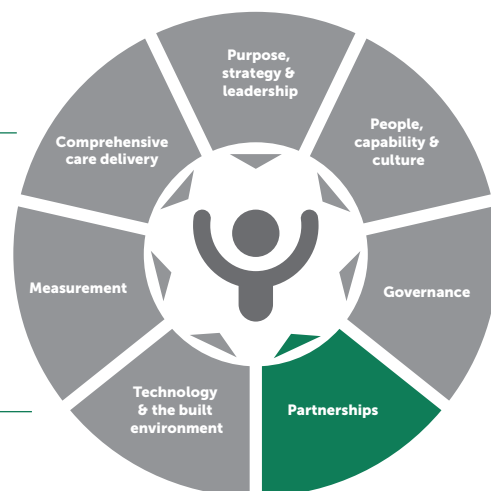Fact sheet 6: Person-centred organisations

Attribute: Strong external partnerships

A fact sheet for governing bodies and managers

This fact sheet provides information about one of the seven key attributes of high-performing person-centred healthcare organisations – Strong external partnerships.

All attributes are interrelated and should be considered together as a framework for achieving great person-centred care.

This attribute focuses on recognising that close connections within and across health care settings and other sectors is essential to the delivery of person-centred care. Partnerships with other service providers are critical to coordinating services around the needs and preferences of individuals, and should be encouraged to ensure continuity of care and good patient experience.

Coordination of care does not necessarily require the merging of different services, structures or workflows. Instead the focus is on improving delivery of care through **alignment** and harmonising of the processes and information among the different services.

Key elements:

- Healthcare organisations have a comprehensive network of service partners and relationships
- There is a focus on seamless transitions and coordination of care
- Healthcare organisations operate as leaders in system improvement
- Community volunteers are recognised and supported as critical partners in enhancing the patient experience

"Relationships (with the community) are absolutely critical"

Executive staff

Is my organisation achieving this attribute?

Element	What can this look like?	Reflective questions
Healthcare organisations have a comprehensive network of service partners and relationships	• Services are coordinated around the preferences and needs of the patient, and partnerships exist within and across health care settings (through referral systems and networks) • There are broad linkages between health and other sectors to address social determinants that may impact a person's access to care, health and wellbeing. These may include housing authorities, religious institutions, law enforcement, social services and schools	• Who are your external partnerships with? Do these partnerships support care delivery that is safe and coordinated around the needs of your patients? • What other linkages/partnerships could your organisation make within and across the health and other sectors to support comprehensive care? • What structures and processes are in place to support and foster relationships with external partners, such as local community services?
There is a focus on seamless transitions and coordination of care	• Recognition that coordination of care is not a single activity, and there is a range of strategies in place. This may include care pathways, clear referral processes, health navigators, case management, team-based care and improved information flows	• What strategies are in place to ensure safe transitions of care? • Are there clear care and referral pathways to support continuous care? • How does information flow within your organisation? Can you improve the flow of information so it is accessible to the right person at the right time?
Where there is an opportunity, healthcare organisations operate as leaders in system improvement	• Opportunities to lead in system improvement through research, education, innovation and development of best practices are identified and acted on • Teaching person-centred skills and knowledge to the new generation of health workers • Where there is an opportunity, acting as coordinator and facilitator of inter-sectoral collaborations (this could include with social services or community organisations)	• What opportunities are available for your organisation to lead or collaborate on person-centred care initiatives? • Are there opportunities for you to share your learnings in relation to person-centred care with other organisations?
Community volunteers are recognised and supported as critical partners in enhancing the patient experience	• Partnering with volunteers to assist with services across the organisation, including wayfinding, information provision, transport services and support services	• Does your organisation use volunteers to support the delivery of care? • What services across the organisation could benefit from partnering with volunteers?

Excelling in this attribute will help you meet some of the requirements in the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards (second edition)

Some of the main NSQHS Standard actions that relate to this attribute include:

Clinical Governance Standard
- Governance, leadership and culture (1.1, 1.2)
- Healthcare records are available to clinicians at the point of care (1.16a)

Partnering with Consumers Standard
- Partnerships in healthcare governance, planning, design, measurement and evaluation (2.11, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14)

Comprehensive Care Standard
- Designing systems to deliver comprehensive care (5.4)
- Collaboration and teamwork (5.5, 5.6)

Communicating for Safety Standard
- Organisational systems to support effective communication (6.4)
- Communication at clinical handover (6.7, 6.8)
- Documentation of information (6.11)

Helpful resources

Communicating for Safety resource portal provides information and resources to support effective clinical communication across the patient journey www.safetyandquality.gov.au

Framework on integrated people-centred health services – World Health Organization: outlines strategic approaches and potential policy options and interventions www.who.int/servicedeliverysafety/areas/people-centred-care/framework/en/

Manual on Care Coordination: From Admission to Transfer of Care in NSW Public Hospitals Care Coordination – NSW Health www.health.nsw.gov.au/pfs/Publications/care-coordination-ref.pdf

Shared transfers of care program – Primary Health Tasmania: provides a range of resources, including tools, templates and case studies www.primaryhealthtas.com.au/programs-services/connecting-care/professionals/shared-transfer-of-care

References

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3. Jorm CM, White S and Kaneen K. Clinical handover: critical communications. Med J Aust 2009; 190 (11 Suppl): S108-S109.

4. The King's Fund. Volunteering in health and care. London: The King's Fund; 2013.