Can a Novel Approach to Clinical Supervision improve department capacity and functionality?

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**Background**

**Clinical Supervision:**
- Is embedded in Dietetic clinical practice
- Hasn't included processes for assessing clinician competency in specialty areas to facilitate career progression Grade 1 ➔ Grade 2 Dietitian
- Limited evidence of impact on department capacity & functionality.

**‘Buddy’ Program developed**

- Set of competencies developed for Grade 2 specialty areas.
- Grade 1 Dietitians ‘buddied’ with Grade 2 Dietitians

- Monthly Clinical Supervision sessions held over 6 months for each ‘Buddy’ partnership. Each session had a prescribed focus with tasks to achieve in between.

**Methods**

**Multiple methods approach:**

**In-depth interviews**
- Conducted by independent HR Consultant with separate groups of Grade 1, Grade 2 & Grade 3 Dietitians.
- Interview questions explored clinicians experience of the healthcare service & ‘Buddy’ Program – strengths, areas for improvement, key outcomes & challenges to implementation.
- Interviews were audio-taped & transcribed verbatim. Data analysed using a thematic analysis approach.

**Analysis of Pre and Post Self Rated Confidence Questionnaires + Post Partnership Assessment of Competency**
- Analysis used basic descriptive statistics to determine number of partnerships that improved confidence scores & achieved competence

**Results**

- 11 ‘Buddy’ partnerships completed

**Portfolio of Evidence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership No.</th>
<th>Average Change P&amp;P Questionnaire</th>
<th>Post Partnership Competency Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8 Competent</td>
<td>Competent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.75 Competent</td>
<td>Competent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.25 Competent</td>
<td>Competent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 Competent</td>
<td>Competent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.4 Competent</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- 81% Partnerships achieved improved self rated confidence scores
- 91% Partnerships rated globally as achieving competence

- Where confidence scores increased – tendency toward overall competence

**Conclusion**

- This novel ‘Buddy’ Program approach to Clinical supervision supports previous work & suggests additional departmental benefits to caseload management, relationship development and communication & skill development in teaching & mentoring.
- Grade 1 Dietitian self-rated confidence may be a good measure of overall competence & a simple evaluation component to Clinical Supervision Programs.
- This approach to Dietetic Clinical Supervision can improve department capacity and functionality.
- Larger studies are required to confirm the applicability of our results to other departments & to explore the adaptability of a structured competency-based ‘Buddy’ Partnership.

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"Looking at it, it does create bonds between the senior and junior staff, as we said earlier, it’s a learning situation. The junior dietitian is learning and the senior dietitian is developing skills in teaching and supervising, so I think it does strengthen communication between staff members."

"So it’s helping build the clinical skills across the department so we have more flexibility to provide cover."

“It’s good that there is structure and that there’s a clear outline that is consistent across the different competencies so you know your sessions, what you are to cover in particular weeks, which helps"