

Tackling the Service Gaps in CHAT's Assessment Service – Session Summary

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An initiative by



Introduction

The Community Health Assessment Team (CHAT) is a youth-focused service that offers free mental health assessment for individuals ages 16 to 30 years old. CHAT Ambassadors, on the other hand, is a youth participatory group first initiated by CHAT in December 2014. The ambassadors partner with CHAT to identify the needs of its users and improve its youth-focused services.

One of the service gaps identified was the lack of resources given to the users after assessment. Feedback has shown that users felt overwhelmed and retained limited information after the assessment. Hence, after evaluating CHAT's current assessment service, the Ambassadors decided to develop an assessment session summary for the users to bring home.

Objectives

To create a succinct session summary, which summarises the information shared during the assessment, helps CHAT's users gain better understanding of themselves and provides recommendations on what the users can do next.

Methods

The project was broken into three stages: Pre-Implementation, Pilot Testing, Implementation.

Pre-Implementation

The team had various ideas as to how to approach the session summary. However, to make it feasible for both the giving and receiving end, we requested that the staff completed a sample session summary so as to give a sense of what would be written, as the staff in charge of writing the session summary also had a big role to play.

An online market research survey was also conducted to identify the general public needs. This is to help us identify areas that could possibly be developed, as well as close certain loopholes. Questions such as whether the possible service users would like to receive a physical report detailing on what had occurred during the session, as well as a non-definite and inconclusive impression of their mental health issues were asked. The youths were asked to complete the survey imagining that they would be going for CHAT's mental health check in the future. 44 youths aged 20 to 25 participated in this survey. We then designed the content based on their feedback.

Pilot Testing

Following a successful pre-implementation stage, the pilot testing was implemented in July 2015. The session summary was presented in an A5 booklet format, containing sections such as the mental health condition they might have together with the reasons, as well as their strengths, current/possible coping skills and recommendations on what they should do next. This was piloted for 2 months, so as to gather sufficient feedback.

During this phase, feedback was collected around 2 weeks later by phone. The feedback was implemented to evaluate whether the assessment summary is beneficial to the users and identify areas for improvement. 20 youths who went through the service participated in the feedback.

The team also collected feedback from the staff to gauge their difficulties and opinions in completing the session summary. This is important so as to accommodate to the staff's needs as well, as they are important stakeholders in the project.

Implementation

A meeting was called within the team and CHAT staff to discuss possible ways to improve the session summary further before implementation. Feedback from both the service users and the staff were also deliberated during the meeting so as to fit the both parties' needs as well. The session summary was then implemented.

Results

Pre-Implementation

The market research survey showed that 89% of the participants hope to receive a session summary. The other 11% of participants who wished to not receive a session summary should they go for CHAT's mental health check cited reasons such as privacy and uncertainty of the usefulness of the session summary. This feedback was crucial for us to improve the session summary before pilot testing. The table below reflected the responses from 89% of participants who hoped to receive the session report.

Assessment Summary Content	Purpose	Data*
Mental health impression and its basis	To address users' mental health concerns	95% need this
Strengths	To encourage positive thinking and build confidence	100% need this
Recommendations	To advise on seeking professional help	51% need advice on professional help and/or coping techniques
Activities to keep doing/try	To identify and/or recommend good coping techniques	

*The survey participants may or may not have used CHAT's services.

*The percentage is calculated based on the survey participants who hope to receive the assessment summary.

Pilot-Testing

The feedback gathered from 20 users indicate that all of them find the session summary useful for them to understand what has gone on in the session. 35% had indicated that it helps them gain a better understanding and insight of themselves, as well as what to do next. This has certainly met our objectives, as we had aimed to help the service user to be more aware of what has happened during the session. It indicated that the sections that were already in the session summary was essential for the youths. Feedback from the staff generally was positive; other feedback was that the session summary should be optional for the service users.

Conclusion

The session summary was found to be a much needed resource for both the staff and the service user to understand what has happened in the session. The team had hoped that it would provide the youths a clearer understanding, and motivate youths to press on in spite of what they are facing. Certainly, it has been a very challenging but rewarding project for the team, and we thank the staff for being very patient with us and guiding us throughout the way.