

A trauma informed approach to capturing the voices of sibling groups in Out-of-Home Care – Online Version

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Outline of today's presentation

- **Note that images have been removed from this online version of the presentation due to copyright and licensing**
- Overview of policy frameworks
- Keeping Connected Model description
- Issues with traditional ethics and consent procedures for interviewing children and young people in out of home care
- Operational strategies designed for capturing the voice of the child
- Initial results of strategies
- Benefits of approach

The Department of Health and Human Services Victoria is committed to the Voice of the Child

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: Article 12

Children and young people are given the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect them, and that governments take into account the views of children in the laws and policies that impact on their lives

We consider how we privilege the voice of the child in our practice. Seeking, hearing, recording and carefully considering the views of children is central to child protection decision making.

Client Voice Framework

1. The client voice is essential for quality and safety
2. Clients have expertise
3. Client voice is a shared and ongoing responsibility
4. Every client is unique
5. The client voice leads to action

Out-Of-Home Care System in Victoria

Children are removed from parental care in situations where there is unacceptable risk of harm to the child's safety and development

Levels of Placement

- ❖ Reunification
- ❖ Kinship
- ❖ Foster Care
- ❖ Residential

Roadmap for Reform: Strong Families, Safe Children

A strategy for reform of the children, youth and families services system in Victoria

- A renewed focus on placement prevention and reunification
- Enhancing existing models of care and designing and testing alternative types of care
- Development and implementation of flexible, individualised packages of support for children and young people in Out-of-Home Care

Keeping Connected Siblings Support Service



Three Core Components:

- **Short-term placement option** where the placement of a sibling group (first entering OoHC) cannot be made in the existing funded home-based care system
- **Therapeutic Planning** for sibling groups new to the Out-of-Home Care system
- **Contact Planning** for separated sibling groups already living in Out-of-Home Care

Issues with capturing the voice of the child in Year One Evaluation

Keeping Connected siblings

Sibling Support and Placement Service

- Recruitment
- Guardian Consent
- Very young children
- Interviewing and trauma

Roadmap for Reform Out of Home Care South Initiative Evaluation

Information and Consent – Under 18

You are invited to take part in a study called 'Roadmap for Reform Out of Home Care South Initiative Evaluation'. We would like to find out about your experience getting support from the Sibling Support and Placement Service (SSPS) program.

Our project asks: "Does this sort of support help young people, or not?" The study will help the Department to understand what is working well and what could be done better.

What if you decide to say yes?

We would like to talk to you about receiving support from SSPS. We will call you, and make an appointment for a discussion at a time and place that suit you.

We will ask for consent from your parent or guardian before you start being part of the study.

We will talk to you for about half an hour. We will ask you questions and audio record your answers. Questions might be about things like, what you liked about the service, or things you didn't like that could be improved. You don't have to answer any question you don't want to. If you do not want to be audio recorded, you do not have to be. Just tell the interviewer and they will write down notes instead.

What if you do not want to do it?

It's your decision to do this or not, and there won't be any changes in the services you get whether you say yes, or no. If you do not want to be in this evaluation study, nothing about your services will change.

If you do participate, you will know that you have helped us to work better with young people in a similar situation to yours.

Privacy, Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information

If you decide you don't want to part of this study, or you say yes then change your mind, this won't affect your relationship with your case manager or the organisation that's providing services to you.

Methods designed to gather regular feedback

Voice of the Child captured by:

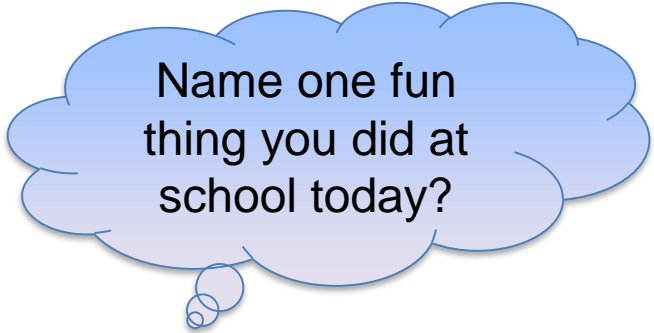
- Strength Cards & Stones/Games
- Ipad Survey App (in development)
- Care Team Meetings
- Informal / Formal Feedback

Triangulated with:


- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
- Foster Carer Questionnaire
- Kinship Carers / Birth Family Survey
- Partnership Team Meetings

Strength Cards & Stones/Jenga for very young children

Images of bear cards and jenga game removed

A light blue thought bubble with a white outline and a small tail pointing towards the bottom left.

Name one fun thing you did at school today?

A light blue thought bubble with a white outline and a small tail pointing towards the bottom left.

What is your favourite animal and why?

A light blue thought bubble with a white outline and a small tail pointing towards the bottom left.

What is your favourite colour?

iPad App for young people (In development)

Question include

- Did you feel safe living with your siblings?
- Did you feel you had someone to talk to?
- Did you feel listened to?
- Did you do enough activities with your siblings?
- Were you still connected to things that are special to you?
- What else could have made your time here better?

Option for worker comments on child/young person behaviour during feedback

Care Team Meetings

Children and young people participate in their care team meetings, and their feedback is recorded in care team meeting notes

Informal spontaneous feedback (documentation by staff and carers)

“I Lowvvvvvve you sosososo muhe (much) and I like wow (how) you look afeftr (after) me (and my siblings) love you. I Love You!!!” - *6 & 8 year olds letter to carer*

“You’ll like it here and the meals are great. I didn’t like vegetables at first but now I’m eating some” – *Outgoing 12 year old to incoming sibling group in carer house*

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

Emotional and behavioural screening questionnaire for children and young people

- Captures perspective of carer of changes in mental health functioning of child / young person
- Administered at start and end of placement
- Completed by Mental Health clinicians

Foster Carer Questionnaires

Questions about the child/young person include:

- Was more comfortable being around you as time went on?
- Showed a decrease in their need to use their behaviour to communicate with you?
- Was more comfortable seeking you out to help with a need?

Questions about the carer include:

- Have you felt supported undertake your role to the best of your ability?
- Have you been provided with direct support from Alfred Health when caring for sibling group?
- Have you been regularly asked for feedback on how the sibling groups in your care have been?

Kinship Carers and Birth Family Questionnaire

Questions include:

- Did you feel listened to?
- Did you feel encouraged to participate in decision making that affected you and your family?
- Did you feel that the service provided you with practical support that you needed?
- Do you feel that you have gained more confidence in managing areas of concern as a result of the service?
- What do you feel you benefited most from the Keeping Connected Service?

What is data / feedback showing us?

Sibling feedback:

- feeling safe and listened too
- happy and connected to carer
- excited talk with family about new things

Triangulated with evidence from carers and parents:

- improvement in self regulation
- routine and structure
- show signs of contentment

Practice impacts

- Most tools are now embedded into day to day work
- Tools inform service enhancements / reviews
- Feedback taken into account by Child Protection in case planning processes / recommendations

Benefits of Approach

- Child voice at forefront of practice - direct feedback into treatment process
- Formal evaluation using Quality Assurance principles
- Verification of results through triangulation

Questions?

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