Part 2: Plan

Distribute the relevant KidsMatter Early Childhood Component Staff Survey

Consulting with staff to ensure their opinions and concerns are heard and valued is an important part of KidsMatter Early Childhood. Staff will be asked to complete a KidsMatter Early Childhood Staff Survey at the beginning of each Component, which provides the opportunity for them to express their views on the current situation within the service, in relation to the areas covered by each Component. It is part of the role of the KidsMatter Leadership Team to provide the survey to all staff and ask them to complete it. They should be able to return it anonymously. A Staff Survey for each Component is included in this volume. Wording for a letter explaining the survey to staff is also provided.

Distribute KidsMatter Early Childhood Family Survey to all families for completion

KidsMatter Early Childhood encourages partnerships with families. The KidsMatter Early Childhood Family Survey provides another way to engage families and encourage them to reflect on issues that your service will be addressing. All families whose children attend your service can be given the chance to share their views. All families are invited and encouraged to complete and return the survey, to ensure you have an accurate picture of how your service is perceived. There is also a letter for families who may wish to complete the Family Survey, which explains how the information collected will be used. It is important to advise families that the survey is anonymous and that it is possible to return the survey without having to hand it to a staff member (for example, via a ‘survey return box’). If you feel that written surveys are not the best or most appropriate way to engage or receive feedback from families at your service, talk to your KidsMatter Facilitator or look on the KidsMatter website for other ways to give families an opportunity to share their views.
**Becoming informed about the Component**

Information about each Component is available in the document *KidsMatter Early Childhood Framework*. Each Component is also available as a PDF document at [www.kidsmatter.edu.au](http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au). At this point, the KidsMatter Leadership Team should become familiar with this information. In addition, Professional Learning is also provided about each Component of KidsMatter Early Childhood. This may be scheduled at a particular time or accessed online during staff team meetings. The planning process can continue before, during and after the Professional Learning.

**Share Component information with all staff**

Now that the KidsMatter Leadership Team is familiar with the information about the relevant Component, it is important to share this information with all staff. This will help them to understand what your service will be working on over the next few months and how it is important for children’s mental health and wellbeing. There is a range of different ways to convey this information, including:

- information sheets provided by KidsMatter Early Childhood
- KidsMatter Early Childhood Professional Learning delivered by your Facilitator or online
- opportunities for staff to discuss and reflect on the information
- further reading recommended by your Facilitator or available online.

**Share Component information with families**

Families are an important part of the early childhood community. KidsMatter Early Childhood provides information on our website and in hardcopy that can be distributed to families. Services might like to consider other types of information that could be provided to families to help them understand more about the Target Areas of the Component, and how the service will be promoting their children’s mental health through addressing these Target Areas.

**Summary**

By now you will have:

- established the membership of your KidsMatter Leadership Team
- attended a ‘Getting Started with KidsMatter Early Childhood’ session
- provided introductory information to all staff
- provided introductory information to all families
- distributed KidsMatter Early Childhood Surveys to all staff and families.

Throughout the rest of this book, you will be guided through a series of ‘discussion points’ that will help you during the ‘Plan-Do-Review’ process.
Discussion point: Setting some discussion guidelines

Before you begin this process it is important to agree on some guidelines. Guidelines are a set of agreements staff make to ensure everyone feels comfortable and confident about participating. Spend some time discussing with your staff what these guidelines might be, so that you all have an agreed understanding.

You might like to consider the following suggestions:

1. Value all contributions—when brainstorming, encourage creativity and avoid judgement, because even the wildest ideas may trigger a more practical suggestion in the end.

2. Quantity then quality—it is important to generate as many ideas as possible so you can select the most helpful ones.

3. Take turns—some staff may have several ideas or comments they wish to contribute. However, it is important that everyone is given an opportunity to be heard.

Some tips:

- Around five guidelines will probably be enough. If you have more than five, perhaps some of them can be grouped.
- Try to word your guidelines positively (for example, instead of ‘Don’t judge’, use ‘Value all contributions’).
- Make sure everyone feels they have contributed to these guidelines.

Our guidelines:

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Your strengths

By now your KidsMatter Leadership Team, staff and families will have a better understanding of the Component you are working on, and have been introduced to the Component Target Areas.

KidsMatter Early Childhood acknowledges that ECEC services are already doing a lot in relation to the Components addressed by our Framework. In this section you will look at the current situation in your service in relation to the Target Areas, identify what you are already doing in these areas and celebrate your service’s existing strengths. Information from the KidsMatter Early Childhood Component Staff and Family Surveys will help you with this process.

**DISCUSSION**

**Discussion point: What do you already do in your service in relation to this Component?**

Now you are ready for your KidsMatter Leadership Team to meet with all of the staff in the service to consider the current situation. Find the Target Areas for the Component you are working on in the Framework book, and use the following table to write down the group’s general views around what the service is already doing in relation to each Target Area. You could also use a whiteboard, butcher’s paper or any other planning tool you already have.

Brainstorm what you are already doing in your service under the Component Target Areas.

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<th>TARGET AREA 1</th>
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<th>TARGET AREA 2</th>
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<tr>
<th>TARGET AREA 3</th>
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Having a good understanding and awareness of your individual and collective strengths is essential, as your strengths can be used to help address the Target Areas.

Look at the information gathered in the table above and highlight:

- What are you particularly proud of as a service?
- What do you do really well?
How to use information from the Component Staff and Family Surveys

Responses to the Staff and Family Surveys can also be used to identify areas of service strength with regard to the Component Target Areas. Collate the information gathered from the surveys to create Staff and Family Component Profiles for your service. These can also be used to help you set goals for your service development for the Component.

**DISCUSSION**

Discussion point: What do your Staff and Family Component Profiles tell you about your strengths?

Together with your staff, look at the Component Profiles. In which Target Areas:

- ... do staff think you do well?
- ... do families think you do well?
- Are there any differences in staff and family responses? And what does this tell you?
- Were there any surprises in the findings?

Now, look at individual questions where your service has rated highly. What are your particular strengths? You can use both the results from your discussions and surveys to come up with these. Use the following table (or another method of your choice) to record your areas of strength.
Our strengths in helping children experiencing mental health difficulties and their families:

<table>
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<th>TARGET AREA 1</th>
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<tr>
<th>TARGET AREA 2</th>
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<tr>
<th>TARGET AREA 3</th>
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We manage to achieve these strengths by (for example, personal qualities, existing policies, creative ideas):

It is important to acknowledge and celebrate your strengths. With staff, think about: What are you particularly pleased with, or proud of? You could do this as individuals (for example, everyone writes something they are pleased with on a sticky note and sticks it on a wall), or in whole group discussion. You can collate your responses below, or on a large piece of paper to display in your service.

Celebrate

We are particularly pleased and proud of:

- .................................................................
- .................................................................
- .................................................................
- .................................................................
- .................................................................
- .................................................................
- .................................................................
- .................................................................

Summary

By now you will have:

- identified with staff what you are already doing in your service in relation to the Component Target Areas
- collated survey information and created the Component Staff and Family Profiles
- identified your service’s existing strengths in helping children experiencing mental health difficulties and their families
- celebrated your service’s existing strengths when helping children experiencing mental health difficulties and their families.

In the next section you will use the survey information and discussion with staff to set your service goals for the Component.
Setting your Component goals

In the previous section you identified your service’s strengths in relation to the Component Target Areas. The next step is to work with staff to determine what your service could do to enhance staff practice in relation to the Component.

Now that you are more aware of your service’s strengths in this area, it is time to begin identifying areas for development. Your Component Profiles on p. 27 are one source of information you can use. You may like to refer to these during your Component planning discussions.

DISCUSSION

Discussion point: What could your service work on to enhance staff practice in this Component?

Together with your staff, discuss the following. You might like to use the Component Profiles to guide your discussions. In which Target Areas:

■ ... do staff think you don’t do as well?

■ ... do families think you don’t do as well?

■ Are there any differences in staff and family responses? And what does this tell you?

■ Were there any surprises in the findings?

Now, look at individual questions where your service has rated lower. Considering these questions together with staff discussions, identify what areas you need to develop. Use the space on the following page (or another method of your choice) to record your areas for development.
Now that you have identified areas for development, you are ready to work together with your KidsMatter Leadership Team and staff to decide on your Component goals.

**DISCUSSION**

**Discussion point: Deciding on your goals**

With your KidsMatter Leadership Team and staff, decide on your goals based on the areas you have identified above. Try to make your goals **SMART**:

- **Specific**—Your goals should be well-defined and clear (for example, all staff will greet parents and carers as they arrive in the morning and afternoon).

- **Measurable**—How will you know when your goal is achieved? What will you see? What will be different?

- **Achievable**—Your goals should be realistic and take into account your current situation and service environment.

- **Relevant**—Your goals should meet the needs of your service—think about why your goal is important in your context.

- **Time specific**—Be clear about when you expect your goals to be achieved.

**Areas for development:**

| Target Area 1
|---|
| Target Area 2
|---|
| Target Area 3

**Target Area**

**Our Component Goals**
**Possible concerns for your service in achieving your goals**

It is important to identify any potential concerns that could hinder your service in achieving your goals. Concerns may be related to:

- **staff attitudes** (for example, how they feel about the proposed changes and their role in bringing them about)
- **staff skills, knowledge and confidence** (for example, whether they think they will be able to do what is proposed)
- **staff perceptions** (for example, about the support that will be offered by, and to, the service)
- **children, parents and carers or broader community**
- **a lack of resources** (for example, time, money, space, or staff capacity).

Consulting with your staff, and taking their concerns into account, will ensure that staff feel listened to, valued and included in the planning process. In addition, if concerns are identified and addressed as part of the planning process, they are less likely to become challenges later on.

Your service can brainstorm ways to address your concerns. During this process you may like to think about:

- highlighting to staff that they are already doing a lot in their everyday practice, and that KidsMatter Early Childhood is about enhancing, sharing and coordinating this practice
- fostering a sense of ownership of the initiative by communicating benefits for staff, such as:
  - improving children’s wellbeing and behaviour
  - strengthening staff morale and reducing stress levels
  - improving relationships.
- identifying how KidsMatter Early Childhood helps your service achieve the aims of the *Early Years Learning Framework* and the *National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care Quality Areas*. 

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KidsMatter Early Childhood Tools and guidelines for implementation

15
DISCUSSION

Discussion point: Brainstorm strengths in achieving your goals, possible concerns, and strategies to address these concerns

The next steps are to spend some time:

- Brainstorming what strengths and resources you already have as an organisation (for example, people, support networks, resources and knowledge) that will help you achieve your goals. List these in the space provided in the table below.

- Thinking of possible concerns about addressing the goals you have set with your KidsMatter Leadership Team and staff. It is important to listen to and acknowledge these concerns so that everyone feels ready to move forward. Look at your goals and use the space provided below (or a method of your choice) to record concerns that are raised.

- Generating strategies for tackling these concerns. Consider how the strengths you have identified might help you overcome these concerns. List these in the space provided.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUR STRENGTHS (PEOPLE, KNOWLEDGE, RESOURCES)</th>
<th>OUR CONCERNS</th>
<th>STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING THESE CONCERNS</th>
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Discussion point: Brainstorm strategies for achieving your goals

The next step is to generate a broad range of strategies to work towards achieving each agreed goal. At this stage it is important to brainstorm as many strategies as you can. This will ensure that you are looking at all possibilities, and not simply settling on an obvious choice. It might be a good idea at this point to revisit your Discussion Guidelines to remind staff that all ideas are accepted without judgement or criticism, as well as to encourage creativity and originality.

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<tr>
<th>TARGET AREAS</th>
<th>OUR COMPONENT GOALS</th>
<th>STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING OUR GOALS</th>
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Summary

By now you will have:

- identified goals that can be achieved in your service
- highlighted and acknowledged strengths and any concerns in reaching your goals
- brainstormed strategies for addressing these concerns
- brainstormed strategies for achieving your goals.

In the next section you will put your goals and strategies together into individual Goal Maps which will form your Action Plan.