

# PRIORITISING INTERVENTIONS FOR PREVENTING MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS FOR CHILDREN EXPERIENCING ADVERSITY: A MODIFIED NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE

## AUSTRALIAN CONSENSUS STUDY

### BACKGROUND

Despite the well-established link between childhood adversity and mental health problems, there is a lack of evidence to guide decision making about the most suitable interventions for preventing mental health problems for children who experience adversity at a local level.

This study considered six evidence-based intervention types, including:

- nurse home visiting programs
- parenting programs
- community-wide programs
- school-based anti-bullying programs
- psychological therapy for children exposed to trauma; and
- economic and social programs

### AIMS OF STUDY

- to reach consensus on local priority interventions for preventing mental health problems for children living with adversity in Wyndham, Victoria; and
- to understand the enabling factors and barriers to implementing these interventions.



### METHODS

Six online modified nominal group technique (NGT) workshops were held with 19 stakeholders. Stakeholders consisted of service providers from health, social and education sectors as well as caregivers of children aged 0-8 years.

# KEY FINDINGS

Among the mixed stakeholder groups, three of the six evidence-based intervention types included in this study, reached consensus:

- nurse home visiting programs
- parenting programs; and
- community-wide programs

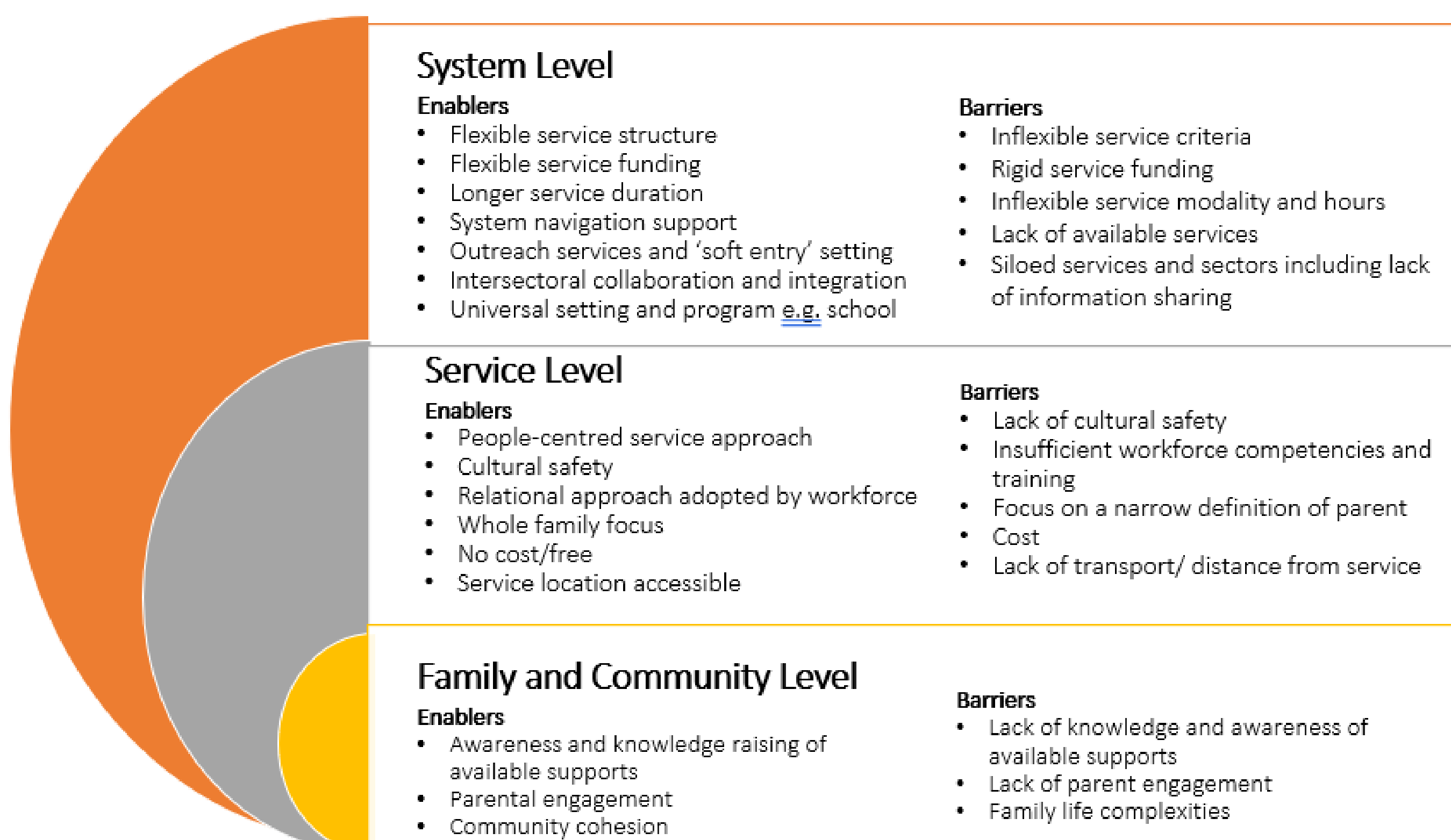
These interventions scored as a 'high' or 'very high' priority for implementation in Wyndham given their potential to act as a gateway for families to increase their knowledge about topics like parenting, and to increase awareness about supports available to families.

School-based anti-bullying programs, and psychological therapy for children exposed to trauma did not reach consensus as some providers and caregivers felt that these interventions were not a priority given they were not a first course of action.

On the other hand, Economic and social programs also failed to reach consensus with some service providers and caregivers acknowledging that these supports were already provided in Wyndham.

# BARRIERS AND ENABLERS

Enabling factors and barriers to the implementation of interventions to support families living with adversity in Wyndham can be seen below :



One key enabler is a people-centred service approach, specifically a focus on the needs and preferences of families through providers taking time to build trust and relationships with families.

Inflexible service criteria, specifically, the provision of services during business hours at a service location is a barrier for some families in Wyndham.

## CONCLUSIONS

A relational approach through service provision, and raising awareness to existing services available were found to be a local priority for preventing mental health problems for children living with adversity in Wyndham.



The NGT consensus method was found to be effective in prioritising evidence-based practice interventions within health settings, engaging local stakeholders, and identifying enablers and barriers to implementation of interventions.

## NEXT STEPS...

The process and outcomes identified in this study provide important background information and stakeholder engagement that will increase the likelihood of successful implementation of future integrated responses to child mental health in Wyndham. This may be useful to consider in the case of future research.

### Citation details:

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