

JOINT EVENT

5th Annual Congress on **EMERGENCY NURSING & CRITICAL CARE**
&
26TH CANCER NURSING & NURSE PRACTITIONERS CONFERENCE

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Social work in the emergency department-implementation of a domestic and family violence screening program

Women who have experienced domestic and family violence use health services more frequently than women who have not. Early identification and intervention by the health system may reduce health problems associated with domestic and family violence and lead to saving for the health sector. This study aimed to evaluate the impact of a new domestic and family violence screening program, which was based on an ecological model and introduced by a social work team in the emergency department of a major metropolitan hospital. The evaluation method included an audit of social work case files to access the effect on referral rates and a survey of emergency department staff to obtain perceptions of the impact of the program on the staff and clients. In the three months period following the introduction of the program, the rate of referral to social work increased by 213%. Staff agreed that the emergency department is an appropriate place to ask about domestic and family violence, under certain conditions. Findings suggest that an ecological social work model provides an approach to screening for domestic and family violence that not only contributes to increased identification and supportive client interventions but may also contribute to more sustainable systemic change

Biography

Debbie McCarthy completed Bachelor of Social Work degree in year 2000. She was an enrolled Nurse for 15 years; during this period, she worked in residential care facilities, palliative care and a brain injury unit. As a social worker, she has been employed as a Counsellor for Human Services Task Force in tissue retention, has worked in various inpatient wards. She has worked as Social Work Team Coordinator in Flinders Medical Centre Emergency Department for 12 years, having extensive experience in crisis intervention and trauma counselling. She has also designed a number of resources for consumers and staff. She established a training program for staff in the Emergency Department and post-graduate nursing program and has been a guest speaker at various workshops in Adelaide. She has recently won the Excellence in Allied Health Award for the Southern Adelaide Local Health Network for her work in domestic violence.

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