CASE STUDY

ARMADELLE YOUTH INTERVENTION PARTNERSHIP (AYIP)

AREA: Co-design with Aboriginal young people

What is the context

AYIP is an early intervention model which aims to act as the interface between the youth justice system and the community to prevent the need for tertiary intervention. This cross-sector of agencies aims to identify at-risk young people early and provide quality and cohesive services that holistically support a reduction in risk factors and provide them with opportunities to develop and thrive.

A key youth issue in Armadale was the lack of school holiday programs running during the December/January school holiday period. This had been brought to the Armadale CAN’s attention by the local Youth Crime Intervention Officer who reported that this period was a peak time of youth crime and there were limited services available during this time. In response to this AYIP partners developed and implemented the ‘Multisport School Holiday Program’ over the 2015/16 school holidays. The Program successfully engaged 5 hard-to-reach young people who were known prolific offenders in the area, with very positive results.

Through the co-design process, young people from the Armadale area who have been in contact with the criminal justice system at all levels (from those who have been in Banksia Hill Detention Centre, in contact with police, and/or those who have witnessed others’ engagement with the system) have helped partner organisations to better understand the challenges that lead to disengagement and contact with the justice system. Consultation with young people through this co-design workshop has been essential in informing the operational components of the Armadale Youth Intervention Partnership.

WHO’S INVOLVED?

AYIP now comprises the City of Armadale, Save the Children Australia, Hope Community Services, WA Police, YMCA, headspace, Mission Australia and Armadale Family Support Network.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The partnership is a model of innovative collaboration between local government and community organisations, with a focus on individuals and creating positive outcomes for Armadale’s young people.

As an example of something on AYIP’s agenda, with the support of the Youth Partnership Project (YPP) team, AYIP undertook a co-design process with both young people who are service users and service providers, to develop and trial a collaborative early intervention model to prevent at-risk young people coming in to contact with the criminal justice system.

The response of the young people was overwhelmingly positive. They said it was the first time they felt someone had an interest in them – to walk through their day, understand what it was really like, and value what they had to say.

This particular workshop also provided incredibly invaluable data. Of the myriad of concerns the young people raised, one key element to their having a good day was it starting well. For example, starting the day well might include having...
WHAT'S BEEN THE SUCCESS?

Through partnering together, these services have been able to achieve outcomes that could not be achieved by any one stand-alone service. For the school holiday program Police statistics showed an overall 50 per cent reduction in offending for participants during this period. Given that these young people are recidivist in their offending and generally difficult to engage, this is an outstanding achievement.

For two young people in particular there were exceptional outcomes after the project. AYIP partners continued to work together to keep participants on track with education, provide family support and mental health support where appropriate, helped them to join sports clubs, attend and resolve outstanding court dates, learn about nutrition, cooking and fitness, and have also helped participants be trained as youth mentors that assist with delivery of partner’s youth programs. Participants gained their first academic qualification in a TAFE Certificate II in Leadership, accumulated over 90 hours each in volunteering through the local community centre and now spend their time on a Saturday night helping young people from similar backgrounds.

AYIP Innovation Award: AYIP was the winner of the Innovation category of the LGMA 2016 Community Development Awards. The Innovation Award formally recognises demonstrated innovation by a team in the Community Development sector to deliver programs, services or community based outcomes above and beyond expectations through include partnerships, resource leveraging, or new approaches to deliver an improved outcome. AYIP is also a finalist in the 2016 YACWA Youth Awards. Winners will be announced at the Award event in November.

WHY DOES IT WORK?

For this particular initiative, the question should probably be, ‘why will this work?’ The success of AYIP generally is built on a culture of openness and passion and commitment to collaboration to make a real and lasting difference. Through the development of a place-based response to youth wellbeing, individuals will be able to see really positive outcomes, which can go a long way to changing the trajectory of their lives.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE CHALLENGES?

A key challenge has been the development of a clear understanding of what early intervention and prevention is and looks like. For AYIP as an example of a Client Centred collaborative early intervention approach to proceed as a proof point project it requires sustainable funding, yet the approach doesn’t fit neatly with any prospective donor and overlaps a number of agency strategic objectives.

Another key challenge is data linkage and confidentiality and legalities for sharing sensitive client data in the best interest of the child/ young person.

HOW IS IT RESOURCED?

The Youth Partnership Project supported the School Holiday Program with $27,000. More generally, partners contribute in-kind to the Armadale Youth Intervention partnership, seeking to make the most of the resources already available. As AYIP seeks to develop and trial the early intervention model, further funding may be sought.

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