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