



Case Study Three:

Classroom versus on-the-job training and skills building

Although this AHA developed a broad range of skills from a Certificate IV in AHA, they found the on-the-job training and supervision by an AHP more beneficial than the course.

'When I finished the course, I got a job in a hospital, so I learnt a very broad range of skills in the hospital.' (Queensland AHA). This assistant noted that people skills were essential for AHAs to work with a broad range of participants with disability – as well as their family members, carers, and service providers.

The AHA worked independently under different AHPs, from different disciplines, within the same organisation. The AHA explained generic AHA skills were relatively transferrable across disciplinary areas. However, they needed the supervising AHP to assist them in developing more specialised discipline-specific skills. This AHA worked as a permanent full-time employee in the NDIS and regularly liaised with AHPs via email, phone calls and videoconferencing.



Benefits

Certificate IV trained AHAs were broadly trained – and with further specialised in-house training – could work under the delegation of AHPs with a wide range of AH disciplines. As a result, these AHAs were more likely to make a career as an AHA in disability and could build on their skills.

- The AHP-provided supervision and professional development furthered the training of the AHA and fostered the development of the AHA's written and oral communication skills.



Challenges

This AHA had not experienced any challenges as the AHPs were readily available for support and training.



Strategies for success

- The AHPs provided in-house training for the AHAs to deliver therapy plans in discipline-specific skills.
- The AHPs delegated to the AHA who was best aligned with the participant, and they were readily available to support the AHA.



Key principles of good practice

- The Certificate IV in AHA prepared the graduate to work under the delegation of an AHP across NDIS-relevant AHP disciplinary areas.
- The Certificate IV provided a good foundation for an AHA career pathway.



Educating future Allied Health Professionals

Providers identify the need for AHP graduates to have the knowledge and skills to delegate services and supervise AHAs, including remote supervision via telehealth.

Providers and AHPs say that most AHP graduates have not had the opportunity to develop these skills during their undergraduate studies.

AHAs are entering the workforce through several pathways including upskilled support workers, school traineeships, Certificate III or IV in AHA, AHPs who have trained overseas, and AHP students.

The following case study highlights the benefits of ensuring future AHPs are suited for the profession through sub-bachelor pathways such as via an AHA undergraduate Certificate, and working as an AHA while studying towards an AHP qualification.