



Government of Western Australia
Mental Health Commission

SAVE THE CHILDREN AUSTRALIA

Date: 30 October 2020
Location: Teams/Virtual
Attendees: Amanda Hughes, Head of Policy, Mental Health Commission (MHC)
Natasa Dale, Assistant Director Strategic Policy, MHC
Ebony Schroeder, Senior Policy Officer, Strategic Policy, MHC
Hannah Woodward, Place-Based Strategic Policy and Communications Officer
Ashton Kealey, Regional Manager – Place-Based Strategies

- Save the Children Australia works with young people with complex needs for early intervention, using a collective impact approach. Holistic approach is working well.
- Promoting holistic, collaborative approaches to complex needs across the board, including the Youth Partnership Project's (YPP) specific Early Intervention Model.
- This model identifies vulnerable young people with complex needs across multiple domains, with families that have been involved with Child Protection (Department of Communities), WA Police Force and where Department of Education have concerns.
- The early intervention model was co-designed with young people and the YPP Steering Committee including senior representatives from various departments.
- This model targets young people between the ages of 8 to 11 years.
- Once families are identified and consent to take part, the YPP run an Intensive Engagement Program with these young people. The key is to build trusting relationships with young people, so they can then engage effectively with support services.
 - Identified a need for 2 to 3-week intensive engagement program during school holidays with a team of youth workers and family support.
 - Intensive engagement program includes fun individual and group activities; educational workshops; clinical assessment; and allowing time for staff to talk to families during these pick up and drop off times.
- Currently finalising an evidence-based practice framework, for how ongoing support is delivered to young people and families (including via connecting with partner organisations).
- The right staff to support young people and families with complex needs has been essential:
 - Recruiting people who have had lived experience.
 - Strong cohort of male staff for male clients.
 - Recruiting people with strong working experience; including trauma-informed and strength-based practices.
 - There is a strong representation of Aboriginal staff.

*We're working for
Western Australia.*



Government of **Western Australia**
Mental Health Commission

- YPP is currently a pilot funded program, with a focus on continuous improvement so it can be scaled to support other high-needs areas.
- Things YPP has learnt include:
 - Young people with complex trauma have an emotional bias towards the negative, and low verbal comprehension in the clinical assessments.
 - Schools will require an approach for improved strategies to respond. Particularly in the Armadale area.
 - These young people with complex trauma very often have issues with anxiety, depression, and anger – likely to become more complex if not addressed early.
- Save the Children Australia’s experience with mental health providers:
 - Services are required for young people, family, and caregivers. Save the Children Australia is not a crisis service but will act as an advocate for this.
 - Young people can be difficult to fit into categories e.g. too complex for Headspace but not enough for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. This is also similar for families.
 - Mental health providers feel inaccessible – long waitlists, not local, overly formal, can’t be flexible to support engagement when other complex factors present barriers.
 - YPP have addressed these gaps by hiring private clinicians to attend the service.

*We're working for
Western Australia.*