

Engaged Research In Action

Presenter: Dr Cathy O'Mullan
Senior Lecturer, Public Health



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Overview

- Phoenix House
- Engaged Research and Impact
- The Yarnin' Up project
- Moving forward

Background

Phoenix House (PH) is a non-government sexual violence and intervention organisation, based in Bundaberg, Queensland. Established in 1995, its Mission Statement is as follows:

“Phoenix House is committed to the provision of a safe and supportive service which assists those members of our community who have been harmed, are at risk of harm, and/or are willing to address their own harmful behaviours, using a public health approach to the prevention of sexual violence.”

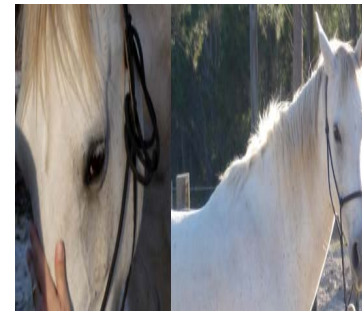


Engaged Research

- Research collaboration started in 2004.
- Innovative problem solving.
- Needs of vulnerable and at risk clients are primary concern.
- Research used to inform service delivery & policy.
- Truly engaged, collaborative and collective research (mutually and collectively beneficial).

Engaged Research Examples

- Animal Assisted Therapy
- Bumblebees Therapeutic Preschool
- Equine Therapy
- Yarnin' Up Project
- Intensive Early Childhood Development



Mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches – psychology, social work and public health.

The Yarnin' up project

“What are the barriers preventing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from accessing local services when they have been impacted by sexual and family violence?”



- CBPR – Community Based Participatory Research
- Research led to further funding & implementation of the GWANDALA project.

Findings

- Social taboo and shame
- Normalisation of violence
- Lack of culturally appropriate services
- Lack of knowledge
- Justice system deterrents

“The best strategies are to build a strong rapport with clients so they can eventually open up...we need a continuum of care and services, not band-aid temporary services”

“We need culturally effective responses...we can't ignore the multiple factors that impact on violence. Some of these factors relate to whole of family issues, poverty, health and substance abuse”

Recommendations

- Strengthen community action
- Educate the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and its workers.
- Provide culturally relevant and appropriate services and staff for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Address legal responses to sexual and family violence

Research to Practice

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community workers identified in the 'Yarning Up' research they wanted training to:

1. Ensure they respond professionally to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people when they are disclosing violence has occurred;
2. Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to move beyond the barriers of shame and social taboo to enable them to get the support they require to recover from the trauma of violence;
3. Understand the impact of sexual and family violence for their communities;
4. Place the violence occurring in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families within a historical and socio-economic context;

GWANDALA PROJECT

Funded through Victim Assist Qld.

Nationally accredited training for 22 Qld based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community workers.

Full scholarships for 10, partial for others

2 'week long' training blocks

95% participants identified increases in community development activities.

Facebook group established.

One participant obtained funding to replicate project within Northern Qld.

Moving forward

- Multiple barriers exist to service access – at the service provider level, opportunities exist to address several barriers.

But, there is much to be done.....

- Advocate for focus on local level responses (in addition to state wide/national approaches).
- Explore how we can better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to develop local solutions.
- Research guided by self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; solutions will be found in and by communities.

Conclusion

Engaged research at a local level plays an important role in ensuring innovative services are delivered within an evidence based framework.

Truly collaborative research has the potential to benefit organisations, clients, the community and Universities.