

YCIDS Transcription – Interview with Sue Alexander

Interviewer: Ellen Welsh

Interviewee: Sue Alexander, Service Leader, Family Relationship Centre Logan, SE Queensland.

(Start of interview)

Sue: Hi Ellen, how are you?

Ellen: I'm well thanks, how are you?

Sue: Yeah I'm good thank you.

Ellen: Now I'm wondering if you're able to start by talking me through how Family Relationship Centre Logan uses YCIDS?

Sue: We use YCIDS as a pre-family dispute resolution session with separated parents. We use YCIDS as part of our case management to help parents to gain some understanding around on-going acrimony, conflict and emotional and psychological domestic and family violence and how it affects children's wellbeing, development and emotional needs. It also helps give support in regards to the sustainable development of their parenting plan. YCIDS is used in conjunction with other support mechanisms in the case management process here. Predominantly, it's delivered individually, one-on-one with the parent in a two hour session prior to the joint session.

E: So would you normally sit with them while they're watching it or do they watch it on their own and then come back to you?

S: Practitioners involved have the YCIDS session on the iPad, and they will watch the presentation together. We provide all the resources that are attached to the YCIDS tool, including the outline and the questions that are applicable to the program. And we will explore the questions that Jenn has created as a means for the client to have further discussions and to check-in at the end of the session. We'll then explore what they haven't understood in that session, anything that stood out for them, and what they know now about child development and attachment.

E: That's great that you're able to provide that extra support for them and they're aren't left to do it on their own.

S: Yeah, absolutely. We found that it's really beneficial in regards to building and supporting that positioning from the child's perspective. And the conversations we have are really about child inclusion and they're child-focussed, and YCIDS really enforces that. So all the way through our process, it puts another child-centred layer on. The value of doing it individually or in a very small group is that you can really explore how it's applicable to their

children, their situation, and their personal circumstances at the level of conflict and difficulties they're experiencing. That narrative probably wouldn't occur if we were to just give them the iPad to watch, and check back with them at the end. In that way, it's a real good tool in regards to being present with the client and being able to dig a little deeper and reflect on particular models, if there's an opportunity to. It really provides that deeper, reflective way of thinking and narrative for each module as well.

E: Certainly, that's great to hear. Do you provide it to all cases, or are there certain cases where you wouldn't think it's useful?

S: So, it comes out of the initial assessment in regards to the client's parental attunement, and other impacting factors that help us in identifying where it would be really beneficial. There are two pathways through which we can use YCIDS. One is, post the screening and assessment with both parents it goes to case management and it's then a case management's decision for pre-joint family dispute resolution session. This would also be the case if the two parents are different in their attunement, or one parent would really benefit from understanding a little bit more about child development and wellbeing, or also if it's their first baby or they've re-partnered and they now have a young child. The other way, is that it might be suggested by the practitioner during the assessment discussion with an individual parent as an optional pre-family dispute resolution session support. Sometimes we might see one party and think that the parent would really benefit even when the other parent's refuses or fails to participate in family dispute resolution. Also, if I'm working with families that have older children, sometimes there'll be a case management discussion around YCIDS being added in regards to addressing the ongoing parental conflict that's occurring and impact on the children's wellbeing.

E: That's great. Do you find that most people are receptive to it, or are there some people that just don't respond well?

S: No, most people are receptive to it. We explain it in a way that communicates how helpful it can be to support them in developing a parenting plan that is based around the needs of their young child (or children) and explain that it allows the parents to identify what it is the children are needing from their parents after separation. These days, I find people generally know a little bit about child development, but [YCIDS] is offered as a tool that's really beneficial and can really assist and help parents. We also explain that we will be in the room with them to facilitate the learning. We don't get resistance, because it's part of our case management process, so it's talked about initially at our FRC Logan Intake and Information Session. Right from the start of the client journey, parents are made aware that YCIDS is something that will potentially be offered to them.

E: That's fantastic. Have you had any instances where it just hasn't worked? Jenn is very interested to hear if there are times where it hasn't paid off at all, and it hasn't done what you'd hoped it would do.

S: Not that I can think of. I think there is varying difference on the spectrum of how effective it's been. Culturally, I think it is very well-developed. I've had discussions at times when clients tell me "in our culture this is how we do things", but I find people are still receptive of

the information that's being provided. In regards to people with low literacy levels, we find it's fine as we're with them, and can help them read and understand the content. We collect written feedback at the end of the session and so far we've never had anyone tell us that it hasn't been helpful. It's about being open with that too, and acknowledging people in themselves and their family's individual diversity, that they know their children.

E: Certainly, and I imagine that sitting there with the parent allows you to tailor it and reframe it so they're not missing anything. Now, the last thing I wanted to ask you was if you had any recommendations for other organisations that may be interested in taking a similar approach?

S: I guess it's certainly added a huge value to our service and to outcomes for parents in helping them learn more about their young children's development. I've personally seen a shift between when parents come in and when they leave the FRC and FDR process. In the content of the parenting plan, it shifts conversation from a perspective of "I want overnight or I want this time frame" to a perspective that understands what's best for child, and delivers a gradual and age-appropriate transition. It's certainly become a very valuable part of our tools that offer extra support for parents, children and young people.

E: How long have you been using YCIDS in this way?

S: FRC Logan started using it back in January of 2019.

E: Ok, so relatively recently... but that's great that you've been able to see a shift already. And I guess you're able to compare using and not using YCIDS as a support tool.

S: Yes, and I'm not an FDRP (Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner), but through my role as a Service Leader and involvement in the case management process and active referral coordination for clients, I can see the change from when parents initially meet with me from this positioning to when they've completed family dispute resolution and a parenting plan. I can see that the value and the purpose of very small group sessions and also really see that shift a lot more for some individuals when you're doing the one on one. It's transformative.

E: Is there anything you think would be of benefit for me to know?

S: The one other comment I'd like to make is that I find that the YCIDS resources and the presentation is fantastic in relation to its content, its language, and the dialogue that Jenn uses. I think it's one of the most well-collated presentations that I've seen. It's not content heavy, it's not theory heavy. It's very universally transferrable to different situations and I really like that.

E: Oh that's so great to hear, Jenn will be very pleased to learn that.