



November 2018

Community access to health care continues to be a big problem for people living in Clarence, and the Clarence City Council is doing something about it through the *Help to Health* project.

By listening to the local community, some of the barriers preventing access identified are:

- Not knowing what help or services are already 'out there' or available
- How to find the *right* information
- Health information is hard to understand
- Services can feel unwelcoming or unhelpful

Through the project, Council hopes to reduce these barriers and see an improvement in the community's health and wellbeing.

How can this project help you?

By participating in the project, your organisation will have the opportunity to build:

- A better understanding of community needs
- Quality relationships with community members
- Integrated care that is based on consumer/community needs
- A preventative model of care (a way of working that can prevent health problems before they happen)
- Skills in supporting self-management strategies

Council need the ideas, support and participation from:

- Health and community service providers
- Both government and non-government organisations who are working directly with people who are vulnerable and/or identified as most in need
- Community residents

About the project

The project hopes to make positive changes by:

- Giving the community more power and control of their own health care needs
- Increasing community and organisation knowledge and awareness of available services in and to people in the Clarence area
- Helping health and community services connect with one another
- Encouraging and moving toward a preventative model of care

The project will do this in several inter-related ways by:

- **The Right Place (TRP) initiative** - Training front-line staff and volunteers to build a customer service culture that is friendly, caring and helpful in different organisations in Clarence
- **It's Ok to Ask (IOTA) initiative** – Working with people in the community to have more power and control when asking questions to health care professionals and to fully understand health information and; working with health care professionals to support this
- **Help to Health Friends (H2HF)** - Learning from, training and supporting local members of the community
- **Clarence Talks** - Organising and providing health and wellbeing information sessions for the community
- Building better connected health and community services in Clarence

The Right Place:

Council have partnered with TRP, a free community health literacy initiative originating from the Huon Valley in 2015 that has now expanded to several other local government areas including Clarence. It aims to provide:

- Improved access to health and community services in the local area
- Improved coordination of the health and community services in the local area
- Improved health literacy of community and member organisations
- Improved customer service to ensure the organisation is recognised as a kind, compassionate and helpful community-friendly place
- Assurance that people are referred to the right service, in the right place at the right time

It's OK to Ask:

Council are also partnered with IOTA – a project overseen by the University of Tasmania and funded by the Department of Health. IOTA is about supporting people so they can find, use and understand information, and make decisions about their health and wellbeing. IOTA promotes a clear message that it *is* ok to ask questions and health professionals are happy to answer them. IOTA workshops can give people the skills to:

- *Tell* their story and what they need to the right person
- *Ask* the right questions clearly and listen carefully
- *Tell* it all back in their own words so people can check that they understand what has been said or shown to them
- Learn about new health resources
- Plan for health appointments

Help to Health Friends:

The *Help to Health Friends* initiative is based on a model from the UK called *Community Health Champions*. H2HF are people willing to help their community by volunteering their time to share and promote available health and wellbeing information with others and participate in any learning opportunities when and if they can. This initiative is a valuable part of the project in it's potential to:

- Reach a broad demographic in the community
- Reach and provide information for people who might not visit or have access to health and community organisations
- Reduce barriers some people have to health access in minority groups
- Use existing social networks to spread information gained from this project
- Actively involve the community in learning opportunities through conversations, group activities and Clarence Talks

Clarence Talks:

Clarence Talks are free ongoing information sessions that are held at different times and locations across Clarence. The topic is always around health and wellbeing with different speakers depending on what the community would like to learn more about. The talks are casual and give people an opportunity to ask questions. This is a simple initiative that hopes to see:

- An increase in awareness of health and wellbeing information, resources and services that are available to people living in Clarence
- Information is spread broadly through word-of-mouth to other people in the community – we hope this will successfully reach people who might be more vulnerable, isolated or in need of support through a 'ripple effect'

Want to support us?

You can support the project by becoming a *Help to Health Friend*, supporting the *It's Ok to Ask* message or joining a workshop, attending a *Clarence Talk* or becoming a *Right Place* member organisation. Contact Kate Franke for more information:

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