

## Development of a tip sheet: A case study in co-design

In 2018 Katherine had an idea to develop a tip sheet for child and family partners collaborating with Emerging Minds.

Below is an interview with Katherine about the co-design process from conception to finalisation.



**Q: Where did the idea for the tip sheet come from?**

**Katherine:** The idea evolved from a combination of past experience as a Carer Representative, lived experience work with Emerging Minds including reviewing policies and procedures, and from a student placement experience.

**Q: How did you go about approaching Emerging Minds to suggest the tip sheet be developed?**

I emailed Lydia (Emerging Minds staff member) with my idea. I was initially worried that my idea would be dismissed but felt passionate about it enough to override my fear and comfortable enough with Lydia to present my idea. Lydia was very accepting of my idea and encouraged me to create it myself as well as collaborate with Emerging Minds staff to produce it.

**Q: How did the first draft get done? What was the process? What was it like?**

The first draft required me to use a tip sheet that I had previously created as a guide to create a template, and to reflect on my lived experience work and past experiences. As well as thinking about my own experiences I tried to think about other people and different cultures and how different people require different types of support.

**Q: How did the review process work?**

I emailed the draft tip sheet to Lydia which she read and provided feedback on. The tip sheet was then reviewed and edited by other Emerging Minds' employees and edits were sent back to me for review. I was given the opportunity to accept the edits or question them, and this process occurred until everyone involved was satisfied with a version that was sent to other child and family partners for feedback.

**Q: What was it like receiving feedback? How was the feedback incorporated?**

Receiving feedback from Lydia was always done sensitively and constructively and I was happy to receive and incorporate feedback into the tip sheet. I received feedback from other Emerging Minds employees as well and this was also mostly constructive, and I happily incorporated it into the tip sheet. There was one occasion when I disagreed with some of the feedback and felt quite strongly about it and discussed my concerns with Lydia. She communicated this to the other employees and through Lydia, we were able to meet my need/view as well as the perspective of the other employee. Receiving feedback felt mostly rewarding from Emerging Minds employees and even more rewarding when other child and family partners provided positive feedback. Feedback from everyone involved was incorporated into the tip sheet which enabled the voice of all people involved to be heard.

**Q: How were you involved in the final stages of the tip sheet development?**

Once all changes were incorporated into the tip sheet, I was given the opportunity to approve and sign off on it prior to publication.

**Q: Did you feel emotional or triggered by the process at all?**

In writing the tip sheet, I reflected on past experiences but I was never triggered during the process. I was emotional when one of the employees tried to take out something that I felt was extremely important to the tip sheet but I always felt respected, valued and heard even when this occurred.

**Q: Did anything negative happen for you or your family as a result of this work? If so, what could have lessened this impact?**

There were no negative impacts for me or my family. It was a rewarding experience and something that I feel very proud of.

**Q: Did anything positive happen for you or your family as a result of this work?**

The experience provided me with a sense of accomplishment, confidence in my ability to create a tip sheet and a sense of reward knowing that this tip sheet could potentially help many people. It also gave me an opportunity to collaborate with professional staff and other child and family partners and learn different perspectives from them.

**Q: Did you get paid for your work? Why is this important?**

I got paid for my work. This is important because it places value on my lived experience and child and family partner work experience. It is also important because I feel valued for my knowledge and time.

**Q: What are the factors you think were important in this being a successful process?**

A trusting and open relationship with Lydia, employees being open to ideas from child and family partners, feeling empowered, feeling a sense of trust from employees about my work, time to work on the project (not being rushed), receiving positive and constructive feedback.

**Q: What would be your advice to other organisations hoping to undertake co-design processes?**

Value new ideas, lived experience of all kinds, and unique voices and perspectives. Empower, collaborate, enable people to feel that they are producing something themselves rather than being given the work. Allow child and family partners to feel like part of the team and an equal part of the service, rather than a separate group. Provide child and family partners time to reflect on ideas and feedback. Leave theoretical discussions and professional jargon for staff meetings and focus on lived experience.

**Q: What would be your advice to other child and family partners hoping to undertake co-design processes?**

Know that your lived experience is extremely valuable and can inform services, sometimes in a way that professional experience can never do. It's okay and normal to be scared or worried about presenting new ideas or opinions, try not to let fear stop you from voicing those because services need to hear your ideas/opinions to develop. It is never okay for a professional or fellow family partner to disempower you - always seek support if this happens and know that you deserve to work with people who respect you, allow you to have a voice and seek to empower you. This work is mostly an empowering experience that enables you to have a voice, however empowerment can often be the opposite of your lived experience and may not be what you are used to or completely comfortable with - it can be liberating but scary at the same time. Be kind and gentle with yourself if you are triggered, allow yourself time to heal and try to find ways to embrace the 'power'.

*Emerging Minds would like to thank Katherine for sharing her time and reflections in this case study.*