

New Approaches to Connecting Allied Health with Palliative Care Information

Gravier S¹, Erny-Albrecht K¹, Tieman J¹, & Lewis V²

1. CareSearch, College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia

2. School of Nursing and Midwifery, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia

Introduction

Allied health describes a diverse group of health care professionals with distinct skill sets and approaches to care, all of whom support people to optimise health and function to achieve quality of life. This is particularly relevant to people with a life-limiting illness and for whom care is palliative with an emphasis on quality of life.

CareSearch develops and provides online access to evidence based information and resources in palliative care. The resources are relevant across the life course, across the system and across individual roles. The aim is to support everyone to make informed decisions in palliative care. We recognise that information requirements of health professionals will differ according to roles and training. Responding to this, and in collaboration with the sector, an allied health section was added to the CareSearch website in 2013. While it is regularly reviewed, we are aware that providing access to information is often of itself not enough.

To address this, a framework was developed to guide engagement with individual sectors to help us understand which information channels are preferred by each group, in what format information should be provided, and what kind of information is required with respect to palliative care. In 2018 we held a workshop with members of the allied health sector and, guided by the framework, launched the Engagement Project in allied health. Here we present our findings and discuss how this has shaped subsequent activities to better connect the allied health sector with evidence based palliative care information that is relevant to their needs and those of the people approaching death who they support.

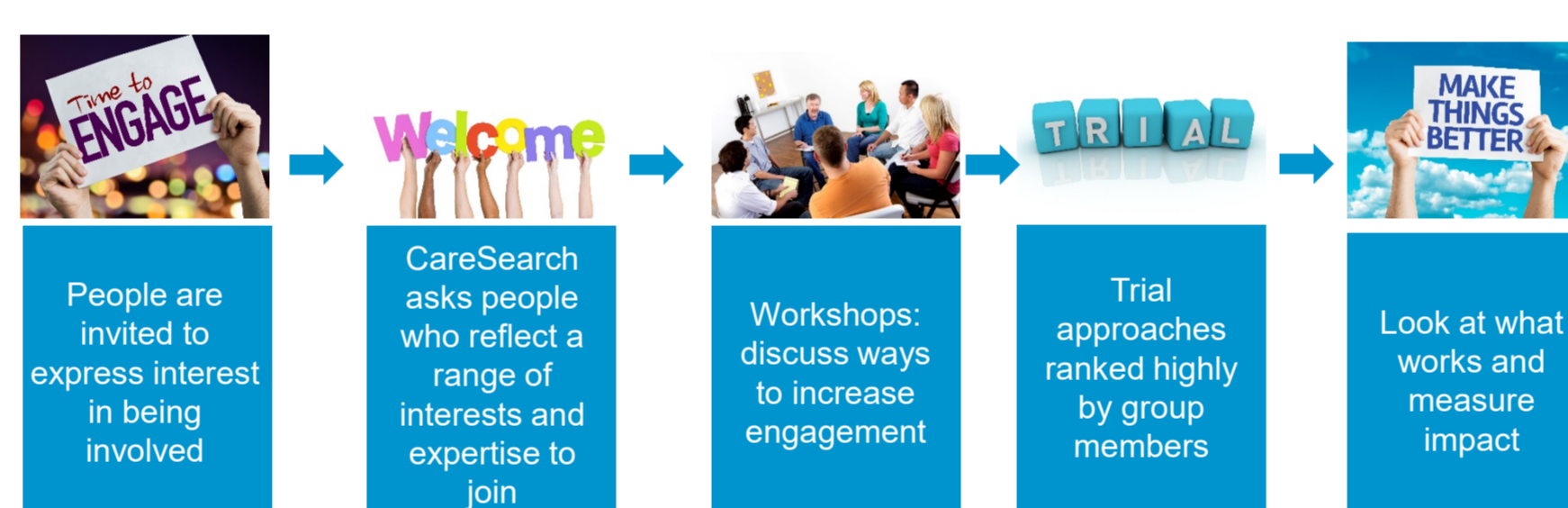


Methods

As part of the formal engagement framework a literature scan of refereed and grey literature was conducted to help us understand the context in which the allied health sector operates. This informed approaches to motivating people to participate in the project to talk about the specific issues affecting awareness and use of resources.

Our analysis of the context informed workshops with members of the allied health sector. The aim of workshops was to support free discussions to determine:

- how information enters the allied health sector,
- how it is disseminated,
- how important is the role of evidence, and
- how information should be presented.



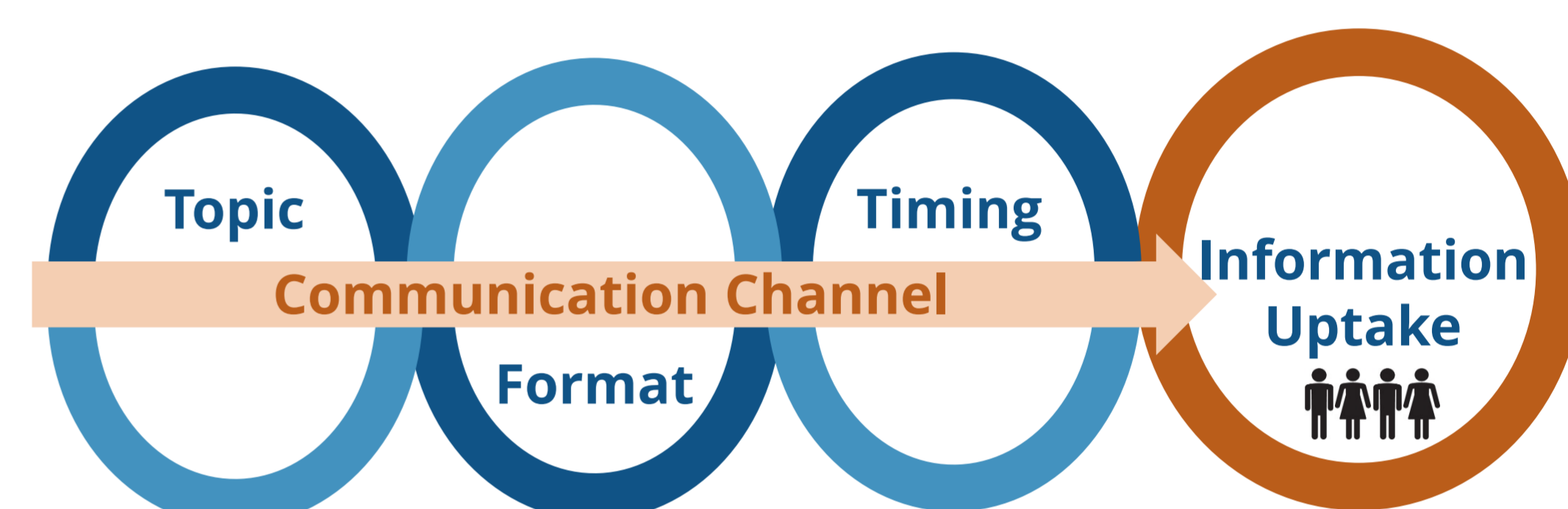
Results & Discussion

Using a formal Engagement Framework we have:

- developed a context statement for allied health,
- recruited “exemplar” participants for workshops to provide representative perspectives on value and use of evidence in their context,
- co-developed an Action Plan for the sector with the sector,
- implemented the Action Plan by engaging with multiple channels,
- assessed the impact of the Action Plan, and
- engaged with the sector to further refine ongoing approaches.

Results & Discussion (continued)

Information enters the allied health sector through several channels. However, for all channels there needs to be alignment between topic, format and timing to ensure uptake. Understanding the sector including competing demands on time and clinical activity is essential, and is best supported through working with the sector for the sector.



Allied Health challenges in relation to Evidence Based Practice:

- Lack of time
- Volume of information
- Knowing where to find evidence
- Lack of funding for additional practices or new practices and transition to new practice
- Knowing what to discard when adopting a new practice

Conclusions

To better understand the use of evidence in practice, a structured approach to engagement with the allied health sector was developed and implemented. In this way increased awareness and reach of evidence based information was achieved. However, the challenge of information overload and limited time remain a barrier to uptake.

Finding out more

Visit the Engagement Project webpage: <https://www.caresearch.com.au/EngagementProject>

Email: susan.gravier@flinders.edu.au

