

Kristin DIETITIAN Central Queensland.

“It would be great if people wanted to work out in our country communities more, not just the cities, so we can build that community of health professionals”



Picture for illustration purposes

Kristin is a part-time Dietitian whose work mainly involves providing dietitian clinics, supporting her team, and working with other health professionals. In her story, Kristin speaks about her experiences sharing

dietary advice, the responses she gets from recipients of information and her efforts in ensuring information shared is well-understood.

Kristin's story:

On a typical day I travel to Longreach, Winton or Isisford to provide dietitian clinics. I also provide support to my NWRH team and work with other health professionals.

The type of services that I provide include: individual and family consultations, individualised dietary advice in easy to understand ways and nutrition counselling to support sustainable eating behaviour change (we all know easier said than done).

I face unique challenges in my work. Nutrition and diet information bombard everyone, and most of it is not from a qualified dietitian and so is often inaccurate and can be harmful to individuals. Unfortunately many people choose not to see a dietitian because they can find diet advice everywhere!

The way I deal with these challenges is by spending time with my clients unpacking the harmful beliefs about nutrition and body image that fuels their damaging food behaviours or confusion preventing them from changing. NWRH dietitians are also working on promoting our services to our communities and be more available at community events.

There are different ways in which we can improve the care we provide. One way is to improve awareness among other health and fitness professionals about the harms of 'telling' people what they should and shouldn't be eating and that they 'need' to lose weight. People find this disengaging, conflicting and shaming them from accessing health care and seeing a dietitian. Instead engaging with people in a compassionate, person centred approach and encouraging seeking individualised advice from a dietitian if the person and health professional have concerns about diet.

I love rural because the people are down to earth, friendly and well-connected to nature.

Kristin's story sheds more light on the challenges faced by dietitians in their day to day work, in particular the need to be conscious of the nutrition information conveyed to clients and the kinds of responses this information is likely to trigger. As Kristin notes, some people find nutrition and diet information "disengaging, conflicting and shaming" – particularly when it contradicts their ways of knowing about eating. That this has implications on clients' decisions in accessing health care makes this a priority concern requiring. Engagement of the most appropriate models of care ensures that clients that clients understand and to some extent apply nutrition information provided by dietitians.



...good health and wellbeing in rural and remote Australia