

SERVICE USER ENGAGEMENT FOLLOW UP COMMUNIQUE

Family & Domestic Violence Therapeutic
Women's Refuge - Peel

Family & Domestic Violence Therapeutic Women's Refuge - Peel Service User Engagement Follow up

ABOUT THE ENGAGEMENT

The State Government's *Stopping Family and Domestic Violence* policy includes a commitment to establish two additional women's refuges. One of these refuges will be tailored to provide person-centred integrated responses for FDV survivors with co-occurring mental health and substance misuse concerns. This therapeutic refuge service model will be the first of its kind in WA. A co-design project for the new service model is being conducted from November 2019 to March 2020.

In February 2020, a service symposium was conducted. Service providers were invited to use their expertise and the research work conducted so far to work collaboratively over an intense three days on the design of the new service model. Progress made in these three days included the development of the overarching principles of the model, more detailed work into how different aspects of the service will actually work and the defining of a target service user group for the future refuge.

To ensure the progress made to the design of the service model adhered to the principles of good co-design, it was important to go back to service users to test the developed model. To do this, IU organised calls with service users whom had already been engaged within the research phase of the project.

ENGAGEMENT : PHONE INTERVIEW

The model was tested with three service users over one hour phone calls. Service users were sent material via email which they were then talked through over the phone and asked for feedback on. An Innovation Unit team member asked the service users for:

- Feedback on the overarching principles and outcomes of the service model
- Feedback on one of the four future service users experiences through the new model. This included asking whether the ideas would suffice meeting their needs and whether they agreed with how we had documented what they are feeling and thinking at different stages of the experience
- New ideas or priorities for one of the four future service user's experiences through the new model

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| Interview Details | Key Findings |
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| <p>1.</p> <p>The interviewee was an immigrant who had recently moved to Australia with her young son when she escaped an abusive partner to go to a refuge.</p> <p>The interview focused on the future experiences of Ben (a child) and Jane (an immigrant from Russia who has recently arrived in Australia).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Women and children's safety must be more of a priority throughout the experience• The user journeys should better reflect the difficult reality of domestic violence• An interpreter used by the refuge must be trusted• It is easier for women whose second language is English to be able to speak about their emotions in their first language• For Jane, having just moved to Australia, strong relationships in the refuge are a great way for them to build a new supportive family and community in their new home• For children, it's important to consider the fact that they resent their mothers for leaving their fathers. The risk of them sharing information with their fathers must be considered• Some of the ideas in Ben's pre-refuge experience make it seem like he is planning to go on holiday rather than to a refuge• It is important to help mothers be able to explain to their children why they have come to the refuge• It is important that children are given time to settle in when they arrive at the refuge• It is important any family counsellors understand family systems• Friendly staff are a big enabler for children feeling comfortable |
| <p>2.</p> <p>The interviewee had experienced refuges as a child.</p> <p>The interview focussed on Ben (a child's) experience through the refuge.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is important to maintain a sense of routine for children coming into the refuge• Talking to children while engaging them with an activity or hobby they enjoy is a good way of encouraging them to open up• Every child will feel comfortable with someone different• Reinforce positive things in children lives• Don't force children to do things that they don't want to• The importance that children feel like they can trust workers, and they won't go behind their back• Buddy system might not be appealing for Ben• A kids night might be a good way for Ben to make positive social connections with other children• Having people around you in the refuge helps children feel safe |

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| <p>3.</p> <p>The interviewee had experienced a refuge when leaving her abusive partner.</p> <p>The interview focussed on the experience of Marlee (an Aboriginal woman).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The importance of realising that different women will need different amounts of time to heal• The importance of having time to settle in, but for women to know that if they need anything there is someone there• First contact must be completely non-judgemental• There should be a childcare professional who comes in a couple times a week to give women time for themselves• Being able to engage with counselling may be difficult for Marlee. The counsellor must realise that Marlee has been disempowered so may struggle to focus on herself• The user journey should reflect the fact that a recovery process can be very up and down• Marlee should be encouraged and helped to reconnect to her community throughout her recovery at the refuge |