

Joint Practice for Supporting Children and Young People with a Disability (CS-ADHC MoU)

A Joint ADHC and Community Services Presentation

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Introduction

Valerie Appleby - Senior Practitioner Case Management
Ageing, Disability and Home Care, NSW Department of Family and
Community Services

Opening:

2 stories – one about events for a child with a disability and their family prior to CS ADHC MOU collaboration and one to provide contrast with experience for a family after collaborative practice.

What made the difference?

Basic Messages

1. A child with a disability is a child first and foremost.
2. Children prosper best with their families unless there is a genuine risk of harm that would apply in any family situation.
3. What support does a family need to stay together?
4. How can we assist a family to build resilience?
5. Case managers and caseworkers from both agencies need to work together to get the best possible outcome for the child and their family.

How did we do it?

1. Agreement at every level from Regional Directors down that we would work together for the best outcome possible.
2. Joint regular meetings from frontline staff to Regional Directors
3. Tiered structure to escalate systemic issues
4. Consistent messages to build confidence of managers and staff in decision making.
5. \$\$ are the last issue for discussion not first.

What do we see now?

1. Confident staff with good relationships working together with a shared message of good outcomes for the child.
2. Parents supported and assisted to keep their child at home with appropriate support and responses.
3. Pooling of resources to get the best outcomes within available resources rather than escalation to crisis.
4. Families more confident to seek assistance early – fear of losing their child is not so dominant.

What do we see now?

5. New resources to build family resilience.
6. Well trained staff who work with families to expand networks and social inclusion rather than a high reliance on formal supports and systems.
7. Better engagement with other mainstream services and a joint approach from CS and ADHC reinforcing the need for collaborative practice.
8. Better understanding of barriers for other agencies and departments instead of conflict and resentment.
9. Pathways to escalate issues and reduce systemic barriers.

Introducing

Annette Smith – Director Child & Family (Riverina Murray)
Community Services, NSW Department of Family and
Community Services

Children represent our future. Promoting their development and wellbeing is widely accepted as an essential investment, as well as a moral obligation because of their vulnerability.

Contemporary thinking

- Problems, research, practice and policy relating to children have often been conducted in “silos” (eg Prior 2002), meaning that information about children with disability is often difficult to find and synthesise into a meaningful picture.
- To improve the interface between disability support and child protection services.

Leadership and Relationships

- Leadership is critical in transforming an Agency
- Build constructive relationships
- Agencies and individuals – people that are good to deal with
- Line Supervisors must think collaboration will work
- Shared Outcomes with all parties including NGOs is crucial

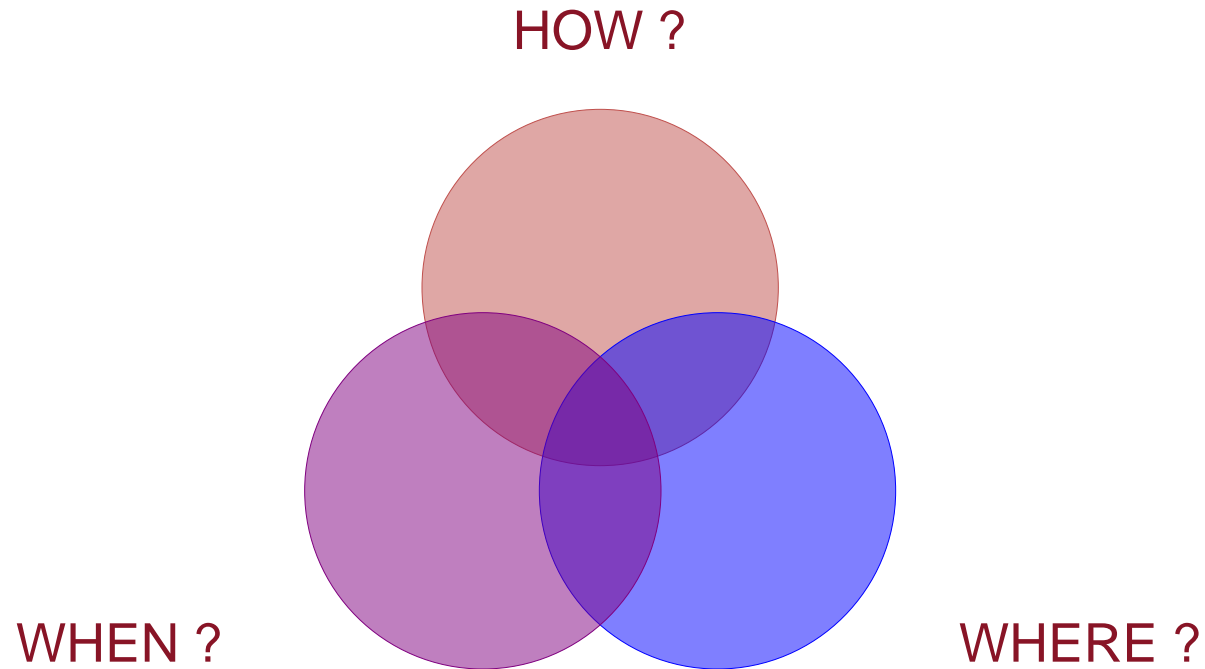
Systems Response

- Philosophical shift from incident to needs for children and families
- Get language and thinking moving
- Many ways of doing things
- Pay attention to systems response – objective to get to a much better place with agencies and families

Language

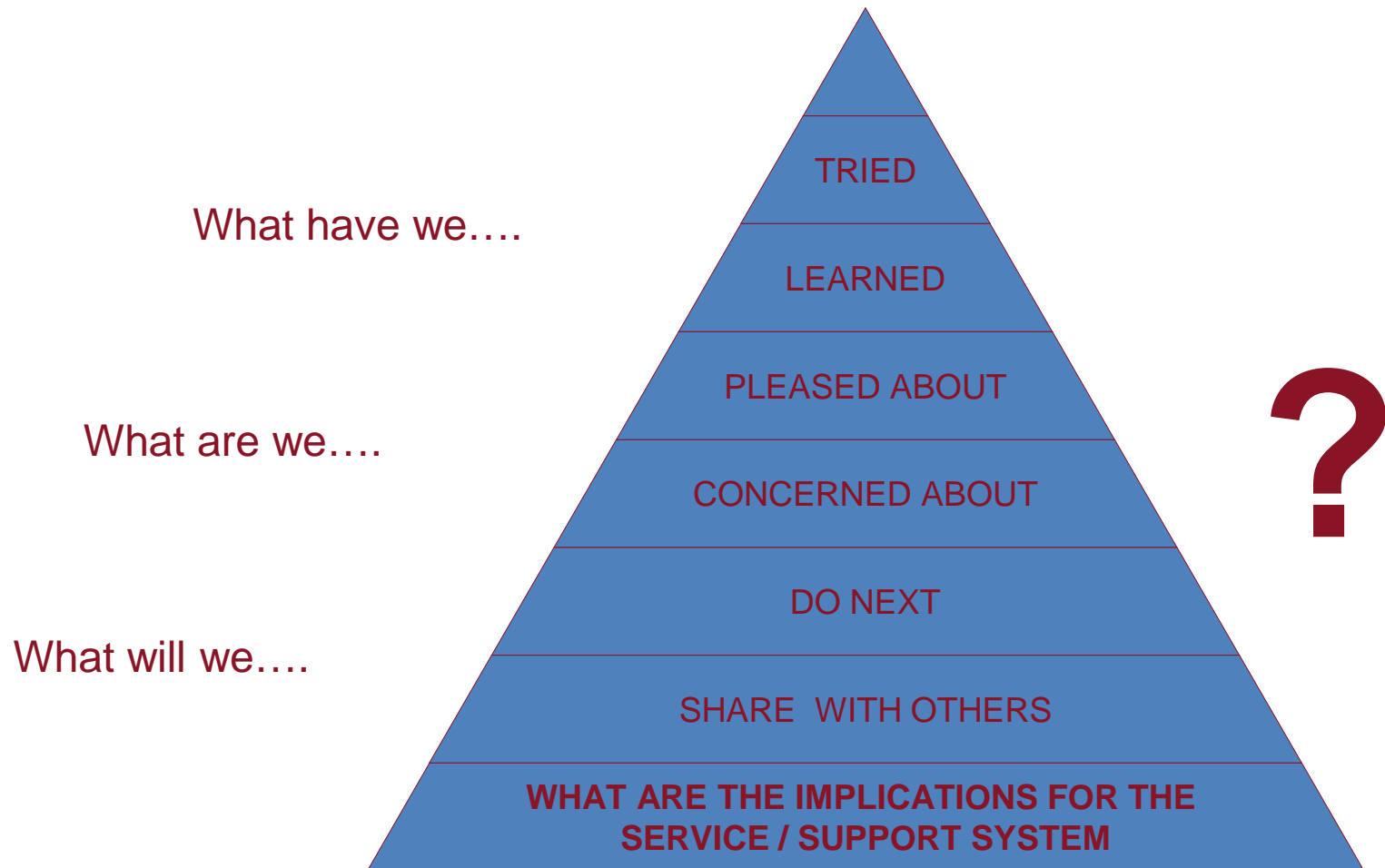
- Key to increasing involvement – including family and agency
- Time and space required
- Generally move away from anxiety
- Calmness results in good thinking
- Say what you mean
- Speak fluently in language of respect
- Inclusive language based on constructive engagement

Use Curiosity



DON'T ASK "WHY ?"

Monitoring and Reviewing Integrated Family Case Management Practice



Conclusion

**Move from adversarial
role to settlement, with
care around engagement
and respect.**