

RESEARCH AIMS AND METHODS

This research aimed to investigate the perspectives of facilitators of Work It Out, a chronic disease self-management program by the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH) to gain an understanding about:

What they believed were the key ingredients that made a great education session
What common challenges arose, and how these are managed
How they use IUIH's Cultural Integrity Framework, The Ways, in their practice

For this research, we conducted 12 in-depth interviews with facilitators of the Work It Out program. These facilitators included: 4 exercise physiologists, 2 dieticians, 2 occupational therapists, 1 psychologist, 1 podiatrist and 1 tobacco action worker. In-depth interviews were chosen because they allowed us to access the facilitators' interpretations of their experiences.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What do the health professional facilitators perceive as the key elements that make a successful Work It Out education session?
2. What common challenges arise during Work It Out education sessions, and how are these challenges managed by health professional facilitators?
3. How does IUIH's Cultural Integrity Framework (The Ways) influence the practice of the facilitators of the Work It Out program?

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THE WAYS

IUIH's Cultural Integrity Framework (The Ways) was found to influence the practice of 'Work it Out' facilitators in three main areas:

The Ways as a 'Check-in' tool:

The Ways was found to be most useful as a reflective 'check-in' tool for the predominantly non-Indigenous facilitator cohort to ensure that their work was culturally safe.

"I found that helpful as a new grad, when you don't have as much clinical experience. 'Why am I doing this?' You can look back on The Ways and think 'okay, well it's a way of being or doing which does align with the core values of IUIH'."

The Ways in group reflection and team learning:

Facilitators also highlighted the importance of The Ways for reflection in Allied Health meetings and individual Work It Out meetings in which they *reflect on The Ways and how it relates to the topic we are talking about*

The Ways in benefiting and understanding clients:

The Ways were also found to shape how facilitators can understand and further build *'really good relationships'* with their clients, or *'to make sure that we are not looking at clients as a number'* The framework was also important in assisting facilitators to build their knowledge of appropriate 'awareness' in how some clients display communication and understanding.

FINDINGS

The findings of this research showed significant overlap between our first two research questions, with many of the challenges that were commonly faced being the absence of what makes a 'great' session. These findings can be divided into three main themes.

PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

| A GREAT SESSION | CHALLENGES |
|---|--|
| <p><i>"A kick-arse session would be when all clients are having a bit of input"</i></p> <p>Most facilitators believed that for a session to be most effective, there had to be participation and engagement from the clients. While this was mostly seen to be clients actively participating in discussions and sharing information, this did not always have to be the case. Engagement could also be passive, with clients taking in information and reflecting.</p> | <p><i>"If you haven't got an engaged audience, what are you there for?"</i></p> <p>Conversely, one of the most common challenges that is faced is when clients are not participating. Sessions with a lack of participation were seen as more difficult, and could be "like pulling teeth". Techniques used by the facilitators to mitigate this challenge included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using silence to provoke participation 2. Using humour, cracking jokes, and staying light-hearted 3. Create an environment where clients felt comfortable to share, especially by building rapport |

SHARING AND CONTRIBUTION

| A GREAT SESSION | CHALLENGES |
|--|---|
| <p><i>"A great session can be someone sharing some confronting stuff... it's a really positive thing"</i></p> <p>Clients sharing personal and intimate stories was seen by many facilitators as making a great session. They believed that doing this helped build connections within the group. Clients sharing can also help other clients if several are going through similar circumstances.</p> | <p><i>"There's some groups where there's 14 people, [and] there's 2 people who do all the talking; there's 12 people who are going to be disinterested, or not be as involved."</i></p> <p>Particular clients dominating discussions was a challenge that several facilitators encountered. When this happens, education sessions can go off track, key messages can be lost, and sessions appear disjointed. Clients may do this when they're particularly knowledgeable about a subject, and are trying to help. Over-sharing often happens within discussions of sensitive topics, such as mental health. This can also serve to derail sessions. To counter this, facilitators would</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Redirect conversations back to where they wanted them to be through subtle hints 2. Directly ask the client to stop 3. Use paraphrasing to wrap up clients who were speaking. |

GROUP SIZE AND DYNAMICS

| A GREAT SESSION | CHALLENGES |
|--|---|
| <p><i>"You go into a room full of depressed people, your mood's probably going to come down; if you go into a room full of excited people, you're going to feel better. [...] [The clients] feed off each other"</i></p> <p>Group size and dynamics played a part in sessions going well. When a group dynamic changes, such as when regular clients stop coming, this can allow other clients to take on other roles in the group. Each group has their own dynamic, and this can alter a session considerably.</p> | <p><i>"The biggest challenge is managing group dynamics"</i></p> <p>Clients would pick up on the mood of others in the room, both clients and facilitators, and this can affect how sessions run. Related to this is the size of groups. When a group was large, some of the activities were not as effective. To counter this, many facilitators broke large groups into smaller groups. To try to improve the feeling within a group, facilitators could draw upon regular clients to help them improve the mood.</p> |