Dietitians Australia

Introduction to MHANDi

What is MHANDi?

MHANDi (Mental Health And Nutrition & Dietetic Information) is a subgroup of the DAA Mental Health Interest Group (MHIG). MHANDi is a collection of resources tailored to improving the knowledge and skills of new graduate/emerging dietitians (entry level practitioners) working with clients who have mental health concerns. MHANDi resources provide support for professional development, as well as, practical tips and guidance. MHANDi resources differ from Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition (PEN) as they are developed from literature reviews rather than systematic reviews, synopses or clinical practice guidelines. The MHANDi resource database is largely added to and maintained by volunteers and involves collaboration with other DAA interest groups.

Development History of MHANDi

MHANDi was developed as a result of the Mental Health Curricula for Dietitians Project (2007-2009) funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing. This project was conducted by Professor Susan Ash (Fellow of DAA) and Kerryn Dowding (APD), who researched the learning needs of Australian graduate dietitians in the area of dietetic practice and mental health. One of the major outcomes of the project was MHANDi, in particular the Learning Tools from the Mental Health Resources Package (Section 5.0 in MHANDi). These tools were developed for dietetic educators, students and entry-level dietitians to assist teaching and learning about mental health in dietetic practice. The project then evolved to the development of additional resources for MHANDi, supported by the MHIG. This project and resources were later promoted via a national road show for DAA members in 2009.

A formal review of MHANDi was undertaken during 2011 with funding from DAA. This involved a survey to DAA members, with some structural, formatting and content changes made as a result of the findings. MHIG volunteers and DAA members from other interest groups collaborated with project officer, Mari Eronen (APD), to review resources and develop a sustainability protocol for maintaining and updating MHANDi in the future. MHANDi team continues to review their processes annually, more recently conducting a survey in 2017 to determine the practical use of resources for DAA members and identifying topics of interest for new resources in mental health.

How do I use MHANDi?

MHANDi can be accessed directly by a DINER search (search "MHANDi"). Alternatively you can select the link "resources" from the MHIG Practice network page on the DAA website. MHANDi has been divided into a range of sections to help you navigate/search for content that may suit your needs. There are several resources within most sections:

1.0 Introduction to MHANDi

Information about MHANDi - what it is, how to use it, and the background to its development.

2.0 Understanding Nutrition Needs in Mental Health

Information on specific topics – diabetes, dementia, food security, eating disorders, Hepatitis C, HIV/AIDS, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, CALD populations, and mood/anxiety/psychotic disorders.

3.0 Professional Practice Tips in MentalHealth

Resources on advocacy, working in mental health care teams, and practical strategies for working with clients and their carers.

4.0 Continuing Professional Development

A selection of courses, seminars and workshops that provide further training in mental health care skills.

5.0 Mental Health & Wellbeing Resource Package

Case studies, vignettes, video and audio clips, the CIRT®, and Mental Health Decision-Making Tree, to support practitioner and student learning.

How can I contribute to MHANDi?

MHANDi would not be possible without the support and contribution of volunteers and DAA members. We welcome any feedback you have about MHANDi. If you know of a relevant website, resource or program that is not included on MHANDi, or have a suggestion for a topic that should be included, please email details to mhandidaa@gmail.com

The MHANDi team always welcomes new volunteers who are interested in being involved in reviewing and adding to the collection of MHANDi resources. If you wish to volunteer, please email us or post your interest on the MHIG member connect page and you will be contacted shortly after.