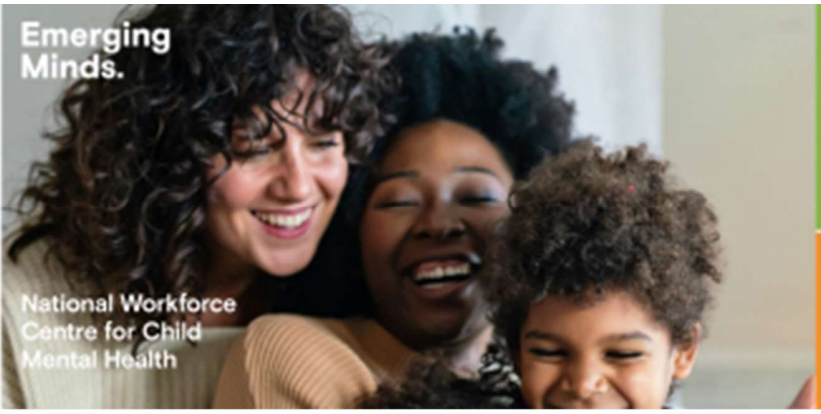


Infant and Child Mental Health
Professional Development Webinar Series

WEBINAR TRANSCRIPT

Navigating cultural differences: Culturally responsive practice supporting families

Disclaimer: The following transcript has been autogenerated and may contain occasional errors or inaccuracies resulting from the automated transcription process.

Amanda Kemperman (00:00:02):

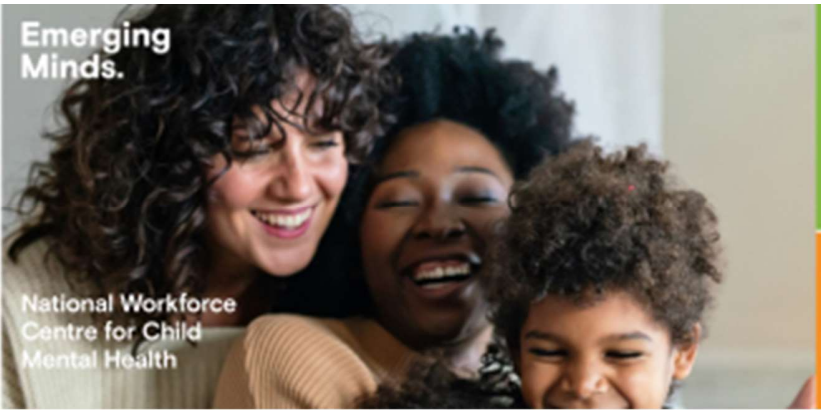
Welcome to today's webinar, navigating Cultural Differences, culturally Responsive Practice Supporting Families. Welcome, Julie Ngwabi, Rhett McDonald and Summayyah Sadiq-Ojibara, who are our presenters tonight. I'm Amanda Kemperman and I'll be your host. I'm currently working with Emerging Minds in their workforce development team. I've been sharing the knowledge and skills of practitioners and parents with lived experience of cultural diversity. This webinar is a part of a suite of resources for practitioners available on our website. Keep an eye out for our latest course called Culturally Responsive Practice Strategies for Children's Mental Health that's being released in April. I'd like to recognise and pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. As the traditional owners of the lands we work, play, and walk on throughout this country, we acknowledge and respect their traditional connections to the land and waters, culture, spirituality, family and community for the wellbeing of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

(00:01:13):

Also for tonight's webinar, we acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families are culturally and linguistically diverse. However, this short conversation won't have the scope to cover their experiences in the detail they deserve. I'd like to acknowledge the lived experience of parents and carers who've lived with mental illness in the past and those who continue to live with mental illness in the present and all of their contributions. When we use the term cowed tonight, we accept its significant limitations, although it is the most commonly used term in Australia and is used by the Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia. When we use this term, we're referring to the vast array of languages, ethnicities, nationalities, traditions, social structures and religions within families and across many different communities. Thank you all for your questions. We've received more than we can cover in this short time together tonight, and we'll aim to get to some of the questions in the chat box tonight as well.

(00:02:24):

However, please check out our resources as many of them may support your practice. There'll be opportunities to engage and provide comments on similar content via the new Emerging Minds course. Keep an eye out for our upcoming webinars, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-Home Care and Practice Strategies for Children Bullying Behaviour. Now tonight to interact with the



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webinar platform, you'll see three little dots on the lower right corner of your screen to access the information tab. You'll find, ask a question, slides, resources, survey and technical support. And in the top right you'll see speech bubbles and you can access the chat. Tonight's webinar, we'll explore culturally responsive practice strategies that foster conversations grounded in family skills and knowledges, identify practice approaches that support families with diverse cultures, languages, and faiths to navigate their parenting in a new country, and outline practitioners self-reflection on their own culture and how to develop cultural humility to prevent cultural bias and racism when supporting children and families. You've been provided with the panellists bios, and so to save time, we are going to jump straight into it. I'll start by inviting each of our panel members to share a small offering. I'll start with you, Julie. What are you most drawn to in your work with culturally diverse families?

Julie Ngwabi (00:04:13):

Thanks, Amanda and hello everyone. I think for me, I value the richness of working in a multicultural society and I think the diversity of cultures, it breeds cultural curiosity in me, and this presents me with opportunities of constantly learning and being informed by different cultures as well. So that's something that's very important to me. Thanks.

Amanda Kemperman (00:04:45):

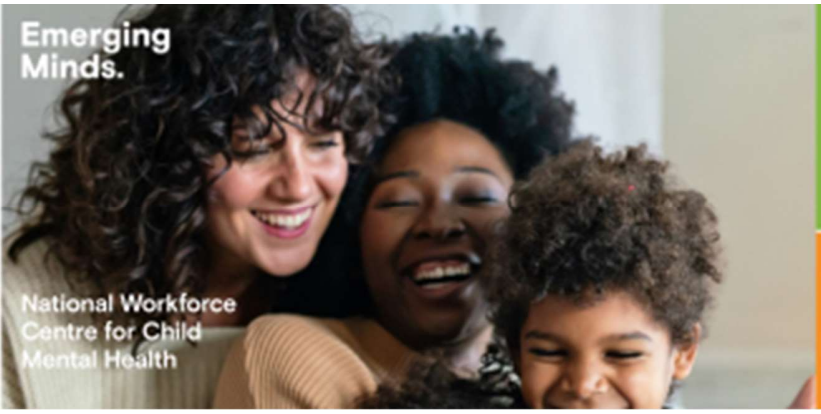
Thanks, Julie. And Rhett, what's one thing that you are drawn to in your work with families who have a different culture to your own?

Rhett McDonald (00:04:53):

Thanks, Amanda. Hi everybody. I think I'm drawn mostly to their abilities and their skills in the face of such oppression and persecution, which is the main cohort I work with. And when I get a bit of an insight into those abilities, I think I secondly become drawn to how it transforms me and how it changes me as a person and a clinician, and perhaps sometimes how right I can be for transformation. And I think with that it's I want to acknowledge that my lived experience isn't really walking to cultures, but everyone I work with it largely is. So I take a lot of that experience and knowledge from them and learn it from them. And probably I want to acknowledge one person in particular who's a colleague of mine called AKA, who has taught me a lot really, and he has a lot of lived experience and he works with people that walk to cultures as well. So working alongside him and all the people that we traditionally call clients, I want to acknowledge their hard fought journeys because that's what I'm drawn to and that's what inspires me. So thank you.

Amanda Kemperman (00:06:10):

Yeah, thanks RT and Summayyah, what's one thing you find impacts you and your practice when working with people who have varying differences in diversities?



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Summayyah Sadiq-Ojibara (00:06:22):

Thank you, Amanda. Hello everyone. I would say that it's really very humbling to meet people and to journey with them and to experience a joining with them. I would say that it's a lot to do with the variance of experiences, the lived experiences that people have and the convergence and divergence of those experiences and how I find myself of the receiving even as I'm giving. So there is a very shared human experience that happens in those moments that is just very transformative, I would say.

Amanda Kemperman (00:07:05):

Yeah, and sustaining. Thanks everybody. We'll now hear from each presenter on some of some key points that they wish to share, and then we'll take some questions. Julie, let's start with you.

Julie Ngwabi (00:07:22):

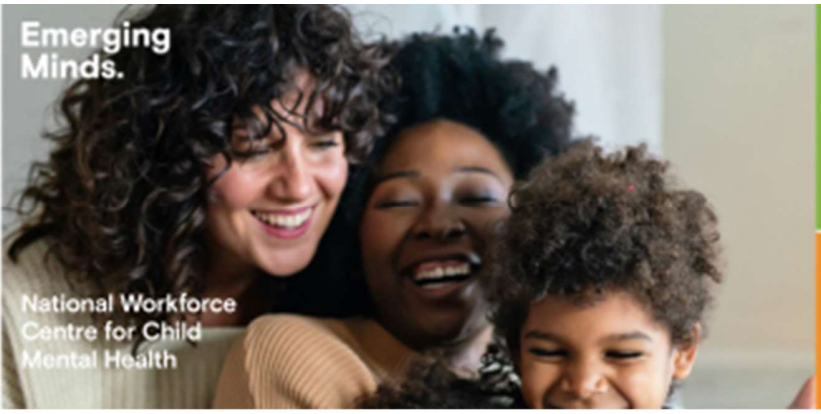
Thank you. I think to be authentically culturally responsive, we have to remind ourselves that called families face unique challenges that actually affect their mental health and wellbeing. So I think it's important for us to begin briefly by exploring some of those factors in order to enhance our understanding and strategies as well. So what you see on the screen are some of those factors which include migration and acculturation with migration. Sometimes it comes with a loss of traditional family support systems back home, and there may also be challenges that come with the migration journey itself and settling into a new country. And with acculturation, sometimes there's conflict between cultural preservation and adaptation, and that can be a source of stress as well. And there's also racism and unconscious bias. We know that racism is harmful to children and their families is harmful to child development. It's harmful to family functioning and it affects people physically, psychologically, and indeed mentally as well.

(00:08:49):

And also there are some cultural practises, those traditions, daily routines that may be impacted by the migration or the move. Sometimes it's about leaving people behind who are part of your daily routine. And especially for children, we know that that has got consequences because children thrive where there's consistency, predictability and routines. And then there's also cultural identities. We're talking about cultural connections. Sometimes I think Trent touched on this as well, sometimes called families will describe a feeling of belonging in two worlds, adapting and functioning in mainstream society at the same time trying to preserve their cultural identity. And I'll also say with the unconscious bias, even though it is intentional, it is still harmful nonetheless. Thanks.

(00:09:54):

So what are some of the culturally responsive practice strategies that help us to foster these conversations that are grounded in family skills and knowledge? We all know that evidence-based



practice, really it draw from three draws from three sources, which is the best available national and international research. And also it draws from the practitioner's voice and expertise as well their skills and their wisdom that they bring to this partnership. And thirdly is the lived and living experience. So I think it's about bringing a cultural lens into that third and crucial component, which is the lived experience and really effective cultural responsiveness. It's about our readiness and understanding to give it equal weight, same as research and our expertise and knowledge on the subject matter. Thanks trend.

(00:11:06):

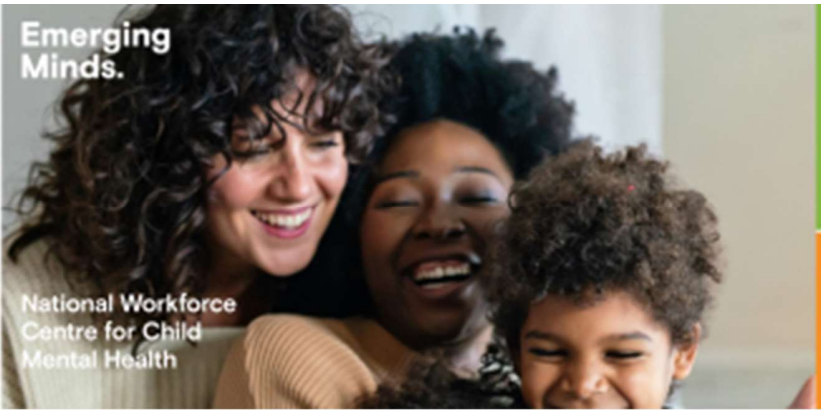
So what is it that we can do to be more culturally responsive? We need to be culturally competent, but what is cultural competence? We can talk about this term, but it means different things to different people. Some people attend a workshop, they receive a certificate that says culturally competent, but that's really not cultural competence. Cultural competence is an ongoing professional development process. Its own corporates awareness of one culture, values, biases, knowledge about other people's cultures as well is also about having the skills to effectively with and work with people from different cultures. And it also embodies the important element of cultural curiosity in order to wholly understand other people's experiences. So really it is we never certify someone is professionally developed. You can never be culturally certified as culturally competent. Actually it's an ongoing learning process and I think it's also important to invest in the engagement and relationship building, rapport building component.

(00:12:34):

I think this is an important and crucial element which is often overlooked in engaging with CALD families. And it's important to note that once that relationship, it's ruptured, it's usually difficult to repay it. That's where practitioners face challenges and say called families. They do not engage with services. It's because of the engagement process and the relationship aspect. So it's really important even before any therapy, before any intervention and throughout the whole process to pay attention to the relationship and the engagement process. And I think it requires cultural humility. We need to accept that we don't know other people's cultures unless they inform us. And we also have to be aware of power imbalances and the role that plays in really affecting that engagement. And it's about sharing that power, bringing the other person as an equal partner, as much as you hold that professional expertise and knowledge, acknowledge that they're also bringing their lived experience, they're also bringing their cultural wisdom way of being and doing.

(00:13:56):

And as I say, really it's a continuous process of learning about other people's ways of being and doing, which might be different from your own. And a commitment to unlearning previously held beliefs which might actually be harmful. And it's about being trauma informed, being aware that some of these children and families might have experienced the trauma. So creating that safety, providing choice, empowerment, trust, it is there I think is really important. And when doing this work, in order to do it effectively, you have to be prepared to sit with the discomfort and the anxiety of not knowing. And to sustain this in practice, we need reflective practice and supervision, a dedicated space to be able to



process all these issues so that we continue to effectively work with the families and centre their needs and be culturally responsive. And we need a strength-based approach, really how do we draw from their cultural wisdom, their way of being and doing and how have they navigated similar challenges before. But that's all for me for now. Thanks Trent and Amanda.

Amanda Kemperman (00:15:17):

Thanks Julie. And Rhett, I'll pass over to you.

Rhett McDonald (00:15:23):

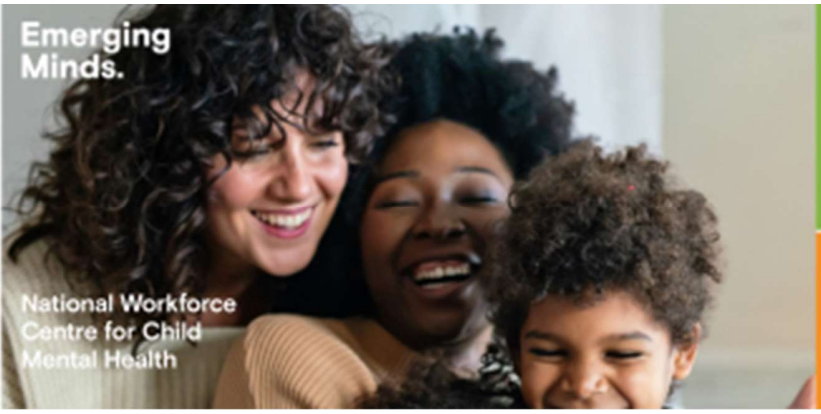
Thank you. My first slide is about putting your knowledge to one side. And this is not about not using your knowledge, it's just about trying not to privilege it as much so that you can make room to discover more and not limit avenues of discussions that might be available to the clients and the people we work with. One of the examples that I probably have here is that I was working with a young man and he was telling me a story about developing a relationship with a girlfriend and juggling the challenges of that. Now I was bringing knowledge to the session of his culture and I was concerned that if I had shared that I could have closed the conversation down. So I tried to put it to one side.

(00:16:16):

Now I knew that traditionally in his culture that he had to get permission from his father to have this relationship. And I was aware that he knew that I had come across, I had met his father on one occasion and I was of the same age of his father essentially. So the power I had in that counselling session was quite strong because of the number of things. And I really felt that if I'd inquired so early as to what I knew about this culture and how he was going with asking his father and that approach, it would've put him in a very awkward position. And instead I put it to one side and I took the position that was discovering something over the seeking of expressing my knowledge or confirming it, and the conversation took a whole other turn. And we undo some beautiful things around his values and ethics and his ways of resisting and testing the waters to send messages that he's growing up.

(00:17:23):

So with that, I think we have to realise that families know their stories of challenging and adapting to culture. And if we take a discovery orientated position, which is not a new idea, we just take the experience that we have as a practitioner into the room without using it too strongly and hoping that we have enough skills and language to have a possible conversation discovering things. So I think when we embrace an openness to their definitions and their ways of being without tempting to box it into our own, we're doing a number of things. We essentially are seeing and doing dignity, which is something that a lot of racism and oppression and persecution tries to destroy. Another thing we're doing is that we're open to our own transformation and are open to finding out new understandings for ourselves. And if we're open to our own transformation, then what we're doing is that we're becoming aware of a context which we'll see that their behaviour makes sense. Within that next slide I'll go to.



(00:18:39):

So how we view them makes a difference. And one of the things that's important here is that I think it's worthwhile reminding ourselves that they're running their life. We are just running the therapy or the session or the meeting. And we have to be curious about what sense of self do they bring, if you like, when they arrive in Australia. And what I mean by that is what does it mean to be a man, a woman, a mother, a child in their culture and even in their family? And how has that been impacted on the journey here or settling here? And that can be dependent on so many things. And certainly in the example of a torture and trauma survivor, where they're at at particular points in their life can determine what it means to be them, which parts of their identity are they privileging at different times.

(00:19:35):

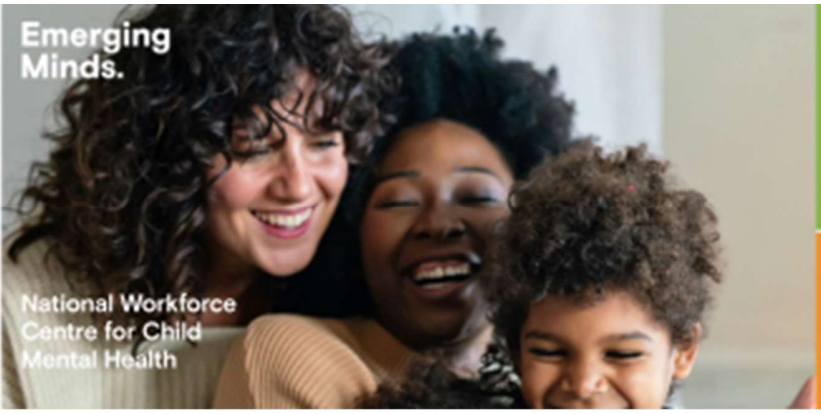
And this is vital because the parts of your identity that you privilege at times of terror and horror and escaping can be very different to the parts of your identity that you privilege in a job interview or in a health setting with us where they have limited power. So this identity is intimately relational, it's linked strongly to culture and language and how we connect informs the identity. I remember chatting with a colleague, aka, and he said something very profound to me. It's very helpful to me. And he said to me that they come into the room with the past in front of them, it's not behind them. He said, don't jump too quickly to the present day and assuming that they're settled and they're safe here within this whole host culture where they are, because if it's forced separation, they'll hold onto what's left behind and they'll grieve for it longer.

(00:20:35):

Lost futures, lost cultures, lost languages almost. So the importance of context that it really influences how we view people and how people view themselves. And the last point on that slide, which is around building stories of response. This is really the work of Alan Wade and Linda Coates in Canada. And essentially it's really about if we ask questions about what happened to them, and often people think that's the good juicy story they need to go after, that's a very different story. If you ask them how they responded to what happened to them, that latter questions is really digging out the wisdom and knowledge and skills. So I think the work that they're doing in Canada around that response-based practice is really helpful. And the last slide I've got is about safety being key. And this is really about setting up the conditions for the healing to take place.

(00:21:43):

So thinking about where we are meeting the foster safety, I know I've had far more success in sessions outside of my office than inside anywhere that I'm trying to break down. The power that I hold in sessions is useful. The presentation of myself is very important. How I locate myself culturally, there's often an expectation that they will locate themselves culturally to us without me sharing that I'm a white settler with ties to English and Welsh and a great, great grandmother from Germany. So I think this equaling things up is really important to structure the safety and then also talking about what are their hopes for the meeting, what are their hopes for how we're going to behave to each other? This



stuff's really important and this isn't a new idea. This is the work of Vicki Reynolds, again out of Canada actually, who talks about structuring safety as the therapy, not necessarily doing it first to get to the therapy. It is part of it. Thanks Amanda. That's all from me.

Summayyah Sadiq-Ojibara (00:22:51):

Thanks Rhett. And Summayyah, thank you.

(00:22:58):

Listening to you, Julie, Rhett, just brings so much up for me in terms of some of my own lived experiences as well as what I experienced as a therapist. And I start by talking about how we are quick to define. So have used a quote from one of my written material, a book I wrote, and it starts with you are, and I'll leave you to read that because essentially what I'm saying here is how meetings and joining start is where we order the other person and that in itself already direct how the engagements will proceed. Next slide please.

(00:23:46):

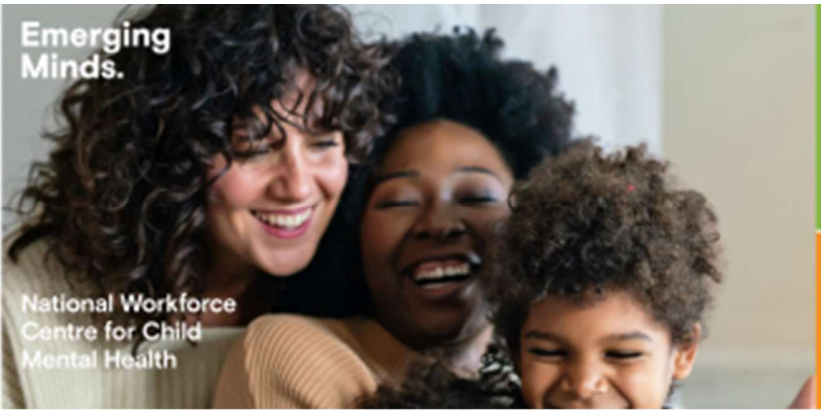
And so I've come up with these crats where I've broken them into certain behaviours, ways of thinking, engaging that are quite racist, aggressive, traumatising, and there's a whole lot in that spectrum. I have chosen five and I find that this can happen in our interpersonal interactions and our engagements in the spaces of community as well as practices. So the first one I mentioned is the detoxification. And this is a concept that is already known. I find that I'm often in spaces where I'm the only person that looks like me. And so it can bring very intrusive fascination and objectification. And in other instances there's this romanticising of stereotypes. So the person that is actually in front of you as a practitioner is not a person, but an idea, a concept. And that talks about, that leads to even the idea of erasure as well. Because when you don't see me then how do you engage with me?

(00:25:05):

How do you know the being that is in front of you? And so what that erases are my identities, my realities. So when someone says to me I don't see colour, they've essentially erased a fundamental part of my identity. Ego explaining is where my experiences are just overtaken my intelligence, my agency, my experiences are just overtaken by another person. And that leads to even the enforcing as well. So very restrictive, prescriptive. I'm sitting in front of a practitioner and so they know better, they know more, they know best for me. And so there is that superiority of positioning and assumption of expertise because of the professional knowledge and skills and that takes over any expertise or lead experience that I might have. And then there's the empathising. You would say that that's almost counterintuitive because one of the conditions that one human being should have with another one is the ability to empathise.

(00:26:15):

And of course in a therapeutic space that is fundamental. But then there is that conditional empathy where again, personal opinions and privileges are centred. Next slide please. And so those crats bring us



to looking at the other side of you are, which is the person able to define who they are. So I am more than one thing and I am the world that lives within me and the world I live in. So essentially talking about who I am as a person, as well as who I am in the world that I'm in with other people. Next slide please. So that leads me to talking about how we as practitioners, we as people who engage in the community in the different context that we find ourselves when we're talking about differences and variations of personalities is to naturalise and to normalise. So we look at the uniqueness of each person, not to rush to look for commonalities, and we look at those dimensions of our personalities, we look at the diversity of beliefs and systems and we look at practices and individual stories.

(00:27:33):

What makes a person wholesome and whole is so much more than why they're there to see you and what some of the experiences have been. We talk about identities in communities. So really one of the main things that I feel was an epiphany for me was this understanding that I am complete in and of myself as an entity and that I complete a whole as part of a community. So any work that we're doing has to be looking at that by centering the clients seeking our needs within context and circumstances. So sometimes I find that there is that individualistic approach where we engage with a person but without thinking about who they are within the community that they're from. Next slide please.

(00:28:28):

And so we talk about how to then engage in terms of learning and knowing the systems, the structure. So this is really talking about the power dynamics that we find. It was very helpful to hear RT and Julie as well talking about this. And really it's work that needs to start much earlier and has to be ongoing. And we look at how we may be insisting on modalities and models and how appropriate or ineffective those theories and interventions and approaches are. I know that when I was training as a therapist, one of the things I struggled with was how Eurocentric a lot of the training was. And when I bring things up and I challenged some of those things, it was just very novel to think that a person could still engage with another person. And some of those ethical considerations need to be considered within the community of people that you're working with.

(00:29:29):

So I typically refer to people as people not so much as clients. I'm still mindful of all the necessary considerations, but I find that that is something so important to a centre in terms of practising and practical. So really understanding how we identify and integrate. So like I said before, we want to talk about the expertise a professional can bring, but also the expertise of the lead experiences of the person before you. When we talk about this, we talk about safeguarding spaces, engaging safely, ensuring safety and enabling safe practices. There's so much to unpack from that. I do believe that Julie and Red also really layered that in some of the teaching that they had shared with us earlier. But ultimately from what you wear to how you speak to where you engage to the things that you pay attention to when you engage is all part of any form of healing space that we're trying to navigate and cultivate.

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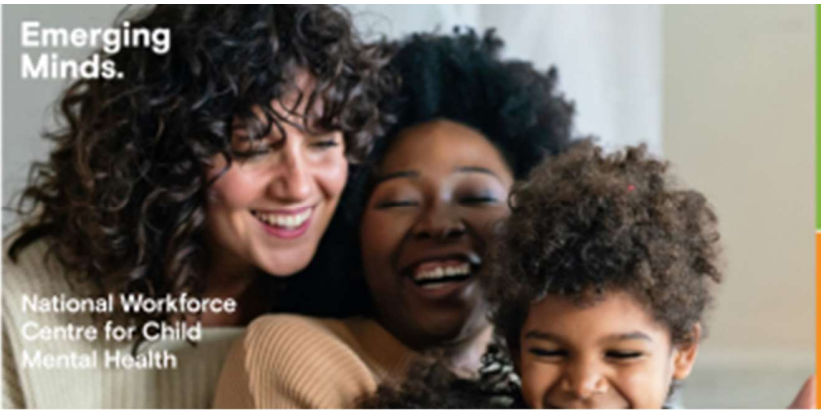


And importantly is to talk about the reflection and reflection. So when we talk about reflection, we talk about mirrors. Oftentimes mirrors are held up to people, but that don't necessarily show the image of the person that is looking into the mirror is more of projections of the one holding the mirror. So a self-reflection can really help us before, during, after engagement, and it's what enables us to hold ourself accountable for the nature of the practice that we're running. Next slide. And I believe that will be my last slide. I've completed this by trying to put this all together with some kind of summary. Again, I won't need to read that to you, but I would really encourage us to think about some of the keywords here that I hope will jump out to us. Some of that will be understanding that we are in the world as one and in the world with each and one another.

(00:31:34):

What's also important is to recognise that we cannot claim control, competence and or censorship over another soul. And finally, as we bring it to a close, we must understand that we are journeying with a person and that we do not have any claim over outcomes of what can happen. We must recognise that at the end of the day, this is a human being or human beings that are in front of us and that all we can do is to engage with authenticity and to also recognise the importance of the authenticity of the other person and the power that exists between. Thank you.

Amanda Kemperman (00:32:16):

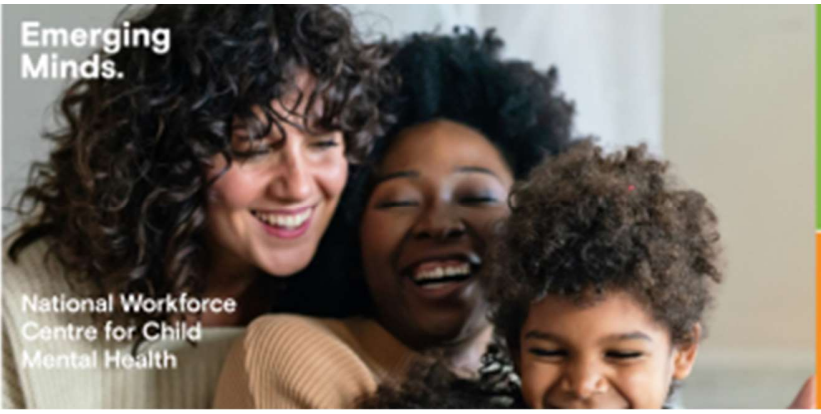
Thanks Summayyah, and thank you Julie and Rhett as well. We've covered a fair bit of ground. Thanks so much for your wisdom and insights. Let's go to one of the questions that's come through. Julie, I'll start with you. The question is sometimes I work with teenagers whose parents and by extension the entire family would clearly benefit from accessing and accepting mental health support. In many cases there is resistance or refusal due to cultural stigma. Do you have any ideas about how to tackle these situations?

Julie Ngwabi (00:32:54):

Thanks for the question, Amanda. I think for me, the first thing I'll be curious to understand, I'll park my judgement and coming into conclusions. So how do I know that this hesitancy really is due to cultural stigma? Do they tell me that or I'm making an assumption? And I think regardless of whether your client is a child or an adult, is always important to apply a holistic family focused approach. We know that families come as a unit and we know that recovery occurs in the context of their relationships. And also it's about addressing some of those social determinants of health that affects their wellbeing. So the National Workforce Centre is identified six practice positions that support authentic engagements and conversations with children and their families. So I think when we adapt to these particular stances and positions, they actually help us to fully understand what's happening for this child and what's happening for these families in order to collaborate and problem solve together.

(00:34:12):

And we know that respect is really important. So we believe that people are aspects and they know what is best for them, even if they're coming to us for help, they're the aspects of their lives and is also a



position of collaboration, is partnering with this teenager and their family to reach a shared understanding of what the concerns are. And I think this opens the door to having conversations of addressing some of those concerns, including the benefits of them, seeking support if that's something that is needed. And also having a position of curiosity is important. We want to understand what is really happening in this family. When the family or the parents sense that we are not just seeking to identify the problems is actually a motivator for them to change or it's an openness to some. When people sense that practitioners are trying to identify problems and solve them for them, that's where people sometimes resist or become hesitancy because people want self-determination and agency.

(00:35:28):

And also it's important to consider the context, explore what shapes their lives, what has contributed to circumstances that is their cultural, social and relational context. Maybe for this family, the issue is prioritising their needs. It may be it's prioritising basic needs, really like food before counselling or attending a parenting program. So really collaborating to be curious to fully understand helps. And also being both child aware and parent sensitive, we're talking about applying an intergenerational approach holding both the needs of this teenager and the rest of the family. And also another important position is to draw from their strengths and their hopes. Focus your conversations around the capacity of the children and their parents to identify their strengths, their skills, and know-how in overcoming adversity because they have drawn from this before to problem solve and also the hope that they have as a family and for their children. And as a practitioner, really I think it's linking how good mental health then helps them to better respond to their children and fulfil those hopes because all parents wants the best for themselves. So it's finding out what's standing in the way. And also I think if indeed there is fear of cultural stigma, maybe it's about providing reassurance about confidentiality issues and consulting with practitioners or services from their culture for additional support. Thanks Amanda.

Amanda Kemperman (00:37:21):

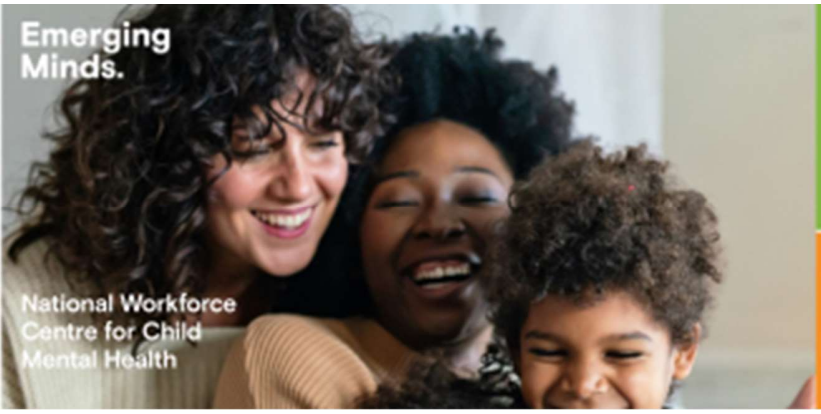
Yeah, thanks Julie. Lots of things to think about. Rhett and Summayyah, I might pass to you a similar question. How do you start conversations about mental health with families that you meet with Rhett? I'll start with you.

Rhett McDonald (00:37:39):

Thanks Amanda. Oddly enough, I think starting a conversation, starting a discussion about mental health is starting somewhere else actually. I think exploring healing and helping within their own culture and within their own family context is where I start.

(00:38:02):

And sometimes that can actually spin into religion as well. The ideas of praying and speaking religious scriptures can be very meditative and soothing to people's soul, same as storytelling and oral histories are important and this collective sharing can have a real soothing effect. So I honestly believe the place to start is understanding what works for them and what they have a long history and knowledge and



wisdom about themselves and not start with the western concept of mental health. I think that can be a little bit dangerous to start there. I think you've got to start somewhere else. And I think with that, I think I would like to hear your thoughts on this because you mentioned before about Eurocentric ideas and I think that there's a connection there, so I'm wondering what you think about that.

Summayyah Sadiq-Ojibara (00:39:04):

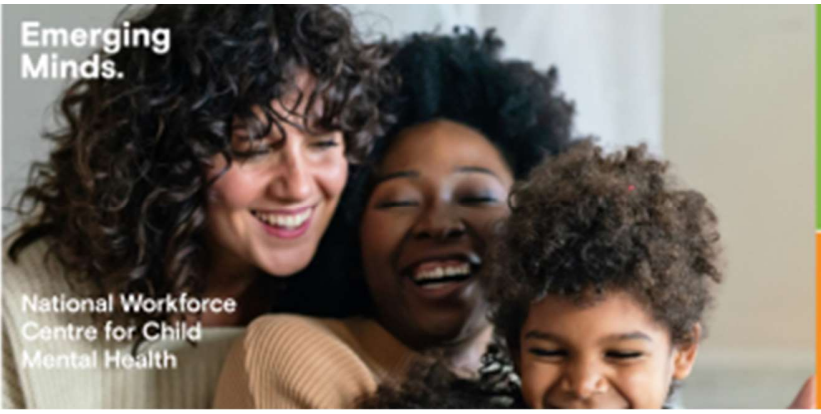
Well, there's just a lot that you've already shared, and I do believe that when we're talking about mental health, even the whole idea of calling it mental health already excludes people's understanding. There is a perception that is already presented across as though it's only to do with the mind. Whereas we're talking about the integration of everything that a person understands in terms of their dimensionality. When we're talking about mental health, we want to normalise the discussion. We want to use storytelling language. So the manner of engagement and the language of expression is very, very key. So using storytelling might require us to use metaphors and symbolism and language that allows us to really engage with the concept of wellness and wellbeing and healing and understanding about beliefs and what that means. What made it really, really limited when I was training was that there was just this idea that it was perhaps certain models that were just the single approaches to those things.

(00:40:20):

Whereas if you sat someone down and you used metaphors or you used experiential manners of expression, it really enables people to understand, okay, this whole idea of a person in terms of their dimension, a person can feel unwell or they can struggle in an area or they can understand that is a lot to do with their inability to feel a sense of belonging and that's what is impacting them. So when we're having discussions about mental health, I would say even the whole definition of it needs to be understood within several contexts of I would say really relevance to people. And so one of the things that I talk about in terms of normalising is just starting that discussion based on what they do know or what they believe they know or what they don't know. And then from there you explore some of those ideas.

(00:41:19):

And if it is possible for us to learn about people's culture, and you refer to this as well, it really situates that understanding that is relevant to people, that is contextual, that is meaningful. I'll give a quick example, which is when somebody comes to see you at times they come with a perception of expertise from your part, something is wrong. And so when you start engaging with them, it's not to quickly say that, oh, I'm not an expert. No, you are an expert, but they also bring expertise. So you want to work collaboratively together to work towards particular goals or points in their journey. And that way they feel like they are participating in their own healing, but then they need direction and directive at times. Because my first real experience when I was learning as well was to go to see a therapist. And I sat there and this person jumped straight into the idea that just because I like giving gifts and I like receiving gifts, it was some sort of people pleasing and it was the farthest from the truth because culturally and traditionally and in terms of my faith, belief, giving gifts is actually a very essential part of engaging.



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(00:42:37):

So I use it in my practise as an example. I mean, I could talk about this all this, so I better stop there.

Amanda Kemperman (00:42:46):

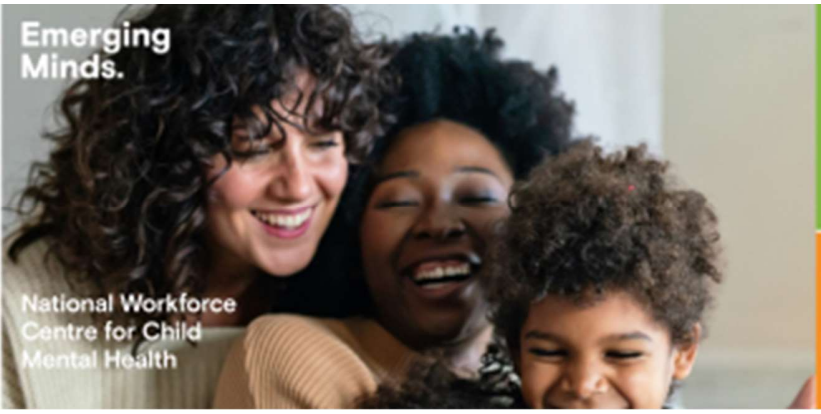
So mental health and wellbeing is much more than just what's happening in the mind. Thank you. We've had lots of questions about working with people with a different culture to your own and navigating those cultural differences. I will also just prompt people that are listening, feel free to submit some questions that you might like our presenters to ask as well, the three little dots in the bottom right corner. Another question that's come through, Julie, I'll come back to you. I working with cloud families and balancing being respectful of cultural approaches to discipline within Australian safety laws and duty of care as well as men using behaviour that minimises women. How do you approach discussing these cultural differences?

Julie Ngwabi (00:43:44):

Thanks, Amanda. I think I'll also be careful not to make broad and general statements. How do we know that's a cultural approach? I'm not sure that's making and hitting is a cultural approach, discipline that is unique to culturally and linguistically diverse families. And we know that by default really most people across all cultures, they parent the way that they were parented. And across cultures, you hear people say that they grew up being smacked and he is part of discipline. But we also know that as people progress, parents may make choices on how they want to parent their children and to discipline them, which might different from what they observed from their parents and generations before. And I think as practitioners, indeed we do have a duty of care to ensure that children are safe from harm. And we also follow the state legislations and guidelines around that.

(00:44:49):

But I'll say also regardless of culture, there's always a difference between acceptable discipline and child abuse. Child abuse is never acceptable. So I think we need both contextual and cultural understanding. In addition to applying legislation on child wellbeing and safety, we need to understand that family adversities and stressors that culturally and linguistically diverse families experience have a flaw on effect on children, on the parents, the way the parent and respond to their children's needs. And as part of routine practise, I think our focus should be on removing those identified risks in the family or in the child and not focusing on removing the child from the family. I think it's also about providing education and information and linking with appropriate supports to this family as well. And also I think we have to be careful about attributing excessive punishment to culture because there's a danger of creating what the child protection system calls false negatives and false positives. This is where child abuse or mistreatment may be overlooked and dismissed as normal cultural practices when it's not. And on the other hand, when applying Western values, there is a risk of parental behaviour that is otherwise culturally normal is causing harm to the children leading to unnecessary interventions. And when there is no harm that is being done, that unnecessary intervention becomes a source of harm to the child.



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(00:46:49):

For the second part, when men are using behaviour that minimises women, how do we respond as practitioners? Again, how was the conclusion made that this is a cultural norm? What was observed? Because massa is found across all cultures. I'm not aware again of a culture where this kind of behaviour is normalised or celebrated. And I can tell you in my culture where I come from, this kind of behaviour is frowned upon. If a partner abuses their power, for example, let's say a man, they accept their power and abuse a woman. They're actually both traditional cultural and legal pathways that people follow. It's not something that is celebrated. So however, we also know that for some families they are more traditional than others with well-defined gender roles. That's just the way it is. And where everyone is contented functioning in their roles, they're thriving and no one is being harmed.

(00:48:01):

And I think judgement and mising may occur when a practitioner, for example, who holds individual values of self dependency and self-sufficiency as normative sees everything else is not right or problematic. So I think through curious engagement, we can ascertain if that behaviour is abusive and then activate the right supports. And it's important to note that sometimes these gender roles may be affected or reversed as a result of migration, and this in turn might create family and relationship conflict. For example, let's say a person whose role before migrating was looking after the children in the home happens to be the one who is now working, let's say that's the woman for argument's sake. And the man who previously his traditional role was to provide and to protect the family is now in Australia unemployed that men might struggle with the gender role reversal. So I think we need to be curious to understand the culture and the context and then used informed decisions to act accordingly. Thanks Amanda.

Amanda Kemperman (00:49:20):

Yeah, thanks Julie. Definitely hearing a theme here of reflecting on how we are coming to these conclusions and assumptions about what we're noticing and

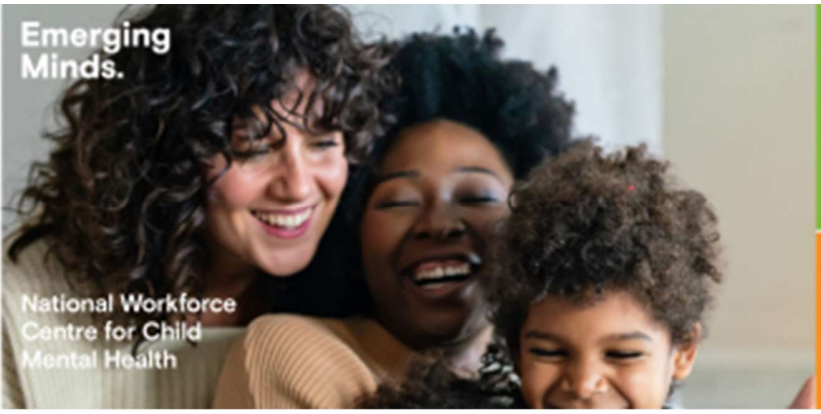
Julie Ngwabi (00:49:31):

Understanding the whole context.

Amanda Kemperman (00:49:34):

Yeah, taking that discovery approach, exploration approach. Yeah, Rhett and Summayyah. Feel free to also add to what Julie shared in response to that question. And I'd also like to ask you about when you notice that you might be making assumptions or judgements from your own cultural understandings, how you manage that and keep that in check in your conversations.

Summayyah Sadiq-Ojibara (00:50:10):



I know that there's so many layers to people and there is also the understanding about intersectionality as well. So when a person is in front of us, there could be a whole lot of things so to speak. And because of that, if we take a position of knowing an expertise over a person's experience, we've already excluded them from that space. I know that one of the things I would often experience, I remember a lecturer just singling me out often in the class because I was literally the only black person there, the only Muslim woman. And she just singled me out one day and said something along the lines of, oh, you should know about early marriage, tell us about early marriage. And I was like, huh, I don't even know what you're talking about with regards to that. So can you imagine certain assumptions that a person has already had?

(00:51:10):

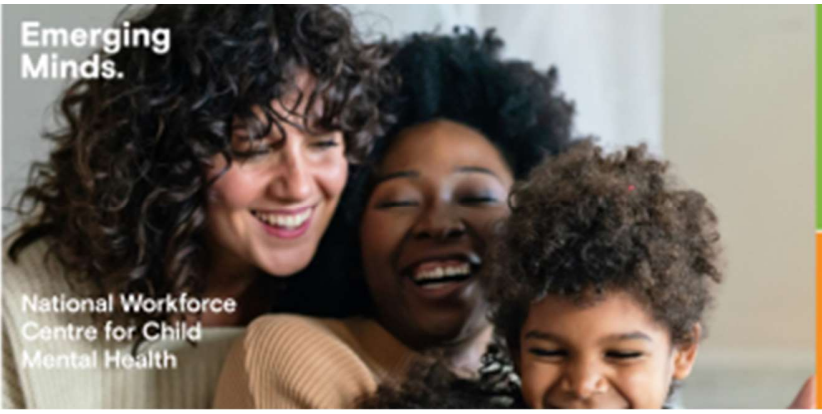
And by so doing, they've just caused me harm. And I could say so many other instances like that. So for me as a person, when I engage with people, I try to be respectful. I like to invite them to be as they are. So say for example, there is an age massive age gap. I do work with a lot of young people. And so at times, clearly I'm the same age as their parents and yet they're needing to engage with me without understanding that I may be as old as their parents, but I still need to be respectful of who they are, what they bring, the knowledge they have, the fact that I'm needing to learn from them. So I have to practise a lot of self-awareness, a lot of self-reflection, and I must hold myself accountable. And where there is a rupture, I must step into that space with humility and invite us to engage and try to repair together knowing that there is that power differential that happens with us. So these are some of my thoughts on this red, perhaps you would have more to add as well.

Rhett McDonald (00:52:24):

This unconscious bias is so important. And the truth is I'm still learning this. I'm still trying to understand it because it turns up a lot with me. I'm conscious that I hold a lot of white privilege in sessions and in meetings that I attend. And one of the ways I've tried to help in this area is to structure the safety and as much equality as I can, even the quality is a dangerous word, but as much as I can where it allows the people that I'm consulting with to sometimes highlight to me when it's turning up. And I know that that can be a difficult situation to get to, but I recall a session with a gentleman and we were reflecting on some current media coverage regarding some that we collectively were doing in the community. And I recall him saying to me that he was talking about believing that if we don't raise our voice with people like me who said if we don't do that, then the oppression will be sustained.

(00:53:43):

And I went down the track of speaking about how his justice and my justice are tied together. And while I do advocate for him, I'm also advocating for myself at the same time. And he said something very interesting to me. He said that it's true that you're a citizen, you're a citizen and you're respected by the government and it's a given that they will respect and look after you. But when it comes to me as a migrant, and I don't have permanency, but I have compelling reasons to be here, I have the same right and respect that you are getting. And then he said, it's up to you citizens to fight for us to get the same



respect. And he started talking about, I breathe the same air, I have access to the same rights. Now what this highlight for me was that I've been really careful because I worked out very quickly that I have access to the things to advocate for him that he doesn't.

(00:54:51):

And I've got to be really careful at how I present the concept of us tied together when in some contexts we aren't. We were not together in that. And that was incredibly humbling for me. And even though he directly didn't tell me where your unconscious biases turned up, he did tell me in another way and I've got to listen carefully and be conscious all the time. So I think if you can structure a relationship whereby it allows for the comfortability for them to highlight the unconscious bias when they come up, then I think that's really useful to me, really. But it's a challenge and I've got to keep working at it and I will till the end of my days.

Summayyah Sadiq-Ojibara (00:55:43):

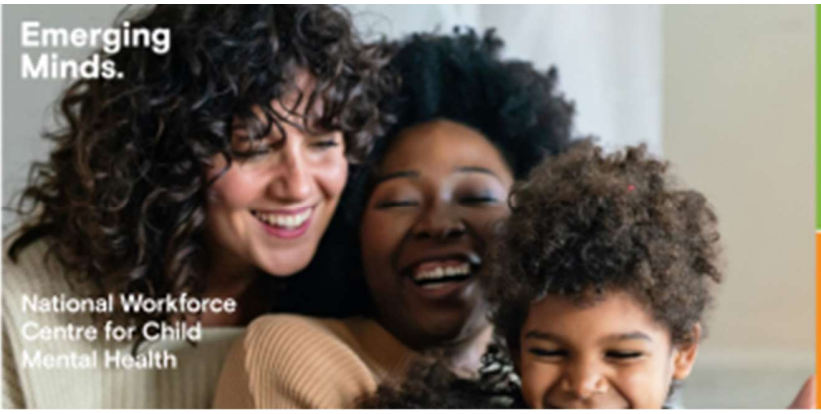
I'd just like to add quickly, Amanda, the other side of what can happen at times is for people to tip to around, so they hold you and hold the space as though it's so fragile and there is a lot of fear in how to navigate, whereas if you come as authentically as possible and there's a lot of humility and that we can meet with that person from a place of shared humanity, understanding that there isn't equality in every space of interaction, I think the person would engage with the other person because they know that they're more authentic, but it's not also to cause harm with a claim of ignorance.

Amanda Kemperman (00:56:32):

Yeah, yeah. And that it's that ongoing journey that you sort of mentioned and will slip up and then noticing it and addressing it and learning from it moving forward. Yeah. Thank you. Thanks for sharing your thoughts on that. We've also had another question come through and Summayyah, I might ask yourself how to best embed collective healing practices in your work with families?

Summayyah Sadiq-Ojibara (00:57:08):

I think importantly is to first understand what healing means to different people and healing can be tied to faith, belief systems and faith systems. There might be certain cultural practices and understanding, for example, hugging. We know that there's a lot of scientific evidence for how that impacts a person, but what does it mean culturally? So if it is a form of greeting, if it is a form of healing, if there are certain ways to engage with it, do the opposite gender hug or not. All of these things really matter. And so when you're talking about it collectively, depending on the space that you are in, it's really important to understand what an action like that can really bring. Another thing that is important is remember how we had mentioned intersectionality as well. Let us understand that in a neighbourhood for example, we might have a community of people and there is diversity in that neighbourhood, and if something were to happen in that place, it's really important to understand that there is that shared experience of that neighbourhood.



(00:58:32):

And then there might be groups or if you like, layers of impact on the different people that make up that space. So there is the outer community of sharing a neighbourhood, but then you also have the smaller groups if you like, or other groups within that community. So you talk about communities within communities and understanding what that means and sharing that without fear that there are differences in that space. And then also importantly, I know that some of the people that I work with, they are people of faith, Muslim, Christian, some belief in a higher power. So spirituality is very key and any form of healing that we would offer in that space cannot be complete. If that higher power is not centred, God is not centred in that space. So we need to have that understanding of what that means.

Amanda Kemperman (00:59:37):

Thank you. We've had a couple questions come through in the chat and one of them is, and I might ask you Julie, how can we move forward to integrate the wisdom of traditional cultures and meet the needs of culturally diverse families?

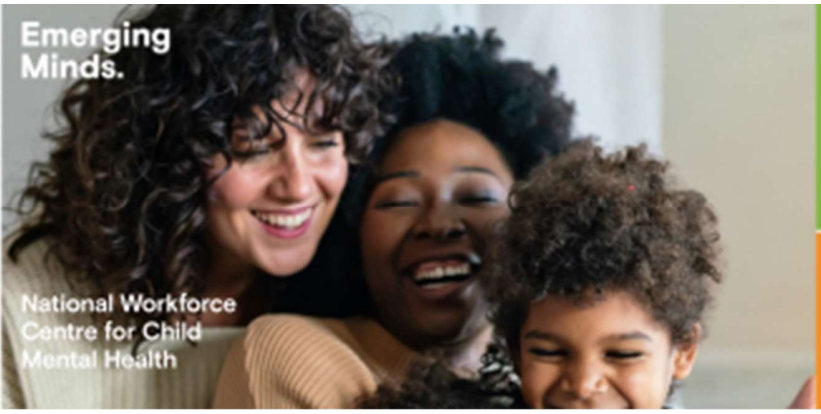
Julie Ngwabi (01:00:03):

Thanks, Amanda. That's a really important question and I think we've really covered some of those really key strategies. But I would say again, for us to be able to have that integration and to attain that we really need cultural competency. There is not ways around it because where we are aware of the influences of our own culture, our biases, world views, and how these impact our perceptions and also influence our actions towards those of a different culture than us. We need to be curious really about people's cultures. This cannot be over-emphasized not only about the unique challenges that they face, but also about their expertise, about their wisdom, about their know-how about their way of being and doing things, their cultural practices, even their parenting styles. We have to be careful though. I think Summayyah mentioned that as well, when engaging with culturally and linguistically diverse communities, they may not necessarily present themselves or see themselves as aspects in our engagements. So it's important again, how we position ourselves again, paying attention to that power imbalances and attending to that. So therefore we collaborate on how we can draw from their cultural practise and wisdom to address those challenges that they're currently facing. And I think it's also important to believe that families want the best for their children and also they want the best for themselves. Therefore we have to seek to understand what is it that is standing in the way of achieving that. Thanks Amanda.

Amanda Kemperman (01:02:07):

Yeah, thanks Julie. And I might open it up. Yeah, Rhet, go ahead.

Rhett McDonald (01:02:11):



Yeah, please. It's just come to my mind, there's something that I'm learning here as well, and it's around the language and the mother tongue being connected to culture and wisdom. And if you take that out and for example, not use an interpreter where appropriate, you are really minimising the expression and you don't get to hear the knowledge and the skill, the abilities and identity exists in the mother tongue, and we know that, and we know history, even in our own history, the colonising efforts to eradicate language is really about eradicating culture. So this is very important to capture the mother tongue, capture the language because using language is not communication, it's identity. Very important. Thank you.

Amanda Kemperman (01:03:03):

Yeah, thanks, Rhett. I met with a practitioner recently who also was working with refugees and trauma and said that memories are also within language. And so when working with an interpreter so that they're able to speak in their first language, really made those memories accessible for them to then be able to work through. So yeah, really interesting about connections with language and honouring that as practitioners. Thank you. We have a couple more minutes. We have got one question from Tom, and I'll open it up to any of you if you'd like to respond. Where does the intergenerational sense of discovery and response in a new country affect development and expressions for children? Quite a big question. What's coming up for people?

Rhett McDonald (01:04:08):

You mentioned it again, Amanda, can you just read it out again?

Amanda Kemperman (01:04:10):

Yeah, yeah. It's many layers in this one. Where does the intergenerational sense of discovery and response in a new country affect the development and expression for children?

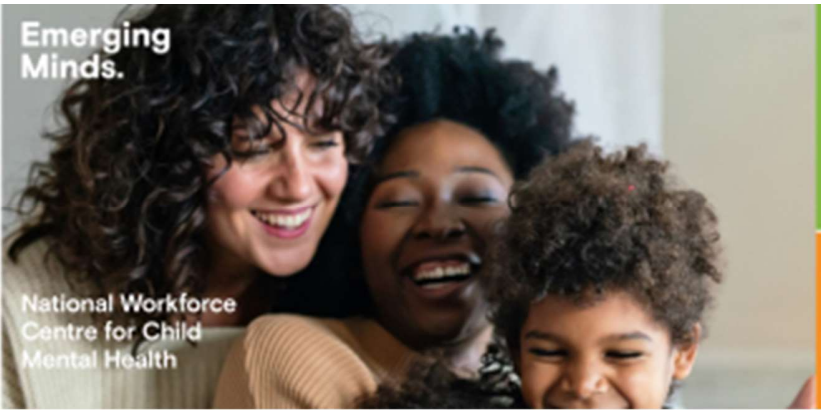
(01:04:33):

It'd be great to have Tom here so he could say it in his own words, but I'm going to do my best to translate what he's trying to get onto there. And I'm wondering if it's that sort of intergenerational impact of experiences and so children being parented by migrants or refugees and what this might mean for their development and how they experience their lives and so on. I'm sure you've each had experiences with children who have been parented by migrants or have had many experiences and navigating that. What are some of the things you've noticed?

Rhett McDonald (01:05:21):

I think what's coming into my mind is, and I have been fortunate enough to have some conversations with some families around what parts of culture are worth questioning.

(01:05:34):



And often that arises with the young children and it forces that question to be confronted by the family. And please don't assume that I'm talking about what parts of their culture is worth questioning. Also a part which parts of the host culture is worth questioning. And I actually find that that could be a really rigorous conversation and you've really got to inquire around why would we question it, how do we hold onto it? When do we hold onto it, when do we let it go? How do we meet in the middle? I think that all those exploratory questions around this are important, and I think we have to value, really value the insights that young people bring to that because they often are the ones that raise the question. And it can be really helpful to raise that question and talk about, that's what's coming into my mind about,

Summayyah Sadiq-Ojibara (01:06:36):

Yeah,

Amanda Kemperman (01:06:36):

Thanks Rhett.

Summayyah Sadiq-Ojibara (01:06:39):

This is such a big one and thank you for attempting to distil it, Amanda. I do believe that a lot of young people, as you've said, Rhett, they find themselves in a neither I reality. So in their homes, they don't really belong sometimes in the place that they're born into or they've migrated to when they were very little, they don't, not necessarily accepted. And people who definitely don't have any checks on their bias are quick to say, well, shouldn't you be thankful for all that you're giving? What would often happen is that a lot of young people are navigating to worlds sometimes more and they just don't feel like they can belong. So their sense of self-concept and identity is keyword and distorted. And when you ask them about their ancestry and ethnicity, they can tell you stories that have been told to them, but they may not necessarily feel that sense of connectedness to that.

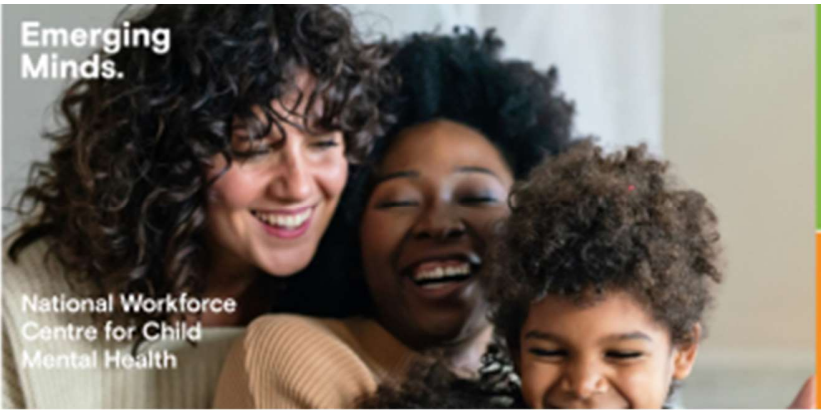
(01:07:56):

But then they are experiencing some of the trauma that have been passed on from their parents, who brought from their parents. So it's a lot of interwoven realities that can be very complex to understand. But I think importantly is to, I like the word discovery, but then it can at times negate what is already present if it is about discovering. So I would definitely invite exploration. Curiosity is key, and it is also about understanding what are we inviting them to, who is inviting whom, what is the reality that we are asking them to be part of it is very complex. I think I'm even getting twisted by speaking about it too.

Amanda Kemperman (01:08:45):

Lots of layers that we navigate as practitioners.

Julie Ngwabi (01:08:49):



I agree with both. And Summayyah I also think really is about that cultural tension that we spoke about before. Who are they? Who is their identity? Trying to preserve that intergenerational cultural identity and also trying to adapt to the mainstream culture in order to fit in, because we know that child wellbeing and development really is influenced by what happens in the places where they live, in the places where they learn, where they play or grow. So all these factors and variables really intersect and impact children's wellbeing and their sense of identity and who are they in the midst of all this. So yeah, it's quite complex.

Amanda Kemperman (01:09:43):

Yeah, thank you. And we've probably come towards the end. Wow, that's blown. Time flies when you're having fun. Hey, and I would like our audience to have one key takeaway message from each of you that they can take into their practise. Rhet, let me start with you. One thing you'd like to share for everybody listening.

Rhett McDonald (01:10:18):

I think what I, even for myself during this session today, I think there is so much to learn, so much to learn and resist the position of expert. That's it.

Amanda Kemperman (01:10:35):

Yeah. Thanks. Rhett and Summayyah,

Summayyah Sadiq-Ojibara (01:10:42):

I would say that in any spaces that we find ourselves in, that we go in with care, that we are curious and that we're courageous, that we must understand that at the end of the day, two people who may be in a space have some, there's a relational field between them and that we have the opportunity to explore what that looks like, and we don't have to be afraid of difference. We just want to be real with it, and we want to be truthful and treat ourselves respect in the process.

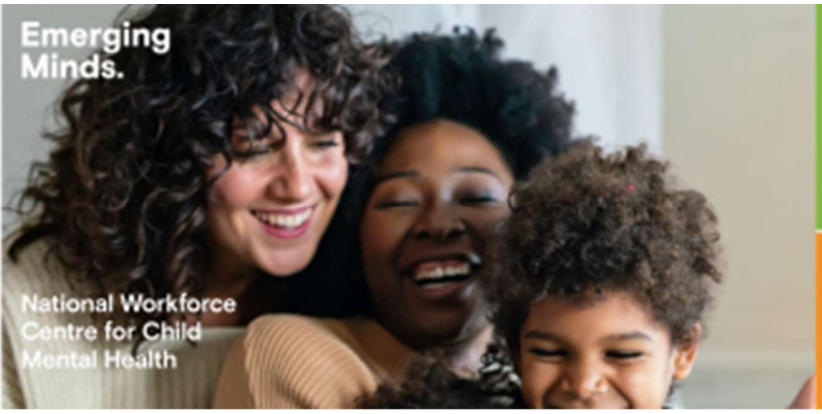
Amanda Kemperman (01:11:17):

Yeah, thanks Summayyah and Julie.

Julie Ngwabi (01:11:21):

I think for me it's also that aspect of the importance of coming together as equal partners and collaborators in this relationship, and this really includes paying attention to that power imbalance. I think it's really key as well. Thanks, Amanda.

Amanda Kemperman (01:11:44):



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Thanks Julie, Summayyah and Rhett, and thank you everyone at home and at work, listening and participating in tonight's webinar. What an important conversation, one of many that we've had tonight. After we've finished, we will give you the link to complete a quick survey. Please take some time to provide us with your feedback. It's all really helpful. You'll also receive a follow-up communication from MHPN with the recording of this webinar, and it'll also be able to be accessed on the Emerging Minds website. You can also search for more resources similar to this webinar tonight, using the resources tab on the emerging mines website. And you search cultural migration and refugees. And you can find the link in the chat. Keep an eye out for these upcoming MHPN webinars. No, I can't. Overcoming School Refusal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-Home Care and supporting the mental health of Neurodivergent person with co-occurring autism. And M-H-P-N has 350 networks across Australia. Some are in person and some are online. This is where practitioners come together and they discuss local issues that are important to each of them. You can visit the MHPN website to join or register your interest in starting a network in your area. This webinar tonight was a partnership between both Emerging Minds and MHPN. Please share your valuable feedback about the webinar by clicking on the banner above or scanning the QR code. Thank you to everyone for your participation this evening, and see you next time.