The role of the community nurse in Aboriginal parent support

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What is Known

• Support for parents of Aboriginal children in the early years is crucial for:
  o healthy family functioning
  o children’s health and social trajectories.

• Aboriginal families a vulnerable group with a range of social and health issues affecting child and maternal health (Walker, 2010; Zubrick et al., 2005).

• Early years physical, psychosocial and sociocultural health is important for lifelong health, wellbeing, education and employment (Hertzman, 2013).

• Culturally relevant innovative solutions to parenting issues needed but not well identified (Walker, 2010).
What is Known

- There is a need for community nurses to develop innovative practice roles to facilitate culturally relevant support for Aboriginal families with young children.

- There is diversity in community nurses’ professional attributes and competencies for addressing complex social and parent support issues affecting Aboriginal children and families (Munns & Walker, 2015).
Parent Support Project

• Peer-led support considered important. Local Aboriginal support workers have lived experiences, realistic understanding and empathy (Munns & Walker, 2015).

• Development, implementation and evaluation of a peer led home visiting support program for Aboriginal parents with children in the early years.

• Located in a low SES outer metropolitan area of Western Australia.
Source: Google Maps
Project Participants

Participants
• Aboriginal peer support workers, project officer, education support officer
• Aboriginal parents
• Community support agencies

Family support agency
• Employment of staff
• Providing infrastructure

A non-Aboriginal community child health nurse as a researcher and program partner.
Role of the Community Nurse: Attributes and Practice

• In partnership, identifying peers
  o Peer attributes

• Relevant program development
  o Participatory Action Research
    o Able to explore and facilitate the program’s suitability, feasibility, acceptability and effectiveness.
    o A strengths based approach
    o Incorporates psychosocial and sociocultural viewpoints.
    o All participants able to identify needs and ideas for future planning.
    o Facilitates culturally relevant, acceptable peer led home visiting parent support.
Role of the Community Nurse: Attributes and Practice

• Working in partnership with all participants
  o Who owns this program?
  o Gaining trust
  o Exploring strategies for working in partnership with parents

• Communication
  o Active listening
  o Non verbal
  o Non judgemental
  o Yarning
  o Exploring effective client communication skills for peer support workers
Role of the Community Nurse: Attributes and Practice

• Reflexive practice, reviewing ways of working in Aboriginal culture

• Organisational flexibility
  o Time
    o Community and family commitments for clients and peer support workers
    o Client families’ mobility

• Opportunistic and planned health education and health promotion
  o Education opportunities
  o Knowledge to practice strategies
Role of the Community Nurse: Attributes and Practice

• **Empowering strategies**
  - Affirmation of achievements
  - Affirmation for attempted strategies

• **Handover planning**
  - Identifying ongoing leaders
  - Ongoing funding and sustainability
  - Ongoing engagement?
Conclusion and Practice Points

• Facilitation and negotiation competencies vs direct clinical care

• “Hands off” approach

• Working in partnership
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References


