



Sharing information  
and integrating services:

## Collaborative Practice

### SUGGESTED TRAINING AND USEFUL RESOURCES



Loddon's Commitment  
to Supporting Families

Our shared core competencies

#### Introduction

The Loddon Children and Youth Area Partnership (the Partnership) has identified four competency areas that will enable workers and organisations to act in the best interests of children, young people and families:

- Understanding trauma and brain development
- Respecting culture and cultural difference
- Social inclusion
- Sharing information and integrating services: collaborative practice

The purpose of this document is to provide recommendations regarding suitable training options in the competency, **sharing information and integrating services: collaborative practice**. In addition to training options this paper also provides resources and information for professional development purposes.

#### Methodology

The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare (the Centre) conducted a mapping exercise to identify existing training through:

- an online survey of Partnership organisations
- focus groups and telephone interviews with Partnership organisations
- a desktop review of existing training packages and resources relevant to each competency
- consultation with experts in each of the four competency areas.

To capture the full spectrum of professional development tools and to assist partner organisations to choose the mode of delivery best suited to their service, we have provided a range of training courses and other resources. Providing options encourages blended learning programs that provide flexibility and cater for different learning styles. The types of training and materials included in this competency training package include face to face training, seminars, webinars and eLearning modules, amongst others.

#### Key findings from consultations

Consultations confirmed the importance of staff attitudes, beliefs and values to the acceptance and sustainability of professional development strategies. The main themes to emerge from interviews and focus group consultations are outlined below.

##### *Who needs training?*

Most Partnership organisations held the view that all practitioners who are in contact with children, young people and families should have at least a minimum standard of competency and training in the four competency areas. This was particularly true for trauma and brain development, and cultural awareness. However, Partnership organisations also highlighted the difficulties they face in achieving universal training with reference to cost, capacity and 'training fatigue'.

The need for training in the four competency areas also varies across locations, organisations and even different areas within the same agency, with some staff requiring little training as their role involves limited interaction with children and families. Refresher training depends on how often skills and knowledge are used in everyday practice.

##### *How training is provided*

It was generally recognised that training should have both theoretical and practical components.

Among partner agencies, training is typically delivered in the form of face to face training or workshops. Interactive workshops and experiential techniques such as case studies and role play are effective because they allow practitioners to apply knowledge and skills to practice.

It was suggested that face to face training and workshops could be delivered jointly to multiple agencies to increase efficiency and promote collaborative practice.

Mentoring or supervision programs were also suggested as a means of strengthening competency. The literature shows a range of different methods that can be used to pair a mentor with a mentee, including 'competency matching', where mentors who are



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proficient in a competency area are paired with mentees who are not. Mentoring could be offered as a follow up to training to ensure that knowledge and skills learned are being embedded in practice.

### *Making training attractive*

Some agencies expressed frustration about training fatigue and a lack of employee capacity to engage with voluntary training. Employees are less likely to participate in training if it appears to be irrelevant to their everyday work. Promoting the benefits of the training program, such as how it will make their work more effective or efficient, can make the training more attractive to employees.

### **Selecting professional development options**

Partnership organisations differ, for example, in size, culture, geographic location and in capability requirements, which means different approaches to professional development and training delivery might be needed. Financial considerations will therefore vary among agencies. While we have not included cost in the selection criteria it remains an important consideration for many organisations when choosing training packages.

### *Validation criteria*

Training packages are based on a cycle of learning, reflection, application and review. Criteria used when determining training opportunities were:

1. The training package is underpinned by the latest available research.
2. It aligns with the goals of the organisation.
3. It is relevant to the needs of participants.
4. It is flexible in delivery.
5. It allows for reflective and active learning.
6. It applies a cultural lens.
7. It addresses legal and ethical considerations.
8. It builds on participants' existing knowledge and skills.
9. It provides opportunities for participant feedback for the purposes of continuous improvement.

### **Training Options**

#### *Information sharing and collaborative practice*

The Area Partnership was not able to identify regularly available training options specifically about information sharing and/or collaborative practice. Consultants had been engaged by some partners to develop and deliver training specific to participants' needs. It was also recognised that, from time to time, some government departments develop specific training in response to new legislation and guidelines for specific sectors. The Area Partnership will explore this need locally.

If you can suggest training for this shared core competency or would like to participate in the development of local professional development options please contact the Loddon Area Partnership Principal Advisor.

### **Useful Websites and Resources**

#### *Information sharing*

#### **Victorian Department of Education and Training**

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/schprivacy.aspx>

**Guidance for schools** on privacy and information sharing. This forms part of broader advice about the responsibility of schools to protect children.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/ecprivacy.aspx>

**Guidance for early childhood services** on privacy and information sharing. This forms part of broader advice about the responsibility of early childhood services to protect children.

[www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au) (see Health, Wellbeing and Safety).

#### **Family Safety Victoria (Victorian Government)**

<https://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/family-safety-victoria/information-sharing-and-risk-management.html>

Information about the new family violence information sharing scheme is available on the Family Safety Victoria website, including a link to the Family Violence Protection Amendment (Information Sharing) Act 2017, the Factsheet and FAQs about the new scheme. Information Sharing Entities (ISEs) will be prescribed in early 2018 in line with the launch sites of the Support and Safety Hubs.

[www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/family-safety-victoria](http://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/family-safety-victoria)





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### *Collaborative practice*

#### **ARACY Factsheet 14: Collaborative competencies/capabilities (2013)**

[Collaborative competencies/capabilities](#) An overview of what research states is needed within organisations to create a culture of collaboration by examining governance, systems, relationships and people & culture.

Prepared by Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth.

[www.aracy.org.au](http://www.aracy.org.au) [https://www.aracy.org.au/publications-resources/command/download\\_file/id/243/filename/Advancing\\_Collaboration\\_Practice\\_-\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_14\\_-\\_Collaborative\\_competencies\\_capabilities.pdf](https://www.aracy.org.au/publications-resources/command/download_file/id/243/filename/Advancing_Collaboration_Practice_-_Fact_Sheet_14_-_Collaborative_competencies_capabilities.pdf)

#### **VicHealth: The Partnerships Analysis Tool**

##### [VicHealth Partnership Analysis Tool](#)

This resource is for organisations entering into or working in a partnership to assess, monitor and maximise its ongoing effectiveness. It was revised in 2011 to include information on changing organisations and has recently been refreshed for 2016.

[www.vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au)

#### **Victorian Council of Social Services (VCOSS)**

##### [Partnership Practice Guide](#)

[http://www.vcoss.org.au/documents/VCOSS%20docs/HSPIC/00911\\_vcoss\\_partner\\_guide\\_1\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.vcoss.org.au/documents/VCOSS%20docs/HSPIC/00911_vcoss_partner_guide_1_WEB.pdf)

#### **The Bouverie Centre**

Ten principles of collaborative practice.

[https://www.bouverie.org.au/images/uploads/Collaboration\\_Principles.pdf](https://www.bouverie.org.au/images/uploads/Collaboration_Principles.pdf)

[www.bouverie.org.au](http://www.bouverie.org.au)

**Social Care Institute for Excellence**, UK based.

##### [eLearning: Inter-professional and inter-agency collaboration](#)

*(These resources have not been reviewed by the partnership as yet, please feel free to provide feedback.)*

e-Learning: Interprofessional and inter-agency collaboration (IPIAC), Published: 2009. These e-learning resources are freely available to all. They provide audio, video and interactive technology to assist in exploring the nature of interprofessional and inter-agency collaboration and in improving collaborative practice.

[www.scie.org.uk](http://www.scie.org.uk)

#### **Queensland Government Early Childhood Education and Care: reflective tool to support integrated service delivery.**

##### [The Queensland Government's Reflective Tool](#)

[This tool will provide early childhood service providers with an opportunity to think about and discuss the delivery of integrated services and consider options for improvement. It focuses on the enablers of integrated early childhood development as outlined in the Model for Integrated Early Childhood Development.](#)

[www.det.qld.gov.au](http://www.det.qld.gov.au)

