

Evidence Based Practice Resource Series



“Supporting Best Practice in Western Sydney”

Linking Evidence to Practice Tip Sheet

Also available from: www.fwtdp.org.au

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FWTDP Core Goals:

- > Achieving learning outcomes
- > Increasing strength based practice
- > Increasing knowledge of evidence base
- > Increasing confidence to apply knowledge
- > Increasing conscious work practice



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Linking Evidence to Practice Tip Sheet

Produced for FWT+DP by C. Quinn Consultancy Pty Ltd 2009

Why is the link between EVIDENCE and PRACTICE important?

What research and evidence on best practice can tell us:

Current research and evidence on the outcomes of specific models and practice strategies previously carried out are useful for informing current and future practice because it can:

- Show what has been proven to be effective in the past and why
- Indicate what would have the most chance of working in areas with similar characteristics of service deliver / target group as your own area
- Enable services to target limited resources to get the best outcomes for client families / communities

To get the best outcomes for your local client group / community, a range of information should be considered. Service providers should take a conscious, continuous, critical and reflective approach to service delivery and practice decision making in areas such as: program design, development, delivery, review and evaluation.



Rycroft-Malone, et al (2004)

When and how to use EVIDENCE to inform PRACTICE:

Always consider the local context when assessing key messages from the current best practice evidence base:

Basic Considerations:

- What is the need?
- What do we know works / how do we know?
- What could work in the individual community setting?

Broader considerations:

Could it be implemented?

- Does the political environment allow the program to be implemented?
- Would the people accept this program?
- Can the program be changed to suit the local culture?
- Are there available resources?
- Could a local organisation implement the program, and would they have the skills to do so?

Would it work?

- Is the problem of the same size?
- Are the characteristics of the population similar? That is, similar ethnicity, education, socioeconomic status etc.
- Is there the capacity to implement the program?

Different uses of evidence in practice: (useful sources will vary for the purpose):

- **To plan**
 - Suite of services/interventions or Single program (i.e. where to put what for whom and when)
 - To meet projected needs
 - To address rising community issues early
- **To design the model, program, activities**
 - What outcomes are worth pursuing, what works, how to deliver
- **To design evaluation – preferably at start**
 - What to measure, using what criteria
- **To train, supervise and develop staff**
- **To case plan** around particular case types; or work with individual clients, families, communities. Evidence informs us on what are the leverages of change and key elements for effectiveness in practice (e.g. quality of relationship between parenting program facilitator and parent; e.g. frequency and duration of home visiting) etc
- **To quality improve the service overtime**
- **To assist in analysing and interpreting findings from evaluation data collected**

Simple strategies for finding Evidence quickly:

Why you should NOT start with Yahoo or Google: Information published on the Internet is not necessarily subject to any quality control. General search engines will retrieve information of varying types and from diverse sources: academic, commercial, political or personal. It makes it more difficult to judge its quality. There are gateways or portals that screen and evaluate what they publish, so the information you find there is more reliable. Some fields of knowledge have specialized gateways and portals e.g. Scirus, the search engine for science, focuses only on Internet pages containing scientific content. Through Google Scholar you can access scholarly material (i.e. of an academic nature and quality) on a wide range of topics including social sciences.

Possible Sources - places to start looking for evidence:

- Australian Clearinghouses (see attached listing and web links)
- Web search engines for academic papers e.g. Google Scholar
- Literature Reviews (often commissioned by government to inform policy and new initiatives)
- Bibliographies – particularly annotated bibliographies
- Conference Proceedings – publication of papers presented at the specified conference. Note – some of these will have high levels of quality assurance and some do not.
- Centres of excellence/specialty - based in Universities (e.g. Social Policy and Research Centre)
- Peer reviewed journals – publications and e-journals listings (e.g. ProQuest). Can access abstracts on web but often have to pay to download full text.

Judge the Quality of Information and Sources:

When using information from any sources, you need to judge its quality yourself. This includes evaluating it with regard to relevance, currency and reliability. In considering relevance apart from relevance to the topic of interest to you it is important to consider the relevance of the type of information for the purpose you intend to use it (for example practice descriptive material and resources from reputable sources may be acceptable to use as discussion points in training or supervision of staff but this material does not necessarily constitute evidence to guide service model development). In rapidly evolving areas of research we need very current information. Examine the date of publication of the book or journal. With web pages, check the date when it was last updated. If any references are listed, look at their dates as well. If an article was published in a scholarly journal, it has already been examined by the editors. Refereed or peer reviewed journals only publish articles that have been evaluated by experts in the relevant field.

If you are using other sources, for instance information published on the Internet, you should check that details of the author or organisation responsible are included and avoid sources that do not disclose those details. You can also look for the authors' qualifications and where they are employed. The domain in the URL indicates if it is a college or university (.edu), a government body (.gov), or a political or commercial organisation (.org or .com); this allows you to make some inferences as to how objective or reliable the information may be.

It is unwise to trust information that is stated without indicating its sources, and if the sources are stated, try to work out if they are reliable. The type of language used will allow you to judge whether the information is mostly factual, opinion or descriptive of experience from one perspective, as against research evidence.

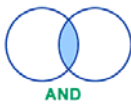
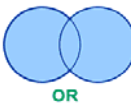
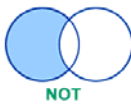
Web Searching Tips:

To start a web search you first need to create a “keyword” list for the search. These words can be combined to develop a search strategy. Developing a search strategy will help find the most relevant information. Some sites e.g. Google Scholar, provide ways to limit or refine the search through the “Advance Search” options. (For more information on developing a search strategy and refining a web search go to Post Graduate Information Skills site of RMIT University <http://www.lib.rmit.edu.au/tutorials/postgrad/>)

Some general techniques to make your search strategy successful include:

Boolean operators

Boolean operators are words used to combine search terms to improve the chances of finding relevant search results. The most commonly used Boolean operators are **AND**, **OR** and **NOT**.

Boolean Operator	Purpose	Example	Result
<p>AND</p>  <p>AND</p>	used to narrow a search and finds records that contain BOTH the terms	humour AND therapy	search will return results which contain both of the terms <i>humour</i> and <i>therapy</i>
<p>OR</p>  <p>OR</p>	used to broaden a search and finds records that contain ANY of the terms	humour therapy OR laughter therapy	search will return results which contain one of the terms <i>humour therapy</i> or <i>laughter therapy</i> , or both the terms <i>humour therapy</i> and <i>laughter therapy</i>
<p>NOT</p>  <p>NOT</p>	used to narrow a search and finds records with the first search term, but not the second	humour AND therapy NOT Australia	search will return all results containing both of the terms <i>humour</i> and <i>therapy</i> but only if they do not contain the third term <i>Australia</i>

Using Boolean operators while searching the Library Catalogue, databases and the Internet can help to retrieve relevant information results. Also consider using this operator to pick up variations arising from plurals, spelling variations, alternative terms and acronyms.

Phrase Searching: Phrase searching involves placing double quotation marks (" ") around two or more words to create a search term. This technique helps with finding relevant information as it narrows down the search to retrieve only those results in which the phrase appears.

Example: "humour therapy" will search for results in which the words humour and therapy appear together. (Note: A phrase search will only search for results that contain the exact spelling of the keywords e.g. a search for "humour therapy" will not retrieve results containing "humor therapy".)

Phrase searching can be used when searching the Library Catalogues, databases and the Internet.

Limiting Search Results: Search results can be limited by using the available on-screen options, (it is useful to limit search results when a large number of hits has been retrieved).

There are many ways of limiting a search including:

- limit by date - limits the search to a particular year range
- limit by format - limits the search to a particular type of format e.g. book, map
- limit by location - limits the search to the location nominated
- limit by field - limits the search to a particular field e.g. author or subject heading

Useful Websites for finding current relevant evidence:

Note: Website URL's do not always stay static and you may find a link that no longer works. If that is the case try going back to the base website to search for the report or information you are looking for. EG: If something like: <http://www.aracy.org.au/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Publications> doesn't work, try: <http://www.aracy.org.au>

Assets Based Community Development Institute – Institute for Policy Research North Western University USA <http://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/abcd/>

Australian Institute of Family Studies
<http://www.aifs.gov.au>

From Australian Institute of Family Studies site can also access the following Clearinghouse & Project Publication Pages

- [Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault](#)
- [Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse](#)
- [Australian Temperament Project](#)
- [Growing Up in Australia: Longitudinal Study of Australian Children](#)
- [National Child Protection Clearinghouse](#)
- [Stronger Families Learning Exchange](#)
- [Youth Suicide Prevention Project](#)
- [Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia \(CAFCA\)](#)
<http://www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/index.html>

Australian Domestic & Family Violence Clearinghouse
<http://www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au/>

Australian Family and Disability Studies Research Centre (University of Sydney)
<http://www.afdsrc.org/>

Australian Institute of Criminology
<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/>

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications>

Australian Centre on Quality of Life
<http://acqol.deakin.edu.au/index.htm>

Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies
<http://www.acys.info/>

Australian Research Alliance for Children and Young People
<http://www.aracy.org.au/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Publications>

Bernard van Leer Foundation (Netherlands – site in English)

<http://www.bernardvanleer.org/>

The Foundation funds and shares knowledge about early childhood development. The website describes the 200+ projects the Foundation currently funds with disadvantaged young children through partner organisations around the world. Download publications free.

Centre for Community Child Health

<http://www.rch.org.au/ccch/>

Centre for Healthier Children, Families and Communities – UCLA University

<http://www.healthychild.ucla.edu/>

Childcare Resources and Research Unit, University of Toronto

<http://www.childcarecanada.org/pubs/>

Child Trends – Social Science Research for Those Who Serve Children and Youth

<http://www.childtrends.org/>

NSW Commission for Children and Young People

<http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au/kids/resources/publications>

This site includes Child Death Review Reports and reports on research conducted by the Commission as well as resources to support practice (e.g. on child participation)

Community Builders

<http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au>

This site aims to help local communities across the state of New South Wales share ideas on how to enhance and strengthen their community. The emphasis is not on research evidence but on practical resources and how to do things including checklists on what is community building; how to use and interpret statistics; group work techniques; managing conflict; how to consult young people; funding sources; sustainable urban design; and partnerships with community and business.

Crime Prevention Branch – Australian Government Attorney Generals Department

<http://www.crimeprevention.gov.au>

The Clearinghouse

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/clearinghouse/

The Clearinghouse provides public access to the products of research funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) under the National Projects element of the Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs (LNSLN) Programme.

Drug Info Clearing House – Australian Drug Foundation

<http://www.druginf.adf.org.au/>

Family Action Centre – University of Newcastle

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac/>

National Centre for Social and Economic Modeling

<http://www.natsem.canberra.edu.au>

- The National Centre for Social and Economic Modeling is a research centre associated with the University of Canberra that publishes research and analysis specialising in research that contributes to social, economic and business decision making.

Social Policy and Research Centre – University of NSW

<http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au>

AUSTRALIAN CLEARINGHOUSES

A clearinghouse aims to collect valuable local and international information in a specific field and to make that information available to people and groups working in that field. As a central access point, a clearinghouse serves the needs of users of a specific body of knowledge. One of its functions is to prevent the duplication of effort by identifying, describing and evaluating information relevant to their knowledge area.

A working list of clearinghouses in the social sciences in Australia

Auseinet (Australian Network for Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention for Mental Health)

<http://www.auseinet.com>

Australian and Other Drugs Council of Australia: National Information Clearinghouse

<http://www.adca.org.au/>

Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies

<http://www.acys.utas.edu.au/>

Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training

<http://www.adcet.edu.au>

Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse

<http://www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au/>

Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/afrc/>

Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute

<http://www.ahuri.edu.au/>

Australian Indigenous Health

<http://www.healthinonet.ecu.edu.au/>

Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth

http://www.aracy.org.au/clearing_house.htm

Australian Resource Centre for Healthcare Innovations

<http://www.archi.net.au>

Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/index.html>

Diversity Health Institute Clearinghouse

<http://www.dhi.gov.au/clearinghouse/>

Drug Info Clearinghouse (Australian Drug Foundation)

<http://www.druginfo.adf.org.au/>

Indigenous Justice Clearinghouse

<http://www.indigenousjustice.gov.au>

National Child Protection Clearing House

<http://www.aifs.org.au/nch/>

National Vocational Education and Training Clearinghouse Network

<http://www.voced.edu.au/>

Primary Mental Health Care Australian Resource Centre (PARC), Dept General Practice, Flinders University

<http://som.flinders.edu.au/FUSA/PARC>

Rural and Remote Allied Health Clearing House

<http://www.sarrah.org.au>

Stronger Families Clearinghouse (2000-2004)

<http://www.aifs.org.au/sf/about.html>

Women's Health Information Clearinghouse

<http://www.whv.org.au/clearinghouse.htm>