

Managing an Existing Cancer Information Service





Course Objectives

- Discuss some of the common issues that arise with managing a call center telephone helpline (staff retention, quality monitoring, call center management)
- Share ideas through interactive dialogue



Learning Objectives

- Discuss a variety of recruitment strategies and staff skills
- Describe the variety of staff trainings to enhance staff skills
- Understand the critical nature of quality monitoring and feedback
- Consider several management practices for operating a call center





CIS Management

- Operations management
- Processes
- Technology
- Human resources
- Facilities
- What makes the “best” program the best





Operations management

- CIS goals
- Business requirements
- Costs/budget
- Data analysis
- Evaluation
- Benchmarking



Operations management

- CIS service operation (examples)
 - Reach a greater percentage of users
 - Develop a database of resources
 - Ensure a high-quality service delivery that meets the information needs of the clients
- Business requirements
 - Business plan – activity targets
 - Financial targets: budget preparation, sources of funding
- Operations costs
 - Cost per call/contact
 - Financial reporting





Operations Costs

- Examples of cost per call elements
 - Labor – hourly wage x minutes per call
 - Training
 - Supervision
 - Facilities





Operations management

- Data analysis
 - Call volume
 - Type of user
 - Subject/type of interaction
 - Are you reaching target audience?
- Evaluation
 - Customer satisfaction
 - Staff satisfaction





Operations management

- Benchmarking

- Is a process of collecting data on key identified questions and comparing yourself among peers
- Helps a program identify where they are compared to other like-programs
- ICISG member organizations offer benchmarking opportunities
- Other health charities





Management Issues

- Continuous process improvement
- Program policies
- Internal and external communications
- Operations, administration and maintenance plans
- Planning for the unexpected





Technology Planning

- Tools and resources
- Telephone system
- Computers, applications, and databases
- Web site
- Email management





Personnel

- Recruitment and hiring
 - Employed
 - Freelance
 - Part-time/full-time
- Organizational structure (ratio of supervisors to information specialists)
- Scheduling
- Training
- Ongoing quality assessment/performance





Facilities

- Budget of host organization
- Site selection
 - number of facilities
 - one location versus cluster of regional centers
- Facility design
- Capacity of facility to expand operations





Leadership and Success

- Attributes for a great supervisor
 - Leader
 - Coach
 - Communicator
 - Motivator
 - Problem-solver - role of supervisor in complicated calls



Case Study: The Anna Story

- Cancer nurse with over 10 years of clinical experience
- Working with CIS for 2 years with no practice problems identified
- Met with supervisor every month to reflect on calls
- Motor car accident related disability



Lessons Learned

- Double head-set supervision of calls revealed Anna's lack of response to emotional cues of caller
- Anna unaware of her lack of response
- Focused on open/closed questions and building empathy and rapport with caller
- Weekly feedback and stretch goals failed to improve performance
- Formal complaint by caller/Anna resigned



Reflections on the Anna Story

- Use probation period and document 'problems' early
- Don't make too many allowances (disability and life drama)
- Full time CIS manager required
- All staff need initial and ongoing training / development to ensure adequate performance is maintained
- Supervisor plays a key role in quality of CIS interactions with the public





What makes the “best” CIS the best?

- A skilled workforce supported by training
- A well-communicated and executed business strategy
- Carefully chosen and effectively applied technology
- Management with an ability to tackle the day-to-day tasks while conducting effective planning
- A balancing of quality and quantity by routinely monitoring and coaching

