

# Nexus

## A Workplace Wellbeing Program For Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol Service Managers

### Introduction

Welcome to **Nexus**, a *Workplace Wellbeing Program* for Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol service managers. Our consultants and mentors help you to maximise workplace wellbeing through mentoring (coaching) managers, establishing best practices for service delivery and creating an effective workplace. This information kit provides you with details on our mentoring process, evidence of need, mentoring methodology and benefits.

We chose the name **Nexus** for this program as it represents 'a link' or 'to bind'. **Nexus** has been designed to help develop a sustainable workplace where the focus is on management 'wellbeing'. Evidence and experience show that well developed managers will develop others, facilitate the knowledge sharing and focus on high quality service delivery to create a sustainable workplace environment.

Why have we titled **Nexus** a workplace wellbeing program? To answer this we firstly should define *Workplace Wellbeing*. For us, wellbeing in the workplace means;

- An organisational culture, lead by senior management that is focussed on the development of its people and high quality service delivery
- An organisational structure that removes barriers to effective service delivery and that recognises the contribution of environment in creating workplace stress
- An environment where people can work without fear, where they can share experiences and ideas
- A place where people want to belong and to contribute

**Nexus** has been designed to:

- Enhance manager & worker wellbeing
- Provide a supportive structure for Managers
- Develop leadership capacity
- Develop management competencies
- Provide strategies/tools & evidence-based guidance to minimise stress
- Reduce recruitment and retention costs
- Develop a sustainable workplace

### How does **Nexus** achieve this?

We begin by providing mentoring for senior executives and managers. Why? Because this group of managers are the nexus, the link between strategy and implementation, because when management fails the entire organisation grinds to a standstill, because current managers are role models for the next generation of managers and because we believe performance is a function of organisational culture, which is established by the way in which managers behave and lead.



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We use the term *mentor* to indicate a process for helping develop management competencies. We chose to use the term *mentor* as it is a term used in the mental health and AOD sectors to describe where a suitably experienced person works with another individual to develop competency. Others may use the term *coaching*; the two terms are interchangeable.

As we mentor people in your organisation we also gain an insight into your organisation. We enable your people to explore the possibilities. We help your people develop to their fullest potential by providing them with a place where they can explore ideas and how they might develop ongoing relationships that help convert ideas into reality.

Through our mentor relationships we build trust; and we share knowledge, which enables a long term relationship to form. This then enables you to explore options for enhancing wellbeing through workforce development.

We believe it is important a working relationship has formed between ourselves and your management team *before* we might propose any solutions to problems. In that way our proposals are based upon evidence of need.

**Nexus** will provide Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol service managers with the knowledge to develop and build workplace wellbeing at three levels, being:

1. An individual person level where people want to work and contribute because their potential is developed, they are valued and supported.
2. A service delivery level where people are provided with appropriate development based upon evidence-based, best practice.
3. An organisational level where a systematic approach to linking purpose with processes and outcomes reduces barriers that contribute to workplace stress

**Wellbeing Indicators:** 30% of managers reported high levels of exhaustion from work, 17% of managers reported feeling cynical about work, 61% of managers had thought about leaving their job, 29% of managers planned to look for a new job in next 12 months and 1 in 5 managers expressed intentions to look for work outside the AOD field (*NCETA Research*)

## Evidence of need for a different workplace

A 2002 paper written for the Inter-Governmental Committee on Drugs summarised

“that a major paradigm shift is required to focus our thinking away from exclusive orientation on training to one which encapsulates factors such as organisational development, change management, evidence-based knowledge transfer and skill development.”<sup>1</sup>

Anne Roche wrote, ‘one of the important conceptual leaps involved in a workforce development approach is the shift to ‘systems thinking’. This is fundamental to grasping what workforce development is about. While education and training can be a part of a workforce

<sup>1</sup> *Workforce Development Issues in the AOD Field: A Briefing Paper for the Inter-Governmental Committee on Drugs*. Roche, A. (2002). National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction.



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development perspective, they essentially focus on the individual learners or workers. The deficit requiring rectification (through training) is seen to lie with that individual. No further consideration is given to the organisational context in which that person operates or the wider system at large which may ultimately determine whether specific policies or practices can be put in place'.<sup>2</sup> In essence, to create a place where people want to contribute you must firstly take a holistic perspective and look not only at the individual but also at the support systems and processes.



**Nexus** is grounded in research conducted by Australia's National Research Centre on AOD Workforce Development (NCETA) and Mental Health Coordinating Council (MHCC) research into workforce development; and guided by workforce development frameworks and capability frameworks from , New Zealand Ministry of Health, New Zealand National Addiction Workforce Development (Matua Raki), New Zealand National Centre of Mental Health Research, Information and Workplace Development (Te Pou).

**Fact:** 44% of AOD managers believe they do not have all the management skills needed to do their job effectively *and* a further 22% don't know if they have the skills to do their job. (Duraisingam, V. et al, 2007. *Wellbeing, Stress & Burnout. A National Survey of Managers in Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services.* NCETA)

<sup>2</sup> Roche, A.M. (2001). *What is this thing called workforce development?* NCETA



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The aim of nexus is to (1) help individual managers develop strategies and competencies, (2) help managers to develop others to be the best they can be and (3) help managers develop a holistic understanding of their organisation and how all the parts interact and influence each other.

### Program Design

**Nexus** has been designed jointly by Kerri Lawrence and John Coxon. Kerri is a qualified health service manager and mentor working in the mental health and drug & alcohol sectors since 1989. Kerri is Director of Wellbeing Programs at John Coxon & Associates, and is responsible for program design and service delivery. John is principal consultant for John Coxon & Associates and is an experienced management coach. John has been working with managers in the healthcare and community sectors since 2002.

### Mentoring For Managers

A mentor with experience in either mental health or alcohol & drug service delivery provides guidance to your managers to develop effective management strategies and capabilities. This helps create a culture where people want to belong and contribute.

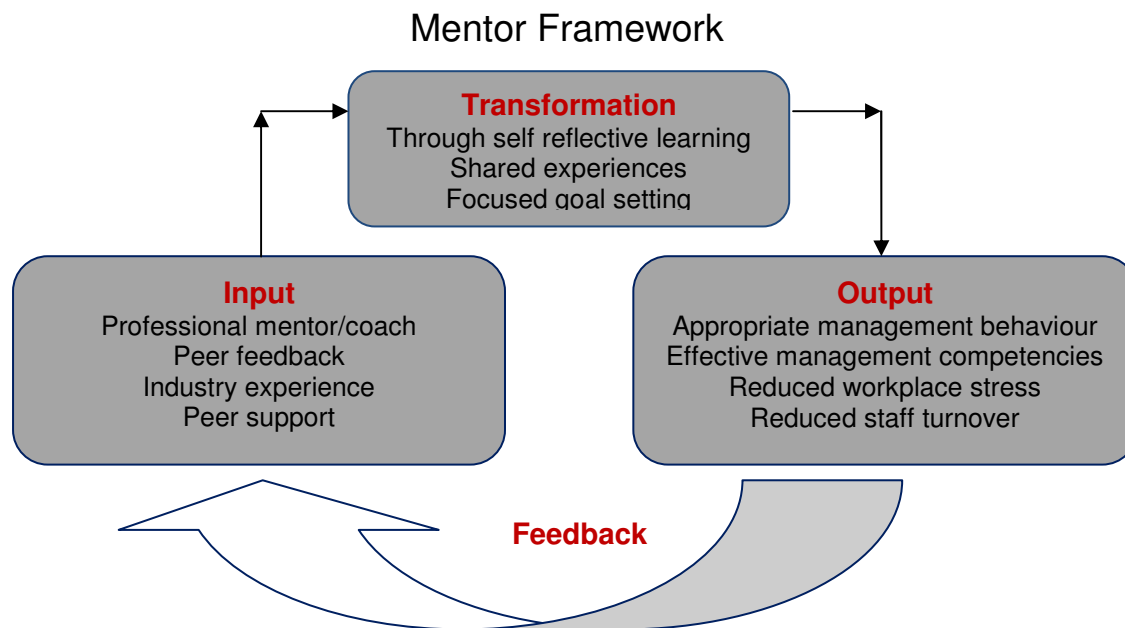
Our mentors have worked extensively in mental health and AOD. They understand the environment, the language, the issues and the challenges faced daily by managers in these sectors. A typical mentoring relationship extends over 12 months, is goal-driven and evidence based. Prior to mentoring taking place we seek evidence of the need for change, mentors use proven methodologies and best practices and at the end we seek evidence of change having taken place. Mentors and protégés develop and agree upon a mentor development plan and contract.

Our philosophy is that mentoring is a process of self-managed learning. It is a relationship based upon trust and mutual respect, where the protégé benefits from the broad experience and knowledge of the mentor; while the mentor encourages reflective thinking and facilitates dialogue. As a result managers develop an ability to provide leadership, to form working relationships and create an effective workplace.



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### Why provide mentoring for your managers

For many years now mentoring has become recognised as an effective means of developing effective managers<sup>3</sup>. Throughout Australia, State Governments have incorporated mentoring into their management development programs.<sup>4 5</sup> The Mental Health Coordinating Council promotes mentoring as an effective management development process<sup>6</sup>

There are practical reasons for providing mentoring for your managers. The process is based upon observed evidence of a need for change, it is based upon the development of management behaviours and it focuses on implementation into daily work activities. Mentoring is not a concept; it is about developing real behaviours in a real workplace that are needed to achieve real outcomes.

<sup>3</sup> Haley, F. and Canabou, C. (October, 2003). Fast Talk: The mentors' mentors. Fast Company, 75, 59. Five top leaders talk about their mentors and what they learned from them.

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/public\\_employment/working\\_in\\_the\\_nsw\\_public\\_sector/mentoring](http://www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/public_employment/working_in_the_nsw_public_sector/mentoring)

<sup>5</sup> Office of the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment (WA), *Mentoring: A Strategy for Achieving Equity and Diversity*, Public Sector Standards Commission, Perth, 1996

Office of the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment (NSW), *Mentoring Made Easy: A Practical Guide*, Sydney, 1999.

<sup>6</sup> Mental Health Recovery – Philosophy in Practice. A workforce development guide. 2008. MHCC



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### The mentoring process

John Coxon & Associates provide a mentor with experience and understanding of the mental health or alcohol and drug sectors. A mentor's role is to guide the process of learning and development through establishing a safe mentoring environment, assisting with goal setting, facilitating conversations and discussion, encouraging exploration of possibilities, challenging assumptions and monitoring progress. It is not a part of a mentor's role to 'tell' a protégé what to do; rather to help a protégé to identify their own solutions. This avoids the protégé becoming dependent upon the mentor.

A mentoring relationship may be short-term or long-term. The time frame is driven by the protégé's needs.

Each mentoring relationship is based upon evidence of need and is goal driven. The outcome of mentoring is always a change of behaviour by the manager.

Evidence of need may be as formal as a 360 degree process or it may be as informal as feedback to the manager by their executive manager or by peers. The process of gathering evidence is not as important as their actually being acceptance by the protégé of a need to change. If there is no evidence of a need to change then management development may be achieved through supervision and further education.

The mentor and protégé work together to develop a *mentor development plan* and a *mentor agreement*.

In developing a mentor development plan the protégé sets out their key objectives or goal and activities they will engage in as they move towards these goals.

The mentor agreement sets out the length of the mentor relationship, contact details, frequency of mentoring sessions and contains a confidentiality clause.

A review process and evaluation process are built into the mentor development plan. A protégé is expected to be able to demonstrate appropriate progress towards achieving goals and to be able to demonstrate the impact of their development.

### Mentor program fees

**Nexus** mentors are highly qualified people with many years experience in mental health or alcohol and drug service delivery. The cost of mentoring depends upon factors such as frequency of sessions and where mentoring takes place. Each mentoring contract will be fully costed and a proposal prepared prior to commencing. Discounts may apply when two or more people from the same organisation are involved in mentoring at the same time.

It is recommended mentoring be viewed as a development program that will deliver quantifiable benefits to both the organisation and to the individual. Rather than view mentoring as a cost, instead view it as highly personalised professional development.



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### Program Outcomes & Benefits

When there are low levels of workplace wellbeing an organisation may experience:

- Reduced job satisfaction – lower collaboration, high conflict
- Lower job performance – people not developed to perform to potential
- Poor service delivery – service outcomes not met
- Increased recruitment and retention costs – lose of best people
- Mismatch between competencies and client needs – community needs not met
- Reduced commitment to the organisation – turning up but not contributing

Research by Gallup Group<sup>7</sup> shows that 26% of people who leave an employer do so due to poor management! Further research has shown that not only is managers a key driver of staff turnover **but also** factors such as company image (belief in the organisation, pride in working there) and employee value (policies and practices that support employees) contribute to workplace satisfaction and wellbeing<sup>8</sup>. The key to an effective and enjoyable workplace rests in the capacity of each manager to (a) lead and manage to the best of their ability and (b) develop the potential of others. In achieving this:

- Your organisation will reduce its recruitment and retention costs
- Increase engagement by all employees
- Be able to attract high quality employees
- Reduce workplace stress and burnout
- Minimise workplace conflicts
- Improve service delivery

### Return on Investment

When you invest in workforce development and the development of managers you invest in the future sustainability of your organisation. Benefits accrued and multiply year after year as high quality workers deliver a high quality service. Workforce development is the platform upon which service delivery is founded and is a signal to funding bodies and sponsors that your organisation has the capacity to achieve the best possible return on their investment.

### Our People

**Kerri Lawrence** is Director – Wellbeing Programs at John Coxon & Associates. Kerri is a professional Health Service Manager with extensive skills and experience in mental health & alcohol and drug service delivery. Kerri's experience has been across both government and not-for-profit sectors, in Australia, New Zealand, and internationally. Kerri holds post-graduate qualifications in health service management, and a Masters in Health Administration. Kerri is an experienced Organisational Consultant and is a Registered Mentor with the Australian College of Health Services Management.

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<sup>7</sup> Buckingham, M. & Coffman, C. (1999). *First, Break All The Rules*. Simon & Schuster

<sup>8</sup> Erickson, A. & Blecha, S. 2007. *A New Look At Why Employees Leave*. White Paper.



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**John Coxon & Associates** work with managers in the health sector, aged care sector and not-for-profit sector to develop leadership capacity and management capabilities. We achieve this through a mixture of consulting, coaching, mentoring, facilitation and customised professional development. Each of our consultants has experience in the health sector or not-for-profit sector. They understand the unique environment your managers operate within.

Principal consultant, John Coxon worked with Kerri Lawrence to develop **Nexus** and will maintain an active involvement in monitoring and evaluating the success of the program.

### Additional services

Depending upon your needs, John Coxon & Associates have people with the knowledge and experience to assist with:

- Developing organisational systems and processes
- Workplace development
  - Managing complex case loads
  - Working effectively with clients with a dual diagnosis
  - Early prevention techniques for a client at risk of suicide
  - Dealing with difficult people/Reducing workplace stress
  - Leadership behaviours
- Program design and evaluation

### My Promise to You

At John Coxon & Associates it is our practice to offer a risk free environment to our clients. If at any time we fail to deliver outcomes, as agreed between you and ourselves, we will refund the entire fee. No questions asked. This is my promise to you.



John Coxon  
*Principal Consultant*

