

WHAT CAN A PHYSIOTHERAPIST DO WITHIN THEIR ROLE?

FOR YOUR CLIENTS AND FOR YOUR ORGANISATION

Grampians Region HACC Guiding Principle:

The Grampians Region HACC Program promotes effective working relationships between HACC funded Physiotherapists and Living at Home Assessment and Care Planning Officers.

Physiotherapists are qualified Allied Health Practitioners trained to provide individualised assessments, develop intervention and enhancement plans and implement therapeutic programs for their clients.

The Grampians Region HACC program has a number of physiotherapists who are engaged to work with you and your clients to assist them in their daily living activities and social networking.

Part of good practice in supporting older people and people with disabilities is to look for the reasons behind changing abilities and seek assistance for the person to overcome them instead of increasing services without review. Many older people will find that as more is done for them they will lose the advantage of incidental exercise and find that their joints being to stiffen and their muscles waste.

Physiotherapists have a vital role to play in helping people stay on their feet and active. They will be able to assist in a number of ways:

Strength:

Strengthening specific muscle groups e.g. the muscles of standing and walking. Building exercise tolerance to be able to walk further. Demonstrating and teaching getting out of a chair independently. Strengthening the muscles of the arms and trunk in order to support independence in personal care. This may be prescribed specifically or done in an exercise group setting.

Balance:

Physiotherapists have knowledge of the issues that affect balance as well as other conditions that lead to the risk of falling. They are able to conduct falls risk assessments and treat conditions that may cause falls as well as prescribe home exercise programs and make recommendations about the safety of the home and community environment. They can also demonstrate simple ways of getting up from the floor following a fall and suggest protective equipment which will minimise injury if a fall occurs.

Pain:

Pain will often limit what people are willing to do which can lead to increased muscle weakness and joint stiffness. Physiotherapists can provide treatments and prescribe home programs which assist with pain relief.

Stiffness:

Physiotherapists use a number of techniques to reduce joint stiffness which may be affecting mobility and personal care.

Ongoing Rehabilitation:

HACC Physiotherapy is not to be used for rehabilitation however when the more acute phase of rehabilitation is complete further physiotherapy may assist with the enjoyment of a more active lifestyle.

Planned Activity Groups:

The environment of your PAG may affect the amount of incidental exercise people get and there may also be safety issues that physiotherapists can identify and develop strategies to overcome.

Staff Training:

HACC physiotherapists may be available to assist with the training of support staff in identifying the need for referrals and assisting with one to one exercise programs.

The above are simple examples. There may be a number of other ways that a physiotherapist can be of assistance. Asking the HAC physiotherapists to attend some Living at Home Assessments could be a positive experience for both the physiotherapist and the assessment officer. Where HACC physiotherapists are unavailable the Community Health physiotherapists may be able to help in some instances.

Physiotherapists are also there to assist Living at Home Assessment and Care Planning Officers and their clients through secondary consultation (advice and suggestions) or by providing the types of assessment listed above to assist in the enhancement of client independence and quality of life.

Engaging Physiotherapists in your practice can broaden your horizons in relation to client choice and service delivery techniques. They can provide training for family members/friends and Community Care Workers/Support Workers in how best to work with and support the client. They can assist you to help put the ASM principles into practice and build them into your care planning and service delivery models.