“Bigger than a program”: The transfer of the Aboriginal Family Wellbeing Program across Australia

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Background - FWB

• Developed in 1993 by The Aboriginal Employment Development Branch of the South Australian Department of Education, Training and Employment;

• A community development approach “to support Aboriginal people to meet their higher level needs as determinants and precursors to wellbeing and build capacity for employment”;

FAMILY WELLBEING AND DEVELOPMENT
LEVELS OF INTERVENTION

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
STRONG ACTION

ACTIVITIES & PROCEDURES
• What to do
• How to do it

DIRECTIONS & PURPOSE
• Why are we here?
  • What are our beliefs and values?

UNITY & IDENTITY
• Who are we?
  • Where do we belong?
  • What do we have in common?

ADDRESSING THE BLOCKS AND BARRIERS
• Healing the wounds
• Releasing the anger and grief
• Confronting the violence and addictions

BUILDING A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR STRONG ACTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Why study program transfer?

1. NHMRC criteria: Could Aboriginal empowerment initiatives that work in one setting can be transferable to other settings?

2. Community research partners were keen to deliver FWB across communities.

3. There are few descriptions of the successful transfer of programs or services in the Indigenous Australian health literature.
Method

1. A historical account of FWB transfer;
2. A theoretical model of program transfer;
3. The significance of the theoretical model for practice and policy.
1. FWB spread
FWB adaptation

• Employment and community development
• Training and capacity building
• Health promotion
• Empowerment research
• School education
2. Supporting inside-out empowerment by embracing relatedness

- Supporting inside-out empowerment – i.e. empowerment of self and others;

- Embracing relatedness with self, others and the structural conditions;

- Embracing relatedness occurred at individual and organisational levels.
Theoretical model

Meeting a need

- Dynamic:
  - Establishing relevance and credibility
  - Creating a safe space
  - Nurturing universal human qualities

Listening and responding

- Dynamic:
  - Identifying needs, priorities and aspirations
  - Committing incrementally
  - Gaining resources

Adding value

- Dynamic:
  - Strengthening organisational capacity
  - Influencing policy

Taking control to make choices

- Dynamic:
  - Dealing with baggage
  - Encouraging the ripple effect

Core process: Embracing relatedness
3. Significance

• The empowering nature of the program,
• The experiential personal change processes resulting from program participation,
• Informal networks and three providers,
• A responsiveness of organisations and incremental commitment,
• The role of research in adding value.
Summary

- Grass roots program transfer is facilitated when the program is experiential and empowering, and Aboriginal people take control of the process;

- Program transfer can be supported through facilitating collaborations, partnerships and informal networks;

- Value-adding to long-term Aboriginal empowerment initiatives is important;

- The theoretical model can be used to consider issues and strengthen processes of program transferability.
Thanks