

Issue #26, June 2010

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Better services, better outcomes, stronger communities – the Quality Framework for Disability Services

Standards, indicators, self-assessments, consumer assessments, measuring outcomes, quality plans and continuous quality improvement are all words that we are hearing more often. Agencies are being asked by almost all funders to be more accountable about what they actually do to support people who use services. But what does this mean in our day to day work?

In the case of agencies who are funded by the Department of Human Services to offer support to people with a disability this means the *Quality Framework for Disability Services in Victoria (2007)*. Or QF for short.

The QF provides the structure and tools for disability service providers to deliver high quality services so that people with a disability can experience the same



outcomes that are valued by the broader Victorian community. It strives to ensure that services and supports for people with a disability are regularly reviewed, meet agreed standards and are constantly being improvedⁱ.

The framework promotes a system of sustainable relationships and supports, which has at its centre the interests and goals of each individual with a disability. It is multidimensional and describes the relationship between:

- Human rights
- Organisational practice
- Quality assurance
- Quality improvement
- Outcomes for people with a disability

The quality framework brings together the elements that assist agencies to determine how well each person they support can experience the same outcomes that are valued by the broader Victorian community. It strives to have a positive impact on the daily lives of people with a disability, their

family members and carers, through the introduction of an outcomes-focused approach to measuring, monitoring and continuously improving servicesⁱⁱ. It consists of industry standards which relate to an organisation's systems and processes, and outcome standards which measure the extent to which services and supports make a positive difference to the lives of people with a disabilityⁱⁱⁱ.

The framework, which according the *Disability Services Divisional Plan 2009-10*, has its origins in a reform agenda that strives to enable

- a stronger emphasis on outcomes for people with a disability and their families and carers
- connecting human rights agenda to service provision
- focusing policy and service development on key transitions
- promoting practices that are engaging, relationship-based, strengths-focused and participatory

- thinking creatively about how to combine support services with whole-of-community initiatives at the local level
- service providers engaging people with a disability in partnerships to define and develop solutions, notably through the development of self-directed supports^{iv}
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The framework promotes a system of sustainable relationships and supports, which has at its centre the interests and goals of each individual with a disability. It is multidimensional and describes the relationship between:

The quality framework brings together the elements that assist agencies to determine how well each person who uses support is assisted to experience the same outcomes that are valued by the broader Victorian community. It strives to have a positive impact on the daily lives of people with a disability, their family members and carers, through the introduction of an outcomes-focused approach to measuring, monitoring and continuously improving services^{vi}. It consists of industry standards which relate to an organisation's systems and processes, and outcome standards which measure the extent to which services and supports make a positive difference to the lives of people with a disability^{vii}.

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Services Divisional Plan 2009-10, has its origins in a reform agenda that strives to enable:

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LDC Group has been involved with the QF from its very early days including:

- Piloting the framework with 19 government and non-government

agencies across Gippsland and Eastern Metropolitan regions (2006)

- Conducting training for agency managers (2009)
- Assisting DHS to align it's own policies with the standards and indicators (2009)
- Offering support to agencies
 - Developing tools (outcome measurement, recording progress, identifying which indicators apply)
 - Training practitioners and managers
 - Assisting the alignment of the various quality systems, standards and indicators

In the time that we have been involved with the QF we have seen many agencies move from anxiety about what the framework means for their particular organisation to an eagerness to embed it into everyday practice. We are now hearing people talk about creative ways of capturing what is happening, assisting all

stakeholders to understand the ambitions of the framework and about how the framework might actually benefit their organisation. We are also hearing questions about tools to align different quality frameworks, tools to measure outcomes and ways to record information. We have been collecting tools that agencies have developed as well assisting them in the development of new ones. These tools are available for download on our website: www ldc net au

So as agencies are increasingly considering the outcome of the support they offer, what are the outcomes of the framework itself? We, the people who use services, the disability support sector and the Department of Human Services, await news of the outcomes of the first round of independent auditing which is currently underway. As we work with agencies outcomes are becoming evident. For instance, we have seen many people with a disability who use services, along with their families and carers, come to expect that they have a greater say and more control and involvement in the support they

receive. We have also seen an increase in the understanding by some agencies of the impact that their approach to service delivery has upon the lives of people they are supporting.

Our team will continue to support all agencies in their pursuit of supporting people with a disability to experience the same outcomes as other Victorians through making the Quality Framework part of their everyday work. If we can assist your organisation please contact us or go to our website to download resources.



Jill Lane
Senior Consultant

Launch of Discourse, Power, Resistance, 2011, Melbourne Australia

The first Discourse, Power, Resistance (DPR) conference was held in 2002 in the University of Plymouth, UK attracting scholars from across the Humanities and Social Sciences who were interested in

transgressing inter-disciplinary boundaries. The conference, now in its ninth year in the UK, has established a reputation for confronting, disrupting and provoking controversial debate that focuses on, and interrogates how qualitative research methods are so often politically fraught and epistemologically contested. A continuing concern of the conference is a critical focus on research methodologies and the related issues of how is knowledge constructed, represented and disseminated.

The conference has an international reputation, drawing delegates from a wide range of the developed and developing nations and attracting world-class keynote speakers. In 2011 DPR will launch in September in Melbourne Australia. The Australian conference is an exciting new development that will unite scholars, practitioners and researchers from Australia, the United Kingdom, the Caribbean and South Africa. The development and addition of an Australian arm to the DPR network will provide an opportunity for individuals interested in promoting and participating in

provocative, critical and complicated conversations around the possibilities for contemporary qualitative research approaches in Australia.



Notice Board

Association for Qualitative Research Seminar

Date: **August 9**

Time: 5.30pm-7.00pm

Presenters: Dr Mark Vicars

Title: **Queering Methodology: An Interactive Seminar**

Venue: La Trobe University CBD campus

205 Franklin St, Room FS G04 (near Victoria market)

Cost: Free to members, \$20 for non-members, \$10 for non-member students

See details at:

<http://www.aqr.org.au/seminars-a-workshops-2008.html>

LDC Group Website:

www ldc net au

We've made some changes on our website. Check it out!

If you are interested in a particular subject that you would like us to write about, please email us. If we consider that we can competently discuss the subject then we will provide an article in the newsletter.

Requests should be emailed to:

mark@ldc.net.au

To unsubscribe to the newsletter please send an email to: ldcquarterly@ldc.net.au and type 'unsubscribe' as the subject.

References

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<http://www.field.org.au/legislation/responsibilities/standards.html>
 - iii National Disability Services. Quality Framework for Disability Services - A Guide for Boards of Management
 - iv Disability Services Division. Disability Services Divisional Plan 2009-10. Department of Human Services. Melbourne, Victoria.
 - v Disability Services Division. (2007). Quality Framework for Disability Services. Department of Human Services. Melbourne, Victoria.
 - vi Field – Furthering inclusive learning and development website
<http://www.field.org.au/legislation/responsibilities/standards.html>
 - vii National Disability Services. Quality Framework for Disability Services - A Guide for Boards of Management
 - viii Disability Services Division. Disability Services Divisional Plan 2009-10. Department of Human Services. Melbourne, Victoria.