

Making change happen: Communicating with families of diverse cultures

Be You In Practice webinar series

Facilitated by: Maria Heenan and Emma Woods, Be You Consultants.

Video excerpts featuring Julie Ngwabi, Emerging Minds and Hana Al Raee, Special World Family Daycare

Introduction: 0:00 – 2:54

Maria Hennan:

Hello everyone, and welcome to today's In Practice webinar, Making Change Happen, Communicating with Families from Diverse Cultures.

My name's Maria, and joining me today is Emma, and we are both Be You Consultants.

Our role is to support learning communities and organisations implement changes to support mental health and wellbeing in your services.

So today's In Practice webinar is a follow-on from last month's In Focus webinar with Julie Ngwabi from Emerging Minds.

Julie shared insights into respectful and meaningful ways of connecting with families from diverse cultural backgrounds to support children's mental health at both the educator and the service level.

And today we're going to explore examples of planning to implement goals to address gaps, needs, or opportunities around this topic. You'll be able to find the recording of last month's webinar on the Be You website.

As we come together, I'd like to pause to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land that I'm meeting on today, the Whadjuk Noongar people.

And I'd like to extend that acknowledgement to First Nations owners of land throughout Australia. I also acknowledge that Emma is on the land of the Worimi people and that she has ancestral connections to the Wiradjuri land.

I recognise that these lands have been places of teaching and learning for thousands of years and I acknowledge the important and continuing role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people play in early learning and care and in the early learning community more broadly. I invite you to take a moment now, maybe place your feet on the ground, take a breath as you acknowledge the country that you're on today.

Before we begin, we would also like to acknowledge that the content we're about to talk about does include topics related to mental health and wellbeing.

So please remember to take care of yourself during this webinar, and if at any point you feel uncomfortable, you're encouraged to take a break or step away. If you need any support, you can reach out to a trusted colleague or leader, or refer to the mental health services and support information on the page now.

Session structure: 2:07 – 2:54

Maria Heenan:

Today's webinar will follow the structure outlined on this slide. Our aim is to provide practical examples of implementation of mental health and wellbeing goals around communicating with diverse families.

While we're exploring the examples, you might like to reflect on what being culturally competent, curious and sensitive means to you. You could also consider how you might improve communication around mental health in your service with families from diverse cultures.

While we're facilitating the discussion live today, the webinar is being recorded as our aim is for it to be used as a learning tool for services for making change.

As we progress through the discussion, we invite you to consider our key messages and how they support your planning for change around mental health and what things you'll take back to your team to shape your next steps. I'm going to hand over to Emma now.

In Focus Recap by Emma Woods: 2:55 – 3:48

Emma Woods:

Thanks, Maria.

So let's begin by revisiting key messages from last month's In Focus webinar.

Julie Nawabi from Emerging Minds shared insights on communicating meaningfully and sensitively with families from diverse cultural backgrounds, particularly when discussing children's mental health and well-being.

We'll watch a short three-minute recap shortly.

Before that, I'd just like to highlight a few key ideas that stood out from the webinar.

Now, Julie's insights were grounded in lived experience and highlighted three corporate practices recognising the impact of language and how the language we use can have varying meanings. The importance of culturally responsive practice and the need for self-awareness in your role as educators.

So now let's take a watch.

**Julie Ngwabi, In Focus recap video of key messages from previous In Focus Webinar:
3.49 – 6.48**

Julie Ngwabi:

Yeah, we know that really using culturally sensitive language is really powerful in shifting perspectives and being intentional with the language that we use.

And also, recognising that people that we connect with, they bring expertise and knowledge, and also being aware that they've got their agency and self-determination before coming on, putting on our professional heads on.

And also knowing that sometimes people might have experienced trauma. So being trauma-informed, allowing them to have choice and to collaborate with them, and being intentional to seek to understand the whole context because it's so much easier to think we know what's happening to this family.

And by so doing, we risk stereotyping people and being intentional that the language that we are using, it really draws people in. It doesn't throw them away. And also some of the strategies that we can use to shift the perceptions really

Again, acknowledging the parental knowledge and wisdom of families from diverse cultures and looking at ways on how you can tap into that and harness that in your engagement. And also considering the whole context, the cultural context, the social and historic context that this family might be finding themselves in.

And of course, this requires us to be culturally humble, to be curious in order to effectively collaborate with them. And we cannot overemphasise the importance of being respectful in our language and interaction. And we know that culturally responsive practitioners are those that look inwardly as themselves.

We have got that self-awareness of their own biases, beliefs and assumptions. And they don't just look at a problem in its isolation, but they seek to, they listen to understand the context as well. And they are also mindful on how they position themselves, you know, to share the power with the other person. And to also be mindful that they might be privileged because they belong to mainstream communities.

So there are some barriers that they may not be aware that culturally diverse families are facing and the willingness to keep on learning. No one can know all the cultures all the time. So we are taught by the people that we are interacting with at that particular moment. And doing this work really is through partnership and collaboration.

Linking to the National Quality Standard (NQS), whole service approach and implementation concepts: 6:49 – 21:25

Emma Woods:

That was just so great.

And every time I hear that, there's new parts that I go, oh, yes, and oh, yes.

So I really do encourage you to go and watch that webinar that's available on the website, like Maria suggests had informed us.

But from this recap, I'd really like you to carry forward five concepts from our session today. Now, the first one is taking a strength-based approach.

This is where educators show curiosity and recognize the values and experiences each family brings. The second is to lead with your human head. Now, this one is the one I really love and is where Julie invites us to prioritise empathy and connection before professional responses. So that idea of putting your human head on 1st and then your professional head.

The third is to seek the full context. Take the time to understand a family's experience, to avoid assumptions and support meaningful engagement. The fourth asks us to practice cultural humility by staying open, being respectful, and approaching situations with a willingness to learn. And the fifth and final one is to consider how you can reflect on your own perspectives. Cultural responsiveness requires ongoing self-awareness, learning, and reflection.

These concepts all point to one thing for me, and that's strong partnerships with families.

And this aligns with the National Quality Standard.

Let's explore how by looking first at quality area one, element 1.1.3, information for families. This requires services to ensure families are informed about the program and their children's progress. This is achieved by sharing how your practices support children's wellbeing. For example, explaining how creating a sense of belonging not only supports learning, but also the children's mental health and wellbeing.

Now moving to quality area two, element 2.1.1, wellbeing and comfort. It requires us to ensure each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for. This is achieved by understanding each child's background to better support their wellbeing and by understanding how this diversity influences the cultural needs for a child. For example, cultural diets or practices which need to be accommodated and valued. These actions support the wellbeing of the child and the family.

And the final and finally quality area 6, We've actually connected to two elements as this directly relates to our topic here today. So starting with element 6.1.2, parents' views are respected. This asks services to respect the expertise, culture, values, and beliefs of families, and that families share in decision making about their children's wellbeing, something Julie spoke very powerfully about.

For example, a service may inquire about a family's, about their family's cultural practices and understandings about wellbeing. This will then inform how they approach, inform and communicate with families about children's health. well-being.

Moving to element 6.1.3, families are supportive. This is where services ensure current information is available to families about the service and about relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family well-being. This is achieved through some of the key learnings from Julie and they include taking time to understand a family's journey, identifying individual needs that impact well-being, connecting families with community resources, encouraging and normalising help seeking, and having awareness of culturally specific services to further strengthen support.

I feel this really does reflect Julie's notion of being curious.

Let's now look a little deeper into the three concepts from Julie and consider how they would be practiced as a whole service.

Maria and I are going to talk through these together.

So on this slide, you'll see three key parts to communicating with families from diverse cultures around children's mental health. In our In Focus webinar, Julie introduced culturally sensitive language, cultural competence and cultural curiosity.

All of these support us to come, all of these help us, support us to become culturally responsive practitioners.

But Maria, what does this look like in everyday practice?

Maria Heenan:

It's such a great question because understanding the idea is one thing, but applying it is where the real impact happens. So let's look closely at cultural curiosity as a whole service approach. Cultural curiosity is both a mindset and a behaviour that can strengthen how we communicate with families from diverse backgrounds about their children's mental health.

In practice, it might mean embedding cultural curiosity into your service values so that it shapes how everybody talks and works with families. This becomes part of a broader, long-term goal to strengthen relationships with all of your families at the

service and to create a safe space to talk about mental health and promote help seeking.

A practical starting point might be your team discussions and meetings, taking time to learn together and build a shared understanding and practice of cultural curiosity so that everyone feels confident engaging in these conversations with families.

As Julie highlighted in the webinar, this involves cultural humility, listening respectfully, understanding each family's context, and reflecting on our own biases and assumptions. Creating space for this reflection is a really powerful strategy.

At Be You, a useful starting question we often refer to is, how does your service currently think and talk about mental health?

So we can extend this with a lens of cultural curiosity when engaging with families, for example, by asking, *how does your family or your community think or talk about mental health?*

What language or terminology would you use to talk about emotions and wellbeing?

And finally, what do you do as a family to support your wellbeing every day?

These open questions help create a space where families feel heard, respected, and valued.

Emma Woods:

So improvement really comes down to change and making that change visible in practice.

For example, embedding cultural curiosity into service values, as you mentioned, Maria, means that it becomes part of every educator, of how every educator communicates and builds relationships with families.

For example, instead of asking closed questions like, *Is everything okay at home?*

Educators might begin asking more open-ended questions like, *Can you tell me a bit about your family's routines?*

Or, *What's important for us to understand about your child's wellbeing?*

This shift helps build stronger relationships and deeper understanding.

Maria Heenan:

Exactly.

And this kind of shift needs to be really supported intentionally.

So a service might be working towards goals such as building deeper connections with all of our families, creating a safe space to talk about mental health, or encouraging help-seeking behaviours from our families.

So working together to develop that practice of cultural curiosity becomes a really key strategy to support any of these goals.

Emma Woods:

So when we're planning for this, it can be helpful to break it down.

We might ask, what does cultural curiosity actually look, sound, and feel like in your service?

Julie gave some great examples in the webinar, like asking open-ended questions about a family's journey to Australia or their cultural approaches to parenting. These kinds of questions do more than gather information. They build trust, show respect, and acknowledge the knowledge families bring.

Maria Heenan:

Absolutely.

And that trust is so important if we want to support the mental health of children and families.

So let's consider our planning a little bit further.

How can we plan for change across the whole service? The goal might be for educators to feel more comfortable using that culturally curious approach in everyday interactions with families.

So importantly, planning would include how we support those educators to get there, not just what we expect them to do. So for example, some actions then might include creating a simple educator resource with suggested open-ended questions, or modelling conversations in team meetings, or even role-playing some scenarios to build the confidence.

And building these actions into ongoing team meeting agendas or setting aside spaces and times to continue these actions helps to ensure that those practices really become embedded in your service.

Emma Woods:

I really love those. And that's such an important point because it's not just about the idea, is it? It's about how we embed it.

Maria Heenan:

Absolutely. And this connects really nicely with another concept that Julie spoke about, cultural competence. Julie empathised that cultural competence isn't about

knowing everything about every culture. And it's not something we can achieve through a single training session or even a series of training sessions. We need to really consider how changes can be achieved and sustained.

So if your service already provides or accesses cultural competence training, a further question for you might be, how do we make that learning stick? And how do we ensure that this becomes part of our ongoing practice?

Emma Woods:

So instead of training being the end point, it's becoming the starting point, isn't it?

Maria Heenan:

Exactly. And a service might then set some future goals around providing ongoing learning opportunities and embedding that learning into their daily practice.

So some more specific actions that would support these goals might include reflection and debriefing as a team, so coming together and really discussing what you've learned, sharing practice examples and success stories in meetings, and peer mentoring and coaching can also be really powerful, and linking resources directly to daily practice.

So providing opportunities for regular reflection or conversations about your conversations with the families can really help to turn that learning into a consistent practice throughout the service.

Emma Woods:

So we're really moving from knowing to doing. And that brings us back to the bigger picture.

Emma Woods:

Planning for change means thinking beyond access to training. It's about asking, how will we support this in everyday practice? How will we build confidence across the team? And how will we make this part of our services culture?

Because that's what leads to meaningful, lasting change. So let's shift into this thinking by starting with the how.

we actually make change when communicating with families from diverse cultures about children's mental health and wellbeing. When we say how, we're talking about the practical steps that turn ideas from the webinar into everyday practice.

At Be You, we use implementation principles to guide this work because they help create meaningful, lasting change, not just good intentions. Now, on this slide, you'll see three concepts.

Now, the sizes of the boxes matter here. The smaller boxes, so the sharing information and ideas, are important, but they don't create change on their own. Now, the larger box, implementation, is where change actually happens, because implementation is about making it happen. It's the difference between knowing what to do and actually doing it consistently in practice.

Implementation is the how. And the how is just as important as the what.

It means being intentional, clear on what you want to improve, and clear on how you're going to get there. And just as importantly, it's grounded in the why. Having a clear purpose and vision for how these changes will genuinely support children's mental health and wellbeing, because that's what makes change stick.

As I mentioned, at Be You, we use implementation principles to strengthen this kind of planning for mental health. This isn't something extra.

It builds on the quality improvement planning that you're already doing, helping you embed change across your whole service. As we progress today, we'll focus on four key parts. The first part is a vision for change.

This is your destination, what you want to improve based on identified goals, gaps, or opportunities. The second part are goals. These are the steps that move you towards that vision.

The third part are the barriers and enablers. Now, barriers are what might get in the way, and enablers are what can support you but only if you actively plan how to use them.

It's not enough to identify barriers. You need the right strategies to address them and clear actions to bring those strategies to life.

So that brings us to the 4th part, and that's around change strategies and actions. These change strategies should help you to overcome barriers and use enablers to make change. These change strategies that then require planning of actions or steps that put those strategies into practice. So now we're going to start off and explore these further with a service example. And so Maria is going to introduce this to us now.

Service story example Introduction by Maria: 21:25 – 23:56

Maria Heenan:

Thanks, Emma. I'm really excited about this part of it. So now we are going to hear from Hana, who is at Special World Family Daycare. This is a service that I've had the privilege of working with as their Be You Consultant over recent years.

It's a large family daycare provider based in Melbourne.

Hannah outlined, they've been prioritising mental health and wellbeing in their community. They also have a vision of continuing to build a mentally healthy and connected community. And this has included planning for change around how they communicate about mental health.

And from my work with the service, I know that an initial action was to support their educators' mental health literacy and their confidence in facilitating conversations with families. At the end of last year, they identified that they'd made significant progress with this goal and that educators were more aware of the importance of mental health and their role in supporting children and families, and more comfortable using that terminology around mental health.

Emma Woods:

This makes me think of how when planning holistically from your vision, some goals and actions may seem at first a little unrelated to that vision or as you unpack these, some adaptations may need to be done for that vision.

I mean, you know, the vision is about how they wish for their families to have understanding and to prioritise mental health and wellbeing the way that they do as Educators and as a service. But they started first with a goal around their Educators' mental health literacy. This is great. It really does demonstrate how to achieve sustainable change. It really requires an implementation journey. It is great to hear, Maria, how you have been able to support the service with this.

Maria Heenan:

Yeah, so sometimes before we start to put actions into place, we often need to pause and maybe even zoom out a bit and think about what actually needs to be done so that we can work towards our vision.

If they hadn't invested that time supporting the educators' understanding around mental health, supporting the family's understanding would have been more challenging.

So to continue working toward the vision of building a mentally healthy and connected community, they then reflected on how they can provide further support for their families.

And this has led to a new vision, which Hannah outlines in this next video.

So just before we play the video, I'd like to acknowledge and really thank Hana for her time and generosity in sharing her story and for the work she and the team have been doing with Be You to support the well-being of their community.

Vison and Goals Video 23:57 – 24:48

Hana Al Raee: Special World Family Daycare:

So at Special World Family Daycare, our goal is to increase families' awareness about the importance of mental health for children and build that strong relationship with the families where they can trust us to share information and to give the Educator also the required tools to help the children to express their feelings.

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Exploring service story and goals: 23:57 – 25:21

Maria Heenan:

So you can see here Hana's articulated a clear vision that children feel safe to express their emotions and where families feel confident discussing wellbeing.

They have three separate goals that each support this vision.

They plan to increase the family's awareness of the importance of mental health and wellbeing for children, build strong trusting relationships with those families, and support educators to build capacity to understand and express their feelings.

Having these clear goals makes it easier for them to then develop actions to work towards the goals.

Applying Implementation Principes: 25:23 – 27:44

Maria Heenan:

So let's think now about how we can apply the implementation principles Emma introduced a moment ago to improve in how we communicate with families from diverse cultural backgrounds about children's mental health.

We'll start with the vision and goals. At Be You, we describe the change you want to see as your vision for change.

And we've heard from Hannah how the goals can support that vision. Your vision for change comes from your own identified needs or priorities and describes your future desired state. It should be both aspirational and inspirational, capturing what you want to be different and the positive impact on mental health that it will have.

Your goals are the steps that move you towards that vision. They outline what you'll actually do in practice, and they should be specific, measurable, and clearly aligned to the vision. So a simple way to think about this might be that your vision is the kind of

service that you want to be, and the goals are the changes you're going to make in practice to get there.

So here's another example of a service's vision and their initial goals to support communication with families about children's mental health. The service developed a vision that all families, including culturally diverse families, are supported to understand that the learning experiences at the service are intentionally designed to promote children's resilience and support their mental health outcomes.

From that vision, they established three goals. That all families are supported to understand how the program supports children's resilience and mental health using culturally responsive approaches and accessible language.

The second goal is that educators can confidently and sensitively explain the purpose and benefits of their program to families from diverse cultures. And the third goal is that regular opportunities are provided, including conversations, visual displays, or translated information to help families engage with and understand the service's approach to wellbeing.

So these three clear goals support the development of actions and steps to be taken to work towards the vision. So I want you to take a little moment to reflect on this in your service.

Do you have a clear vision for your service about how you communicate with families about mental health? If you do, what are your goals? So once you've established your vision and goals, it's important to identify any barriers and enablers. So Emma is now going to talk us through that process.

Service example video introduction of barriers and enablers: 27:47 – 28:10

Emma Woods:

Thanks Maria. So earlier we explored the importance of recognising barriers and enablers.

So just a quick reminder, barriers are the things that may hinder progress, while enablers are the supports that help us move forward when used intentionally. To bring this to life, we'll return to the example from Special World Family Daycare shared by Hana.

Service Story example and Video of Barrier and Enablers: 28:11- 32:04

Hana Al Rae, Special World Family Daycare

maybe like, again, it's about the stigma of the mental health. Maybe some of them, they will not, they will not feel the importance of that and they will feel like, you know, I don't, it's general knowledge. I don't know, I don't want to know more about it.

If I want, like, I can get to get the information by myself, not joining, like by not joining the Zoom call or the meeting if it's happened in person because everyone will look into it in different ways. Some of them they will value the opportunity and some of them they will not really appreciate it.

Families, so they will feel more comfortable in sharing like information about their children. And also building that also great relationship with the children, especially with the educator, because they're spending more time at her place. Like for us, we visit the educator maybe once every few weeks. But at the same time, with the open communication between the educator and the families and the children, that will help us to overcome and to like notice the require where is the gap and Educator communicate with their family on a daily basis during their pick up and drop off.

So whenever like any information Educator get from the office, she will share it with the family as well. Plus we e-mail the families, we call them, we check on them, we do survey with them to try to like get as much information as required to help their children to development.

We have from Afghanistan, from Pakistan, from India, from Lebanon, from Syria, from Iraq. We have Australian, we have Aboriginal. Dari, yes, I speak Dari. Yes, that's why I translate myself, because for me, I would love when I share any translation to just not consider Google or any other like tools, because I want to make sure it's the right information.

And I have Dari because one of our coordinators, she speak Dari. But with the new arrival, some of them they want, as I mentioned before, they want to keep the language. So some, for example, Afghani families, they recently arrived here, they want to find like educator who speak Dari so they can communicate with her easy. Because for small like stuff, like also with the planning or portfolio, sometimes we encourage the educator to write on their own language if she can, so they can understand the writing. Otherwise, we encourage them to go like to do Google Translate so they can, she can send it to them in their English, but she translate it to them also in their language. Trying our best, we put ourselves in the shoe of the families, especially the new arrival, like we are here to support them and to help them and also refer them to the community around in the area where they arrive, when they located in, to help them like to get to know more about the country and to be involved in some activity. And all of this also come under the children well-being.

So when they go to do some activity with other children, when they join, maybe some program after school that helps them a lot to be to feel better about themselves as well.

Exploring service story barriers, enablers and implementation strategies: 32:05 – 38.53

Emma:

The video, we heard that stigma, limited awareness, and discomfort around conversations about mental health were identified as key challenges that could impact their progress. In response, the team focused on strengthening communications with families to help shift these challenges over time.

Maria, in your work with the service, were there any additional challenges that emerged?

Maria Heenan:

Yeah, there was an unexpected challenge that Hana noticed when they were first getting to know some families who had recently arrived in Australia. Sometimes the families were unsure about why educators and coordinators were asking so many questions and trying to get to know them, particularly about their well-being.

So Hana and the team recognised that this might be linked to misunderstandings about the purpose of these conversations, as well as different expectations and understandings around privacy and confidentiality.

So once they had this insight, the team was able to respond thoughtfully, taking time to explain their approach and reassure the families of the purpose for gathering this type of information. And in the end, this helps to build stronger and more meaningful partnerships with the families.

Emma Woods:

Julie also spoke about the importance of understanding full context when responding to to these kinds of situations. So barriers will will be unique for each service and each family.

Some additional barriers which may arise for a vision like Special World Family Daycares could be that the family may have connection to lived experiences which impacted their mental health and wellbeing and may initially respond by wishing to not take in those types of conversations or information as this may be and this then might be misinterpreted by the educators as the family not valuing mental health and wellbeing.

To respond to this barrier, I feel it connects again to that concept of seeking full context. A response to this type of barrier may also look like the one Special World Family Daycare identified around building trusting relationships with families to be able to support respectfully and sensitively families' participation. In these situations, taking time to understand context and continuing to build respectful relationships is key.

It's also important to acknowledge that not every challenge can be fully resolved, but they can be approached with care and intention. Now, another barrier may relate to cultural practices around children's well-being.

For example, in some cultures, including First Nations communities, a kinship system plays a central role in supporting children, sometimes referred to as the family of aunts. With this in mind, a culturally humble approach might involve educators showing genuine curiosity about how the family, and I mean the whole family, supports their child. This could include learning who plays an important role in the child's life and how they contribute to their well-being. Now, for example, this could be a specific auntie who provides and guides the child with strategies for regulation and their emotions.

Now, a final barrier could relate to linguistic diversity within the services families, as well as the language or the terminology being used, having varying definitions and understandings. Now, during the video we just watched, Hana shared how they overcome and respond to supporting linguistic diversity for their families. One strategy that they mentioned was around supporting and valuing requests from families to be paired with Educators who may be able to speak their first language.

But Maria, could you share with us about how the terminology used around mental health and wellbeing could be a barrier?

Maria Heenan:

Absolutely, Emma. The language that we use really, really matters.

For some families, the term mental health might be associated with illness, and it might carry some stigma. And other families might simply use different words to describe similar concepts. So, if we're not mindful of this and careful in how we proceed, conversations or information that we share might be confusing, uncomfortable, or even confronting for some families. And that can really impact those relationships we're working so hard to build.

At Special World Family Daycare, the team has been building their own understanding and confidence first and are now considering how to support the families in ways that feel really safe and accessible for everybody.

Emma Woods:

This really does highlight the importance of developing a shared understanding for mental health within your community.

So now let's just turn our attention to the enablers that Hana shared in the video.

These are the everyday practices already in place that can intentionally be used to support their goals. In the video, we heard the role of coordinator visits in building strong relationships. We heard a strength-based, respectful approach during

enrolment, how they have open communication between educators and families, the responsiveness to individual needs, including that language support, and consistently taking a human-first approach by considering the family's perspectives.

Spending time identifying your enablers provides a strong foundation for selecting change strategies. Now, change strategies are the approaches that guide how we create meaningful change. They are evidence informed and there are many to choose from.

Your Be You Consultant can actually support you in selecting strategies that best suit your context. Some strategies that support a vision and goal like Special World Family Daycares include peer learning, mentoring, sharing resources, identifying early adopters, encouraging networking and using prompts or cues.

Strategies related to service example: 38:54 – 39:31

Emma Woods:

So once again, Maria, are there any other strategies that Special World Family Daycare have applied?

Maria Heenan:

Yes, so Hana and her team have used the strategy of sharing information resources about prioritising mental health with their Educators and with their families. So they also ensure that where possible, the information's translated into the family's first language. And this change strategy links to their goal of supporting families' awareness of mental health, which helps them promote further discussions and even seeking support.

Emma Woods:

That's so great. So now we're going to turn and look at how this comes together in practice.

Service Story, Actions Video: 39:26 – 42:17

Hana Al Rae, Special World Family Daycare:

So we're going to watch another video to explore the specific actions that the team is taking. And actually, the action we are planning to do is, as we mentioned before, like we share resources with the families and with the educators. We highlight the importance of the mental health. And we are looking into inviting one like counsellor or psychologist. So, she can have Zoom call with the families and with the educator to talk in general about the importance of mental health for children, educator and families. We are in the process of having this like this organised soon.

I want just to share with you what I emailed the families the other day. I start with this phrase, like, strong partnership between family and educator are essential in

protecting and promoting children's well-being. Like, yes, if you have any concern about your children's emotional development or mental health, please feel comfortable speaking with us. We are here to support you.

Of the children attending the service, we have one of our coordinator go and visit the educator place so she can get to know the child, to get to observe the child, to help the educator build the plan, the planning like suits the child needs and interest and strengths and challenges as well. So sometimes also we have the opportunity where the coordinator met with the parents at the educator house during the pickup. So that open communication as well. And when you talk to that person in real life, it's different when it's over the phone. So that make it like easier and give that kind of trust between the families and us. So after that, whenever they need, like we experience that. If their family need any help, any support in different area, like finding kindergarten for the new arrival children, maybe changing school, maybe applying for school. So they communicate with the coordinator to ask her for help. So we have that really open communication and trust. We build that trust between us and the families. So we are offering really a lot of services rather than only the family daycare service, which we are really proud of.

Exploring service story actions.: 42:18 – 44:20

Maria Heenan:

We did see in the video that there are lots of actions in place to support the mental health and well-being of the families. And they're all family grounded in those relationships, trust, and open communication that they build between the educators, coordinators, children, and families.

So the relationships come from their understanding of the refugee and migrant experience, but also in their intentional actions of meeting in person with the families and being culturally curious in those conversations, and linking the families to culturally responsive services in their community, and providing information both in conversations and in their written communication. And also thinking about the importance of focusing on mental health and well-being in all of those conversations. So building trust is a crucial part of this role, and Hannah is really right to be so proud of the work that she's been doing and the whole team have been doing.

So you heard in the e-mail that Hana uses terms including well-being and emotional development, as these might be more comfortable for some of the families as well. And Hana also highlights that supporting families to connect with their new community as they settle into Australia is a key action for mental health promotion for the whole family. So this demonstrates how the enabler they have of focusing on building trust, building trust in relationships, and really knowing the families allows them to support the families in this really meaningful way.

Through these actions and with their focus on building trust in respectful relationships, they're better placed to offer guidance, provide support, or connect families with external services when they need to. We know that strong partnerships with families increases the likelihood that they will reach out to the educator or coordinator if they have concerns or need support.

As Hana said, in this way, they provide more than family daycare. All these actions are helping them to achieve their vision of building a mentally healthy and connected community. An important note here also is that Hana has included being culturally curious in her conversations with families, as a natural way to learn about what's important to them, the same way that Julia Nawabi outlined in the webinar.

Example of being culturally curious in practice: 44:21 – 47:14

Emma Woods:

I love it, really does, you know, reflect that idea of being culturally curious, learning about what matters most to each family through genuine and respectful conversations.

I can recall when I was an educator in a service and I had noticed how a family would repeat their child's name each time we, and when I say we, I mean the Educators and the team were pronouncing the child's name. I chose to actually observe this behaviour and listen more intently to how the family was pronouncing their name.

I was really practicing being self-aware with a willingness to learn. I could have absolutely asked the family how to pronounce the name. However, I had sensed that this was something they had tried to approach before. And through the behaviour that I was observing, could see how this was a real barrier for building a strong and trusting relationship.

So after listening intently each time the family re-pronounced their child's name, I would practice and study it in my head. Then one day I felt confident to practice this pronunciation. This is when the family member actually just stopped, looked up from everything that was happening. So, you know, the usual, where's your hat?

Where's your bag during that pickup transition time? And they looked at me in the eye and said, you said my child's name correctly. Thank you.

I then explained to the family how I had observed their behaviour of re-pronouncing and I have been practicing and that I was so glad that I gotten it right. I then shared with the family that now that I have the pronunciation correct, I will work with the educators and the team to also use the correct pronunciation. The family responded with, oh, that would just be so amazing.

This then opened up our trusting relationship, resulting in conversations about the child's development and well-being, which were being respectfully accepted by the

family. This example shows how an action that you may take might not be something you had planned on, but becomes this very important incidental action, which was crucial to the relationship and the wellbeing support then provided to the family and child.

Now, thinking back to Hana's example, we can see how everyday practices can be used intentionally to support progress towards a goal.

Making change happen summary and key messages from webinar 47:15 – 50:31

Emma Woods:

So let's bring this together. Improving mental health is ultimate. definitely about behaviour change. And that can be challenging.

For change to happen, three things are needed. Capacity, so knowledge and skills, opportunity, so to be able to practice that knowledge and skills, and motivation. If one is missing, change is unlikely to last.

So where do we start?

First, identify your barriers and enablers. Barriers can slow progress, while enablers such as people, resources, and existing strengths help move things forward. Some barriers are predictable, while others emerge over time and may impact long-term success. It's also important not to assume resistance. What appears as a resistance may reflect context or past experiences.

Next is then to choose your change strategies. These are the approaches that help influence capacity, opportunity and motivation. Once you have identified your change strategies, the next step is to determine which actions will put those strategy change strategies into practice. Once you've chosen your strategies, the next steps becomes clear. What are we going to do differently? The actions are the tasks or the steps and the things that you're going to be doing. Action is what makes it real.

Now, to close this, let's reflect on some key messages from today and consider some next steps. Today, we have looked at how building strong partnerships from families helps create a shared understanding of why children's mental health matters and how we can support it together.

These partnerships are strengthened through communication that is respectful, culturally aware, and grounded in genuine curiosity about each family's experiences. And for this to lead to real change, we need to be intentional, having a clear vision, setting meaningful goals, and understanding what might support or challenge us along the way so we can plan the right strategies to move forward.

Let's take a moment to look at some possible next steps that you might take. If you're an Educator joining us today, this is an opportunity to reflect on your own practice. Consider how diversity shapes families' perspectives and children's mental health, and how you can continue to build your confidence in being culturally responsive. If you're in a leadership role and you've joined us today, your focus might be broader.

Think about any gaps or priorities in how your service communicates with families and how you can strengthen this across your team. Planning for sustainable and meaningful change is key.

And for everyone, remember, you're not alone with this work. Your Be You Consultant is there to support you as you take these next steps.

Resources, how your Be You Consultant can help and Finalising the webinar: 50:32-54:24

Emma Woods:

Please take a moment to complete a quick feedback form using the Zoom poll that hopefully has popped up on your screen.

Your insights help us continue to improve and make sessions like this one as useful as possible. Now, you might see that feedback and think, oh, I'm out, but don't go just yet as we have some specific resources to share with you just in a moment.

Now, if Maria and I haven't completely convinced you yet, here's a quick snapshot of how Be You Consultants can support you in practice. Think of us as your thought partners in change. We can work alongside your service to unpack what communicating with diverse families looks like in your context, identify your priorities and next steps, and support you to turn ideas into real sustainable change and practice, sorry.

Whether it's building confidence in conversations or strengthening partnerships, or embedding cultural responsiveness across your team, we're here to support every step of the journey. Because real change doesn't happen in isolation. It happens through collaboration, reflection, and action.

To support you beyond today, we want to highlight some practical Be You resources you can take straight back to your service. These resources are designed to help you to build confidence in communicating with families, strengthen culturally responsive practice and to support or supporting children's mental health in a meaningful way.

These are our professional learning modules from the family partnerships domain, so the partner and assist, and our cultural responsiveness resources. Strong partnerships with families aren't just important, they're essential.

Because when families and educators work together, children are better supported to feel safe, understood, and able to thrive. And at the heart of those partnerships is communication. Not just any communication, but communication that is respectful, culturally aware, and grounded in genuine curiosity. Because every family brings their own experiences, values, and perspectives on mental health and wellbeing. When we take the time to understand this, we move beyond assumptions. We build trust, connection, and shared understanding. This is what creates, this is what creates true, truly inclusive, mentally healthy learning communities.

Now, before we finish, we'd love to invite you to our next In Focus webinar titled Secure Responsive Educator in Relationships to Support Mental Health. This will be with doctors Robyn Dolby and Belinda Friezer from Secure Beginnings. It's taking place on Thursday, the 21st of May at 4pm Australian Eastern Time, and will be followed by a practical session like today, the following month. Now registrations are open on the Be You website and the link's been popped in the chat for you. So go ahead and do that and mark it into your calendars.

Thank you so very much for being a part of our session today and for the work that you do every day to support children, families, and your communities.