Early discussions were focused on researching models of care that would provide the best client outcomes, the best student learning opportunities, a platform for research, as well as be sustainable long term. What type of clinic would be able to meet all of our objectives?

Research into inter-professional competency domains helped identify the knowledge skills, attitudes and values that shape the judgments essential for inter-professional collaborative practice and include: inter-professional communication, patient/client/family/community centred care, role clarification, team functioning, collaborative leadership and inter-professional conflict resolution.

Elements of collaboration include respect, trust, shared decision making and partnerships. With this in mind Blue Care and the University of the Sunshine Coast set up the Wound Solutions Clinic.

Our Partnership
Blue Care is a not-for-profit provider of health, community and social care. It is a subsidiary of the Uniting Church, with a mission to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.

Blue Care has been a community care provider for over 60 years and provides a range of services to support people in their homes, local community centres, residential aged care facilities and retirement villages, with clinics staffed by a range of health professionals, including nurses and allied health professionals.

Prior to our coffee meeting University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) health professional students (nurses, occupational therapists, exercise scientists) attended off campus Blue Care facilities for clinical placements but were not exposed to higher level of wound treatments provided by Blue Care specialist staff.

A strategy to correct this shortfall was the development of an on-campus Wound Clinic which benefits the USC through the provision of further on-campus clinical placement opportunities and capacity, the development of teaching and research partnerships,

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Coffee and conversation: Creation of a wound clinic
By Eleanor Horton, Amanda Besci, Allison Vallejo, Paul Burrows, Bronwyn Doyle and Marianne Wallis
In late 2010 discussions began, over coffee, between three nurses with aged care experience, about how two organisations could work together and engage students to enhance their knowledge and skill development with community practicums.
and an increased community involvement, particularly in the area of healthcare in the community. The benefits to students include enhanced access to clinical placement and inter-professional learning opportunities and research. The benefits for Blue Care are increased opportunities to partner with tertiary education in service delivery, research, community engagement and access to a modern clinic space specifically designed for the conduct of community-based care. There are many models of clinics on university campuses to enhance student clinical placements for a wide variety of disciplines. The model that is used at the Wound Solutions Clinic has proved itself to be able to meet the clinic objectives.

Objectives
The objectives of the Wound Solutions Clinic are summarised in table 1.

Daily Operations
The Wound Clinic is staffed by dedicated, Blue Care health professionals including two registered nurses, a podiatrist and a dietician. Clients are transported from their residential addresses to USC via a Blue Care bus or private transport. Most clients are Blue Care clients and all communication is through Blue Care. The University provides the venue for the clinic and coordinates clinical placements for students. There is a steering committee consisting of representatives of both organisations and all the relevant discipline groups, as well as a researcher. This steering committee oversees the governance of the clinic in conjunction with the General Manager of all the USC Health Clinics.

The clinic is currently being evaluated and early qualitative feedback provided in interviews with staff, clients and students endorses the Blue Care Innovation Award given to the clinic in 2014 for ‘Living the Values’.

With an ageing population and an increase in chronic wounds the clinic is expected to provide a key element of care for people with chronic wounds on the Sunshine Coast, in addition, by actively engaging a variety of health professional students we are successfully developing the experts of the future. Not a bad outcome for the price of a cup of coffee.

Applying psychosocial theories for nursing students
There is an increasing awareness about the importance of community based placements for nursing students given their work with vulnerable, unwell groups (Baglin and Rugg, 2010; Gerber, 2013).

The placement of students studying nursing has traditionally focused on acute care providing the student with important clinical skills. However, opportunities for students to apply their understanding about the impact psychosocial issues and social determinants of health has outside the acute care sector is also warranted, as it better enables them to be informed about what those influences are on health, illness, recovery and wellness.

Furthermore, with the increasing provision of home visiting and community based healthcare services, there is an evolving need for more community based placements with a variety of population groups.

Teaching nursing students about the broader population through community based placements with disadvantaged groups increases the students’ confidence in dealing with the variety of people they will encounter in the acute care setting.

References


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