Emerging Minds.

CASE STUDY

Supporting implementation of the South Australian Trauma Responsive System Framework in the child and family support sector

November 2023

1. Introduction

This case study examines an initiative that is being delivered through a partnership between Emerging Minds and the Early Intervention Research Directorate (EIRD) within the South Australian Department of Human Services to improve the trauma-responsiveness of the South Australian child and family support system (CFSS).

Emerging Minds seeks to partner with government departments around Australia as part of its strategy to support system-wide implementation of improved child mental health practices. Discussion between Emerging Minds and EIRD commenced in 2020 and in February 2022 development commenced on an initiative to support CFSS agencies to implement the sector's new Trauma Responsive System Framework. The initiative has been delivered through the in-kind contributions of Emerging Minds and EIRD, and additional funding from EIRD.

2. Methodology

Realist case study approach

Emerging Minds works with implementation partners in a highly contextualised way, in terms of the differing organisational and sector needs it responds to, the initiatives it develops, and the outcomes it seeks with partners.

In order to understand if these partnerships are effective and why, Emerging Minds has used a Realist case study approach to provide a framework for analysing varying contexts, mechanisms of change and outcomes. Realist evaluation[1] is a theory-driven approach that asks 'what works for whom and in what circumstances? (and how and why?)'. It recognises the importance of contexts in achieving desired program outcomes and is commonly used in evaluations where there is wide variability in the contexts in which programs are delivered. The unit of analysis in a Realist evaluation is the mechanism of change in context.

A case study design has been used for in-depth investigation of partnerships. Case studies are an established social research method useful when seeking to understand how and why social phenomena work[2].

Case study selection

Emerging Minds used purposive sampling to select organisations for case studies that provide opportunities to examine mechanisms of change in varying contexts. Selected case study organisations are considered to be exemplars in terms of the progress of their partnership with Emerging Minds and the likelihood that outcomes will be evident that can provide useful learning for Emerging Minds and other organisations.

Interviewees

A Realist evaluation approach requires data collection from key informants with experiences of the relevant implementation processes, changes and outcomes that resulted from the initiative, and who bring a range of perspectives. Emerging Minds and EIRD staff identified key informants who were able to participate in informed discussion about change processes and outcomes.

Data collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted using discussion guides that drew on the recommendations of Pawson[3] and Manzano[4] for conducting interviews for Realist evaluation. Discussions explored descriptions and objectives of initiatives, contexts in which participants were working, actual versus expected results, barriers and enablers of implementing change, and also considerations about who could be missing out on any benefits from the initiative.

[1] Pawson R, Tilley N. (1997). *Realistic evaluation*. Sage Publications, Inc.

[2] Yin R. (2007). *Case study research*. Sage Publications, Inc.

[3] Pawson R. (1996). Theorising the interview. *The British Journal of Sociology, 42*, 20.

[4] Manzano, A., 2016. The craft of interviewing in realist evaluation. *Evaluation, 22*, 342-360.

Interviews were conducted over Teams or Zoom, recorded, and transcribed by an external transcription service. Transcripts were checked by participants for accuracy and completeness before being imported and analysed in NVIVO.

Ethical approval was obtained from Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (ID: 30181).

A total of 8 professionals participated in interviews for this case study. This included Emerging Minds staff (n=2), EIRD staff (n=4), and EIRD consultants (n=2).

Data analysis

In analysing data and developing Context-Mechanism-Outcome configurations, the following definitions were used:

Initiative	The agreed activities that Emerging Minds delivered in partnership with EIRD to achieve agreed outcomes.
Context	The internal and external environmental conditions within which the initiative was delivered and that influenced (positively or negatively) the achievement of desired outcomes.
Mechanism of change	A change process that occurred as a result of individuals responding to the initiative.
Outcome	Any process or impact outcome – expected or unexpected - that resulted from a mechanism of change.

Data analysis was carried out by members of the Emerging Minds Research and Evaluation Team who had not been directly involved in the initiative.

The following pre-determined coding categories were used: Initiative, Context, Change Processes, Outcomes, Individuals, Challenges/Barriers, and Who might be missing out. Inductive analysis was then used to generate themes within each of these categories. Related themes were grouped and the relationships between themes in each group interpreted, before consolidating themes into mechanisms of change.

3. Initiative description

The EIRD–Emerging Minds initiative has taken place within an overarching reform agenda of the South Australian Department of Human Services to improve early intervention services for children and families with complex needs (*Roadmap for Reform for the Child and Family Support System 2021–23*). The initiative has involved jointly customising a quality improvement tool developed by Emerging Minds, known as Emerging Minds Focus (Focus), to support the South Australian Child and Family Support System (CFSS) to improve its trauma responsiveness and better ensure safety for vulnerable children in their homes.

The EIRD-Emerging Minds initiative had three key objectives:

1. To customise Focus to assist CFSS agencies to operationalise the South Australian Trauma Responsive System Framework and build system and organisational capacity to support the social and emotional wellbeing of children.

2. To engage organisational leadership and practitioners in CFSS agencies to commit to using Focus.

3. To support agencies and EIRD to use Focus to build sustainable practices that are trauma responsive and promote mental health and wellbeing for children, families and workers across all levels of the South Australian child and family support system.

Focus was still under development when EIRD partnered with Emerging Minds to customise the tool to align with the Trauma Responsive System Framework. The Focus tool uses a quality improvement approach to support the implementation of changes across multiple levels of a system from frontline workers and service users, to organisational leadership and program funders. It includes a series of attributes that are necessary to build systemic support for trauma responsive services and links those attributes to a set of actions that help organisations embed the attributes. Regular surveys administered through Focus help collect data from the workforce and organisational change management teams to identify any differences in views and experiences, and collectively identify

strengths and opportunities for improvement. Templates within the tool allow organisations to develop action plans to address priority attributes and to document their quality improvement journey.

The customised version of Focus covers all 54 attributes of the Trauma Responsive System Framework. Although this was considered by all project team members to be larger than ideal, there was a strong commitment to incorporating the full extent of co-design work that had led to the framework.

> '…because the Framework had been co-designed with lots of lived experience participation, we needed to translate it exactly word for word into the tool, so that somebody could pick up the Trauma Responsive Framework and then go into the tool and see that direct correlation.' Emerging Minds 2
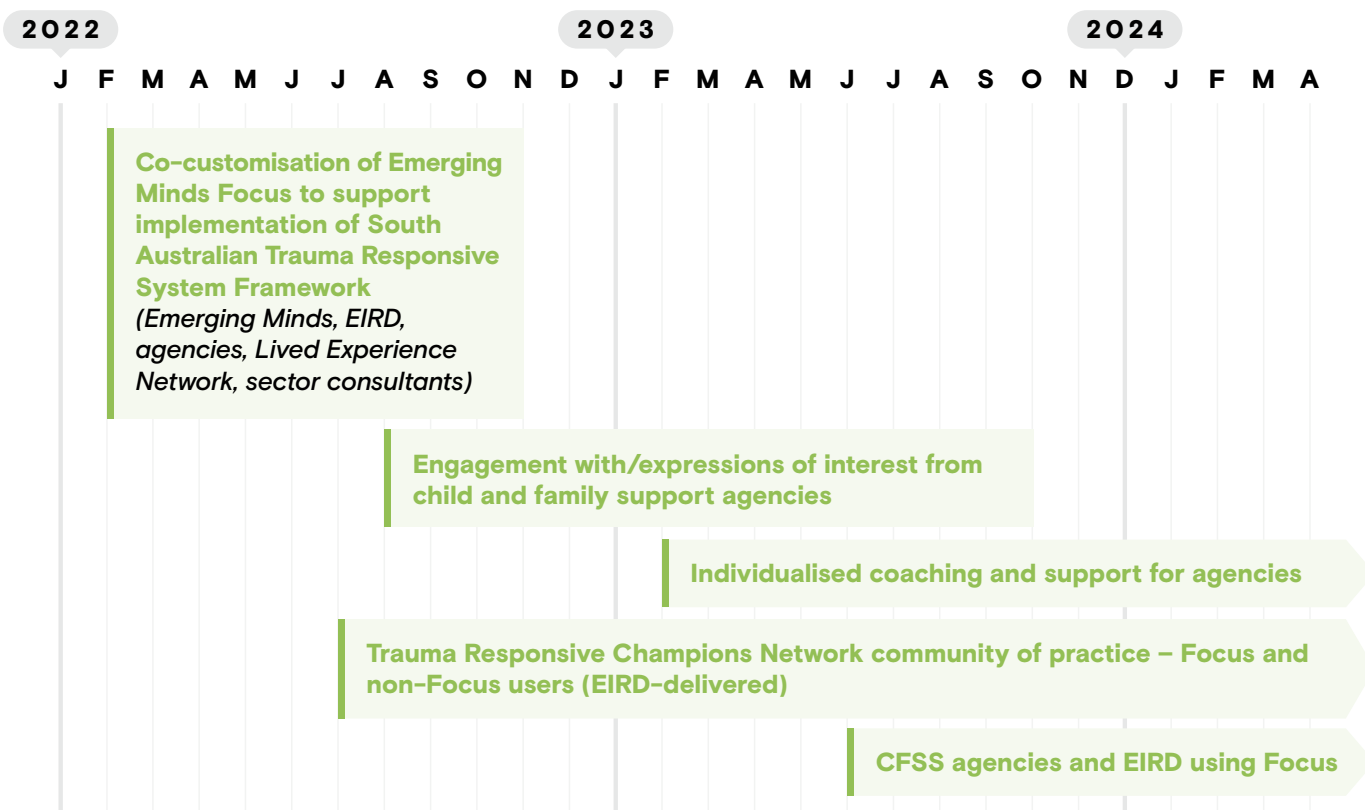
The project team also prioritised convenience, making Focus a central repository for the range of evidence-based training and practice resources promoted by

EIRD to the CFSS sector to support implementation of the Framework. This included relevant Emerging Minds online learning courses and practice guides, Common Elements[5] training and resources, and cultural training.

In addition, the initiative includes individualised coaching and support for CFSS agencies using (or interested in using) Focus, and participation in a community of practice (the Trauma Responsive Champions Network) supported by EIRD that includes representatives from all South Australian CFSS agencies, whether or not they are using Focus, to implement the Trauma Responsive System Framework (see Figure 1).

The initiative development process was intensive, requiring significant staff time from EIRD and Emerging Minds. This level of investment is unlikely to be available in many other cases. Emerging Minds interviewees were of the view that trialling a Focus customisation process with EIRD has led to efficiencies and processes that can be adapted for use within other organisations and sectors.

Figure 1   **Overview of initiative activities**

2022

J F M A M J J A S O N D

2023

J F M A M J J A S O N D

2024

J F M A

Co-customisation of Emerging Minds Focus to support implementation of South Australian Trauma Responsive System Framework
(Emerging Minds, EIRD, agencies, Lived Experience Network, sector consultants)

Engagement with/expressions of interest from child and family support agencies

Individualised coaching and support for agencies

Trauma Responsive Champions Network community of practice – Focus and non-Focus users (EIRD-delivered)

CFSS agencies and EIRD using Focus

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[5] DHS Early Intervention Research Directorate (EIRD) (n.d.). Common Elements Approach. Adelaide: Department of Human Services.

4. Outcomes

(a) Development and customisation of Focus

The most tangible outcome of the development phase has been the completion of a customised Focus, incorporating all 54 attributes of the Trauma Responsive System Framework. Although this process took longer than expected, all interviewees were of the view that the tool responded to the needs identified in the co-design of the Trauma Responsive System Framework. Among those agencies using the tool, the feedback has been that it is technically reliable and that the individualised support has been highly effective, valued and appreciated by agencies.

> 'Emerging Minds have provided really brilliant support around any troubleshooting, any IT issues. So, the feedback that I've had from the organisations that have pressed "go" on Focus has been it's all tracking along fine.' EIRD 3

(b) Agency engagement

The agency engagement stage has involved numerous individual on-site meetings and sector workshops with CFSS agencies to introduce the sector to Focus and to understand the needs and priorities of each agency.

Interviewees identified a number of outcomes that have resulted from this process. Those outcomes perceived to be most important are outlined following.

Interviewees were of the view that, as a result of this initiative, there is an increased recognition within the sector that providing trauma responsive services requires more than training practitioners, and that organisations wanting to improve their trauma responsiveness need to commit to whole-of-program or whole-of-organisation involvement, and further, that this type of system change requires multi-level participation.

Discussions with agency leaders were also felt to have resulted in greater appreciation by leaders of the resources required to commit to using Focus to undertake effective and sustainable organisational change, including resourcing cross-organisational change teams, and enabling collective reflection and action processes. These 'change readiness' conversations were perceived by the project team to have been open and authentic, contributing to shared understanding within the sector of the practical steps necessary to becoming more trauma responsive.

> 'There is general understanding and agreement that this is a mutually accountable process for all those involved in the sector, including the funder.' Consultant 7

> 'I think the other outcome we've heard is a process outcome, and that's from the practitioners saying really loudly that it's not just up to us all the time to change our practice.' Emerging Minds 2

By August 2023, six CFSS agencies had started using Focus. At the time of analysis for this case study, agencies had set up their Focus accounts and were appointing their change teams and/or collecting their first data. This was seen by the project team to be a positive result, given that the initial target had been to on-board three agencies in 2023 (Table 18). The six services using Focus have chosen to utilise the tool across multiple programs, including non-EIRD funded programs, and in some cases across their whole organisation.

Table 1

Child and family support agency engagement (at August 2023)

Number of agencies expected to implement the Trauma Responsive System Framework	11
EIRD target for number of agencies using Focus in 2023	3
Number of agencies engaged and introduced to Focus	11
Number of agencies expressed interest in using Focus through the expression of interest process	11
Number of agencies using Focus	6

A significant outcome of this initiative to date is that EIRD, as the sector funder, is using Focus to implement the Trauma Responsive System Framework in its own department. This commitment by EIRD to participate alongside funded agencies in a whole-of-system process is seen by Emerging Minds staff and the two consultants as an uncommon and powerful sign of commitment by a state government department. EIRD has committed to using Focus to identify where it can improve its own trauma responsiveness as a funder, and to share with stakeholders the results of its data collection from the sector on its performance on funder-level attributes for trauma responsiveness.

> 'We can't just expect other people to do it and the funder doesn't bother. And we are learning from that as well. We'll be very transparent about what we're learning in our journey of engaging with the tool.' EIRD 4

EIRD has assembled its change team, completed its first round of data collection from agencies and is undertaking collective reflection processes to identify its priority areas for action.

(c) Outcomes for Focus users

As EIRD and CFSS agencies have only just started using Focus and implementing the Trauma Responsive System Framework, it is too early to measure outcomes resulting from the use of Focus. However, some EIRD interviewees described already applying trauma responsive principles in both their professional and private lives, and were seeking to work in a more trauma responsive way with a range of staff and partners beyond this initiative.

> 'I think an impact of it is that it really does bring people back to the [trauma responsive] principles; you can't help but get reminded about the six principles. From my perspective, it certainly had an impact on me. I mean, obviously I've been very immersed in it, more so than a lot of other people. But I find that I think about them [trauma responsive principles] … at work and in my life.' EIRD 4

It is anticipated by Emerging Minds and EIRD that some organisations using Focus will have made progress towards the expected outcomes in the next 12 months and will participate in implementation case studies in 2024.

5. Context

This case study focuses on those context factors which were identified by interviewees as being the most significant influences on the trajectory of the initiative to date.

(a) Sector level context: Continuation of a co-designed reform process

All interviewees agreed that one of the most important contextual factors influencing this initiative is the preceding co-design process that developed the Trauma Responsive System Framework. This was a two-year process that involved more than 300 people and included streams of work dedicated to co-design with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and lived experience advisors. The process took place in the context of sector reform in the Department of Human Services (the *Our Healing Approach* agenda) following public enquiries into the South Australian child protection system.

In addition to developing the 54 attributes of the Framework, the co-design process was successful in establishing relationships, agreed principles and a shared belief that change was possible. These outcomes became defining contextual factors for the EIRD-Emerging Minds Focus initiative which involved agencies and individuals who had previously been instrumental in the Trauma Responsive System Framework co-design.

Interviewees described feeling a strong sense of responsibility to translate the Trauma Responsive System Framework into practice and to honour the goodwill and belief that had been generated by the co-design process. Interviewees also described CFSS agencies as having a higher-than-usual degree of buy-in to the initiative, following their role in the preceding co-design process. The Focus tool was positioned as a vehicle to help embed the co-designed Trauma Responsive System Framework into practice.

(b) Individual level context: Shared commitment and existing relationships

All interviewees highlighted the importance of the relational component to this initiative. They identified shared vision, shared practical experience, the range of skills, and a high degree of commitment that the Project Team members brought to the initiative.

Many of the Project Team members were already known to each other and had reputations within the South Australian CFSS sector as having credible practical experience and commitment to system improvement.

EIRD made a decision to continue to use the same consultants on the Focus project as those who had been involved in the co-design of the Trauma Responsive System Framework, providing personnel continuity for the sector, and integrating expertise in trauma, capacity building and capturing the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

> 'I think what's helpful is that we've all got pretty similar things that we believe in, that we think are useful to do in a system like this. So the group of people that we had have a similar approach.' Consultant 8

> 'I think what worked well was that we had such amazing people, so committed to making it work and who could see the value.' EIRD 4

(c) Partnership level context: Complementary capabilities and collaboration

One of the consultants on the initiative who knew both EIRD and Emerging Minds initially brought the two organisations together – aware of Emerging Minds' strategy of partnering for system change and EIRD's task of operationalising the Trauma Responsive System Framework. Emerging Minds was well regarded for its training resources on children's social and emotional wellbeing and was gaining increasing expertise in supporting system change.

EIRD brought visible leadership commitment to improving trauma responsiveness, a strong relationship with a lived experience network, staffing, resourcing for consultants, and a collaborative mindset.

> 'I think we really value our partners and that we can't be the experts in everything and we don't profess to be. We've got a lot of diversity of skills and background experience in our team, but we're trying to build an evidence-informed system. So we want to partner with experts in the field … it's all about collaborating and progressing the shared agenda that we all have.' EIRD 5

EIRD also brought its role as funder and contract holder in the child and family support sector. And while EIRD is committed to a partnership approach with agencies, it nevertheless did bring an expectation, and a degree of authority, that agencies would work towards improving their trauma responsiveness.

> 'We do have high expectations of them [agencies] because we want to achieve real change and we can't do what we've always done in the past. Yes, we are doing everything we possibly can to support them, but there's no doubt that they need to be successful.' EIRD 6

(d) Agency level context: common pressures and needs

The conditions within which CFSS agencies operate have determined how the project team has sought to engage agencies and whether or not agencies have chosen to come on board with using Focus. While agencies each have their own contexts, interviewees identified common contextual factors present across all agencies, all of which were already familiar to the project team from previous work:

- Extreme time, work and risk pressures
- Staff shortages and increase in lower-skilled workers
- Competing strategic and improvement priorities
- Fatigue and scepticism of reform and change programs
- Wariness of collecting organisational data that could be used by funders (including EIRD) for performance monitoring, sector benchmarking or funding decisions; and
- Familiarity with systematic and structured quality improvement approaches.

6. Mechanisms of change

In this case study, the mechanisms of change describe the ways project staff (EIRD, Emerging Minds and consultants) and CFSS agencies have responded to the initiative of developing and implementing a tool to facilitate a change in agency practices to create more trauma responsive services. The change processes outlined below appear to have been instrumental to the achievement of initiative outcomes to date. The mechanisms of change were generated by grouping themes identified in the qualitative analysis, interpreting the relationships between the themes in each group and consolidating these themes into three key mechanisms of change (see Figure 2).

(a) Education: The sector built its understanding of the components of whole-of-system change

This initiative started out with a goal of whole-of-system change, but it is the customised Focus tool that showed agencies how this might actually be achieved. Discussions about the use of Focus became the caveat for conversations with agencies about how to better meet the needs of children and families. Through these conversations and demonstrations, leaders and practitioners came to recognise the practical steps they could take in implementing the Trauma Responsive System Framework using Focus in their own organisations, and how this fitted within a multi-level approach to improve system trauma responsiveness.

> 'The tool is systemic and systematic. They have done it visually…people can pick it up pretty quickly, multi-level and linear that makes it easier for people.' Consultant 8

> '… getting people to think not just about practice, but about what supports practice at an organisational level and then what supports practice and organisations at a funder level.' EIRD 4

(b) Dialogue: EIRD, the project team and agencies engaged in open communication about expectations and barriers

The project team comprised a small number of staff each from Emerging Minds and EIRD, and two external consultants. In delivering this initiative, project team members committed to modelling the six core principles of the Trauma Responsive System Framework:

1. trustworthiness
2. safety
3. peer and community support
4. collaboration
5. empowerment and self-determination; and
6. know yourself and learn.

The amount of time staff from both Emerging Minds and EIRD invested in this project was significant. Using the six key principles, both in how they worked with each other on the project and how they engaged with agencies, resulted in a high degree of camaraderie within the project team which enabled them to push through long hours and the challenges associated with working on this project within the contextual factors outlined above.

In working with CFSS agencies, the project team acknowledged the power imbalance that has traditionally existed in many funder–funded relationships, and worked to counter-balance this through fostering greater trust and partnership with agencies. An important demonstration of a more equal relationship was EIRD's commitment to use Focus for its own internal change process, in effect establishing a parallel process alongside the agencies.

Having an open dialogue with agencies about their current needs and challenges in service delivery gave the project team opportunities to outline EIRD's intentions behind the use of Focus. This provided CFSS agencies with information to help decide whether they were in a realistic position to commit to using Focus as expected.

An indication of a more sensitive approach with CFSS-funded agencies was the decision by EIRD that it would not compel agencies to submit their Focus data back to EIRD. This addressed a significant barrier to using Focus among agencies who were concerned that their data would be used for performance monitoring or funding decisions.

> 'So EIRD will not get any data from the organisations unless the organisations choose to share it. And that became really, really important … EIRD didn't want this to be punitive, they wanted it to continue with the spirit that had been designed with and for the sector.' Emerging Minds 2

> 'I think the sector have really appreciated how this project team have guided them through this and how they've managed and role modelled the principles of the framework.' EIRD 3

c) Responsiveness: EIRD responded to agencies' concerns with flexibility

According to the project team, the sector remains fatigued and sceptical about reform agendas despite the sense of optimism and intent generated by the co-design of the Trauma Responsive System Framework. Project team interviewees commented that CFSS agency leaders were struggling with committing to a change process while delivering services with staff shortages and resource constraints. The project team actively sought the views of agencies where possible and were then able to be flexible, and adjust their processes and expectations in response to the concerns raised.

> 'That allowed us at Emerging Minds to refine our messaging around how to speak to people who would be putting this into place…' Emerging Minds 1

An important stance taken by the project team was an awareness that embedding sustainable practice change across an organisation or program is challenging and is likely to be a long-term process. This messaging was relayed directly to agencies in an attempt to reduce the pressure on organisations and prevent a sense of overwhelm. Agencies were told that they would have the flexibility to focus on as few or as many attributes as they chose and could align their chosen actions with broader organisational strategic priorities if they wished.

> 'I think that's been a really good and important selling point in that this is a long-term journey and then there's no expectation of anyone to have to tick boxes …' Consultant 7

> 'It's not about being perfect. Take your small steps; you don't have to change the world … Do it step by step. Because actually, it's the slow steps and the small steps that can work well with a tool like this … Just start …' Consultant 8

Listening and responding to the implementation concerns around the use of Focus was identified by interviewees as being essential to meeting the needs of time-poor organisations and enabling them to get started with Focus and to keep going.

In addition, the project team sought to outline the benefits to agencies of using Focus and, where possible, demonstrate how it could make their lives easier. This has included combining a range of capacity-building resources that complement the integration of the Trauma Responsive System Framework, including Common Elements resources, which were embedded within Focus to enable CFSS agencies to manage multiple capacity-building programs within one platform. According to the interviewees, CFSS agencies reportedly saw benefits in collecting data on their trauma responsiveness that might be used to demonstrate their performance in future tenders and submissions.

> 'What's in it for that service out there? And so from all of these demonstrations that [project team members] have gone to … they've been able to go, "Look, here's how easy it is to use and here's the benefits that you're going to get from it." So that's when they got the engagement, which has been amazing.' EIRD 6

> 'I've been involved in many, many reform processes over the years, but I haven't seen the level of buy-in that we've had with this particular project. I think it's because of the approach that we've taken and the authenticity of it …' Consultant 7

Context–Mechanism–Outcome configuration for EIRD–Emerging Minds Focus initiative

FOCUS INITIATIVE

- Digital whole-of-system change tool using a quality improvement approach
- Customised for SA Trauma Responsive System Framework
- Individualised coaching and support
- Trauma Responsive Champions Network community of practice

CONTEXT

Sector: part of a larger co-designed reform agenda

Partnership: existing complementary capabilities

Individuals: existing relationships and shared vision

Agencies: common pressures and needs

MECHANISMS OF CHANGE

Education
Sector built its understanding of the components of whole-of-system change

Dialogue
EIRD, the project team and agencies engaged in open communication about expectations and barriers

Responsiveness
EIRD responded to agencies' concerns with flexibility

OUTCOMES

- Sector recognises the need to invest in actions beyond practitioner training
- Sector recognises the need for multi-level accountability within their agencies
- Senior leadership in agencies recognise the importance of time, energy and resources required

- Trusting relationships established between funder and funded
- EIRD demonstrating use of Focus as a funder-user

- Realistic expectations by EIRD of agencies' use of Focus
- Six out of 11 agencies committed to using Focus as part of implementation of the Trauma Responsive System Framework

7. Challenges

All interviewees acknowledge that there will be multiple challenges for CFSS agencies to progress their change priorities despite beginning with good intentions and an understanding of the benefits of Focus. There is concern that the 54 trauma responsive attributes incorporated in Focus may prove to be too large for agencies and EIRD remains open to reviewing this at a later date. The project team also perceives pressures from the wider structures that sit around the sector's reform environment.

> '… the Focus tool and the Trauma Responsive System Framework are trying to move a very, very complex system to have a different kind of alignment. But the pressures that are on it – economic risk, media, money – are very strong and so they push it back. Even though you're trying to head towards something, you get these forces that push it back.' Consultant 8

EIRD remains committed to providing ongoing support to agencies as they work through their change processes. Continuing to provide this level of support may prove to be a challenge over a long period of time.

Despite the challenges, there is optimism among the project team that Focus can help to build momentum for change across the CFSS sector as agencies start using it. The collective reflection that Focus is expected to create within organisations is expected to build a collective will and sustained action for change. Embedded evidence-based resources are expected to build knowledge and inform attitudinal shifts. As agencies and EIRD share their experiences and outcomes with each other through the community of practice, it is expected that opportunities to learn from each other will accelerate sector-wide learning. These expected change mechanisms will be examined in implementation case studies in 2024.

8. Who might be missing out?

Until agencies are in a position to identify outcomes from their use of Focus, it is difficult to identify who might not be reached by any benefits from this initiative. This could potentially include workforces and children and families in organisations failing or unwilling to move to trauma responsive practices. It could also include agencies who may choose not to use Focus, drawing on their own expertise in seeking organisational change. It might also raise questions about what other service sectors might benefit from supported implementation of the Trauma Responsive System Framework, including child protection services for instance.

9. Limitations

This case study covers initiative development and agency engagement, which encompasses only the early stages and use of Focus by CFSS agencies. The experiences and outcomes of other agencies will be examined in future case studies.

Those interviewed for this case study were all members of the project team, selected for their in-depth knowledge of the initiative. Having worked closely together, the interviewees hold many similar experiences and views. They also share a commitment to seeing this initiative succeed. While these characteristics have been a strength for the initiative, they could result in confirmation bias and a lack of alternative viewpoints.

Further case studies are expected to broaden the range of key informants and add to our understanding of if and how the EIRD–Emerging Minds Focus initiative has improved trauma responsiveness among South Australian CFSS agencies. Here, it will be particularly important to seek the views of agencies who committed to using Focus to determine if the use of the tool was implemented as was expected by the project team.

10. Conclusions and implications

At this stage, only early outcomes from the points of view of the project team are available for this case study. Interviewees agreed that important outcomes have been achieved so far in terms of developing a tool to support a systems approach to trauma responsiveness across the CFSS sector, and initial commitments from the sector funder (EIRD) and six CFSS agencies to use that tool. The context of a co-designed reform agenda, and a departmental expectation of improved trauma responsiveness in agencies, has led to a shared commitment to the change process within the sector. Individuals on the project team with existing credibility and working relationships have been able to leverage their shared vision and experience. The change mechanisms identified in this case study point to processes that

may help organisations and sectors seeking sector-wide change in differing contexts. This includes:

- using Focus to facilitate understanding in organisations about what is required to implement change across a sector

- engaging in open dialogue to build trust between a funder and the funded agencies; and

- listening and responding to the common challenges of agencies, including by offering coaching and support, so that agencies feel able to meet the requirements of a sector-wide change process.

It will be possible to explore any improvements in CFSS agencies' trauma responsiveness once agencies have had time to use Focus to formulate and monitor their improvement action plans.

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