

### **BREAKING TRADITIONS OF PRACTICE: WORKFORCE CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING DISABILITY SERVICES STANDARDS WITHIN PURPOSE-BUILT ACCOMMODATION FOR YOUNGER ADULTS**

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#### **What was the study about?**

This study looked at the problems faced by staff in providing services for young adults (18-65 years old) with complex disabilities residing in Integrated Living Model (ILM). Primarily the study focused on the challenges staff faced in providing appropriate levels of care that meets the disability service standards (DSS) within the new ILM framework.

#### **What did the study find?**

When comparing current practice with the Queensland Disability Service Standards, findings highlighted that workplace challenges exist to some degree in all areas of the ILM. Challenges ranged from unrealistic workforce expectations to understanding and recognising client's rights, responsibilities and roles. Communication and coordination of care plans combined with work methods associated with aged care models all contribute to the challenges in providing adequate services to young adults with complex disabilities. The study found that some changes needed to occur within policy, management, professional development and staffing practices.

#### **Why is this interesting or important?**

It is important to understand that young adults with complex disabilities require specific needs and services, and that this presents a number of challenges. This study highlights the practical challenges faced by service providers in delivering that care. By understanding current shortcomings in the ILM, it should be possible to implement important changes to staff practices and provide better service for young adults with complex disabilities.

#### **How was the study done?**

Interviews were conducted with 20 staff working within a purpose-built ILM, this represents 50% of the permanent staff. These interviews were set against the disability service standards framework, in which the ILM operates.

#### **What does this mean for practice?**

In terms of practice this study shows how new social policy, i.e. keeping young adults with complex disabilities out of aged care facilities can create additional challenges for service providers and clients. When new services are implemented old service techniques can become an impediment to providing care. New frameworks, staff training and cultural shifts are necessary to meet the expectations of care for young adults with severe disabilities residing in the ILM.

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