



Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth

Working together to enhance the wellbeing and life chances of children and young people.

Final Report to ARACY/ARC NHMRC Network Seed Funded Collaboration			
Project title	Connecting Research, Policy and Practice in Evidence-based Treatments for Child Abuse		
Convenor of collaboration	Dr Rae Thomas		
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email	r.thomas@griffith.edu.au	Total grant amount	\$10,000
Major activities undertaken (expand section as necessary)			
Activity	Date	Description	
Literature Review and Survey Drafting	October-November 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A literature review was conducted in order to inform survey development. - Assistance with literature review and survey development was initially obtained from all consortium members and from other international research collaborators. 	
Survey Drafting and Feedback	November-December 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two consortium group meetings were held to discuss survey development and to receive feedback on survey drafts. Feedback was received from consortium members and other policy-makers, practitioners and researchers. International researchers provided support and feedback via email. - A list of organisations was compiled as the sampling frame. The list was developed with assistance from policy and practitioner consortium members. - Organisation contact protocols were established to respect anonymity of clinicians and to reduce their workload. 	
Survey distribution and Follow-up	January - March 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contact protocols were developed and recruitment of participants commenced in early January. Organisation Managers were initially contacted to seek permission to a) conduct survey and b) if so, speak with Service Managers and decide on the best format for survey delivery (hard copy or online). Distribution of survey and collation of survey results commenced. 	
Collation of data and finalization	February - March 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiple strategies were employed to maximise survey response rate. Numerous follow-up phone calls, email prompts and letters were used to prompt Service Managers. - Data collection ceased at the end of March. Data were collated and analysed at the end March and early April 2010. 	



Benefits arising from the project and how these align to ARACY goals

Collaboration between researchers, policy-makers and practitioners

Because the consortium lead is an Early Career Researcher (ECR), the collaboration during this process was extremely valuable and informative. The survey was developed in consultation with consortium members from all fields. Researchers shared knowledge about past survey endeavors and formal measures, policy-makers informed the survey team of best practice standards in contacting organisations, and practitioners refined survey questions and networked with colleagues to ensure the survey conveyed appropriate language.

The collaboration generated from this project has commenced the process of knowledge integration between researchers, policy-makers and practitioners. This knowledge will be shared with ARACY Members and with the Queensland practitioners and organisations surveyed. In addition, due to the success of the collaborative process and survey results, discussions for future grant submissions are continuing.

The nexus of research, policy and practice cannot be explored nor understood until an appreciation of the current practices and future needs of practitioners is achieved. This project has successfully commenced this undertaking.

Capturing knowledge to improving the lives of vulnerable children

The excellent response rate of survey returns (approximately 79%) is indicative of the passion and commitment of practitioners in Queensland in sharing their knowledge about the barriers and facilitators of providing clinical services to vulnerable families. Survey results indicate practitioners support the principles of evidence-based interventions and, when trained and supported within and outside their working environments, they will use EBTs. However, researchers and policy-makers have lessons to learn about the definition of EBTs and the transportability and usefulness of EBTs beyond the research setting. The survey results suggest practitioners are creative and innovative and are exposed to many professional development training options.

Cooperative Research Centre – Prevention Science for Children and Young People

This project (and future projects developed by the consortium) has strong connection to the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) proposal for Prevention Science for Children and Young People, which is in progress and supported by ARACY members and others at Griffith University. Three of the primary consortium members have committed time to the proposed CRC (Homel, Thomas and Zimmer-Gembeck). Key CRC research projects are Knowledge Exchange, Mobilising Prevention Strategies, and Identifying Leverage Points – Macro. Many of the proposed CRC projects build upon the information available within the surveys we have collected. Indeed, outcomes of our current project and further projects seem similarly aligned to the specific goals of the CRC.

Mentoring ECR

Responsibility for project implementation, budget allocation, supervision of research staff and delivery of outcomes were coordinated by the ECR in the consortium, and project Convenor, Rae Thomas. Throughout the progression of the project, she received mentoring by all consortium members to design a survey relevant for researchers, policy-makers and practitioners alike. In addition, collaborations with consortium practitioners and direct contact with managers and practitioners in community organisations increased her knowledge and afforded her unique insights into the design and communication of basic research when it must be relevant for policy and practice. This will assist with on-going dissemination efforts so that information will be available in a form that is useful to researchers, policy-makers and practitioners. This mentoring will allow her to build her research profile so that she has the capacity to acquire a postdoctoral fellowship in this area and to apply for national competitive grants.



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Project outputs			
Grant applications (expand table as needed)			
Granting body Griffith University Griffith Institute of Health and Medical Research	Date of application 12 th October 2010	Title of application Distinguished Visiting Researcher Award	Nominator Rae Thomas
Was application successful? No Yes Amount granted Pending (give date of notification)			
Publications (Provide full details and current status - published, in press, under review, etc) (expand table as needed)			
Paper 1 The Coal Face: Working with Vulnerable Families in Queensland (in draft with a view to publish in an Australian journal)			
Please comment on the collaboration process, successes and obstacles (expand section as necessary)			
<p>Collaboration</p> <p>Collaboration for this project evolved from conversations. Researchers at an international conference (Hurlburt, Kolko, Zimmer-Gembeck and Thomas) conversed about research shortcomings in dissemination attempts of evidence-based interventions/treatments (EBTs). Conversations with policy-makers (Thomas, Harrison and Clarke-Jones) about the desire to implement EBTs in community organisations working with vulnerable families further developed ideas. Finally, conversations with practitioners and others about the challenges of implementing EBTs and their value to the practitioner's client base (Thomas, Homel, Pickering and others) expanded these ideas. Through active participation in these conversations and communicating with each group the concerns of the other, the germination of a project to understand evidence-based interventions from the practitioners viewpoint evolved into a project worthy of investigation. Working with others with expertise in policy, research and practice held many successes and challenges. Due to the tight timeframe, many conversations with consortium members were held via email or telephone. Many conversations ensued and collaborations strengthened.</p> <p>Some challenges to collaboration included the distance between consortium members, such that all conversations with international researchers were via email. In addition, the project spanned the Australian summer. This challenged collaborations with policy-makers and practitioners as leave from work during January occurs often during this period. Consequently, meetings in December were difficult to schedule due to competing commitments. Despite this obstacle commitment from members was high and all researchers were able to converse via email. Thomas and Zimmer-Gembeck, however were able to meet face-to-face with the practitioner consortium member and policy-makers.</p> <p>Survey Successes</p> <p>The project team was able to contact 68 community organisations. Of these, 47 (69%) agreed to participate in the survey. From these 47 organisations, we expected 141 surveys to be completed. We received 112 surveys from Queensland practitioners representing a response rate of 79%. Approximately 33% of respondents reported working in a major city centre whereas, 25.6% reported working in a rural city centre. Almost 10% of survey respondents reported working in a rural/remote part of Queensland. The remaining practitioners reported working in an urban environment. This demonstrates the utility of the survey and the commitment of Queensland practitioners to increasing and sharing knowledge about their clinical work. Strategies for maximum return rates were recommended by the policy-maker members of the consortium (Clarke-Jones and Harrison). Further, practitioner member (Pickering) contacted colleagues to discuss the survey prior to being contacted by project staff. The success of follow-up contact by project staff contributed greatly to this large return rate.</p> <p>Survey Obstacles</p> <p>The protocol of contact for the Organisations took longer than anticipated. Organisation Managers were initially contacted to seek permission (and details) of Service Managers to be contacted. For some organisations, this procedure took several weeks. Similar lengths of time elapsed when attempting to contact the Service Managers. Respect for busy schedules and workloads was always maintained and organisation staff were able to nominate times and protocol for follow-up reminders. Organisations were able to choose to complete the survey on line or have a hard-copy posted to them. To increase return rate an intense follow-up period was conducted. Project staff contacted organisations to prompt return of questionnaires and at times completed surveys on the telephone. To achieve high survey returns project staff worked on recruitment and follow-up for 9 weeks.</p>			

Name: Rae Thomas (Convenor) Date: 16th April 2010