Case study:
“Bigger than a program”: Embracing relatedness to transfer and implement an Aboriginal wellbeing program across Australia

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Background: The Family Wellbeing Program

- Developed in 1993 by policy makers from 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”.

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

Contents taken from “Aboriginal Employment, Education Development Branch, Family Wellbeing DRAFT Mission Statement”
Why program transfer and implementation?

Research question:  
What process underlies the transfer of the Family Wellbeing Program (FWB) across sites and situations?

Benefit:  
1. Policy makers: Could Aboriginal empowerment initiatives that work in one setting can be transferable to other settings?  
2. Community partners: Could they be better supported to deliver FWB across communities?  
3. Research evidence: Could the study contribute to the literature about the transfer of Indigenous Australian health programs and services?
Method

1. A historical account of FWB transfer from program documents, reports and papers;

2. A theoretical model of program transfer from interviews with stakeholders;

3. The significance of the theoretical model for practice and policy from comparisons with other models.
1. FWB transfer across Australia

http://maps.of.net/map/australia-states-blank#.UfWuzKxmyrM

TAFE South Australia provider hub

BATCHELOR/TANGENTYERE provider hub

James Cook University Empowerment Research Program provider hub
2. Supporting inside-out empowerment by embracing relatedness

- Embracing relatedness with self
- Embracing relatedness with structural conditions
- Embracing relatedness with others

**Sub-processes:**
- Committing incrementally
- Gaining resources
- Strengthening organisational capacity
- Influencing policy

**Sub-processes:**
- Encouraging the ripple effect
- Identifying needs, priorities and aspirations
- Establishing relevance and credibility
- Creating a safe space
- Nurturing universal human qualities
- Dealing with baggage

**Supporting inside-out empowerment**

- Sub-processes:
  - Committing incrementally
  - Gaining resources
  - Strengthening organisational capacity
  - Influencing policy
3. Significance: what was important

- The empowering nature of the program,
- Experiential personal change processes,
- Aboriginal people taking control of the process,
- Informal networks and partnerships coordinated through three provider hubs,
- Organisations’ responsiveness and incremental commitment,
- The role of research in adding value

BUT: The program was not sustained beyond 2 years in $\frac{2}{3}$ sites.
Summary

Program transfer and implementation can be better supported by:

1. Attention to the empowering nature of programs;
2. Support for Aboriginal people to take control of the process;
3. Support for program hubs that can facilitate long-term collaborations, partnerships and networks;
4. Value-adding through associated research;
5. Review of funding frameworks to support long-term approaches; and further research to consider issues and strengthen the sustainability of program implementation.

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Links
First Global Conference on Research Integration and Implementation
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