



Australian Government

Australian Institute of Family Studies

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Promising Practice Profiles

Reflections on methodology

Shaun Lohoar

Child Aware Approaches, 12 April 2013, Melbourne

Background

Funded by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) to produce a national collection of Promising Practice Profiles

AIMS

- to highlight approaches used by organisations to better understand ***what works*** to help families and communities to ***protect*** their ***children***
- to ***identify*** how responses to ***child and family safety*** can be delivered through ***communities*** in a ***respectful*** and ***effective*** way



Background (continued)

Focus organisations

- specialist Aboriginal community organisations
- non-Aboriginal agencies that deliver culturally appropriate programs

For use by

- carer support organisations
- relevant state and territory organisations
- Commonwealth government agencies
- PLUS researchers



Why “promising practice profiles”?

Criticisms

- too subjective (or not empirically based)?

Strengths

- can reveal who, what, how, where, when, why?
- generates ideas/innovation

Previous work

- other promising practice databases
- literature



Collaboration

Collaborators

- Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)
 - ◆ developing a submission questionnaire
 - ◆ assessing submissions
- Closing the Gap Working Group

Issue

- engaging organisations to submit their programs/practices

Response

- "tick box" surveys versus "narrative" approaches



Submission questionnaire

Language

- use of “plain language”
- opportunities to "tell the story"
 - ◆ open-ended approach

Principles (domains relevant for Aboriginal Services)

- community / family consultation and involvement
 - ◆ identifying needs
 - ◆ decision-making
 - ◆ program design, development, implementation and refinement
- cultural relevance (use of materials and practices in service delivery)
- community and service delivery context



Assessment

Inclusion criteria

- evaluation status
- effectiveness
 - ◆ program objectives met?
- anecdotal evidence (“practice”)
- “empirical” approaches
 - ◆ of 38 submissions, only [?] would satisfy inclusion criteria

An “inclusive” approach to assessment

- “arbitrary” inclusion criteria v capturing innovative and/or promising practice
- useful for researchers! for other service agencies?



Translating the data for use

Making sense of the information

- providing a context
 - ◆ from an A-Z listing to a THEMATIC display
 - ◆ searchable themes
- Improving service uptake
- Protecting Children
- Early literacy/ school readiness
- School retention
- Preventing criminal justice system involvement/recidivism
- Cultural education/support
- Engaging hard-to-reach groups
- Parenting support
- Social inclusion
- Workforce development/capacity building
- Service coordination
- Health promotion
- Suicide / mental health / substance misuse
- Adolescent support / crime diversion
- Intergenerational trauma and healing



Translating the data for use (cont'd)

Making sense of the information

- linking **practice** to available **evidence**



Summary

Collaboration is key!

- for research approach
- and for services – reflected in the data

Language needs consideration

- to engage services
- “evaluation” v program “feedback”

Best ways to collect information

- face-to-face; visit services
- PROCESS = OUTCOME



Acknowledgements

- Dr Deb Scott, Research Fellow, Australian Institute of Family Studies
- Frank Hytten, Executive Officer, Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)



Child Family Community Australia (CFCA)

For further information about the
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Promising Practice Profiles
visit the website at:

CFCA information exchange

Online resources for evidence-informed
decisions in policy and practice

www.aifs.gov.au/cfca

