

Of the total 52 participants, 23 people attended the training in Latrobe and 27 in Hobart, with 50 evaluation forms returned.

## Training Overview

Of the total 52 participants, 50 evaluation forms were received. 49 respondents rated the training as good – excellent, which is equivalent to 98%.

This was a highly successful event, and met priorities 1 and 2 of the Workforce Development Strategy recommendations.

1. ***Increasing the skills and competencies of the SHS workforce.***  
Attendees reported improvement in their ability to deal with the needs of complex clients and knowledge about effective responses to trauma and other life complexities after attending the training.
2. ***Increasing the accessibility of training and professional development to the whole of the sector.***

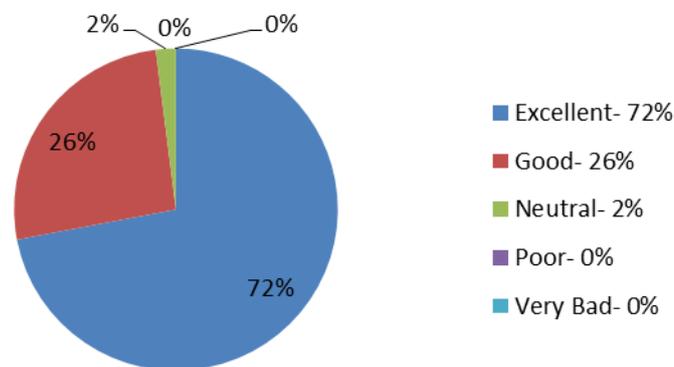
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Training was provided in Hobart and Latrobe, which provided training opportunities to workers State-wide. This training was offered at a subsidised rate of 80%, costing services \$60 per person rather than the full cost of over \$250.00, thus increasing accessibility to more workers from a variety of services.

Informal feedback indicated that the session was very successful and provided valuable information to attendees. Written comments showed that participants were engaged during the training and gained valuable skills to improve their self-care at work. Many comments praised Tracey’s delivery of the session and the personal stories she shared, as well as the useful and practical information in the manual provided and during the session.

A common request was that the training could have been offered as the full 3-day course, to allow more time to explore the topics and issues; but unfortunately it was not practical to offer training for more than one day (see Recommendations).

### Overall rating of Complex Clients and Self Care training

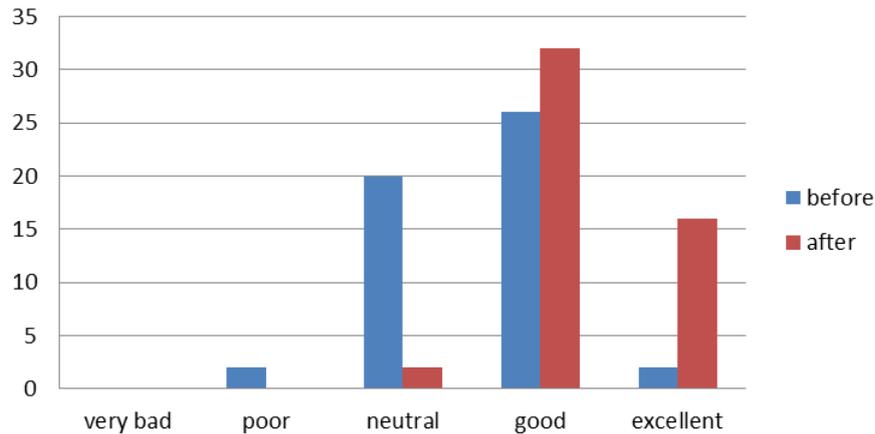


### Participant Evaluation

Evaluation questions were rated on a scale of 1 – 5.

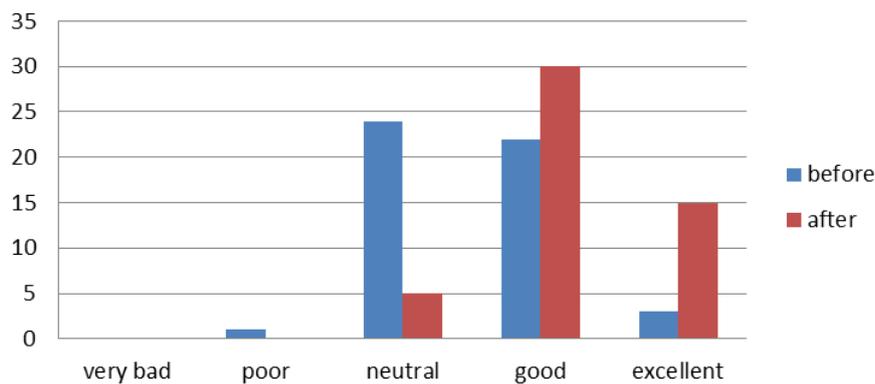
1. Rate your knowledge of effective responses to clients responding to trauma and other life complexities before the training session
2. Rate your knowledge of effective responses to clients responding to trauma and other life complexities after the training session
3. Rate your ability to deal with the needs of complex clients at work before the training
4. Rate your ability to deal with the needs of complex clients at work after the training
5. Overall, how do you rate today’s training?
6. Do you have any comments about this training session?
7. Please note any suggestions you may have for future training topics.

## Knowledge before and after training



**Question 1 & 2: Rate your knowledge of effective responses to clients responding to trauma and other life complexities before and after the training session.** This graph shows that all ratings of poor moved up to neutral and above after the training. Those people who rated their knowledge as neutral decreased from 20 to 2 and ratings of excellent increased from 2 to 16 after the training, indicating attendees felt their knowledge of trauma, complex needs and self-care increased as a result of the training.

## Ability to deal with need before and after training



**Question 3 & 4: Rate your ability to deal with the needs of complex clients at work before and after the training.** Once again, all ratings of poor improved to neutral or above after training. Ratings of neutral decreased from 24 to 5 after the training and ratings of excellent increased from 3 to 15. This shows a similar pattern of improvement in participants' ability to deal with complex clients after the training as in the knowledge ratings above.

**Question 6:** Comments from evaluation forms included:

- 'Every worker AND manager should do this training - preferably over 3 days. Tracey you are awesome, interesting and fun! Thank you. I will be working on my self-care strategy!'
- 'Excellent and engaging trainer. Considering self-care in a new and positive way'.

- ‘High level, relevant material. Will be making some changes to workplace methods. Very well presented and a useful resource to take away’.
- ‘Tracey was fantastic, very engaging, would attend training with her again for sure’.
- ‘Lots of useful information and tools to bring back to the workplace. Excellent presenter, casual, fun, relevant. Thank you’.
- ‘Tracey was very easy to listen to. Good to hear about how she dealt with clients and how life is changing so fast. Would have liked to do the rest of the course’ (3 days).

<b>Organisations/programs represented via geographical region.</b>	
<b>North/North West</b>	<b>South</b>
2 Anglicare 4 CatholicCare - CHATS 3 Karinya 4 Launceston City Mission 6 Magnolia Place - Launceston Women’s Shelter 2 Warrawee 1 Youth, Family and Community Connections 1 Housing Choices	6 Anglicare 6 Colony 47 5 Colony 47 - Mara House 4 Jireh House 3 CatholicCare - CHATS 3 Bethlehem House 2 Salvation Army

## Recommendations for Future Training

### Actions for implementation by Shelter Tas:

1. Eventbrite registrations were set up to accept registrations and payments for each person attending training sessions. Many organisations reported it would be more efficient if they could register more than one person in one transaction. Shelter Tas had introduced the ‘one registration each’ policy to avoid over-registration by some organisations while others missed out. Subsequently, an initial quota of three places per service, with a second round of offers if places still available closer to the training date was introduced.
2. Shelter Tas recognised the importance of gaining consent to use images of people participating in training on public documents. Amovita provided a register for people to ‘opt-in’ to have their photo used. As there was no way of identifying who had provided consent after they had signed the form, this system limited options for Shelter Tas to collect images of the training. For future training, notices will be placed around the room (and attendees will be notified verbally) asking participants to alert those people taking photos that they do not wish to be included.
3. Amovita provided some useful resources for preparing for training events. Shelter Tas has been given permission to use these resources for future training, so these documents will be adapted for Shelter Tas’ use.
4. Considering the very positive feedback on the training provided by Amovita, Shelter Tas will investigate inviting Tracey Harris back to Tasmania to deliver Motivational Interviewing training later in the year.

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**Broader Considerations:**

5. Many of the written comments indicated that the training could have been longer (the course is intended to be held over 3 days, but Amovita runs this one-day 'summary' course regularly). The majority of attendees commented on this because they enjoyed the one-day training and would have liked more information and time to discuss the content further. Ideally, Shelter Tas would have offered this training over multiple days, but realistically this would have prevented many people from being able to attend, as organisations commented that they would not be able to have staff away from work for more than one day. For this reason, training over multiple days would rarely be a possibility. Shelter Tas will consider how much a course can be truncated without reducing its effectiveness or enjoyment for participants in future training preparations.
6. This has been an administratively intensive project thus far, particularly in reminding people to register and prompting people on registration instructions. A longer registration period would not necessarily resolve this, but allowing time for the Project Officer to contact services directly to remind them of deadlines is helpful.