



Allied health professionals play a key role in community prevention of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease

The statistics about type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke are alarming. Every day in Australia almost 280 people develop diabetes¹, and every 12 minutes someone dies of cardiovascular disease². Preventing these serious conditions has never been more important.

Allied health professionals play an important role in the prevention of type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke. Accredited

Exercise Physiologist, Nicole French, and her team at Exercise for Rehabilitation and Health (ERH) have been leading the way in community health promotion and prevention by delivering the *Life!* program since 2008.

The *Life!* program is a type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease prevention program coordinated by Diabetes Victoria and supported by the Victorian Government. *Life!* gives participants the motivation and support needed to make and maintain positive changes, adopt healthy behaviours and lead a more active lifestyle. The program is delivered by qualified health professionals through a series of group course sessions or over the phone, one-on-one with a health coach.

“To date, our roll out of the Life! program has been our most popular and effective intervention for chronic disease prevention.”

Nicole French, *Life!* facilitator



References

1. National Diabetes Services Scheme. Data snap shot – All types of diabetes. March 2015.
2. Australian Bureau of Statistics. Causes of death 2014 (3303.0). March 2016.

Exercise for Rehabilitation and Health Case Study

ERH is a private practice located in Essendon North, delivering a range of individual and group-based client services focusing on preventative health, rehabilitation and self-management. Director, Nicole French, founded the practice in 2006 and overtime has grown her organisation to include exercise physiology, physiotherapy, corporate health, occupational health and safety programs, as well as moving towards online platforms to increase accessibility to healthcare.

“The Life! program strengthens our service provision which is in line with our organisations mission of providing access to allied health services that help to prevent as well as manage chronic health conditions.”

Nicole French, *Life!* facilitator

Why did ERH become a *Life!* provider?

Nicole's commitment to diabetes prevention, as well as the opportunity to be part of a structured and measureable program, sparked her initial interest in the *Life!* program. To date, *Life!* has been the most popular and effective intervention for chronic disease prevention at the practice. The health of their local community, and in fact for all Victorians, continuously drives them to facilitate *Life!* groups. Nicole and her team encourage all of their clients who are at high risk of developing diabetes, heart disease and stroke to take part.

How does the *Life!* program support ERH's work in prevention?

ERH have found that *Life!* compliments their existing programs and services, and allows them to provide a program that is flexible and which considers a holistic approach to health.

“At every opportunity we are endorsing the Life! program and encouraging organisations to become providers and health professionals to become facilitators.”

Nicole French, *Life!* facilitator



Nicole French (top left), *Life!* facilitator, and her team at Exercise for Rehabilitation and Health.

How does ERH engage with the target audience to promote the *Life!* program?

For ERH, the most successful strategies to encourage further participants to commence the program has been through face-to-face discussion with clients and word of mouth from those who have completed the course. To help create greater awareness of the program, Nicole shares participant success stories through social media, engages with local GP clinics and has a regular segment on North West FM radio. With over 90 group courses already delivered, Nicole and her team are committed to delivering *Life!* which they believe has a significant impact on both their local and broader communities.

Interested in delivering the *Life!* program?



www.lifeprogram.org.au



03 8648 1880



life@diabetesvic.org.au