

Tech Savvy program

Submission of the Tech Savvy program – Connecting the “Digitally Excluded” to the World for consideration of the 2019 DRTA Awards for Excellence.



Leah Sullivan

Lifestyle and Wellbeing Team Leader

Anglicare SQ – North Coast

THE PROJECT

The **TECH SAVVY PROGRAM** aims to assist the disconnected isolated client to become connected with the world at large through the internet. From their PC, lap-top, tablet, iPad, iPhone or Android they cotton-on to the modern world of online shopping, facetime, texting, emails and Facebook and Google maps - where they delight in showing everyone else where they are from!

The program includes a monthly class and has extended to in-home support from trained volunteers on a weekly or fortnightly basis

Client needs vary from those using Google earth to reminisce childhood memories, to online shopping for those having troubles accessing the physical shops, to sharing photos and keeping in contact with family and friends using emails, Facebook, facetime or skype.

Each **Tech Savvy** Class the client attends are tailored to suit the needs of the client. For example, helping a client find websites that sell "beads" on-line. The client views the beads, compares prices, and adds to cart, items shipped direct to the client's home, so he/she can continue their hobby of Jewellery making. This enables the client to continue **to live the life they choose** despite the reduction of mobility and physical access and all the while considering online safety.

Tech Savvy is also used during "Arm-Chair" Travel where we incorporate client places of interest to create an experience. Using the iPad (connected to the large screen TV) and using google earth clients are able to travel abroad and reminisce on what has changed since their last visit or to explore new places always wondered about. Nostalgia personified – especially when they see their childhood street or home.

One of the greatest successes of the program is the assistance of setting up regular skype or FaceTime calls with family to stay connected, being able to see each other during the call has helped with isolation and loneliness.

The **Tech Savvy** program is scheduled to go state-wide within Anglicare in both community and residential settings by end of 2019. Many branches have already implemented the program.

THE OBJECTIVES

To engage clients in a cognitive stimulating exercise to meet individual client's needs. Engage clients on all levels of ability. Connecting individuals to others and/or groups through social media. To have an environment so delivery of the activity Tech Savvy appears to be an impromptu for fun and laughter whilst being educational. This will include encouraging clients with the opportunity for choice and decision making in a social environment with a purposeful goal and maintaining the opportunity for self-expression. To combine both new technology and old as a therapeutic and educational tool.

Process – From Plan to Evaluation

The Federal Government has flagged digital inclusion as an important funding initiative under the banner of "*Be Connected*". The goal is to assist the elderly in their confidence and skills with the internet whilst maintaining a focus of online safety.

Older Australians with low internet skills can often feel isolated from their community and family at a time in their lives when feeling connected is increasingly important. "*Be connected*" aims to change that through a family and community centred approach. It will help older Australians to realise the value of being connected online and provide access to appropriate training and support in a safe and familiar environment.

<https://www.beconnectednetwork.org.au/news-events/be-connected-program-launched-older-australians>

Identified the need through chatting with and knowing client's needs.

Implemented a survey to further understand client needs and enthusiasm for the program.

120 clients were surveyed,

58 clients returned the survey

48 clients felt isolated and disconnected from family and friends.

44 clients showed interest in learning new technology by either iPad laptop etc.

26 clients were concerned about keeping up with trends such as email billing.

55 clients were interested in games and books, entertainment

33 clients were interested in keeping in touch with family and friends with social media

3 of the interested clients attended the first workshop on 3rd October 2017.

With clients talking to one another about how easy it has been for them to be **Tech Savvy**

Subsequent review determined that there were constraints with time, day and health limitations which led to the expansion of **In-home Tech Savvy** assistance and a day and time change.

By January 2018 we had 18 clients attending regular monthly session at the local Nambour library

By July 2019 we have 53 clients receiving the tech savvy program in home by volunteers and 19 regular monthly attendees participating in the program.

Clients were assisted to purchase devices using their HCP funding. Contacting families if they could assist with old no longer used devices for those that were under different funding packages. To be able to utilise the program in home

Using grant money from the Be connected. I was able purchase x2 iPad and x 3 laptops to be used during our monthly sessions at the library utilising the library desktops.

Many clients choosing to bring their own device to learn with at the monthly session.

A Montessori model was adapted during the sessions with focus on supporting the person and the environment. The program adapts to support memory loss and independence with choice and decision making. The tech savvy program embraces meaningful activity with purpose.

A DRTA focus is observed by encouraging the use of cognitive abilities. Clients are actively involved with meaning and purpose. The program includes a person-centred approach supporting all abilities.

The laptops and iPad are lent out to clients for a 2 week basis to practise and continue learning their new skills and to evaluate if they would benefit from owning their own device. Families are also embracing this program as it is helping them all stay connected when separated by distance.

Using the **Tech Savvy** program with google earth has been a great tool for being connected with family and friends also. Clients use google earth to see where their grandkids are now living that they physically are not able to visit any more. This gives a feeling of connectedness with family and friends. Down the digital highway, across the ASQ community sector, there is a enormous impact on those clients who take part. They are be part of the digital age, unafraid of the world wide web, taking their place, chatting, banking, shopping, gaming (well at least Scrabble and Solitaire) and finding out all they've wanted to know about anything!! Isolated no more!! Old friends reunited, families regularly popping up for a chat. With a touch of a screen or a swipe and a click all is revealed and nobody misses out nor is left wondering. Nothing takes the place of "being in the know"!!

For many senior Australians, they grew up without a telephone in the home. Phones were in the street or at the Post Office. With the roll-out of copper wire telephones, thousands of Australians became familiar with the “ringing” of the phone – and in time everyone was “on the line”. Many recall the hilarity of the being part of a “party-line”. Seniors have seen winding phones and to push button to wireless. Fancy, they now can store numbers in their phone – never needing a directory any longer. In these times, **Tech Savvy** demystifies and empowers them just too simply do what they want to do – speak, write a note, go to the bank, pay a bill and amuse themselves.

One of our clients is a gentleman born in the 1930’s. Telephones were about (in a red booths) in some streets or at the local Post Office. Telegrams were sent and received from the Post Office. In one sense technology was all around him. But as he aged he felt he was being separated by technology as he reached his years as a 80 year old, originally from England, was, in his prime, a Champion breeder of “English” Sheep dogs in New Zealand and Toowoomba QLD. Now, with events all over the world, via Your Tube and the Internet, he can see what’s happening, who’s won the trophies, what new developments are for the trials and read the newsletters of every Association of Sheep Dog Breeders and Trainers around the world! – “Who said... You can’t teach an Old Dog new tricks!!

The curiosity is there in seniors. Helping them step by step with the **Tech Savvy program** is bringing everyone, “just a little bit closer”.

It’s a fun and interesting way to show clients they can have **“Support for the life you want”**.

Another client says’ she can now google news articles and use the news apps instead of buying newspapers. I love how I’m so in touch with the world, It saves me money not buying the newspapers because you can google anything. I’m now living in the 21st Century which i thought I’d never be able to do. – Sue

I’ve learnt to use a iPad as a tool to keep my husband stimulated and more alert since he has dementia. He plays dementia specific games, we take photo son the iPad and use it for reminiscing and helping my husband remember the things we love to do. - Shirley

IMPACT TO THE ORGANISATION AND COMMUNITY

The program has had a positive result promoting the quality of care in the aged care setting. Client’s achievements has enabled the community to have feelings of excellence in care for their family members. A general good news story has shown the community that clients in residential facilities and still living isolated at home in can still have an interesting, rewarding and fun life.

Following the success of the tech savvy program in past years and continued clients interest we will be incorporating and celebrating” get on line week” within our local community helping others that don’t have access to this program .

See attached videos of the Tech savvy program and clients testimonials

Thank you for taking the time to read this submission- Tech savvy supporting clients for the life they want.