



### A Comprehensive Eating Disorder Education Program for an Adult Acute Medical Ward

Project Team Leader: Hollie Laver (EDS – Manager) and Alisha Douglas (CET – Acute Clinical Nurse Educator)

Project Team Members: Rhiannan Parry (Baxter 7 NUM), Somer Prowd & Emily Hunt (EDS Clinicians), Lily Dunn (Baxter 7 RN) and other Baxter 7 Nursing staff

#### INTRODUCTION

Eating disorders are a serious, but treatable, mental illness with significant physical consequences. Eating disorders can affect people of all genders, ages, races, religions, ethnicities, sexual orientations, body shapes and weights.

The Barwon Health Eating Disorder Service (EDS) provides specialist outpatient treatment to young people aged 0-25 years. During the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a significant rise in eating disorder referrals and need for hospitalisation. Between 2018/19 to 2020/21, admissions increased by 145% for people aged 18 years and over.

This increase in admissions exposed a gap in the ability of staff working on an adult acute medical ward to provide expert care to eating disorder patients in our region.

To address the gap on Baxter 7 ward, a collaborative approach between Nursing Staff, Eating Disorder Service staff and the Clinical Education & Training Nurse Educator was adopted to equip staff with expert skills and knowledge.

#### OBJECTIVES

The aim of the project was to provide an education program directed at:

- Empowering Baxter 7 Nursing Staff to deliver best care to eating disorder patients over 18 years of age admitted to University Hospital Geelong;
- Enhancing critical knowledge regarding eating disorders, admission goals and feeding strategies; and
- Creation of an easily accessible and comprehensive learning program on the eLearning platform (Grow).

#### METHODS + IMPLEMENTATION

- Collaborative planning with project team members regarding the workforce’s knowledge base and development needs.
- Creation and delivery of tailored formal and informal education sessions on Baxter 7 ward.
- Weekly in-services held for two months. The in-services were offered F2F, online and recorded to increase accessibility.
- Three 4-hour workshops covering key elements such as: diagnoses and aetiology, inpatient admission, managing distress, and essentials of meal support. The workshops were delivered online due to the hospital’s COVID status.
- ‘Eating Disorder Education for Baxter 7 Staff’ platform created on Grow. This enables centralised access to national guidelines, best practice guidelines and previous in-services. This is now part of service-directed training for Nursing staff.
- Compilation of ward-based resource folder.

#### TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Attendance at education sessions was recorded and reported via the eLearning platform. Phenomenological interviews were conducted and staff completed a post-education survey.

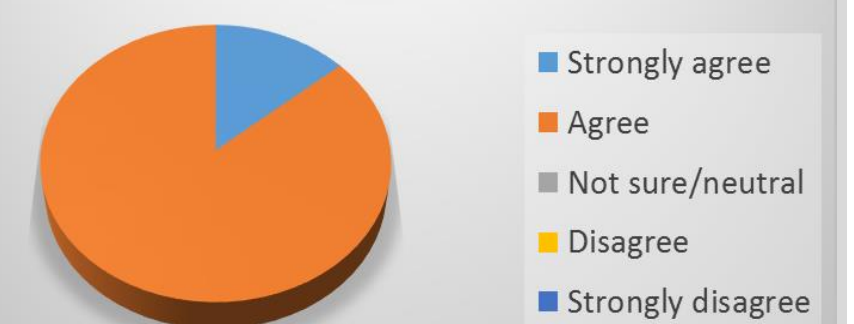
#### Select Category

- Safe Care       Personal Care  
 Effective Care       Connected Care

#### RESULTS

- 100% of surveyed staff (n = 22) either agreed or strongly agreed that the education program provided had increased their confidence, knowledge and skills in caring for these patients.
- Feedback from Nursing Staff included:
  - *“I’ve become more understanding regarding behaviours associated with eating disorders and mental illness.”*
  - *“The training made me realise that eating disorders, regardless of type, come from a place of anxiety and fear. I have more empathy now for these patients.”*
- Nursing Staff showed high levels of compassion and thoughtfulness surrounding care by developing an aide based on the cognitive tool, “forget-me-not”. The aide is designed to empower the adult eating disorder patient and inform staff on effective care strategies which will reduce triggers, protect the patient, and emphasise distraction/de-escalation techniques.
- Increased collaborative care across disciplines was also reported.

The eating disorder education provided has increased my confidence, knowledge and skills in caring for a patient with an eating disorder



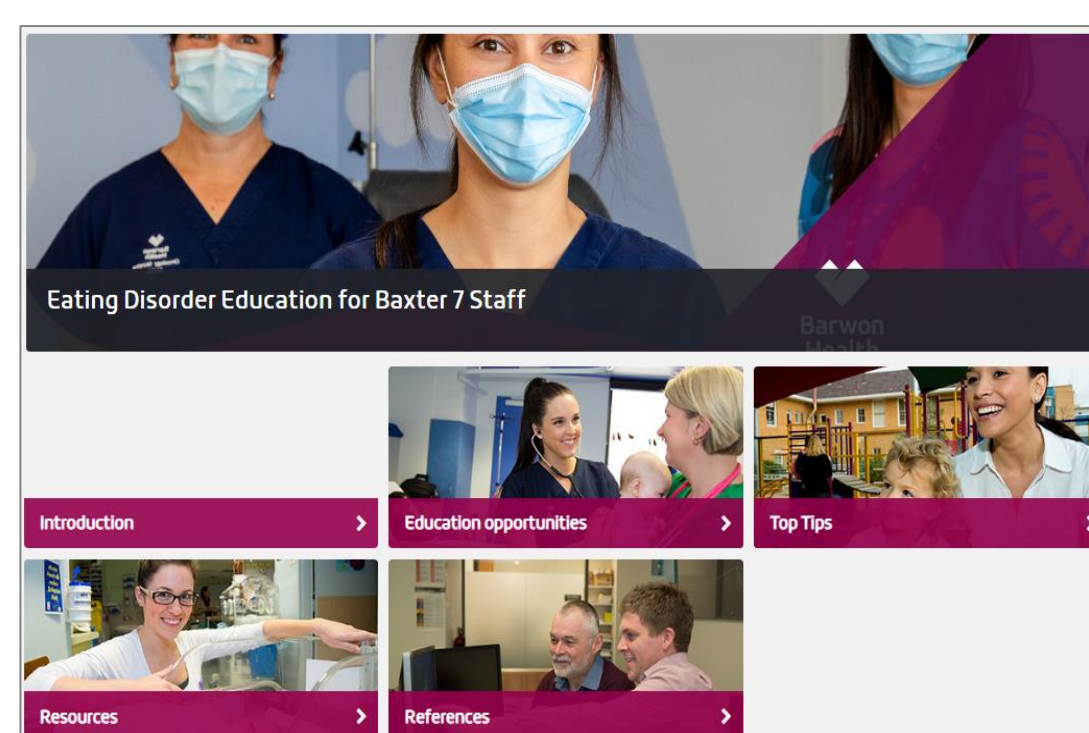
#### KEY LEARNINGS

This project highlighted the importance of:

- Protecting and separating the patient from the eating disorder
- Understanding types of eating disorders and complications
- Understanding stages of change and motivation for recovery
- Having respect and empathy for the patient
- Implementing novel strategies for meal support
- Having access to resource and training 24/7 via Grow, and
- Communicating broadly and working collaboratively

#### SUSTAINABILITY

- Ongoing collaboration between medical and mental health services with continued provision of regular supervision and education time to build on knowledge gained through this project
- 24/7 access to resources and training via GROW
- Improved care and experience for people with eating disorders admitted to Baxter 7 (to be formally evaluated in the coming year)



(R): The aide based on “forget-me-not” assists staff provide safe and high quality care tailored to the patient’s needs.

This aide helps identify what may trigger and what may provide comfort to the patient with an eating disorder.

(L): The eLearning platform (Grow) is the repository created for Baxter 7 Nursing Staff to access relevant evidence-based resources and education.

