



Empowering under-represented communities: Trauma-responsive evaluations in the family violence sector

STOP Domestic Violence Conference, Hobart, 28 November 2023

Acknowledgement of country

We recognise the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across this country and acknowledge their sovereignty was never ceded.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and acknowledge their continued custodianship and care for the many lands and waterways that support life.

We acknowledge the untold histories and the injustices of the past and the present. We respect the value and ongoing contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make to our communities and to wider Australia.

Why do we need to consider trauma in evaluation?



Trauma is common and harmful

- More common among those who experience structural inequality and marginalisation
- Common among those accessing health and human services
- Common among service delivery staff
- Lifelong impacts- in DV context can be chronic
- Often co-occurring issues which means increased engagement with a range of social services

Evaluations need to get to the most truthful answers

- Designing evaluations appropriate to the population
- Avoiding re-traumatisation
- Considering a trauma responsive approach across the whole evaluation and not just a component i.e. data collection

Trauma informed vs trauma responsive

Trauma informed:

- Recognises the widespread impact of trauma
- Understands how it affects people
- Integrates that awareness into policies practices and culture of organisations and systems



This approach supports increased knowledge and skills of the effects of trauma to meet client needs

Trauma responsive:

- Builds on the trauma-informed foundation
- Looks to actively adapt and tailor interventions to address the specific needs of those experiencing trauma
- Builds in flexibility to adapt to individuals as they progress on their journeys
- Prioritises continuous learning

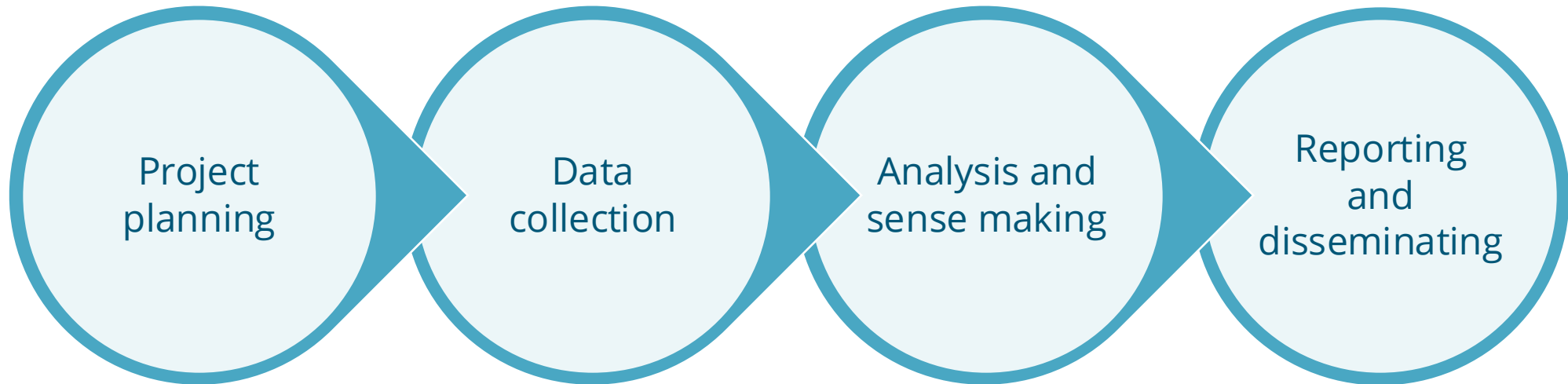


This approach supports change across all aspects of an organisation or service

Evaluation lifecycle

Trauma responsive approaches

Evaluation governance



Trauma responsive evaluation – governance and planning

Embedding a trauma responsive lens from the outset of the evaluation project.

Program design phase:

- Evaluation framework
- Program logic design
- Data collection approach
- Confirming Key Evaluation Questions



Involvement:

- Advisory group
- Peer researchers
- Lived experience within evaluation project team



Trauma responsive evaluation governance and planning – lived experience in practice

Working with advisory groups

- Have a clear Terms of Reference with input from members
- Consider who members are representing/ dynamics within the group
- Be transparent about what can be changed and what is fixed
- Take it slow – take time to build rapport and don't rush



Working with peer researchers

- Have **clear criteria** for position, including diversity
- Develop **position description** and involve people with lived experience in the recruitment process if possible
- Develop **welcome pack** (project description, roles and responsibilities, support)
- Give people **choice** in how they are involved
- Deliver **training and support** where required
- Allow sufficient time for **preparation and debriefing**
- **Communicate** regularly
- Balance the need for collaboration with how suited tasks are to be performed collaboratively
- Consider **power dynamics**



Administrative data analysis challenges

- Administrative data is not inherently 'objective'
- People with disability and LGBTIQ+ people are **under-represented in administrative datasets**, considering the prevalence of family violence in these groups

Are the right questions asked?



Are demographic questions consistently asked and completed?



How are changes to these details recorded and updated?



How does this align with state and federal level reporting?

Trauma responsive administrative data – in practice



Data collection

- Are you asking the right questions?
- Are these questions mandatory?
- Do workers feel comfortable asking these questions?



Data analysis/interpretation

- Check - are you aware of the limitations of the data?
- Share - use lived experience team members to help interpret data
- Balance - Consider the weight given to admin data and participant voice in reporting

Trauma responsive evaluation sensemaking and reporting

DRAW ON LIVED EXPERIENCE

- Ensure people with lived experience have access to and opportunity to provide interpretation on the findings
- Prioritise lived experience voice and what they see as success

CONSIDER SYSTEM BIASES AND BLIND SPOTS

- Be aware of the system biases, gaps and blind spots particularly in regards to administrative data involving people with disability and the LGBTIQ+ community

UNDERSTAND HOW EVALUATION CAN DRIVE CHANGE

- Consider the role the evaluation can have in driving change at a whole of organisation/service/system level for under-represented communities

Recap & key takeaways

TRAUMA RESPONSIVE EVALUATION



- Puts lived experience at the centre of evaluation governance and design
- Is aware of gaps, biases and blind spots
- Uses safe, inclusive and meaningful consultation
- Prioritises the client voice and what they see as success
- Identifies areas for organisation/ service and system change
- Promotes continuous improvement to enhance program/ service delivery

Thank you



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