Welcome to the fourth instalment of the Framework for Practice newsletter.

This quarterly newsletter keeps you updated on all the latest news regarding the department’s Strengthening Families Protecting Children Framework for Practice.

Where we have been!

We are five months along in the journey of implementing the Strengthening Families Protecting Children Framework for Practice.

22 Foundational Training two-day sessions have been delivered to a total of 1914 departmental and 901 partner agency staff, with participants appreciating the networking and information sharing opportunities of the joint training.

Since the May newsletter seven Leading Practice Training sessions-training for Managers, Team Leaders, Senior Practitioners, Child Safety Training and Court Coordinators-have been delivered in Brisbane and Cairns. Participants have learnt about the Collaborative Assessment and Planning framework and the connection with the SDM tools and there has been great feedback from participants regarding their opportunity to reflect on practice. Bringing together different staff cohorts allowed for sharing of ideas as they related to the framework implementation and reform projects. A Townsville Leading Practice session will be offered in September.

In addition to Leading Practice training a three-day Family Group Meeting Convenor training was held 27-29th July. This session had 16 Recognised Entity staff and 69 departmental staff together to learn how the framework can be embedded in family group meeting processes. We thank all the participants for their commitment, especially those who travelled from as far as Thursday Island.

Implementation is more than just training and some of the other implementation initiatives include: changing the department’s ICMS case note options to include the framework tools; beginning work on revision of the case plan template; and Senior Practitioner led tutorials on use of the tools.

News from around the State

Workers from around the State are embracing the Framework for Practice and the related tools. Below is a snapshot showcasing great practice from two regions.

Central Queensland Region

In CQ we are encouraging staff to be creative with their application of the Framework for Practice, by reminding everyone that the Framework is about finding new ways of understanding and engaging with our children and families, rather than simply completing tools or using new words to describe the same old patterns. We were very impressed to see CSO Eloise Mclellan from the Bundaberg CSSC undertaking this work with a young person. This is how far some of us will go to connect with the young people we work with!

The greatest "3 Houses" you will ever see... drawn right up Eloise’s arm by the young person.
Practice leaders Maureen Ervine and Matthew J Armstrong have also prepared a workshop to support staff to “dig deeper” by examining their own values, assumptions and skills. The workshop includes a re-examination of core practice skills as well as activities to assist staff to identify and develop their own personal framework for practice. The workshop will be delivered seven times across the Central Queensland Region in August and September.

Brisbane Region

Some CSSCs are having a ‘Word of the week’ – where they are identifying specific words that cannot be used in case notes and conversations and are focusing on describing the behaviour inferred.

The Regional Practice Leader and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Practice Leader have been rolling out Foundational Training with the Office of the Public Guardian and with Child Protection Liaison Officers using case examples provided by the other agencies to analyse practice issues.

The practice leaders have also put together a workshop on ‘Connectedness’ to be delivered to the Residential Care Sector in August and September 2015.

Out of Home Care Audit

The OOHC audit is now more than 66% completed (as at 30 June 2015), with all audit panels to be completed by 30 November 2015. So far, there have been 240 audit panel recommendations from 2209 panels that the LTG-CE is no longer in the child’s best interest.

With the implementation of the Framework for Practice, the Case Review and Audit Panels have provided an opportunity to ‘try on’ many of the tools and processes.

Across the state, we have seen some great examples of how the Framework for Practice has been integrated into Case Review and Audit Panels, such as the CAP Framework, Three Houses, four domains of inquiry and many of our critical friends have started to use appreciative inquiry. We are seeing more examples of greater engagement with children and young people, families, carers and agencies who are actively participating in panels.

The Practice Leadership Unit will engage with Regions before the end of the year to undertake a Lessons Learned process in relation to the OOHC audit and the Framework, which will feed into future Framework for Practice training and support.

Engaging Fathers

14 July 2015 saw the 'Engaging fathers: Project 18' forum delivered in Townsville. This initiative draws on the principles of the Strengthening Families Protecting Children framework to partner with fathers in the context of their strengths and aspirations for their kids. This was the sixth Regional event across the State in the last 18 months. The purpose of these events is to raise awareness about the importance of fathers to their children and to build the confidence of staff to better engage and involve fathers in all forms of family support and child protection work.

The Townsville event was attended by 80 staff from across the child and family sector. The day featured a great range of presentations from local agencies and guest speakers. A highlight was a video presentation by a father who has been a client of local services. He described how important his children are to him and how frustrating and difficult his experience was until he met workers who listened and understood his story.

Dr Richard Fletcher from Newcastle University was the main guest speaker. He described several inspiring projects his team have initiated with fathers ranging from group work with young indigenous men to a text support service for new dads (SMS4dads). Next stops for Project 18 are Cairns and Mt Isa. These events are being planned for late 2015 or early 2016.

Next round of training

Intensive Practice Module Sessions - primarily for senior practitioners, training staff and practice leaders will commence in late August and will run through to May 2016. This is a 7x2 day train-the-trainer series and participants will impart the knowledge and skills in their regions.

Coaching - coaching for managers and team leaders will start in October. Coaching sessions will focus on the gathering and analysis of case information and will assist participants to form balanced judgements and decisions.

Want more info?
Contact the Practice Leadership Unit at: PLUmailbox@communities.qld.gov.au