

# A Guiding Framework for Effective Delivery of Speech Pathology Services by Support Staff

Speech Pathology Australia



*Giving people a say in life*

# Background

- Speech Pathology Data
  - Economic & workforce data indicate:
    - Ageing workforce
    - Increased burden of disease
    - Declining workforce
- Significant workforce shortages now & in the future (Aust Productivity Commission, 2005)

# Speech Pathology Australia

- **Supports a suite of initiatives to address workforce shortages, including:**
  - Increased flexibility in service delivery
  - Emphasis upon client-centered service models
  - Strategies to improve recruitment & retention
  - Changes in scope of practice

# Speech Pathology Australia Documents

- **Code of Ethics (2000)**
  - Specifies the standards of integrity & ethical principles to which all members must abide.
  - These principles are fundamental to defining the boundaries of professional & clinical practice that ensure the delivery of safe & quality care to clients

# Speech Pathology Australia Documents

- **‘Scope of Practice’ (2002)**
  - identifies breadth of speech pathology role;
  - lists variety of domains of practice;
  - delineates profession’s client base, services, contexts, purposes, approaches.

# Speech Pathology Australia Documents

- **Position Papers and Statements**
  - Provide a guide for best practice in particular clinical domains
  - Outline Association's position of specific issues
- **'Principles of Practice' (2001)**

# Overarching Principles

- Changes to work practices are supported
- Work practices should only be done in the presence of a well-developed clinical governance framework
- Key skills which cannot be transferred to other professions or support staff must be identified

# The Process Followed

1. Working Party
2. Literature search
3. Development and circulation of questionnaire
4. Results



# Results of Questionnaire

- No delegation of assessment tasks
- No delegation of tasks related to diagnosis
- No delegation of tasks associated with the treatment planning\*

# Development of Guidelines – Key Considerations

- Concepts underlying safe & effective service delivery
  - Clinical governance
  - Competency
  - Credentialing & clinical privileging
  - Risk management
  - Supervision

# Clinical Governance Frameworks

- Allow development of systems to ensure services to clients are safe & effective (Sally & Donaldson, 1998).
- Provide for the creation of processes & documentation to support & define the role of professionals & support staff.

# Clinical Governance Frameworks

- May encompass:
  - Protocols for defining scope of practice & practice boundaries
  - Position descriptions
  - Supervision processes
  - Processes for establishing competency
  - Risk management plans
  - Identification of minimum training requirements

# Competency

- Substantial background knowledge
- Interplay & integration of linked knowledge base
- Access to appropriate tools & training
- Consideration of the granting of specified privileges for specified term in specified context
- Regular performance & competency reviews

# Credentialing & Clinical Privileging

- Used to “evaluate & verify whether a healthcare professional possess the relevant qualifications, skills & experience in order to undertake professional practice at a local level (Aust Council of Safety & Quality in Health Care”, 2004)
- Credentialing → clinical privileging

# Risk Management Framework

- Ensure procedures & interventions are as safe as possible
- Mechanisms must be in place to monitor risks & to implement appropriate change
- Should target preventable adverse events

# Supervision

- Supervisors should be experienced health professionals
- Support workers performing activities delegated to them must participate in formal supervision.



# Guiding Principles for Delegation to Support Staff

- Support staff must only work under the supervision of the speech pathologist who retains ethical & legal responsibility for client care
- The supervising speech pathologist must provide adequate training & establish competency of the support worker to carry out the delegated task
- Support staff must work within the agreed plan of care & the scope of training provided
- The care plan must include appropriate step-up & step-down strategies

# Guiding Principles for Delegation to Support Staff (cont.)

- Support staff must be competent to perform appropriate monitoring strategies to allow adjustment of a program as agreed in the plan of care
- The speech pathologist must be readily available for consultation & evaluations prior to, during & after the delegation
- The support worker must be advised of the medico-legal & ethical implications of failing to observe these boundaries

(adapted from Arkansas State Board of Physical Therapies, 2003)

# 'Parameters of Practice' (2007)

- Framework for Delegation of Tasks to Speech Pathology Support Personnel
  - Detailed analysis of tasks that may be delegated to support staff with varying levels of experience or training

(Reproduced with permission from Royal College of Speech Language Therapists  
“Competencies Project: Support Practitioner Framework” (2002)

# A Support Worker may not:

- Select clients for assessment or intervention
- Perform definitive assessment procedures
- Change any treatment
- Independently develop or alter a plan of care or treatment goal
- Independently draft reports
- Discharge clients from treatment

# Unit 1: Assessment

Career stage	Newly appointed support worker	Established support worker or worker with discipline specific training	Other professional (Allied health/nursing professional)
1.1 Establishes and documents the presenting communication and/or swallowing condition and issues: identifies significant others and collates information	Not to be delegated	Not to be delegated	Working on specified screening tasks in specified contexts with support, supervision and direction
1.2 Identifies the communication and/or swallowing condition requiring investigation and the most suitable manner in which to do this	Not to be delegated	Not to be delegated	Working on specified screening tasks in specified contexts with support, supervision and direction
1.3 Administers speech pathology assessment	Not to be delegated	Not to be delegated	Not to be delegated
1.4 Undertakes the assessment within ethical guidelines and relevant legislation	Not to be delegated	Not to be delegated	Not to be delegated

# Unit 4: Speech Pathology Intervention

Career stage	Newly appointed support worker	Established support worker or worker with discipline specific training	Other professional (Allied health/nursing professional)
4.1 Establish rapport	✓	✓	✓
4.2 Implements speech pathology intervention program based on assessment, interpretation and planning	Works with a high level of support, direct supervision and direction	Able to work independently on specified tasks with indirect supervision from speech pathologist. Working with direct supervision on more complex tasks	Work on specified tasks in specified contexts with support, indirect supervision and direction provided through discussion
4.3 Undertakes continuing evaluation of speech pathology intervention & modifies as necessary	Works with a high level of support, direct supervision and direction.	Able to work independently on specified tasks with indirect supervision from speech pathologist. Working with direct supervision on more complex tasks.	Working on specified tasks in specified contexts with support, indirect supervision and direction provided through discussion
4.4 Documents progress and changes in speech pathology intervention	Works with a high level of support, direct supervision and direction. All documentation must be checked and co-signed by the speech pathologist	All documentation must be checked and co-signed by the speech pathologist	Working on specified tasks in specified contexts with support, Indirect supervision and direction provided through discussion
4.5 Undertakes management & implementation within ethical guidelines of the profession & all relevant legislation & legal constraints, including medico-legal responsibilities	✓	✓	✓

# Future Directions

- Development of framework for credentialing of extended & advanced scope of practice
- Development of training package for speech pathologists working with support staff
- Investigate requirements for Associate Membership for support workers
- Identify core competencies relevant to allied health disciplines; contribute to development of appropriate collaborative training units