



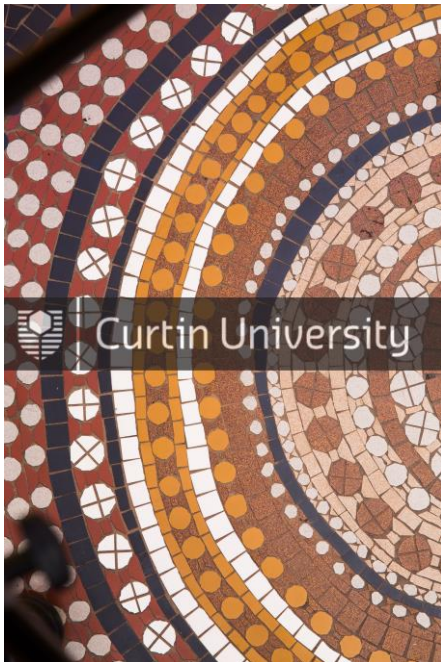
Advocacy for Older People

against the backdrop of the Royal Commission and Covid-19 pandemic

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54th Australian Association of Gerontology Conference
9-12 November, 2021
Online

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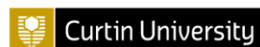


Acknowledgement of Country

We would like to acknowledge the Whadjuk Noongar, Turrbul and Jagera people whose land we are standing on and recognise the strength, resilience and capacity of the traditional owners of the lands.



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Session Overview

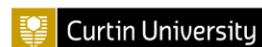
- What is aged care advocacy and why is it important?
- Research project: What is required for effective aged care advocacy?
- Research to practice: How are the research findings informing practice?



What is Advocacy ?

Advocacy is the process supporting a person to

- Understand and exercise their rights
- Have their voice heard on matters that are important to them
- Have their views and wishes considered in decisions made about their life.



Why is Advocacy Important?

- The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety highlighted a number of concerns relating to the quality of aged care services.
- People accessing aged care services are often fearful of making a complaint.
- Following the Royal Commission, the aged care system will be subject to significant and ongoing reform and many older people will be seeking independent support to understand and navigate changes to their care.
- The COVID pandemic has introduced new challenges for aged care recipients.



Growing Demand

- Demand for advocacy increased by 63% between 2017-18 and 2020-21
- Royal Commission Recommendation 106 called for a study of unmet demand for advocacy services and increased funding to meet demand for advocacy, and provide increased education, systemic advocacy and capacity building measures including advocate professional development.
- In the 2021-22 Budget the Australian Government committed \$94 million for expanded National Aged Care Advocacy Program.
- The aged care advocacy workforce is set to double with this increased funding.



Developing the OPAN workforce: Exploring the skills, attributes, knowledge, professional development, and training requirements for effective aged care advocacy

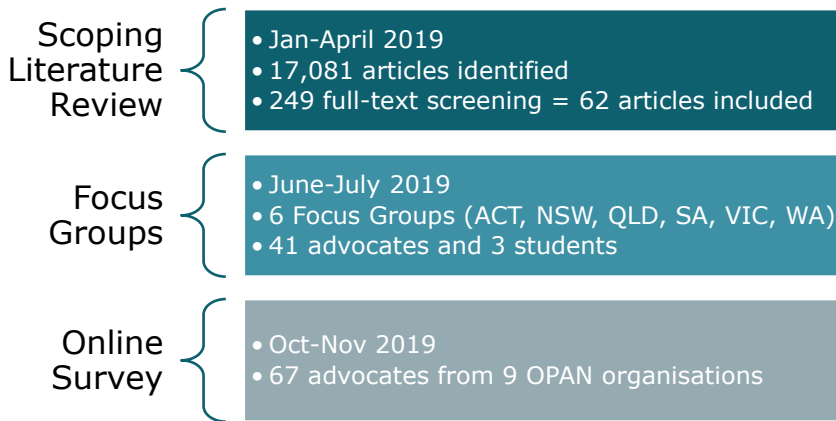
Ms Maya Hayden-Evans, Dr Barbara Blundell, Dr Ben Milbourn & Professor Sonya Girdler

July 2020

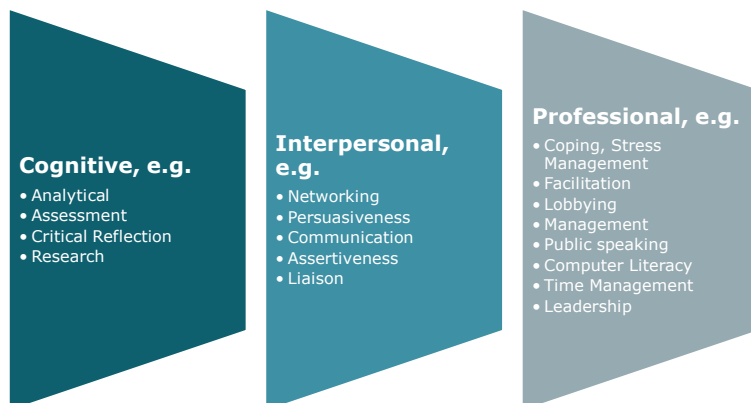


Project Phases

Mixed-methods research design

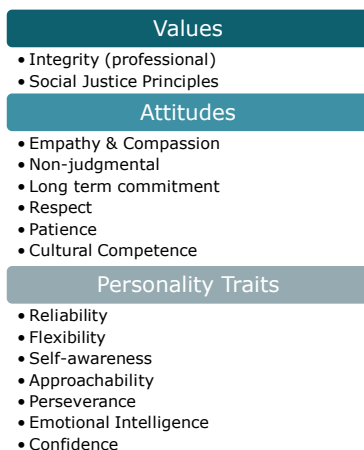


Skills



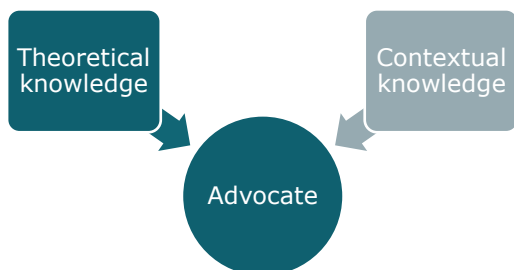
- 26 skills were identified as necessary for either individual or systemic advocacy, including cognitive skills, interpersonal skills, professional skills
- a broad range of skills are needed – interpersonal communication skills are critical

Values, Attitudes & Personality Traits



- Focus groups: values and attitudes more important than skills and knowledge
- Survey: values, attitudes and personality traits ranked higher than many of the skills
- Survey: professional integrity most important value for an aged care advocate

Knowledge



- Advocates draw on both theoretical and contextual knowledge
- Most important knowledge: understanding of advocacy role, clear understanding of practice boundaries

Implications

- Values based recruitment

Make a Difference:

Help protect the rights and raise the voice of older people

- National Advocate Orientation Program
- Advocate Knowledge Hub
- National Aged Care Advocate Meetings
- Development of a Professional Development Strategy



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References

- Hayden-Evans, M., Blundell, B., Milbourn, B. & Girdler, S. (2020). *Developing the OPAN workforce: exploring the skills, attributes, knowledge, professional development, and training requirements for effective aged care advocacy*. Curtin University & OPAN.