



# Remote Service delivery: learning from adaptation during Covid-19

Connecting Up Webinar

October 2020

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# Acknowledgement of Land

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, and we pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future for they hold the memories, the culture and dreams of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continual relationship with the land and we recognise the importance of the young people who are the future leaders.

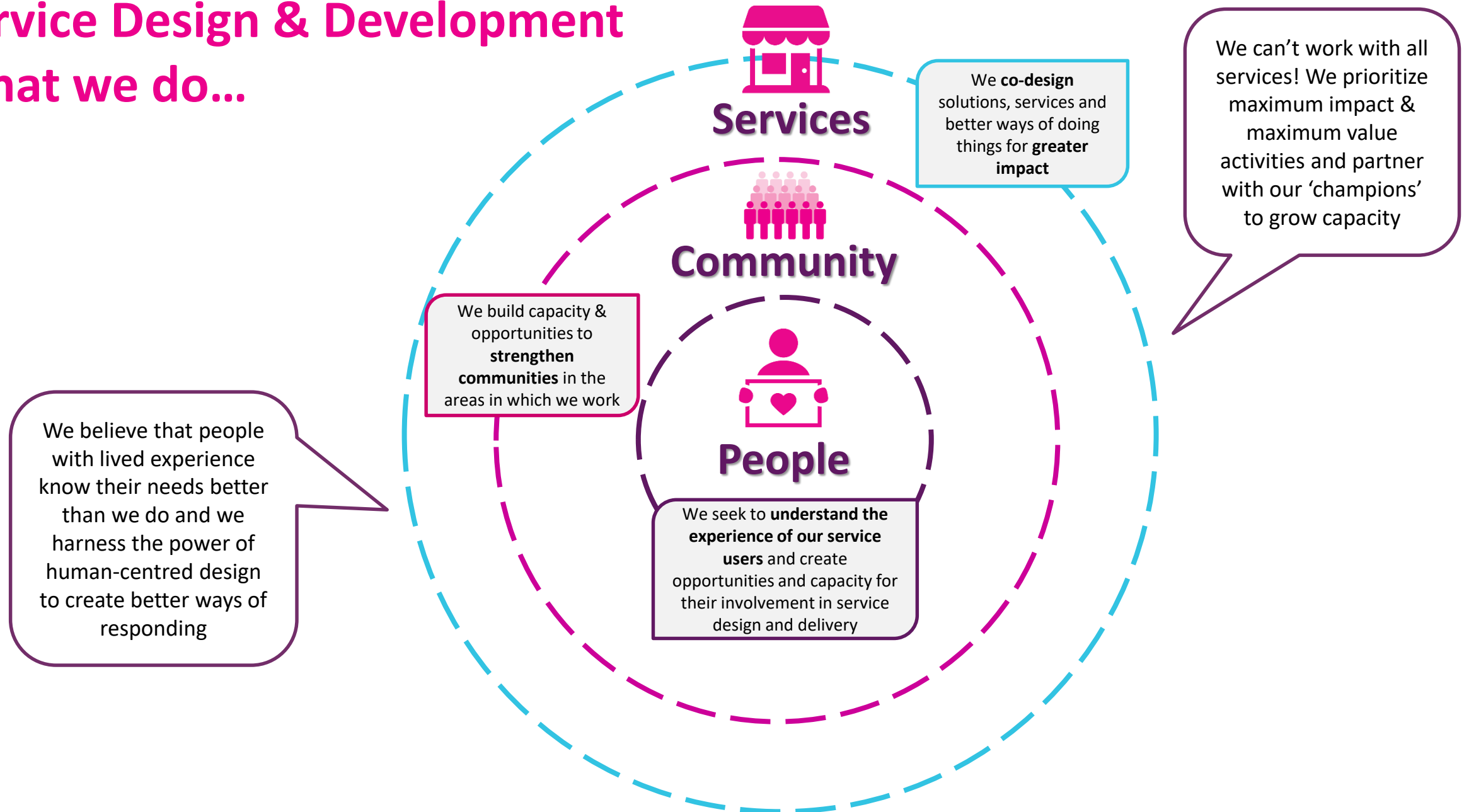
We invite you to Acknowledge the Land you personally are meeting on today in the chat box





# Service Design & Development

## What we do...





# How we work: Human-Centred Design

Human-Centred Design is the main approach our team uses for designing services, and can be applied for designing **strategies, products, systems, policies, physical spaces** and almost anything else!

It is a series of **principles and mindsets**, accompanied by creative **tools and methods**.

Our role is to (a) use these principles to help design services and (b) support other staff members to use HCD principles and mindsets in their own work.

## 1. Empathy

We prioritise understanding our user (client, community, stakeholder) throughout the process. If it doesn't meet their needs, then it isn't a success

## 2. Problems before solutions

We focus on understanding the problem before creating solutions. We use create tools and methods to come up with a range of possible solutions.

## 3. Collaboration

We don't have all the answers – so we facilitate discussions between teams and expertise to come up with the best idea to meet 'user' needs.

## 4. 'Fail fast, learn fast'

We believe in 'failing fast, learning fast'. We test our assumptions and ideas often, and iterate our models regularly.

## 5. Desirable, Feasible, Viable

We understand the importance of balancing what is desirable for users, with what is financially viable and organizationally feasible.

We champion **co-design** and **partnering with those with lived experience** to come up with the strongest outcomes and the greatest impact.



# Supporting service delivery teams to adapt during COVID 19

- 3 x strategies to share **information**, build **awareness**, swap **ideas** and **resources**
- An evolving program of work with a 'phased approach' supported by the SDD team who filter and organize information, ensuring it is easy to access and understand
- A focus on **collective problem solving** with the SDD team facilitating discussions and sharing of ideas

## Guidance sheets



Simple 'how to' guidance with tips and examples

## Resource library on Teams



An evolving library of resources, case studies and tools gathered from internal services and externally

## Online Forums



Service delivery staff: Hear about guidance sheets, resources & share ideas.

SDD team: Hear the pain points and questions and inform future resources



# Three horizons

## Horizon 1: meeting immediate needs

How might we enable our services to continue to support their clients during 'physical distancing'?

## Horizon 2: Keeping Clients Safe – mentally and physically

1. Supporting clients with declining mental health
2. Supporting tenancies at risk – facilitating virtual property inspections
3. Supporting vulnerable families - protecting children from risk of harm
4. Community engagement and development

Targeted forums & guidance sheets for each focus area including:

- Case studies
- Good practice
- Tips
- Links to resources

## Horizon 3: Sustaining good practice

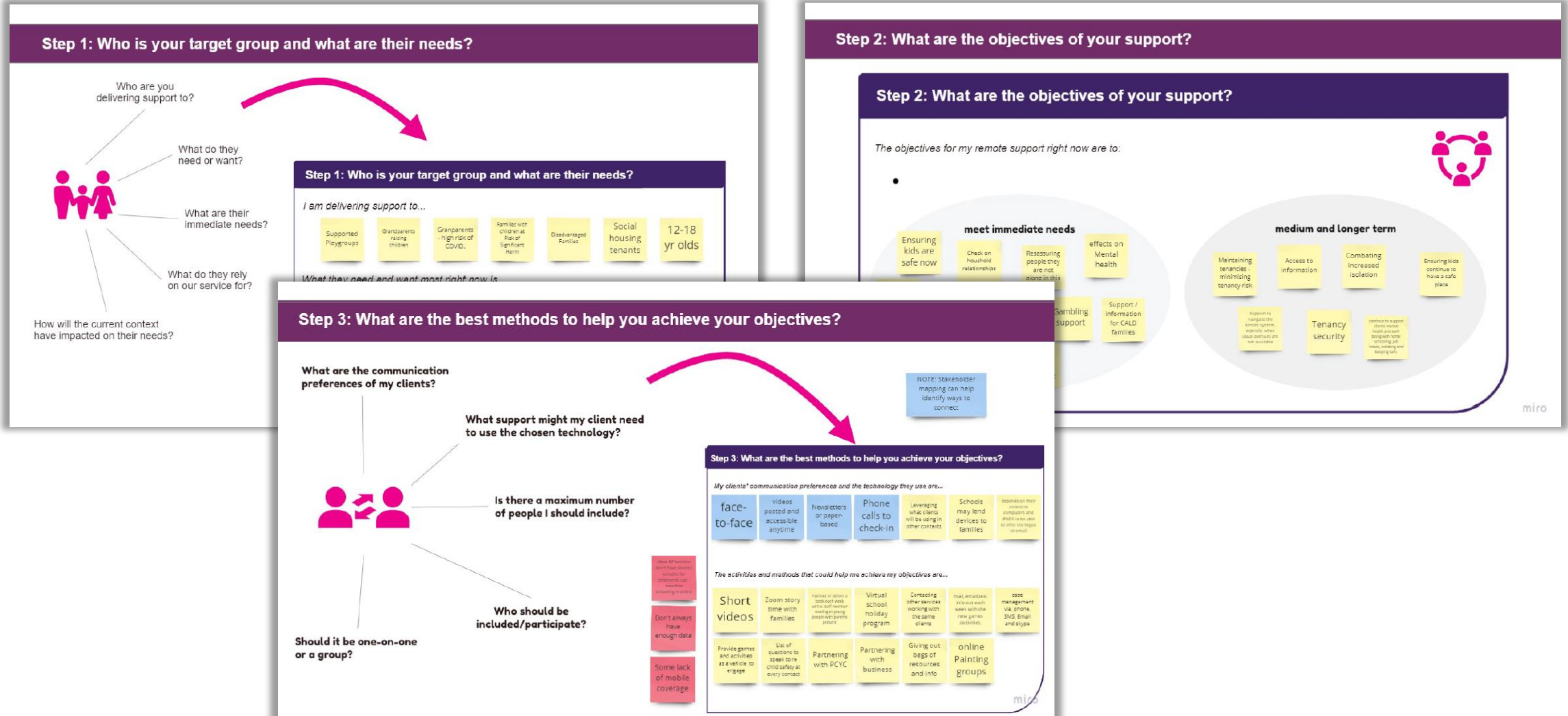
Currently being developed based on a summary of insights and opportunities from the previous phases



# Virtual Forums

Forums brought together staff from different locations to **collectively problem solve and share ideas**

A Human centred design framework ensured that we kept the **client experience at the centre of solutions**





# Virtual Forums

Virtual white boards enabled **idea generation, collaboration and rapid production of outputs**

## Tell us your ideas for working remotely...



## CHALLENGES





# Case study: Services working with children at risk of harm

Family support services were identified as facing significant challenges in adapting the way they worked.





# Unpacking a specific scenario

## Responding to signs of Risk

### The scenario

- We have concerns that a family is experiencing violence

### What this looks like...

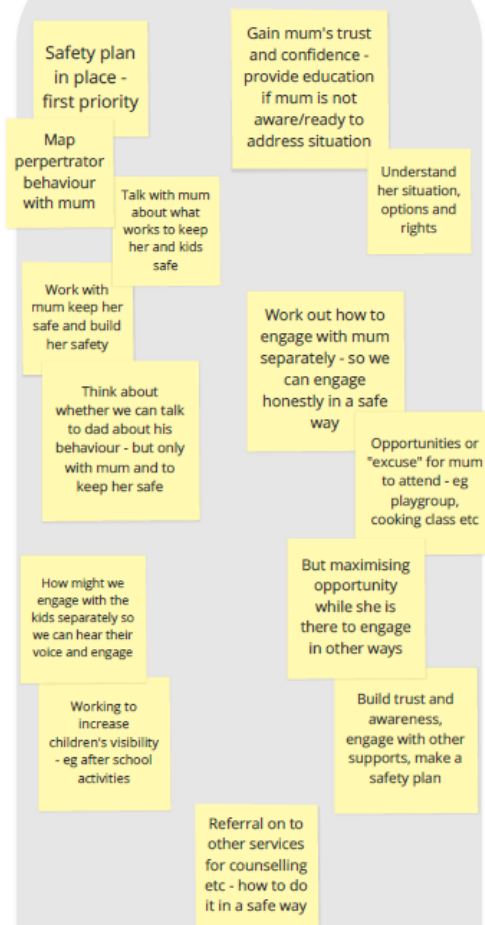
(signs of risk)

- Only talking to you in certain situations. Calling you from outside. Don't want to meet at the house
- Different behaviour.
- Forbidden/restricted from participating in activities. Either they disclose or they cease participation.
- Non-verbal cues - body language, fear, pain, visible bruises.
- Mannerisms of children - withdrawn, displaying different mannerisms.
- Things a child/parent says in conversation
- Interaction of parent with child - eg parent picking on a child

### What I know about the family's situation...

- Maybe DFV was original referral reason. Or family has a history of DFV
- Emotional and psychological support. Response to MH needs.
- What options are available to ensure safety - how they can access services and supports safely
- Heightened sense of isolation
- Loss of control - perpetrator has gained power
- Children don't have "escape" from the family situation (eg going to school)
- Disruption to usual support - MA needs to fill some of the gaps (eg MH or AOD)
- Mum is trying to keep everyone safe - doesn't want to make dad more angry. Can have a hidden aspect.
- Their technology/access... what do they have? What do they need?

### Pre COVID-19 I would have...



### But these responses need to be adapted in the current COVID-19 context...

Adapting to responses to COVID-19

I would have done... but currently...	The objective behind this is...	In the current context I could achieve this by
Increase visibility of the kids in the community and opportunities for engagement with kids eg get them in child care, pick up and do an after school program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gives CW a chance to engage with the kids</li> <li>Increases visibility of kids in the community</li> <li>Gives kids some "respite" from tense home situation</li> <li>Gives kids structured activities and positive engagement</li> <li>Gives opportunity to monitor risk to kids and assess needs</li> <li>Visibility increases accountability - perpetrator has more power when visibility is reduced</li> </ul>	
Access to mum - enagege 1:1 - opportunities to refer, speak freely eg bring down to the office for a living skills, take a meal home, but while in the office do case work, engage with other services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build awareness of situation and rights and that she has options</li> <li>Emotional and psychological support</li> <li>Provide mum with contact info, phone numbers, other supports</li> <li>Look out for small subtle cues - things that you may risk missing. To help make a better assessment of the situation</li> <li>Privacy to engage honestly</li> <li>Opportunities to engage with other supports</li> <li>Opportunities to refer</li> <li>Make a plan</li> </ul>	
Safety plan - what options or strategies are actually available? Options changed and reduced. Who can she lean on? Usually we might say go see a neighbour or family member. Take family out to a safe place if he is getting agitated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build on current strengths to keep family safe</li> <li>Help her plan in advance what she can do in different situations</li> <li>Think about "what ifs" for support - eg what should we do if....</li> </ul>	



# Brainstorming the options





# Sharing the insights more broadly

Insights and ideas from the forums were brought together into a set of resources that were made available to the wider organisation.

## Adapting to COVID-19: Children and Young People at Risk of Harm

*How might we identify the signs that a child is at risk of harm when we have limited or no face to face contact?*

During this time of physical distancing it is especially important to look out for the signs and cues that may indicate a child or young person is at risk.

The following tips and ideas were collated from a workshop with members of the Intensive Family Support PRG at Mission Australia exploring challenges and ideas for adapting service delivery in response to COVID-19. These suggestions are not intended to be comprehensive practice guides and should be conducted at all times in accordance with [MA's Child and Youth safe policies and procedures](#) in particular meeting our Recognising and Responding to Risk of Harm policy and associated state/territory procedures, and COVID-19 safe practice advice.

### What are the signs that a child/ young person is at risk of harm?

*When you usually do a home visit or engage with a family face to face, what are you looking for? What do you see, hear, smell, think? What are the signs and cues that catch your attention?*

During COVID-19 with reduced face to face contact, it can be more difficult to see the signs that a child or young person may be at risk of harm. By thinking about what signs you would usually look out for you can then identify ways that you might be able to see these signs during COVID-19. These might include:

- Not sighting the child – if you engage with the parent but are not able to see the children, or if they seem reluctant to let the child be visible.
- How does the parent/carer respond to questions about the child such as where they are, how they are going or what they are doing?
- Do they family seem to be avoiding contact such as home visits and/or phone calls? Could this be a sign that things aren't going so well?
- Observing the child and how they interact with other family members:
  - Body language - giving off subtle signs or non-verbal signs
  - Do they sound stressed or like they are not coping?
  - Is their behaviour different to usual? For example they are usually happy but now their head is down, arms crossed, and body language is closed.
  - How the parent/carer is interacting with their children - how do they speak to them? How are they responding to their needs?
- Observing the physical environment
  - Is there evidence of any AOD material in the home that children may have been exposed to?

## Adapting to COVID-19: Responding to signs of Family Violence

*How might we respond to concerns that a family may be experiencing Family Violence during this time of physical distancing?*

In the current environment, it is important to ensure we respond when we identify signs that a family may be experiencing Family Violence. However we may need to adapt some of the strategies we would usually use to suit the current context.

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Note that "Mum" has been used throughout this document, however tips and strategies would be relevant for any family member at risk of harm.

### What signs might you notice when you engage with a family?

When engaging with families, you may notice signs that may be indications they are experiencing Family Violence. These could include:

- Only talking to you in certain situations. Calling you from outside. Not wanting to meet at the house.
- Their behaviour is different in different circumstance. E.g. they are more reluctant to engage, body language or tone of voice is different to their usual behaviour.
- They indicate that they are forbidden or restricted from participating in activities. Or they unexpectedly cease participation.
- Non-verbal cues - body language, fear, pain, visible bruises.
- Mannerisms of children - withdrawn, displaying different mannerisms.
- Things a child/parent says in conversation that may raise concern for their safety.
- Cues from the way a parent interacts with a child - e.g. parent picking on a child
- Where DFV was the original referral reason, or the family has a history of DFV, this will influence how we interpret the signs

## COVID-19 Key Practice Example: Physically Delivering Items

*Delivering items to clients has emerged as a key engagement strategy during COVID-19 that is about much more than the items delivered.*

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### What are your objectives?

- Provide items that help address their needs
- Opportunity (or "excuse") for face to face engagement
- Gain visibility of the child so you can look for signs of risk:
  - See the physical appearance of child
  - Observe child interacting family members
  - Look for small/subtle cues
- Encourage engagement through provision of items the family wants or needs

### What makes it most effective?

- Maximise opportunities for engagement:
  - Text or call in advance to say you're coming.
  - Make a time that suits the family.
  - Ask them to meet you out the front.
  - Encourage informal interaction – e.g. bring a folding chair and a coffee and chat in the garden.
- Provide something the family wants – to encourage reluctant engagers.
- Involve community partners - work together rather than separately.

Work closely with other agencies and support their activities. Could you run a competition? Supply prizes? Make combined make packs together?

### Build on your ideas... This could be even better if...

Send a message asking what families want or need so packs can be customised.

Get longer engagement by connecting with a family after delivering a pack to do an activity with them - engaging children and parents together.

### What to include in your pack.

- Info on helplines/crisis services
- Information on COVID-19
- Mental health support info
- Information on what services are open in your area
- Food packs/emergency relief
- Mental health resources for parents (e.g. adult colouring)
- Mobile phones/technology
- Recipe with ingredients
- Parenting resources
- Educational resources (e.g. laminated writing sheets)
- Family activities (e.g. games, books, puzzles, recipes).
- Kids activities (e.g. colouring, craft, activity sheets)



# Templates and resources

A range of templates and resources were produced throughout the project, aiming to share learnings and insights, and provide resources to help services think through further challenges.

Some of these are available on our external resource sharing hub: <https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/resource-sharing-hub>

### Tips for Remote Service Delivery

*How might we foster connection between our staff, clients and community in this time of increased physical distancing and isolation?*

Supporting those most vulnerable in our community is more important than ever at Mission Australia. Our ability to prioritise our vital services has become crucial in times like this, because we know that the most vulnerable in society with whom we work are often those most greatly impacted.

While much remains uncertain, there are many things we can do to stay connected and continue to deliver our work in these uncertain times.

This guidance is aimed at Service Delivery staff who work in services that are usually face-to-face but need to consider alternatives during this period of 'physical distancing'.

*What types of tips are included?*

The following are some basic tips to help you deliver services during this period of 'physical distancing' including information about how to adapt your services and what methods and technology platforms you may choose. While the answer is increasingly lying in digital technology, we also know that these technologies need to be about people – helping people to connect, to listen to one another, and to reach out to others who may feel particularly vulnerable or isolated.

This guidance is intended as a starting point. These tips will be updated as we learn more about what's available, what our needs are and how workers inside and outside Mission Australia are developing new ways to support people in need at this time. We will continue to gather and share examples of good practice and learn together as we go.

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### Tips for Running Virtual Groups

*How might we design and deliver virtual group activities that are engaging, inclusive and best reflect face-to-face interactions?*

*Getting set up*

**Creating a "safe space"**

- Encourage participants to choose a quiet space, if possible, where they feel comfortable.
- For example, consider: Will they get interrupted? Who else is home? Who can hear?
- Encourage participants to use headphones so that others in the same room can only hear their side of the conversation.
- Consider camera angles and backgrounds – what can other people see in your background? Lighting can also be important to make sure that participants can clearly see each other's faces and their expressions.

**Test your tech**

- Consider what the experience will be like for participants – put yourself in the participants' shoes and consider how they might use and engage with the technology.
- Make sure you test your technology beforehand so you know how it works and feel confident using it. Running a practice session with a team member can help to iron out any problems. Do you need to share documents or swap presenters? Practice doing this beforehand.
- Make sure your participants are set up and know how to use the chosen technology. Consider giving them a test run to make sure they know how to troubleshoot any issues.

**Group sizes and dynamics**

- Consider the best size for your group based on the objectives of your session.
- Larger groups can be more challenging to facilitate in a way that allows interaction. They may require more structure.
- Larger groups can be great if you are delivering information and don't expect as much interaction.
- If you want a group to include more informal interaction or discussion, consider keeping the numbers smaller.
- Take some time to think about the dynamics of your group. Do you have some participants who are usually not comfortable speaking up? Consider how to make

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### Using Facebook for Client Interactions: Guidelines for Service Delivery teams

The following Guidelines provide information about what you can use Facebook to communicate with clients and how you can use Facebook so that you are protecting the confidentiality and privacy of your clients. These Guidelines are a temporary arrangement whilst social distancing restrictions are in place and may be reviewed regularly as we continue to investigate technology solutions for service delivery.

*When can I use Facebook for communicating? with clients?*

Facebook can only be used to communicate with clients for the following two scenarios:

- 1) You want to communicate information one way to a group of clients or tenants
- 2) You want to facilitate two way or multi way communication between a group of clients or tenants.

For both these scenarios you may use a Closed and Private Facebook Group and must follow the protocols set out below. Importantly, for any new Facebook Groups that are established, this is only endorsed where the group of clients are already part of an existing group, for example a play group or youth group.

Members (clients) of the Facebook Group can see who else is a member of the group, so this will not be suitable for all services.

**Facebook (including Facebook Messenger app) may not be used for:**

- Communicating with a client individually
- Having case management or client related conversations
- Communicating with partner agencies or referring agencies
- Communicating with a group of clients who do not know each other or are not part of an existing group
- Communicating information to any party that reveals personal information about any Mission Australia client.

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### Remote Service Delivery Worksheet

Use this worksheet to follow the steps in the "Tips for Remote Service Delivery" guide as you think about adapting your service delivery to your new context. Keep the guide handy to prompt you to think about different options available.

**STEP 1: Who is your target group and what are their needs?**

I am delivering support to...

- 

What they need and want most right now is...

- 

**STEP 2: What are the objectives of your support?**

The objectives for my remote support right now are to...

- 

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Remote Service Delivery Worksheet V1 March 2020  
Page 1



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## Supporting Communities Remotely

This guide provides ideas for ways you can strengthen the community in which you work during 'physical distancing', as well as during the transition back to the 'new normal'.

**Building strong communities**

Mission Australia works alongside communities, supporting them to become stronger. Supporting the wellbeing of local communities is particularly important during times of crisis, such as this current time of physical distancing. Initiatives should aim to build and maintain strong community wellbeing aligned to the Stronger Communities Domains in our [Strengthening Communities Framework](#).

We recognise that all communities are unique, and will be experiencing different challenges and needs during this time. Below you will find a range of ideas that have been collated during online forums with service delivery teams and via yammer.

**Ideas for supporting the community remotely**

**Create a COVID Service Directory**

- ✦ Develop and maintain a directory of the supports and services available in the local community, including their current operational status, available groups, and key contact details. Maintain this as restrictions gradually ease
- ✦ Share across all Mission Australia services in your region to build a united approach to support all individuals and families living in the community at this time.
- ✦ Share with external agencies to foster collaboration, resource sharing, and to build trust across the service system.

**Ensure marginalised groups are not left behind**

- ✦ Disseminate information to support referrals and supports for marginalised groups in your community such as CALD groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, LGBTIQ+ people, and people living with disability.
- ✦ Develop information on your services for people of key language groups, with low literacy, and people living with auditory and visual disabilities.
- ✦ Consider collaborating with other organisations to ensure information across the service system is accessible to all.

**Communicate COVID-19 information**

- ✦ Ensure information about COVID-19 and staying well and safe during this time is communicated clearly to all clients. Particularly as this information continues to shift.

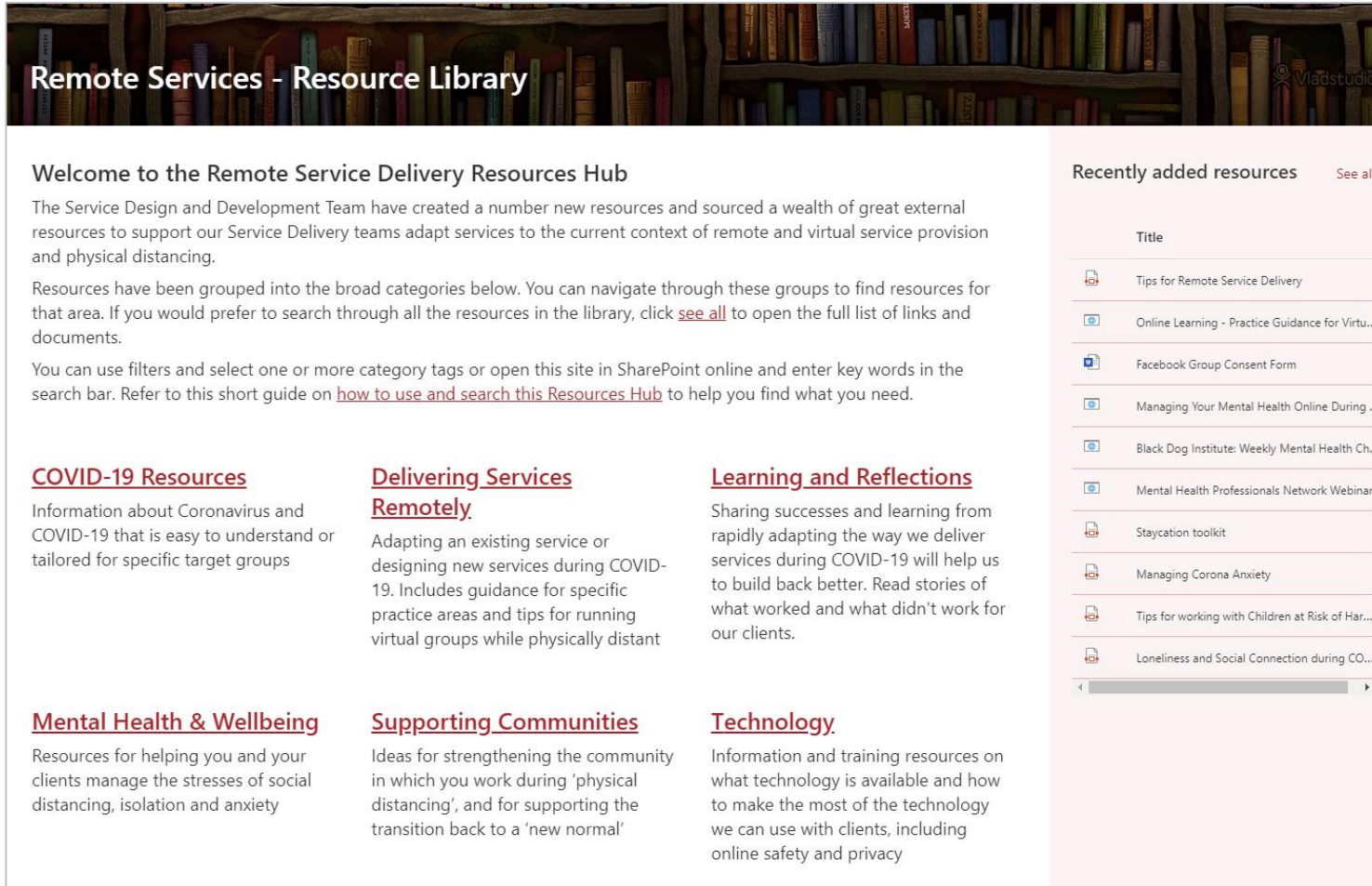
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For more information on the Stronger Communities Domains please go to the Strengthening Communities Framework Pages 4-7



# Resource Library

A Resource library was also set up to curate links from the huge range of internal and external resources that were bring produced as the world adapted to COVID-19



## Remote Services - Resource Library

**Welcome to the Remote Service Delivery Resources Hub**

The Service Design and Development Team have created a number new resources and sourced a wealth of great external resources to support our Service Delivery teams adapt services to the current context of remote and virtual service provision and physical distancing.

Resources have been grouped into the broad categories below. You can navigate through these groups to find resources for that area. If you would prefer to search through all the resources in the library, click [see all](#) to open the full list of links and documents.

You can use filters and select one or more category tags or open this site in SharePoint online and enter key words in the search bar. Refer to this short guide on [how to use and search this Resources Hub](#) to help you find what you need.

### COVID-19 Resources

Information about Coronavirus and COVID-19 that is easy to understand or tailored for specific target groups

### Delivering Services Remotely

Adapting an existing service or designing new services during COVID-19. Includes guidance for specific practice areas and tips for running virtual groups while physically distant

### Learning and Reflections

Sharing successes and learning from rapidly adapting the way we deliver services during COVID-19 will help us to build back better. Read stories of what worked and what didn't work for our clients.

### Mental Health & Wellbeing

Resources for helping you and your clients manage the stresses of social distancing, isolation and anxiety











### Supporting Communities

Ideas for strengthening the community in which you work during 'physical distancing', and for supporting the transition back to a 'new normal'

### Technology

Information and training resources on what technology is available and how to make the most of the technology we can use with clients, including online safety and privacy

#### Recently added resources [See all](#)

Title
 Tips for Remote Service Delivery
 Online Learning - Practice Guidance for Virtu...
 Facebook Group Consent Form
 Managing Your Mental Health Online During ..
 Black Dog Institute: Weekly Mental Health Ch..
 Mental Health Professionals Network Webinar:
 Staycation toolkit
 Managing Corona Anxiety
 Tips for working with Children at Risk of Har...
 Loneliness and Social Connection during CO...



# Challenges and how they were overcome

## Rapid adaption to new ways of working

Giving things a go: virtual white boards, webinar etiquette, quick training sessions

## Not knowing the answers

Spending time listening, lots of 1:1 conversations, creating space for defining and prioritizing problems before rushing into solutions

## Limited time and resource

Creating consistent frameworks and tools that can be replicated, working to 80% not perfection, creating outputs quickly

## Balancing risk and innovation

Being a conduit between services and other key business functions e.g. IT, legal



# Collected learnings and insights

## New ways of engaging via digital delivery

Some clients benefited from **more individually tailored** approaches, **greater choice** or **increased frequency of contact**.

## More coordinated care

For some, the use of digital technology **improved the integrated and coordinated care** they received from different organisations.

## Empowerment through digital literacy

Clients experienced greater **independence** through rapid increase in **digital literacy** and **access to technology**.

## The digital divide has become bigger

Some groups have been **left behind** and face **increased barriers** to accessing support or meeting their needs.

## Intensive collaboration in the homelessness sector

COVID-19 saw unprecedented numbers of rough sleepers moved into temporary accommodation and engaged with wrap around supports.

## Fast-tracked housing outcomes

Focussed collaboration led to housing outcomes that would not have occurred during normal circumstances.

## Changes to service entry pathways

Some entry pathways were no longer available (eg "sft-entry"). Some new entry pathways opened up that had not been available before.

## Social isolation and mental health

Many clients experienced increased social isolation and declining mental health during COVID.



## Q&A and discussion

- What were your experiences of adapting your work during COVID-19?
- What challenges or opportunities did you encounter?
- How can we sustain some of the good practice and innovation that has emerged?