

Gowrie

INCLUSION AGENCY TASMANIA

Inclusion Agency Professional Learning

Lindsey Tighe professional learning session, "Asking Better Questions"

Well Minds Work Anxiety Training Sessions with Jessica Forward & Emma Richardson

Visual Supports Training with Emma Puttock

Celebration of Practice

We celebrate the work of Lady Gowrie John Paul II OSHC Service. The management and educator team have established the Service with an intentional and meaningful inclusive environment that emanates the true essence of Belonging for the children who attend.

*"Nurturing Inclusion,
Growing Together"*

Welcome to Lady Gowrie Tasmania's Inclusion Agency newsletter, empowering inclusive education and care services across the state.

Lady Gowrie Tasmania, are proud to be the state-wide provider of the Inclusion Agency Tasmania (IAT), funded by the Australian Government Department of Education.

Our mission is simple yet profound: to champion inclusive practices in Education and Care Services across Tasmania.

Lady Gowrie Tasmania Inclusion Agency has offices in all three regions of the state.

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Roxanne Ellis
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What does it take to make a difference?
Relationships.

Inside this edition of the Inclusion Agency Newsletter, you'll meet the Inclusion Agency's newest member, Inclusion Professional Consultant, Megan Simmons.

Inclusion Professionals, Catherine Burr and Danielle Lowe share their reflections of recent professional learning sessions.

Lady Gowrie John Paul II engages in conversation about building an OSHC service from the ground up with a strong focus on authentic inclusion for all children.

To compliment the exploration of the importance of building trusting relationships and responsive communication strategies, we also write about Trust Based Relational Intervention. This practice is foundational to exemplary inclusive care environments and supports meaningful interactions for every child.

So! A little drum roll please for this bumper Autumn Edition. We couldn't be more excited to share it with you!

Lady Gowrie Tasmania
acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional
Owners and Custodians of Australia and
pays our respect to the longest living cultures
and Elders both past and present.

We acknowledge and celebrate the resilience and
strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
and cultures today and acknowledge and respect their
deep connection and relationship with Country and
Community and commit to working together for a
united Australia that values the Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander heritage and provides
justice and equity for all.

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We welcome Megan to the Inclusion Agency Tasmania as our consultant, delivering specialised coaching and professional support across the state, alongside the Inclusion Professional team.

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We celebrate the work of Lady Gowrie Tasmania John Paul II OSHC Service, an intentional and meaningful inclusive environment that emanates the true essence of Belonging for the children who attend.

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Inclusion Agency Professional Learning

We highlight the positive impact and importance of remaining current on research into practice by sharing reflections of recent professional learning attended by some of our Inclusion Professionals. Including - Asking Better Questions facilitated by Lindsey Tighe, Visual Supports facilitated by Emma Puttock, and Well Minds Work facilitated by Emma Richardson & Jessica Forward.

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Trust Based Relational Intervention

Find out about this exemplary practice. TBRI is a perfect fit for early childhood education and care, as the heartbeat of TBRI is connection and attachment theory.....a foundation to all ECEC quality practice.

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Upcoming Events

Here we provide information on some community events highlighting inclusion and social awareness for supporting children across Tasmania.



Introducing Megan Simmons Inclusion Professional Consultant



Megan is a dedicated physiotherapist who has been supporting students in a transdisciplinary role within the education system for nearly 10 years. Her passion for helping children with diverse needs has led her to focus on consulting and upskilling education and care staff to create inclusive environments where every child can thrive.

Throughout her school support role back in Queensland, Megan has developed a deep understanding of the challenges faced by children with diverse needs and the importance of early intervention. Her extensive knowledge in children's development, has allowed her to work closely with teachers and other education staff to develop effective strategies for supporting physical disabilities, emotional regulation difficulties and other conditions that can impact a child's ability to learn and participate in school and education and care environments.

In addition to direct interventions, Megan is passionate about upskilling education and care staff to enhance their understanding of child development and disability. Through workshops and coaching support, she empowers educators with the knowledge and skills they need to create inclusive environments and foster the growth and development of all children.

Megan is committed to making a positive difference in the lives of children with diverse needs. Through her transdisciplinary work, she aims to create environments where every child feels valued, supported, and able to reach their full potential.

During her free time, Megan enjoys adventuring in her new home, Tasmania, with her partner Ben and dog Ollie.

Celebration Of Practice

Lady Gowrie Tasmania John Paul II OSHC

Upon walking into the John Paul II outside of school hours care (OSHC) space, a purpose-built hall and commercial kitchen, the immediate feeling was calm, warm, and welcoming.

There has been considerable work undertaken to establish the service that opened in the new building in July of 2023.

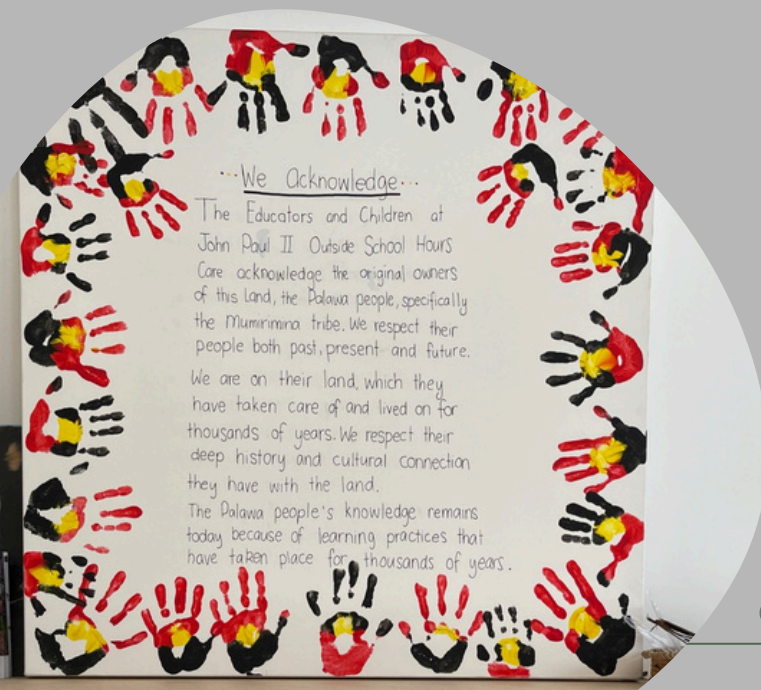
From the beginning, the service team had a clear vision of what was needed for the school's OSHC service to succeed;

- establishing trusting relationships with families and the children,
- building a sense of belonging,
- a child-centred and inclusive approach,
- consistency of access for all the families requiring out of school hours care for their children.

The educator team is experienced, knowledgeable, and supportive of all the children in their care and has well-established practices that were carefully considered to support inclusion and responsiveness to the needs of children from the opening of the service. After my visit to the service, educator, Kerem, shared further insight into the development of the service...

What do you love most about what you do?

It is a very rewarding job, and you learn so many special skills that help with so much of life. Every child is unique, and it's great to get to know all of them and see them thrive in a great OSHC environment.



"I love coming to after-school care and vacation care because my educators are so kind and all the other children who come are really nice too"

Theo, year 5

Celebration Of Practice

Lady Gowrie Tasmania John Paul II OSHC

At the beginning of your journey to open the Service, what were some of the key considerations for the environments?

Opening a service for the first time was especially challenging because we did not know the interests and needs of the children. The mindset was to source inclusive resources that we could use for multiple purposes. As a pull-in, pack-away service, we also tried to find seating solutions and furniture to soften the space and make it more engaging and comfortable. The furniture we purchased is functional but also adaptable, so we can easily change our environment as children's needs/interests change.

What have been some of the highlights you have experienced in building an inclusive service for children and families and ways you have fostered their collective input?

Seeing the development of children who were at first isolating and struggling to regulate; they are now getting involved, speaking and interacting with a variety of different children. We foster collective input from the children through our program books, where we talk to the children to find out what they would enjoy and make suggestions for what they can do (including meals at OSHC). This highly influences the ongoing program design.

What were some of the barriers you were aware of that you were wanting to address?

Two barriers that we faced throughout the first six months of operating were that, as we only had one large open space, it was very difficult for children to regulate as it is a loud, bright open space. We are hoping that the addition of a sensory tent will help. A significant barrier was that every child interacts with, communicates with, and responds to educators in different styles. It was a learning process to adapt and learn how each child responds and communicates. This just took time and required a genuine focus on building relationships (both with the children, their families and the school community)

How is your environment set up to provide spaces for children to regulate?

As mentioned, this has been quite a challenge throughout the opening of this service, as it is a loud, open area with not many spaces to separate and regulate. We have found that sensory toys and fidgets in their own area of the room help significantly during vacation care. Having access to a separate room that can be darker and is carpeted is an amazing resource. Within this environment our educators have built strong relationships to foster children being able to talk openly about their needs, which has been so beneficial with supporting each child. Ease of access to the outside to use it as a breakout space when necessary is also helpful.

What was the biggest success you noticed and were able to build upon in the early stages of opening the service?

Forming a strong community with all children, families, and the school. At first, many groups were hesitant and worried. Through forming strong connections and engaging with all stakeholders, communication improved including the provision of feedback.

Learning about planting by the seasons



Practicing the art of paper folding

Celebration Of Practice

Lady Gowrie Tasmania John Paul II OSHC

How has your Inclusion Professional helped in this journey?

The inclusion team and Inclusion Professional, Donna, have been out to help and support us, visiting to see how she can help us with strategies to increase engagement for all the children.

How do you find a balance between prioritising relationships and engagement with children and the other tasks of your day?

It is always about finding the right times to do jobs and the right days to spread the other tasks out for the afternoon, on different days, and for different educators. This is a great way to always prioritise staying engaged and developing our relationships with children. By making sure we are sharing the load of some of these tasks, we can ensure that different educators are always interacting, making sure we are all developing and building on established relationships with the children. Making sure all our educators are engaging with the children gives them confidence that they can come to anyone and talk to anyone about their needs and requests.

How do you support children to succeed in your daily program?

Our children very much thrive on structure and routine. We have found the most success with a very structured routine for the mornings and afternoons. It gives the children the knowledge to know what is going to happen when they come in, however the learning experiences are flexible. The learning program and menu are always displayed on our program wall, which we have made especially for the children.

How have you built a collaborative relationship with the school and local community?

The school has been so great to work with; it has really been a collaborative effort. We are constantly in communication with teachers, and they provide us with lots of support. Brendon Gill, the school principal, and our liaison person, has been nothing but brilliant. He is in constant daily communication with the team, checking in to see if we need anything and how we can work together. We would like to build more on our relationships outside of school. We have planned a fund-raiser with the Dog's home for this upcoming vacation care program, which we hope to build on and make a lasting relationship with them.

Do you use different methods of delivering instructions, looking at individual needs and differences, for example, visual cues or breaking down instructions?

This is vital for the children's success. Everyone is different and learns and absorbs information uniquely. Due to this, we must display and convey information in different ways. Some children prefer to see the program on the board we have access to; others prefer to just hear what we are doing at group time. When packing up or transitioning to something new, many of our children require prior warning and countdown, whether that be packing up in five, packing up in four, etc. Finding a way to communicate with each child is something we are always working on, and developing it is a constant learning exercise.

As a team, what was your collective understanding of inclusive environments in the beginning and now?

Our mindset has not changed; we opened with the thought process that everyone is welcome, and everyone should be supported.

Inclusion Agency Professional Learning

Lindsey Tighe – Asking Better Questions

Reflection written by, Danielle Lowe

Lindsey's coaching sessions are inspirational! She was very open at the beginning of her session, explaining that a career change and the development of her business were simply a strong desire to contribute to making the world a better place and to challenge herself in the next stage of her personal growth.

Her passion is using questions to empower people and enable them to fulfill their potential. Lindsey is a published author and delivers workshops and multiple resources to thousands of people throughout Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore.

This dynamic and thought-provoking session was a valuable opportunity to extend my skills. It ignited an awareness of the impact of "telling" people when others come for answers, advice, support, and solutions to problems. To be inclusive, I have learned that we must value the contributions, ideas, thought processes, and skills others possess rather than jumping to the rescue.

In the early stages of my career, my thinking was that supporting others with clear instructions, answers to questions, providing solutions to problems, and being a general fixer-upper were the best actions to support my team. Little did I know that I was possibly, an inhibitor to their growth, ego-driven by being helpful, and a suppressor to supporting others to develop problem-solving skills.

More deeply, I was not as inclusive as I would have liked to be. I was not as open as I would like to admit about supporting and accepting other people's perspectives.

All that said, we are all on a journey and Lindsey is the ultimate example of how we can change, grow, and want to bring out everyone we encounter's "amazingness".



The following strategies which underpin an approach to having Empowered Conversations recognise the complexities that can arise from the exchanges we encounter when we interact with others throughout our daily lives.

- Rather than telling, ask thought-provoking, 'better questions'.
- If the person asking for help is stuck, provide support and continue to ask further open questions to provoke curiosity and possibilities.
- Asking questions to support problem-solving builds trust and rapport, empathy, open mindedness, flexibility, patience, and a positive growth mindset.
- "I don't know" rarely means I don't know! Often people just need time and support to think in different ways.
- Actively listening is key for the questioner to allow the person asking for help to think and explore possible solutions. Active listening requires practice to eliminate thinking about associations and experiences of our own while in the listening process, interpreting the information through our lens of prejudices, assuming, providing our opinion, becoming distracted, fear of silence, and feeling the need to jump in and rescue.
- Understanding the difference between closed and open questions is the key to successfully provoking the person who is stuck. Open questions provide room for many possibilities as opposed to closed questions which usually provide one-word answers.

Inclusion Agency Professional Learning

Emma Puttock – Visual Supports Reflection written by, Danielle Lowe

Engaging in the visual support session proved to be an enriching and enjoyable experience, leaving a lasting impact plus extended capability in supporting educators and services. Through exemplifying the utilisation of visuals and coaching educators on their significance, learning through repetition is fostered.

During the session, several pivotal insights were brought to light:

Visuals extend far beyond pictures on cards; they permeate our everyday lives through the utilisation of real-life objects and items. Recognising this broader scope of visuals opens up a myriad of possibilities for incorporating them into education and care settings.

Visual aids have the remarkable ability to enhance predictability within learning environments. By providing visual cues, children are better able to anticipate and comprehend forthcoming information, thereby fostering a sense of security and understanding.

Crucially, visuals afford children time to process and internalise information at their own pace. This freedom to linger on visuals until comprehension is achieved is instrumental in supporting diverse learning styles and cognitive processes.

A profound revelation from the session was the role visuals play in augmenting children's language skills. While a child may possess a robust vocabulary and expressive language, their receptive language abilities may not be at the same stage.

Expressive Language – is the way we use words, sentences, signs and gestures to communicate our thoughts, feelings, ideas and needs with others.

Receptive Language – is the ability to comprehend and process information through words and language.

Visual aids serve as invaluable tools in bridging a gap, nurturing both receptive language comprehension and communication skills.



Inclusion Agency Professional Learning

Emma Richardson & Jessica Forward – Well Minds Work, Supporting Children with Anxiety, Reflection written by, Catherine Burr

In this recent session, a new understanding of how anxiety can influence children's behavior, and adults' as well, was unveiled. Delving into the intricacies of brain development sheds light on why children often exhibit seemingly irrational and exaggerated behaviors.

Essentially, what's occurring is that they're metaphorically "flipping their lids". This lid is the prefrontal cortex, the region of the brain responsible for judgment and self-control, which matures last, typically around mid-late 20s.

This insight enables us to comprehend that significant behavioural outbursts stem from normal brain development in children. While it's crucial to devise strategies that aid children in calming and coping with anxiety, it's equally important to acknowledge that a degree of anxiety is necessary for motivation and safety in all of us.

One of the most valuable takeaways from the session was that children can access psychological support at the University of Tasmania clinic. This resource comes at a significantly reduced cost, with self-referrals accepted.

This session served as a poignant reminder of the complex interplay between brain development and behavior in children, and the importance of accessible support systems in navigating childhood anxiety.

Families can get more information by emailing:
hello@wellmindswork.com.au



I found the session very informative and insightful and am grateful for the opportunity to join in.

Thank you!

Lisa, Beaconsfield Early Learning Service



**WELL
MINDS
WORK**



Understanding Trust-Based Relational Interventions (TBRI)

Trust-Based Relational Interventions (TBRI) is a powerful approach developed by Dr. Karyn Purvis and Dr. David Cross at the TCU Institute of Child Development. It's designed to help children facing behavioural challenges, especially those who have experienced trauma or neglect. Here's a breakdown of what TBRI entails and how it can make a difference in the lives of children.

What is TBRI?

TBRI is rooted in neuropsychological research and compassionate principles. It was originally designed as a family-based intervention aimed at children who have endured relationship-based traumas such as abuse, neglect, or multiple foster placements. However, over the past decade, Drs. Purvis and Cross have refined and tested TBRI strategies, demonstrating their effectiveness in creating nurturing environments for children who have experienced challenges in their lives. In fact, TBRI is a perfect fit for early childhood education and care sector, as the heartbeat of TBRI is connection and attachment theory.....the foundation to all ECEC quality practice.

The Three Principles of TBRI: Connecting, Empowering, Correcting

TBRI operates on three foundational principles:

1. **Connecting:** This involves building strong bonds between caregivers and children through playful engagement, warm eye contact, nurturing touch, and mindful interactions. Caregivers learn to regulate their own emotions and respond sensitively to the child's needs.
2. **Empowering:** TBRI empowers children internally by addressing their physiological needs, understanding their sensory processing challenges, and creating supportive environments. It emphasizes hydration, healthy snacks, deep breathing, and sensory experiences tailored to each child's needs.
3. **Correcting:** When addressing challenging behaviours, TBRI follows the IDEAL Response principles: Immediate, Direct, Efficient, Action-Based, and Leveled at the behaviour, not the child. It offers a hierarchy of responsive strategies, ranging from playful engagement to protective interventions, depending on the severity of the behaviour.

Feature Article

Levels of Response in TBRI

TBRI offers a framework for responding to challenging behaviours at different levels:

1. Playful Engagement (Level 1): Redirecting behaviours in a playful manner to strengthen the caregiver-child relationship and encourage positive communication.
2. Structured Engagement (Level 2): Pausing the situation to offer choices or compromises, guiding the child toward constructive behaviours and providing opportunities for "re-dos."
3. Calming Engagement (Level 3): Assisting children in regulating their emotions through co-regulation, creating a safe space for them to calm down, and collaborating on coping strategies.
4. Protective Engagement (Level 4): Reserved for situations involving violence or aggression, this level requires formal training and emphasizes safety while maintaining connection with the child.

Conclusion

Trust-Based Relational Interventions offer a compassionate and evidence-based approach to supporting children who have experienced trauma or neglect. By prioritizing connection, empowerment, and positive correction, TBRI equips caregivers with the tools they need to create healing environments and promote healthy development in vulnerable children.



Implementing TBRI in Daily Life

TBRI is not just a set of principles but a holistic approach that informs everyday interactions. Caregivers integrate TBRI strategies into daily routines, transitions, and decision-making processes. They offer choices, provide structure, and scaffold learning experiences to help children feel safe and in control.

Upcoming Events

13th - 19th May National Families Week



26th May National Sorry Day



27th May - 3rd June National Reconciliation Week

20th June - World Refugee Day



2nd - 9th July NAIDOC Week



31st July National Out-of-School Hours Care Educators Day

4th August National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day



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a sense of belonging,
everyone can
flourish together