



Proactively Managing For Outcomes in Statutory Child Protection

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Objectives of the Workshop

For participants...

- To become familiar with a model for managing statutory child protection offices
- To complete an audit of their own office and identify priorities for change
- To identify potential key implementation issues
- To consider this in light of the findings of an action research implementation project

Workshop Agenda

1. Background to the development of the management model
2. Explanation of the management model
3. Individual exercise: the management model audit
4. Small group discussion
5. The implementation experience
6. Personal perspectives
7. Questions
8. Conclusions

1. Background to the development of the management model

Five reasons for developing a child protection management model

- Limitations of available models
- The impact of managerialism
- The need to expand the definition of client need
- Limitations of child protection management research and theory
- The distinctive context of statutory child protection

Critical considerations in developing a potential model

- Informed by solid theoretical and empirical underpinnings
- In the form of a logic model - that links service inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes
- Specific attention to implementation issues

(Schorr 1997; Cameron and Vanderwoerd 1997; Plantz, Greenway et al. 1997; Cameron, Karabanow et al. 2001)

A logic model for effective management

OUTCOMES

Meeting and responding to client needs



OUTPUTS

Service activities that have proven effectiveness in contributing to outcomes



INPUTS AND ACTIVITIES

Management strategies that assist the development of an environment that supports effective service activities

Action Research - two key research questions

- Q1: What are the essential components of a management model that can guide area office management teams in proactively managing toward client outcomes?
- Q2: How can a management team effectively introduce such a model to a statutory child protection area office?

Two Phase Methodology

Phase one:

- The development of a potential model with the involvement of Departmental staff (9 workshops in 2002)

Phase two:

- Further develop the model in light of a ten month implementation experience (three offices in 2003)

2. Explanation of the management model

Clear service outcomes embedded in a case management framework

- The outcomes of child safety, child well-being and family and carer support are identified as the central focus of statutory child protection service delivery
- Structured planning processes, like the Department of Families case management system, have been found to be important in focusing practitioner's attention on client needs

(Farmer 1997; Grimshaw and Sinclair 1997; Aldgate and Statham 2001).

Service activities that have proven effectiveness in contributing to outcomes, informed by a sound practice framework

1. The development of effective relationships with children, young people, their families and carers
2. Participative planning processes
3. Collaborative practices with other service providers
4. A tenacious approach to case work

The development of effective relationships

- Cornerstone of effective assessment and intervention
(Weakland and Jordan 1990; Drake 1994; Winefield and Barlow 1995; Shemmings and Shemmings 1996; Thoburn, Brandon et al. 1997)
- Facilitate the engagement of children, young people, families and carers in the child protection process and are critical in gaining cooperation and compliance with child protection case plans
(Thoburn, Lewis et al. 1991; Marsh and Fisher 1991; Marsh and Fisher 1992; Lewis 1994; Colton, Drury et al. 1995; Thoburn, Brandon et al. 1997).

The development of effective relationships

Client involvement, cooperation and compliance with case plans has in turn been found to predict better case plan outcomes including:

- significant reductions in the likelihood of subsequent reports of child maltreatment
- significant reductions in out of home placements
- increased potential for parents to maintain custody of their children
- decisions in favour of less restrictive orders in court
- the early and successful discharge of children from care
- placement stability
- child well being

(Fanshell and Shinn 1978; Millham, Bullock et al. 1986; Berridge and Cleaver 1987; Jellinek, Murphy et al. 1992; Cleaver 1994; O'Toole et al. 1994; Finkelhor and Berliner 1995; Kufeldt, Armstrong et al. 1995; Karski 1999; Cleaver 2000; Littell 2001)

The development of effective relationships

What works:

- sensitive and informed professional/client relationships, with an appropriate balance of power;
- treating clients with respect and as unique, rather than as a case;
- establishing effective communication, despite the challenging context; and
- recognizing the stigmatizing impact of involvement with statutory services and seeking to rebuild child, young person and parental confidence.

(Drake 1994; Bullock, Little et al. 1995; Thoburn, Lewis et al. 1995; Farmer 1997)

Participative planning processes

- Participation in this context refers to children, young people, family and carer involvement in planning and other decision-making processes
(Adcock 1991)
- A key benefit of increased client-worker collaboration in planning is increased commitment to carry out the goals of plans and better compliance
(Cimmarusti 1992; Thoburn, Lewis et al. 1995; Littell and Tajima 2000; Littell 2001)

Participative planning processes

What works:

- building on the existing strengths of the child or young person's situation;
- working through rather than avoiding conflicts;
- involving a range of people, who could support children and young people, not just their parents and carers; and
- seeing formal planning meetings not as an end in themselves, but as a step in an ongoing collaborative process.

(Famularo, Kinscherff et al. 1989; Jellinek et al. 1991; McCallum 1992; Kim 1993; Butler, Radia et al. 1994; Bullock, Little et al. 1995; Shemmings and Shemmings 1996; Marsh and Peel 1999; Masson, Harrison et al. 1999; Littell and Tajima 2000; Pennell and Burford 2000; Aldgate and Statham 2001)

Collaborative practices with other service providers

“Collaboration refers to working relationships between different teams or units within single departments and to professionals from different disciplines or agencies working together for a common focus” (Aldgate and Statham 2001, p99)

- There is widespread agreement that interagency collaboration is difficult to achieve generally and in child protection

(Norton and Rogers 1981; Wilson and Akana 1987; Challis, Fox and Dingwall 1985; Molin and Herskowitz 1986; Fuller et al. 1988; Blyth and Milner 1990)

Collaborative practices with other service providers

Critical to outcomes in child protection because:

- client needs cannot be met without them
- lack of interagency cooperation has been identified as a significant contributing factor in child deaths

(Hallett 1995; Aldgate and Statham 2001)

Collaborative practices with other service providers

Ineffective collaboration has been linked with:

- families not being offered supports at an earlier stage leading to more intrusive, distressing and expensive intervention at a latter time
- the underdevelopment of planned, interdisciplinary therapeutic interventions
- families being offered services based on the available pool of services, rather than an assessment of their needs

(Packman and Hall 1998; Birchall and Hallett 1995; Tunstill and Aldgate 2000; Aldgate and Statham 2001)

Collaborative practices with other service providers (con)

Research has identified that interagency collaboration has been an important factor in improved client outcomes, including:

- effective case planning
- avoiding court proceedings
- preventing placement breakdown
- promoting effective client participation
- increasing the effectiveness of the worker-client relationship

(Glisson 1994; Banks 1995; Biehal, Clayden et al. 1995; Ward 1995; Morrison 1996; Hunt, Macleod et al. 1999; Hunt and Macleod 1999; Cleaver 2000);

Collaborative practices with other service providers

What works:

- clarifying and negotiating roles;
- cooperation;
- joint service planning and delivery;
- coordinating work;
- being part of a team; and
- keeping each other informed through frequent communication.

(Aldgate and Bradley 1999; Aldgate and Statham 2001)

Tenacious case work

When caseworkers engage in casework in a committed and proactive manner, focused on achieving effective outcomes for individual children.

Tenacious case work

A tenacious approach has been linked with:

- Effective case intervention and outcomes
- Effective client participation
- Client satisfaction

(Glisson 1992; Cleaver 1994; Drake 1994 Bullock, Little et al. 1995; Colton, Drury et al. 1995; Thoburn, Lewis et al. 1995 Glisson 1996; Glisson and Hemmelgarn 1998; Aldgate and Bradley 1999; Thoburn 1999; Harwin, Owen et al. 2001)

Tenacious case work

What works:

- non-routine, individualized, service decisions, tailored to each child or young person;
- persistence in solving difficult problems;
- persistence in ensuring that case plans are carried through;
- a determination to enhance the quality of children and young people's lives;
- an ability to function as an asset to families; and
- a commitment to doing the best to meet families' needs.

(Cleaver and Freeman 1995; Farmer and Owen 1995; Brandon, Thoburn et al. 1999 Glisson and Hemmelgarn 1998 Thoburn 1999)

Management strategies that assist the development of an environment that supports effective service activities, informed by a sound management framework

Management Strategies

- Builds on work undertaken with the Sunshine Coast Management Team (Wilson, Campbell et al. 2001; Wilson and Soares 2001).
- Adopts the Albrecht (1988, 1990) approach of dividing management strategies within three domains
 - Service strategy
 - People development
 - Systems development
- Includes a range of management strategies identified in an extensive literature review
- Includes the feedback of 9 workshops undertaken to critique the model in 2002 and those added as a result of the implementation experience

3. Individual exercise: the management model audit

Management Model Audit

1. Complete the audit using the following scale
 1. Well established
 2. Somewhat established
 3. Initial stages of establishment
 4. Not established at all

Management Model Audit

- Identify a priority area from each domain for potential implementation (think about the area that you believe would make the most significant impact on the capacity of staff to undertake the service activities in the model)
- What would be a key implementation issue? How could this be addressed?

4. Small group discussion

Small group discussion

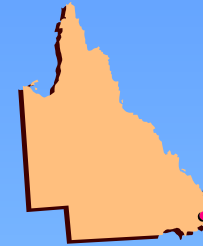
Share in the small group

1. The areas you prioritised for implementation
2. Why you chose these areas
3. What you see as a key implementation issue and how this might be addressed

Feedback to the large group the key implementation issues and ideas for addressing them

5. The implementation experience

Demographics



- The Caboolture & Redcliffe Peninsula Region lies to the north of Brisbane.
- The population of the Region at the 2001 census was 289,955 persons (approx 9% of State's population).

Characteristics of the Region

- The area is characterised by a consistently high level of population growth - almost twice the average growth rate for Queensland
- The majority of growth consists of couple families with dependent children, exceeding State averages in every age category.
- The region consists of both densely populated urban areas and small rural communities.
- Young families are attracted to the Region because of its close proximity to the capital city, and relative affordability in terms of housing.
- High costs of public transport and limited transport services make it difficult for families to access services in Brisbane.
- The Region contains two of the twelve Community Renewal Areas across Qld (established in 1998 to improve the quality of life of Qld communities experiencing significant social and economic stress).

Staff & client profile

- Departmental services are provided from three area offices at Strathpine, Redcliffe and Caboolture
- Each area office consists of a Manager, 2 Team Leaders, 2 Administration staff and approximately 10 Family Services Officers
- The regional office, comprised of specialist and administrative staff, is located in Caboolture.
- The region averages around 100 child protection notifications per month
- There are approx 300 children on Child Protection Orders most of whom are placed in foster care
- The region has had an influx of carers and children moving into the area due to the affordability of housing

Implementation process

- From February to October 2003
- 3 child protection area offices
- Range of strategies
 - Management team planning and review
 - Mentoring for management team members
 - Team meetings to obtain staff views

Summary of the key findings

- Participants described an increase in capacity (to undertake the four service activities) for many individuals and teams
- I&A teams described a decrease in team capacity in October (or for one office some increase and some decrease). This was directly linked difficulties being experienced in relation to the throughput of notification write-ups
- In October all teams across all offices thought it was an effective change process and described extensive engagement in the change process
- While some of the increase in capacity could be linked to the natural impact of increased experience in undertaking a role, majority of the change identified can be closely or directly linked to strategies implemented as part of the implementation process.
- All offices showed greater than 25% increase in the number of management strategies that were well established by October

Summary of the key findings

Inhibitors to the change process included

- Resource constraints
- Physical environment and safety issues
- Workload demands, including administrative requirements
- The impact of staff absences with no backfill
- The impact of negative media associated with various review processes, including a CMC inquiry into the abuse of children in foster care.

Summary of the key findings

Facilitators to the change process included

- Mitigating the impact of the constraints by addressing them within implementation plans
- Strengthening cross-team linkages, cross-office linkages and linkages with external agencies as part of the implementation process
- Including team suggestions for priority within implementation plans
- The development of individual management team members, supported by mentoring
- Processes that engage staff participation in the change
- Supportive office dynamics
- The promotion of individual supervision, support and development
- The development of effective team processes
- Establishing effective feedback loops

6. Personal perspectives

Kym and Kay

Personal perspectives

- What worked
- What I would do differently
- Development as a Manager
- Advice about implementation
- Maintaining momentum

What worked - Kym

- Mentoring for Manager, Team Leaders and Administration Officer
- Looking at the balance between Task and Relationship
- Managers role in performance planning - positive affirmation of staff
- Process of continual review - feedback loops
- Modelling changes you want to achieve
- Big ideas forum

What would I do differently?

Kay

- Don't underestimate the impact of change process
- Take more time to involve staff in change process by allowing greater input into the changes
- Accept that obstacles or hiccups are inevitable and move on quickly

Development as a Manager

Kym

- Increased awareness of task/relationship balance
- Structures in place to ensure ongoing attention to implementation of plan
- Increased awareness of staff needs and sensitivities
- Increased cohesiveness within teams and office
- Increased focus of team members on task

Advice about implementation - Kay

- Take the time to discuss the framework with the workgroup before the journey – ownership of the process is critical for success
- Need to be a leader and take the lead
- Mentoring process is critical to the implementation – it can empower the Manager, encourage reflective practice and keep you on track
- Continue to review the implementation plan throughout the process
- Be willing to make adjustments as required

Maintaining momentum - Kym

- Put time aside and plan in advance
- Look for positive feedback loops
- Implement structures that encourage continual review
- Consolidate good habits
- Look for new challenges - Big Ideas Forum
- Continued ownership by the workgroup

7. Questions

8. Conclusions

Conclusions

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8. Please complete the feedback form