Title: Translating Learning into Practice: The Dementia Care Competency Framework

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Objective: With the expected increase in numbers of people diagnosed with dementia, it is vital that the workforce is educated and equipped to deliver high quality evidenced based clinical care that improves the outcome for people living with dementia. Clinicians and academics identified a gap on how education translates into practice and how the clinicians demonstrate clinical competency. The Dementia Care Competency and Training Network established a system that merges learning to practice to competency.

Design: The Dementia Care Competency Framework was established in partnership with University of Wollongong and consulted with over 300 senior clinicians, from various disciplines and locations within NSW Health and implemented by Northern NSW Dementia Care Competency and Training Network. The consultation outcome developed 10 dementia competencies and 40 domains of practice.

Method: Dementia Care Competency & Training Network have created an effective, online interactive, facilitated education platform that translates into a self-assessment tool that assesses clinical competency across three levels: essential, enhanced or expert level of dementia care delivery.

Results: The competency framework delivers an accessible, accredited self-assessment tool available online and across all settings. It inspires personal reflection and professional development, a career pathway, encourages staff retention, guides and supports performance appraisals and develops team practices and processes. Clinicians provide evidence of an action learning plan to improve their skills, knowledge and attitudes through mapped activities. The process is supported through mentor review.

Conclusion: The Dementia Care Competency & Training Network addresses all facets of transfer of knowledge: Awareness of new knowledge, Agreement of a new way of delivering care, Adoption of new resources and commitment to change and Adherence with new practice as being business as usual. The interactive online program delivers to all rural and remote locations across NSW. This mode of clinical competency delivery could be transformed across all specialities.