



**Resilient Families
need Resilient
Workers**
Practice, Policy
and Research.

Hosted By
Centre for Excellence
in Child and Family Welfare Inc. 

Proudly Sponsored By

Australian Government
Department of Families,
Housing, Community Services
and Indigenous Affairs



**Resilient Families
need Resilient
Workers**
Practice, Policy
and Research.



Research into Practice

Annette Michaux

General Manager –
Social Policy and Research
Benevolent Society NSW



Evidence informed practice in community services

Trial, error and breakthrough

22 June 2009

Annette Michaux
annettem@bensoc.org.au

Benevolent Society

Child & family, community ageing, leadership, women's health, research and advocacy



This presentation covers



- Context of child & family work
- Overseas & Australian experience
- Australian experience
- Organisational strategies at The Benevolent Society
- Case study Implementing the Incredible Years PP

5

What is Evidence Informed Practice?



Evidence based practice is the integration of best research evidence with practice expertise and the views of service users and carers



Adapted from What Works for Children? Evidence Guide. Economic & Social research Council et al 2003

6

Aiming for evidence informed practice is difficult in this field

The nature of social care is such that much practice is based on individual professional judgement. It is certainly possible to evaluate the impacts of these judgements and draw some conclusions about what works in social care but it is much more difficult than testing drugs in the medical field....

The range of possible causes of people's distress or difficulties means that in considering what to do its often hard to know what evidence to look for to inform that judgement. appropriate information is often not there

(Janet Lewis JRF 2002)

7

Other difficulties



- Impatience with slowness of research and evaluation results eg UK's Sure Start
- Ability to reach people
- Research, practice and policy gap – 3 cultures concept *(Shonkoff)*

8

Context of our work

- Globalisation
- Changes in families
- Service system that's struggling to adapt
- Worsening outcomes
- **Knowledge of the importance of the early years and imperative to work preventatively**
- **Know more about how to intervene and make a difference**

Tim Moore CCCH



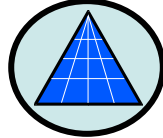
Need a learning organisation or comparable enabler for evidence informed practice to become embedded

SCIE

Learning Organisation



industrial economy



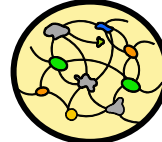
Traditional Organisations

Knowledge
is divided

Knowledge
is boxed and sticky

Skills
are divided

knowledge & mobile ecosystems



Learning Ecosystems

Knowledge
is integrated

Knowledge
is mediated and flows

New skill-sets
are developed



© Bill Ford Jan. '03

11

International trends



- Sophisticated, trustworthy research to practice resources and guidance (*RIP, SCIE, Barnadoes UK, Children's Aid Societies in Canada*)
- Focus on plain English, short messages & storytelling
- Increasing use of end users in assessing the efficacy of a program
- Knowledge brokers – who cross org boundaries

12

Australian context



Enablers

- Clearing houses and dissemination
- Rise of knowledge brokers & KB organisations eg Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY), CECFW
- Online and technology strategies

Barriers

- Geography, rural, remote
- Political context and levels of commitment

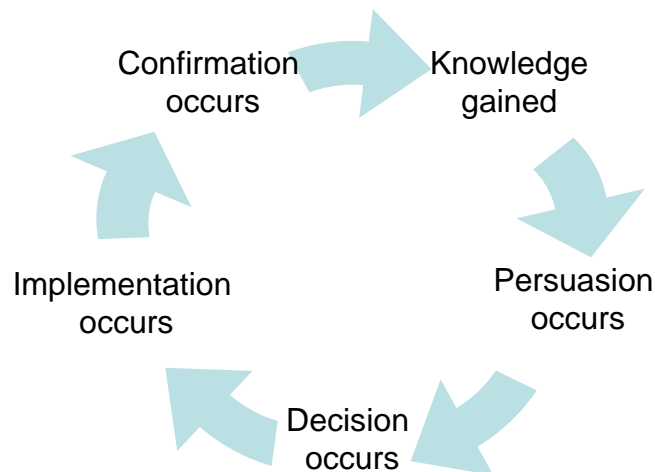
13

TBS Strategic Direction 2009 - 2012



14

Framework Diffusion of innovation theory



Diffusion of Innovation EM Rogers 2003 cited in Tsui 2006 15

Key strategies for diffusion at TBS



Evidence itself is not sufficient: it must be communicated in ways that make it compelling

CHSF 2002

Knowledge exchange

- Agency visits/learning trips,
- Study tours
- Secondments

Capacity building

- Learning circles, communities of practice
- Workshops on *what is good evidence*
- Customised seminars eg LSAC, CCCH, RBA
- Clinical consultations

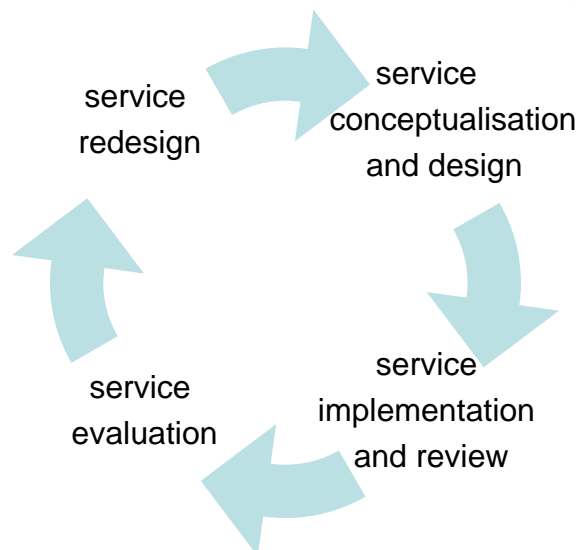
Key strategies for diffusion cont.....



- Research
 - partnerships & networks (ACCP)
 - research staff
 - practice/research specialists (internal knowledge brokers)
 - Research to practice products
- Evaluation
 - real time longitudinal evaluation projects
 - outcome focus
 - regular client surveys

17

Timing



18

Parenting programs

Gaining knowledge, persuasion, decision



- 2 day workshop Parenting Research Centre
- Engaging staff in need for EIP
- Studied a number of evidence based programs
- Choosing which PP would work
- Deciding to adopt Incredible Years

19

Webster-Stratton: Incredible years (IY)



- Rated as one of the few, well supported evidence based practices (California Evidence-Based Clearing house for Child Welfare)
- Basic Program for 2-8 year old's
- Behavioural based to enhance parenting skills
- Changes parents' behaviour, perceptions, communication and understanding
- Used in Head Start USA, Sure Start UK
- Effective with conduct disorders and ADHD
- Reputable public health prevention intervention

20

Brighter Futures program



- Home visiting
- Case management
- Therapeutic preschool
- Individual counseling
- Child therapies: SP and OT and Psychology
- Family support (e.g. housing, childcare)
- **Parent education/training**
- Attachment based interventions (e.g. Circle of Security)
- Supported playgroups
- Aboriginal family work

21

Implementing Incredible years engagement to implementation



Key staff received IY training

- Challenges of overseas material
- Significant challenge to current practice for some
- Lack of support on the ground

Initial roll out

- Enormous energy required to ensure implementation
- Trust building with Aboriginal parents (still striving for engagement)

22

Implementation

- Adapting from overseas
 - Adjusting the manual
 - Length of sessions
- Huge logistics - venue, staff numbers, transport, childcare, food – especially in rural
- Low uptake from cold referrals
- Low uptake from Aboriginal families.... groups come later in the program

23

Breakthrough and confirmation

- Leadership... managers prepared to champion implementation
- Skill levels required
- Skill before culture
- Getting pathway to groups right
- Intensive support to remain in group



24

Is it working?

- Workers can tell which families have done IY
- Significant improvement in parent wellbeing... important as this provides foundation for improved child outcomes

*I am learning a lot and keeping a lot calmer
I am learning how to deal with children's behaviour and
how to deal with them in a nice way
I got to know people in the group, to trust, respect them,
found other people to turn to for help who are not going
to judge you*

Evidence of organisational change



- Language
- Content & discussions at meetings
- Support for evaluation
- Investment in EIP & knowledge brokers



- Easy to slip backwards- actively implement and confirm

Take away messages

1. Rethink traditional approaches to knowledge & become like a learning organisation
2. Plan & resource strategies to engage with the evidence
3. Staged approach to practice change – diffusion of innovation
4. Be tenacious
5. Share externally



27

www.bensoc.org.au

http://www.bensoc.org.au/uploads/documents/evidence_informed-practice-mar2007.pdf

www.aifs.org.au

www.aracy.org.au

<http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/>

www.incredibleyears.com

<http://www.scie.org.uk/>

www.rip.org.uk

http://www.chsrf.ca/home_e.php#3

28

**Resilient Families
need Resilient
Workers**
Practice, Policy
and Research.



Lunch

Sponsored by

