

Supporting effective implementation:

The design and testing of an Intensive Family Support Service fidelity framework

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Intensive Family Support Service (IFSS)

Aim: To increase the wellbeing and safety of children in the NT by targeting families where neglect has or is at high risk of occurring through the provision of intensive family support.

Strategy: Support families through a flexible range of activities so that they are able to provide the best care for their children. A voluntary program with the bulk of referrals coming from the NT Department of Children & Families with priority going to those families who are on Child Protection Income Management.

Program delivery: Community based NGOs deliver the program.

Evaluation of IFSS

PRC has undertaken a **multi-site evaluation of the IFSS Program** using a mixed-methods approach, to answer the following questions:

- 1: What is the social validity (importance and acceptability of the goals, procedures and outcomes) of the Practice Model for practitioners?
- 2: What is the implementation fidelity (adherence, quality, coverage and uptake) of the Practice Model?**
- 3: What are the implementation support strategies and potential moderators of the impact of those support strategies that are associated with implementation of the Practice Model? ,
- 4: What is the clinical impact of the Practice Model as it is implemented? That is, to what extent is adherence to the model associated with improvements in neglect in children?

Fidelity

The extent to which a program is delivered as intended by its developers and in line with the program model (Breitenstein et al., 2010)

Implementation quality is the discrepancy between what is planned and what is actually delivered when an intervention is conducted. (Domitrovich, 2008)

Fidelity is important

- Moderates the relationship between an intervention and its outcomes;
- Prevent potentially false conclusions from being drawn about an intervention's effectiveness;
- Help in the achievement of improved outcomes, that is, guide implementation of a program model as intended;
- Give primary researchers confidence in attributing outcomes to the intervention;
- Give evidence-based practitioners confidence that they are implementing the chosen intervention properly;
- Give secondary researchers more confidence when synthesising studies (Carroll et al, 2007).

Fidelity assessment

There is a great diversity in methods to identify and specify fidelity criteria (Mowbray et al, 2003).

Based on the work of Koball and colleagues (2009):

- **Structural fidelity**
- **Dynamic fidelity (process fidelity)**

Structural fidelity

The **structural** aspects demonstrate adherence to basic program elements.

Helps us understand practitioner, service, and organisational characteristics at each site.

IFSS Structural Fidelity Assessment

1. **Program Level – Descriptive data**
2. **Staff Characteristics**
3. **Program Level – Service Data**
4. **Participant Level – Service Data**

Program Level – Descriptive data

Agency active in NT (Yrs.)

Agency active in IFSS service delivery locations (Yrs.)

Commencement of IFSS delivery

Staff currently employed in IFSS

IFSS staff shared with other projects/activities

IFSS staff turnover

Team Leaders/Supervisor

- Number since commencement of IFSS
- Number who have left during IFSS
- Number recruited after commencement of IFSS

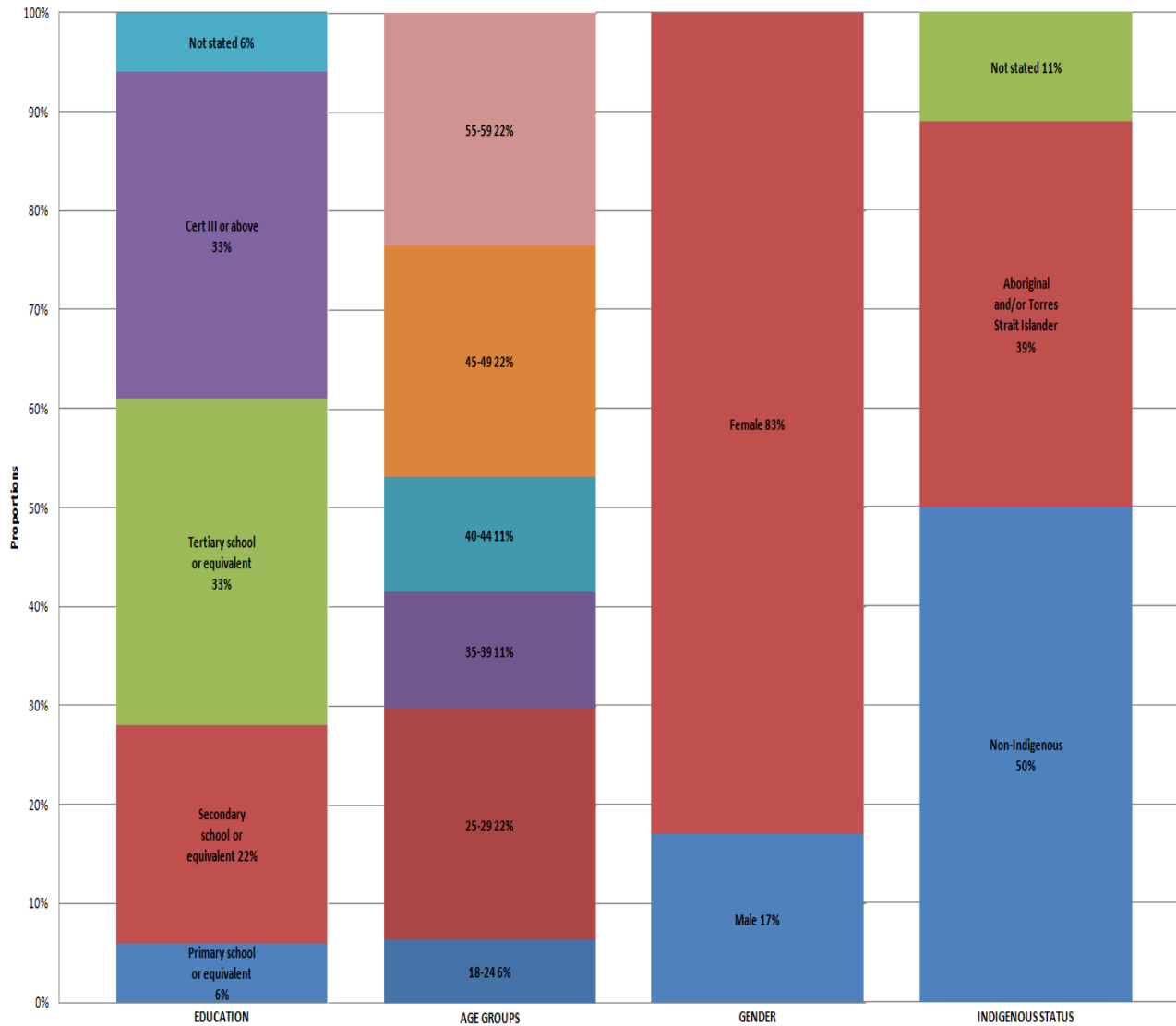
IFSS Workers

- Number since commencement of IFSS
- Number who have left during IFSS
- Number recruited after commencement of IFSS

Staff resident in IFSS delivery locations

Service capacity when fully enrolled

Staff Characteristics



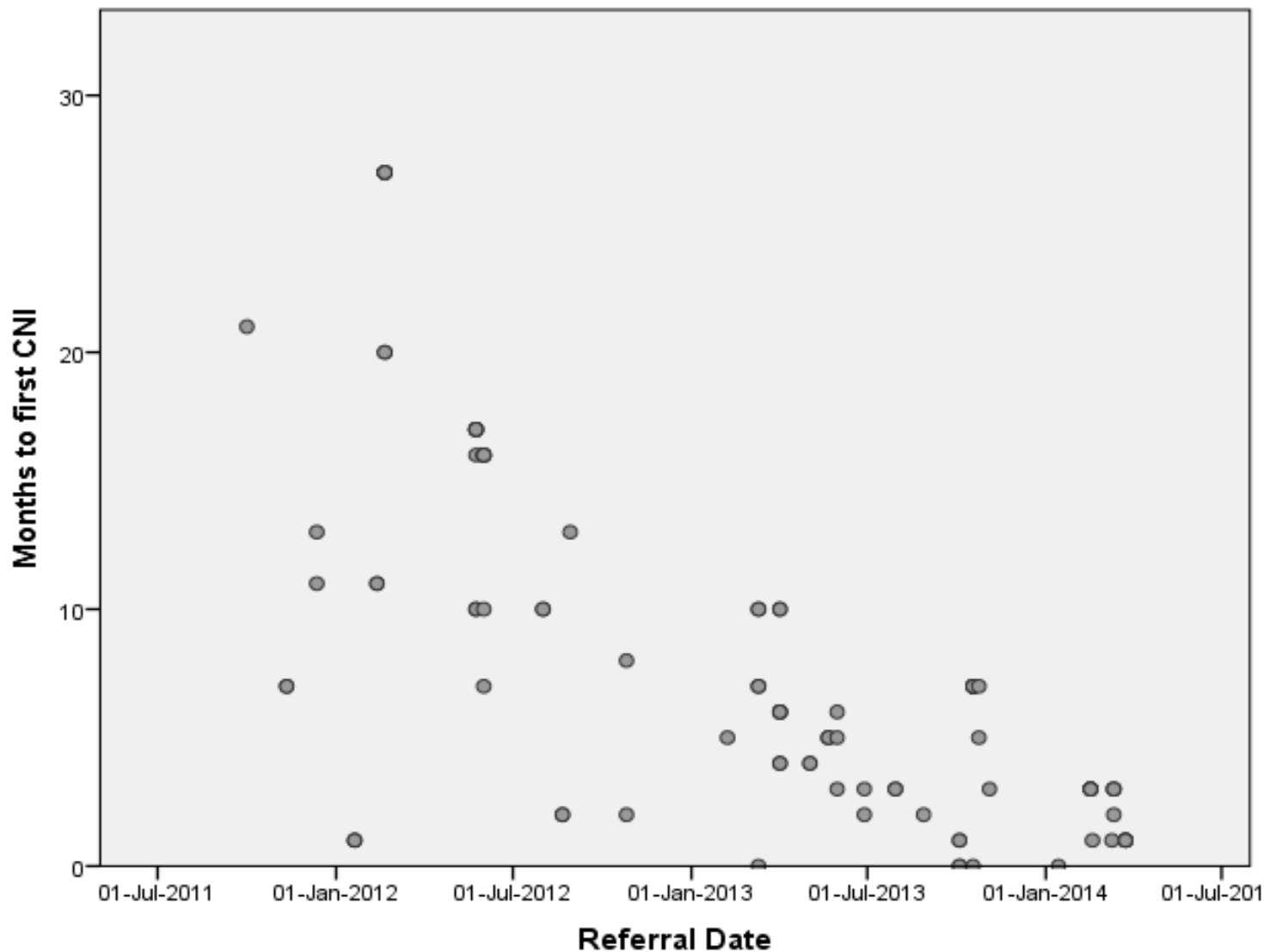
Program Level – Service data

Indicators	Totals
<i>Referrals</i>	
Families referred	55
Referred families ineligible	10
<i>Cases/Families</i>	
Families accepted into IFSS	45
Families in IFSS on CPIM	45
Number of referred children in IFSS	98
Average number of active cases (families) per month	31
Average number of active Indigenous cases (families) per month	29 (94%)
Average number of children in active cases (families) per month	3
<i>Workload</i>	
Average IFSS Worker caseload	22
Total number of families waitlisted	33
Average number of client vacancies per month	17
<i>Exits</i>	
Total exits	67

Participant Level – Service data

Stage of Practice	F2F visits	Percent	Avg hrs per visit	Std Dev.
Engagement	127	13.8	1.10	.62
Assessment	497	53.9	1.13	.62
Intervention	89	9.6	1.19	.58
Maintenance	38	4.12	1.13	.65
Missing	172	18.6	1.00	.71
TOTAL				

Participant Level – Service data: First CNI by referral date



Dynamic fidelity

Aspects or components of a program such as content delivered and quality of delivery presents unique challenges.

Dynamic fidelity – issues

Preliminary results only – very positive

This is feasible in this context

We have been able to operationalise practices

Need to make changes/improvements:

- Ensure results are accurate
- Validate the measure
- Consider cultural and contextual issues

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