

CQI approaches to sustainable implementation of social and emotional wellbeing programs and services

Aim

To support implementation and evaluation of a range of existing social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) programs and services using a continuous quality improvement (CQI) lens, as well as strengthening the evidence base for these programs and services.

Overview

Background: Two factors motivated the project. First, evidence suggests that sustainable implementation of promising programs and services using CQI approaches is potentially a cost-beneficial way of improving health and wellbeing. However, it is hard to find case studies of sustainable implementation and evaluation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander SEWB programs and services, despite significant interest in and uptake of such programs and services. Second, CQI approaches have been applied widely across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary health care services with significant outcomes, but less so within broader SEWB service delivery areas. There is an obvious need to improve service quality and outcomes in areas such as child protection, family support, youth work, drug and alcohol interventions, and other social determinants of health.

Project description: The project covers more than a dozen discrete wellbeing promotion-related research and development programs. By focusing on these activities using a participatory action research CQI lens, the project aims to improve understanding about sustainable implementation and evaluation of SEWB programs and services.

To achieve our goal, a number of pragmatic approaches have been implemented:

- + We have taken advantage of the continuing demand for the Family Wellbeing (FWB) program (experiential learning and empowerment to address physical, emotional, mental and spiritual needs) to design case studies of sustainable FWB implementation within particular service contexts.
- + We have responded to demand from newly established mental health services to work with them on the design of long-term evaluation frameworks using CQI approaches.
- + We have used a systematic literature review of the application of CQI in child protection as an opportunity to engage social work colleagues about the potential of CQI to improve outcomes across social services, and to provide support and mentoring towards more systematic longer term and mutually beneficial research partnerships with industry sectors.
- + An experienced Indigenous health leader (Leslie Baird) has provided cultural guidance to support community/organisation engagement and implementation of SEWB initiatives using a CQI lens.
- + We have reviewed the evidence base for FWB and other SEWB interventions so as to develop a set of core measures to facilitate process and impact assessments across settings.

Outputs to date

- + A SEWB research translation and impact assessment case study is currently under review.
- + A systematic literature review of the application of CQI approaches in child protection has been published.
- + The development of core measures and a governance structure for collection, storage and access for FWB and other SEWB data has commenced.
- + Across the discrete projects more than 10 papers are in press or under review, with more being prepared for submission, and there have been several conference presentations.
- + A National Centre for FWB website (<https://family-wellbeing.squarespace.com>) has been created.
- + Queensland Police and Cape York Aboriginal communities are in an emerging partnership to evaluate a child sexual abuse community awareness and prevention program using participatory action research and CQI approaches.
- + Discussions are currently in progress with the private sector for funding and in-kind support, including a whole-of-community investment approach.

Anticipated outputs

- + Sustainable implementation of FWB in a child protection service using participatory action research and CQI approaches (currently in preparation).
- + A national FWB knowledge-sharing forum to be held in Cairns on 27 November 2018.

Next steps

- + The project will synthesise the learnings and insights gained from the discrete projects to improve understanding of sustainable SEWB service and program implementation using CQI approaches, and to inform practice in this area.
- + Individual researchers will continue to seek funding for research activities building on previous research, as well as working collaboratively across projects using CQI to strengthen the evidence base for SEWB programs and services.

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