



Evidence and
Implementation
Summit 2023
9-11 October

Melbourne, Australia & Online



Behavioural and Implementation
Science Interventions
Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine



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#356 - Menu of Evidence – Children and Family Services

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Objectives/aims

Theme: What works and how to do it: Evaluating implementation and impact

Type: Individual presentation

The Menu of Evidence is an online tool developed by the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing partnering with academic teams from the University of Adelaide, Monash University and the Centre for Evidence and Implementation. The aim is to support decision makers working with vulnerable children and families to make informed decisions on the most effective programs to improve outcomes for their clients. The Menu is unique in that it has used a systematic review methodology to ensure that all available evidence is assessed, provides information relevant to the local context including if programs have been evaluated with Aboriginal families, and is working towards inclusion of locally developed and evaluated programs. This presentation will describe the Menu build and content in two focus areas of family preservation and reunification and preventing maltreatment. It will also discuss the development of evidence ratings and a sector submission process to foster innovation and build local evidence.

Methods

The development of the Menu was a staged process, including sector consultation and completing technical specifications to guide the published evidence review. Building Menu content involved a systematic review methodology, screening studies against scope, design and quality criteria, and assessing effects. The review identified 26,754 records for title and abstract screening, 939 for consideration and

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the first 45 programs included on the Menu are supported by 267 publications. A data dictionary was developed to synthesise evidence into plain-English and easy-to-read information to create accessible program summaries that include evidence ratings of effectiveness, outcome effects, cost, implementation and whether the research includes Aboriginal children and families.

Main findings

This comprehensive review of the two topic areas identified 45 programs with promising impact evidence. The review process identified 38 outcomes and 1,378 indicators across the programs, and translated this into information on what works, for which cohorts and outcomes. The Menu content highlights a strong global evidence base as well as opportunities to support local, culturally appropriate evidence for the Victorian service system, including building evidence for working with Aboriginal children and families. The process also highlighted significant opportunities to increase the quality of evidence and replicable assessment of evidence-based programs, which is critical for evidence-informed policy making and investment.

Information about evidence-based interventions identified through this review has been used to support investment decisions in testing and designing models of care through the Family Preservation and Reunification Response, a system level reform project to prevent children and young people entering care services.

Building the Menu has also involved consideration of a sector pathway and the development of tools to support the sector meet specially developed evidence ratings that capture local programs and practices. Establishing this pathway and supporting the sector engage with the Menu is the next stage of the Menu development.

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