



# PILLARS OF PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

WE  
LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS  
WE

Life Without Barriers (LWB)  
is committed to working  
with people to create positive  
life affirming change,  
championing opportunity  
for all.

The Pillars of Practice  
framework articulates  
‘why we do’, ‘what we do’,  
and ‘how we do it’.

# INTRODUCTION

## WHY IMPLEMENT A PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

The Pillars of Practice framework is designed to assist our staff to reflect on what guides their work and to consistently apply their knowledge and skills in Life Without Barriers' organisational context. Our practice and outcomes focus is critical to continuous improvement and delivering a quality service to each of our clients.

As a diverse and dynamic national organisation, implementing a shared practice framework consolidates our common approaches within and across all of our programs and our many teams. The framework supports transparency and accountability in relation to our core purpose, values and the outcomes we seek to achieve. We are making explicit our practice culture and leadership expectations.

Strategically we are weaving the values and practice framework into all aspects of our organisation so – in the end – everyone is focussed on good practice and improving outcomes for our clients. The Pillars of Practice will be supported by a range of practice culture and leadership activities and embedded through our service improvement planning and team and individual supervision.

# OUR VALUES

Life Without Barriers value statements strengthen and reflect the critical elements that have been demonstrated to underpin effective practice.

Our values need to continually be reinforced in our work to ensure that everyone who works for, and with our organisation knows exactly what our values are.



**WE BUILD  
RELATIONSHIPS**



**WE ARE  
IMAGINATIVE**



**WE ARE  
RESPECTFUL**



**WE ARE  
RESPONSIVE**



**WE ARE  
COURAGEOUS**



## OUR VALUES

Our values statements make explicit, 'why we do', 'what we do' to produce a quality service, that has good outcomes for our clients. [Please note that 'client' is used as a generic term throughout this document and is inclusive of all consumers, service users and participants across our programs.]

We support children and young people, individuals and families, who access our services to have a rewarding and fulfilling life. We believe our clients have the best chance of doing this when they are a part of the community and feel connected to those around them. This sense of community also helps them to establish meaningful relationships.

Our clients want to participate in life and to aspire to goals that offer them a future in the community. Our services and programs support and encourage them in doing this. This is a different concept to programs that remove people who need support from the wider community and provide services in relative isolation.

Our philosophy is that we can only be successful if we listen to the needs of those we support, their families and

their respective communities. This is why we are always reviewing the way we do things and looking for more innovative ways to be responsive to our clients and communities needs.

Clients are why we are here. We support, encourage and empower people and communities to allow each individual to realise their potential. We do this by finding hope in all circumstances, potential for mastery in every person and opportunity for engagement in each community. We empower individuals, families and organisations to learn and grow, by providing holistic and 'wrap-around' support. The purpose of our practice is to help people to overcome life problems by facilitating them to make positive changes in themselves, their relationships and to contribute to broader social and community changes.

Based on studies examining different types of therapies, researchers have suggested that there are four common factors which influence therapeutic effectiveness. The common factors and their relative impact weighting are:

- client characteristics and social support – 40%
- therapist client relationship – 30%

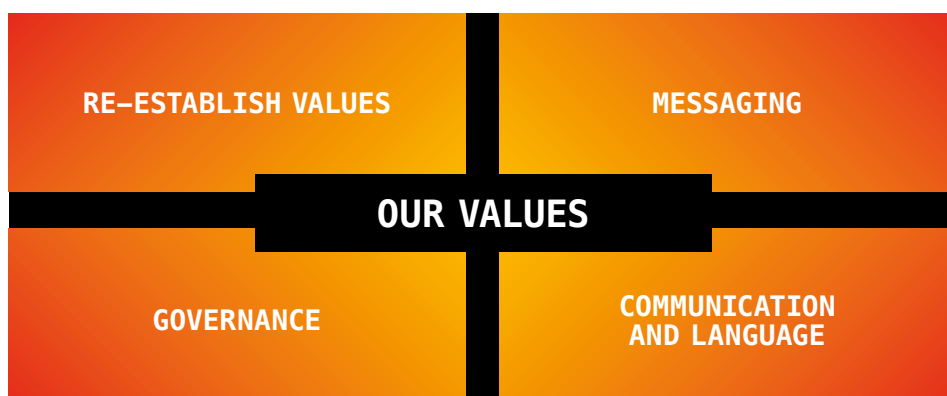
- client hopefulness – 15%
- therapeutic technique – 15% (Asay & Lambert, 1999 as cited in McKeown, 2000).

A key implication is that the quality of relationships between practitioners and clients are powerful determinants for creating change. In practice, this means that interventions to support people must be tailored to the client's definition of need, cultivate strong relationships, build on existing strengths and resilience, develop social support networks and restore hope that the client has the capacity to solve their own problems.

The intention of our work is to assist clients to become the master of their own circumstances; to live life to the full and choose what is right for them.

Reflective practice questions include:

- How do I communicate my commitment to the LWB values in what I say and how I behave?
- What messaging can I use with staff, clients and families and the community to clearly communicate the LWB values?
- How are the values demonstrated in the governance arrangements that I lead or participate in?



# THE PILLARS OF PRACTICE

Good practice is the observable skill of a worker purposely engaging, interacting and forming a relationship with someone within their world to achieve positive outcomes. 'What we do' and the 'way we do it' to be effective in our practice across all our programs are represented by our Pillars of Practice. The practice framework was developed by reviewing research findings and building on LWBs practice experience.

The Pillars of Practice framework is intended to guide and be a reference point for all practice decisions and organisational improvement plans.

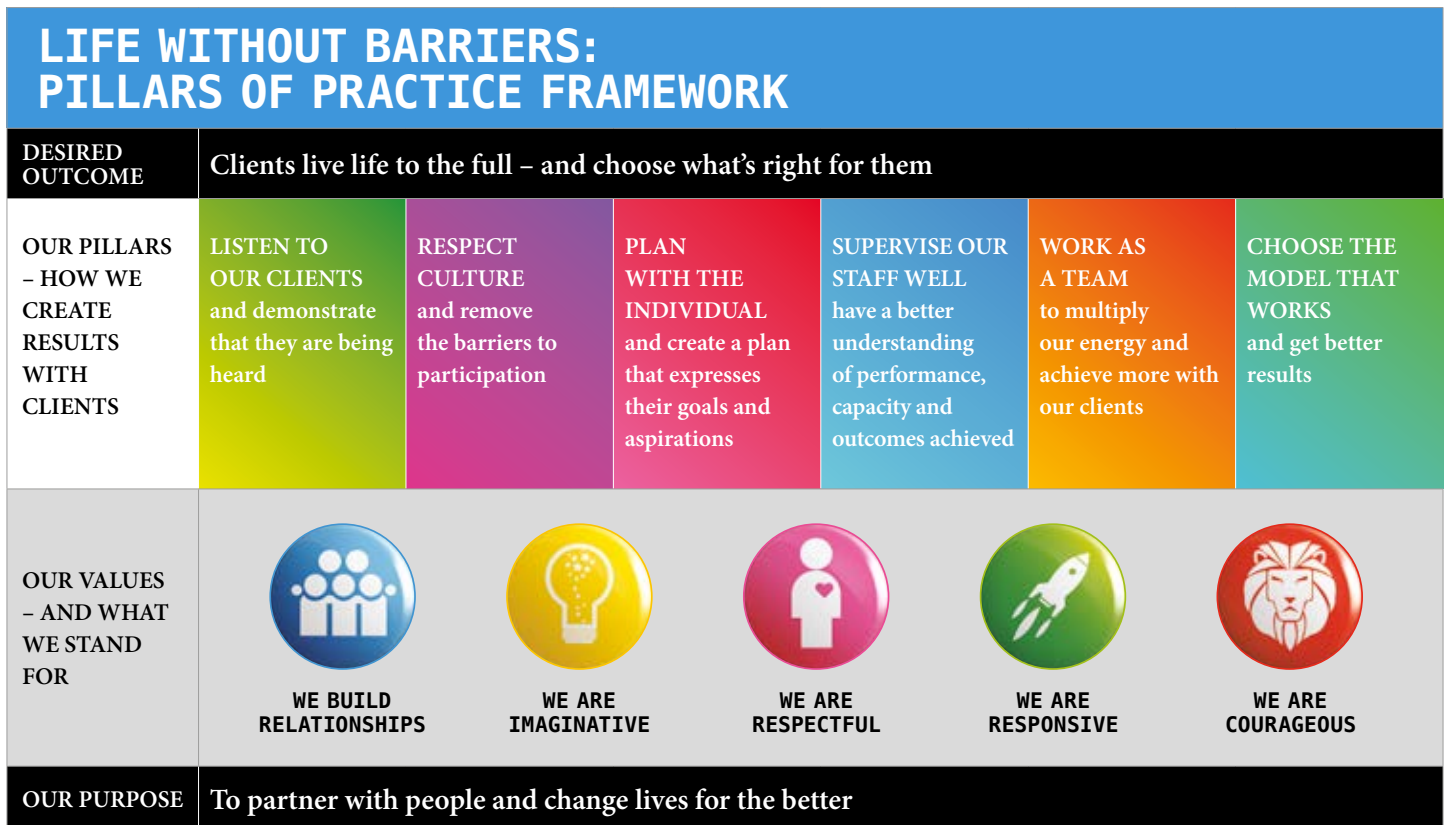
In our work there are many competing demands. Without a clear practice framework, we can respond to emerging issues in a reactive way and find it difficult to establish the focus and direction for our service response. No matter how experienced we are, to be effective in our roles we need to continue to reflect on and build our knowledge and practice skills.

Delivering services in highly regulated areas such as out-of-home care and disability, requires establishing an appropriate balance between professional discretion and standardised procedures to ensure the relevant legislation and regulatory requirements of each state we deliver services in, are met. Our policies, guidelines and practice resources play an important role in promoting accountable service delivery through establishing the required standards of practice and promoting consistency of practice between various teams.

They also provide support to staff, particularly inexperienced staff, when responding to the diverse and complex practice situations we encounter.

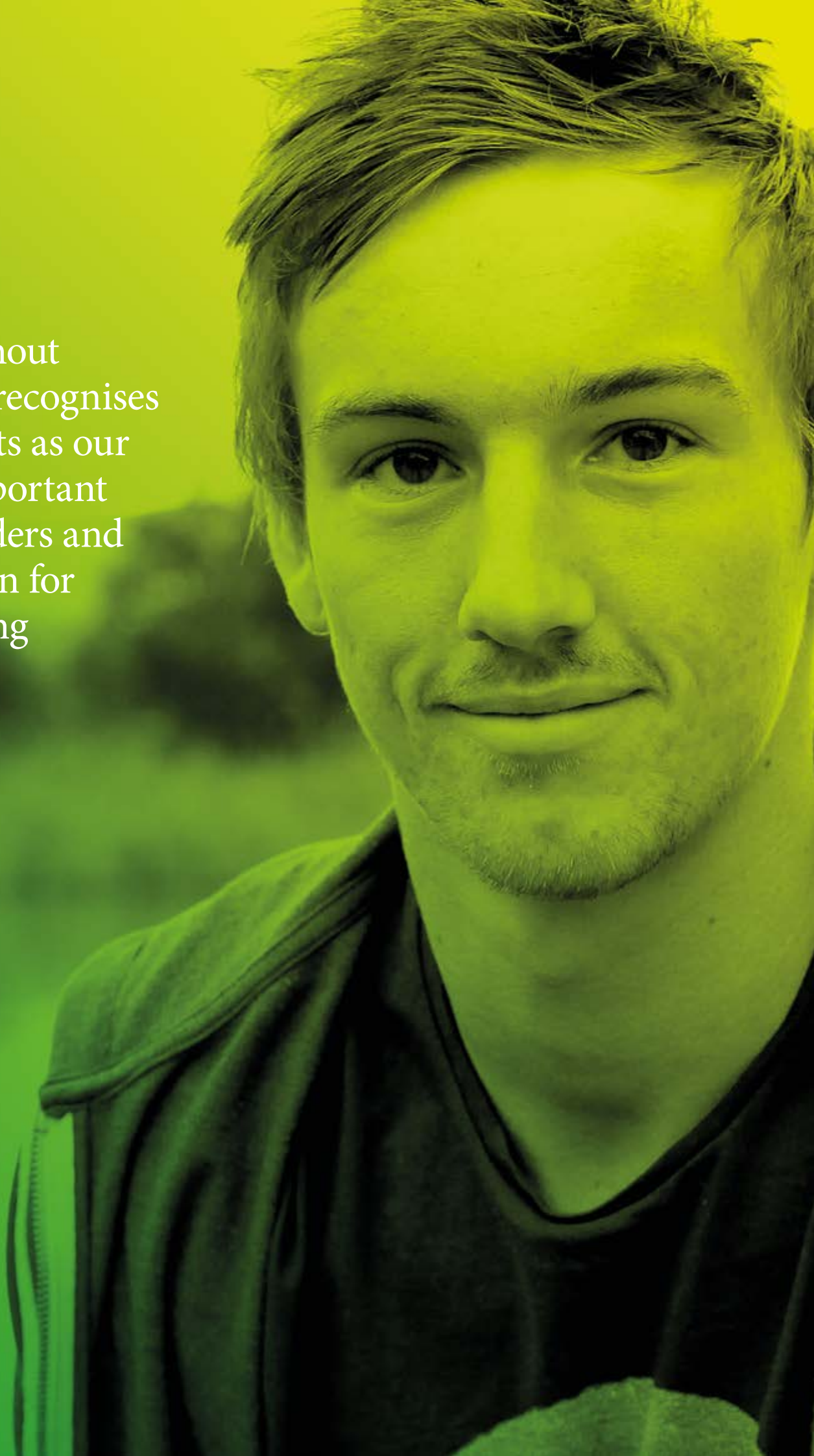
Our procedural documents, which are a component of our organisational knowledge, focus on 'what to do' but we critically need to draw on our interpersonal and cognitive reasoning skills to effectively implement the procedures in a way that delivers responsive client services. Good practice involves responding to the unique individual circumstances while understanding and meeting policy and regulatory requirements.

The Pillars of Practice are underpinned by the LWB values and represent the key activities that support the development of a culture that promotes good practice. The key activities; listening to our clients, planning with the individual and respecting culture are core to working successfully with people while supervision, team work and effective models of care are core to organising the work. A well run organisation is the best context for good practice.



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# LISTEN TO OUR CLIENTS

Listening to the voice of clients and their experiences is vital to our service and is essential to incorporate into everyday work as part of our culture and routine. It involves searching for effective ways to listen to individuals, groups and communities and using that information to alter, change or reinforce what we do and how we do it.

Our clients, including children and young people, as citizens, have a right to participate in decision-making processes about decisions that affect them (Beresford and Croft, 1995; Healy, 2005). The interests of different family members and other stakeholders in a situation may be different but those different voices need to be heard and respected. Research indicates that involvement in decision-making processes by those impacted by the decision can lead to better processes and better outcomes (Munro, 2002; Healy & Darlington, 2009). Clients have a right to participate in determining their service needs, rather than simply receiving services (Beresford and Croft, 1995; Healy, 2005). Listening

to the children, families, carers and individuals with whom we work on a daily basis is critical because as service recipients, they are the experts in how our service is experienced and can provide valuable insights in how we might strengthen the effectiveness of what we do.

Life Without Barriers recognises our clients as our most important stakeholders and the reason for everything we do.

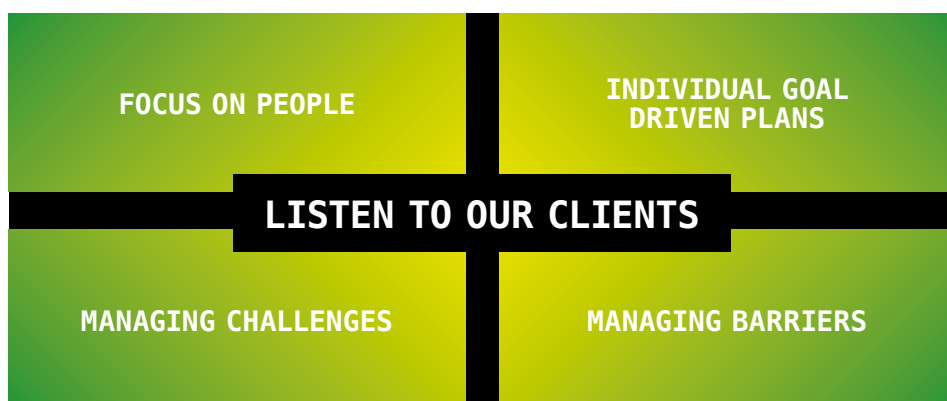
Our strategies to support client engagement and participation provide clear processes at both individual and systemic levels to ensure that clients across each of our service sectors are able to influence, design, contribute to, change and plan their services.

We embrace the responsibility that comes with working for and with disadvantaged and marginalised people. We advocate with policy makers, drive a research agenda and facilitate an innovative evidence based approach to delivering services. By listening to the valuable insights our clients provide, we will enable them to have a collective and prominent voice as we work with policy makers across government.

We need to focus on the people we support and not just on the services we provide. This means that the goals and aspirations of the people we support should be uppermost in all our minds when we plan, design and deliver services and supports. The key is to LISTEN TO THE CLIENT VOICE.

Reflective practice questions include:

- Have I engaged and listened to the client? Am I genuinely interested and curious?
- What does the client want? How do I know?
- Have I developed a trusting relationship?
- What can I do to remove the challenges and barriers to achieving the goals of the people we support at LWB?
- How is the person being supported to participate, make choices and decisions?



# RESPECT CULTURE

Culture is the way in which people identify themselves with their communities. It refers to the shared values, beliefs, views, and practices of a group of people which enable them to exist together. History, and the regions in which people live help to shape their culture, and the 'rules' or ways of a culture are generally passed on from one generation to the next through traditions.

Aspects of culture include, but are not restricted to, country of origin, race or ethnicity, language, behavioural norms and communication style.

Simply put, culture is the way we learn to see the world and make sense of our place within it.

Cultural sensitivity in practice is essentially a desire to understand another person's experience of being in the world and to shape the provision of service to understanding. Operating with cultural sensitivity allows services to remove barriers to participation, enable access and adapt working methods to achieve the intended outcomes.

Culturally sensitive practice values cultural differences, seeks to become culturally informed and to demonstrate this in action. This includes addressing potential barriers to relationship building and engagement and seeking the advice and assistance of people knowledgeable in relation to the culture and language spoken.

In our areas of service delivery, it is critical to acknowledge that the impact of past government policies and practices, particularly in relation to the removal of children, is strongly reflected in the disadvantage experienced by

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people today. As practitioners we need to be sensitive to this history, focus on building trust and rapport with Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander families and communities and seek to address the underlying causes of social disadvantage.

Reflective practice questions include:

- Have I expressed curiosity about the person's cultural background?
- Have I sought advice from a person knowledgeable in the culture and language spoken?
- What barriers might exist for working with a person from this cultural background?
- Do my actions show respect?
- Do I understand the impact of past practices and/or trauma?



# PLAN WITH THE INDIVIDUAL

If we listen to the client and actively try to understand their experiences then we lay a solid foundation for planning with the individual. In all program areas LWB recognises that each person is unique and our work with them is based on a plan that is an expression of their self-identified goals and aspirations.

## PERSON CENTRED PLANNING CAN BE DEFINED AS

*'a way of discovering what people want, the support they need and how they can get it. It is evidence based practice that assists people in leading an independent and inclusive life. Person centred planning is a set of tools for change at an individual, and an organisational level. It shifts the power from professionals to people who use services'*  
(Department of Health, 2001).

Placing the person at the centre of the planning involves listening deeply to them and their family and friends, learning over time what it is they want for their life now and in the future, and then acting on this. This practice approach is the basis for problem solving and negotiation to mobilise the necessary resources to pursue a person's aspirations. These resources may be obtained from someone's own network and other service providers. The key features of planning with the individual are:

- the person is at the centre
- family members and friends are full partners
- the plan reflects the person's capacities, what is important to the person and specifies the support they require to make a valued contribution to their community
- the plan builds a shared commitment to action that will uphold the person's rights
- the plan leads to continual listening, learning and action and helps the person to get what they want out of life.

Reflective practice questions include:

- Have I listened deeply?
- Does the plan reflect the person's capacities and what is important to them?
- How have I involved the family and built on informal supports?
- Is there a shared commitment to the planned actions?



# SUPERVISE OUR STAFF WELL

Supervision is the cornerstone of good practice. It is the way helping professionals check in with staff and carers to clarify client progress, employee/carer wellbeing and keep on track with achievement of client goals. Supervision is one of the main mechanisms through which the organisation can monitor the implementation of our values, evaluate staff/carer competency and capacity.

Supervision assists workers to reflect on their practice and draw out key learnings which builds their practice knowledge and skills. These are the insights and working knowledge that we gain on the job. This may be case specific knowledge gained over time working with a particular person. Workers may also gain insights from working with a number of clients in similar circumstances. Our colleagues, within and outside LWB, are other important sources of practice knowledge, which is a key benefit of working collaboratively.

It is through our practice that we demonstrate our values and our knowledge. Our skills translate our Pillars of Practice into effective services that can make a positive difference to our clients.

Supervision is an important tool for supporting us to integrate all of the elements of the framework into a sound and coherent approach to practice. Supervision involves key functions including: ensuring accountability through aspects such as reviewing casework and compliance with policies and procedures; an educative function which involves reflecting on practice and identifying ongoing training or learning needs and professional development; and a restorative or supportive function which assists a worker to manage the impact of workload, develop coping skills and to develop positive team relationships.



## LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS: PILLARS OF PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

OUR GOAL	Clients live life to the full – and choose what’s right for them					
OUR BEHAVIOURS THAT MAKE OUR PILLARS REAL FOR CLIENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be open and invite feedback</li><li>• Listen carefully and check that you have understood</li><li>• Find out what clients think and feel about what we are doing</li><li>• Listen to words, observe behaviour</li><li>• Tell clients what we have changed based on their input</li><li>• Use warm and friendly language and show kindness</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be respectful to all people at all times</li><li>• Seek opportunities to genuinely engage with and listen to people with lived experience</li><li>• Be authentic in all interactions</li><li>• Be prepared to change how we do things to remove any barriers to involvement</li><li>• Do not make assumptions about how things should be done</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acknowledge that the client is expert in their own life</li><li>• Speak up for our client’s interests without fear</li><li>• Strive to help a client achieve goals</li><li>• Think ‘nothing is too hard, impossible or too bizarre’</li><li>• Make your planning relevant</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inspire, engage and support team members</li><li>• Foster the sense that they can change people’s lives</li><li>• Do the right thing not the easy thing</li><li>• Be open to new ideas and be prepared to fail and learn</li><li>• Keep accurate records of what we do and share information regularly</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acknowledge and congratulate others on doing well</li><li>• Invite team members to provide feedback on how we do things</li><li>• Develop shared objectives</li><li>• Communicate regularly and openly</li><li>• Create forums where staff can offer news ideas</li><li>• Reward new ideas that make a real difference</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide options and models that are proven to work</li><li>• Try a different model if the results aren’t good enough</li><li>• Be open to change when you see a better way to do things</li><li>• Evaluate what you are doing regularly</li><li>• Look to peers to see what they are doing that’s new</li></ul>
OUR PILLARS – HOW WE CREATE RESULTS WITH CLIENTS	LISTEN TO OUR CLIENTS and demonstrate that they are being heard	RESPECT CULTURE and remove the barriers to participation	PLAN WITH THE INDIVIDUAL and create a plan that expresses their goals and aspirations	SUPERVISE OUR STAFF WELL have a better understanding of performance, capacity and outcomes achieved	WORK AS A TEAM to multiply our energy and achieve more with our clients	CHOOSE THE MODEL THAT WORKS and get better results
OUR VALUES – AND WHAT WE STAND FOR	 WE BUILD RELATIONSHIPS	 WE ARE IMAGINATIVE	 WE ARE RESPECTFUL	 WE ARE RESPONSIVE	 WE ARE COURAGEOUS	
FOUNDATION POLICIES	Organisational structure, governance, capability framework, risk management, quality systems and human resources.					
OUR PURPOSE	To partner with people and change lives for the better					

Supervision can occur in a number of ways:

- Formal scheduled supervision is planned and occurs on a one-to-one basis with a supervisor and a supervisee.
- Unscheduled supervision is unplanned and occurs when the supervisee consults with the supervisor as questions arise, plans change or urgent decisions need to be made.
- Direct supervision is where the supervisor observes and/or participates in direct service activities with the supervisee and gives feedback about the activity.

- Group supervision is a group work process which provides opportunities for learning and the development of quality practice. Group supervision is most productive when it is planned and structured.

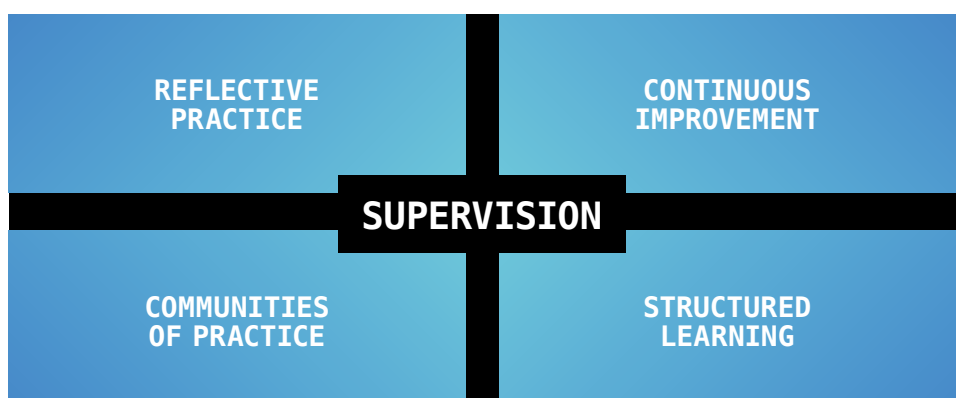
These different types of supervision all provide opportunity to reflect on our specific role and how we might apply our practice framework to best contribute to improved outcomes. They can help us to apply our values, develop our knowledge, explore and challenge our values and build our skills.

Our work environment is in a continual state of change with multiple and complex demands being made on all

management and staff at all levels. New quality frameworks, changes in the funding arrangements with government and requirements to be flexible and responsive to a broader more diverse client base mean that staff knowledge, skills and experiences need to be continually assessed and updated. The challenge for each staff member at LWB is to learn from our experiences and adjust to changing circumstances to ensure that our services assist people to reach their goals and improve their outcomes.

Reflective practice questions include:

- Are there regular opportunities for reflective practice in team meetings, through formal supervision, with peers, with professional groups?
- Is there time for group discussion and learning with peers and managers to explore creative innovative solutions, best practice, new ideas?
- Are there clear structured learning pathways in place for staff that include induction, front line, professional, management and senior leadership groups?
- Are we using our assessment, planning and review processes and our feedback mechanisms to drive continuous improvement? Do we collect data to evaluate our practice and make change when needed?



# WORK AS A TEAM

Team work is the way that work with people should be organised. This enables the individual effort to be multiplied and achieve more for clients as a group than an individual is able to. High performing teams harness the contributions of all members to create work environments where creative solutions to meet client needs are developed and client's needs are met even when individual team members are absent.

For consistent performance across the organisation the aim is to develop a collective or team approach to practice leadership with a balanced focus on both sound management and the client interaction. A team approach is qualitatively different from the pursuit of individual success as it recognises the need for cooperation between people to achieve goals bigger than what can be achieved individually. In large organisations, having a networked and distributed approach is the most efficient way to undertake complex tasks. Practice leadership in LWB will effectively be managed with a strong focus on teamwork and cooperative behaviours.

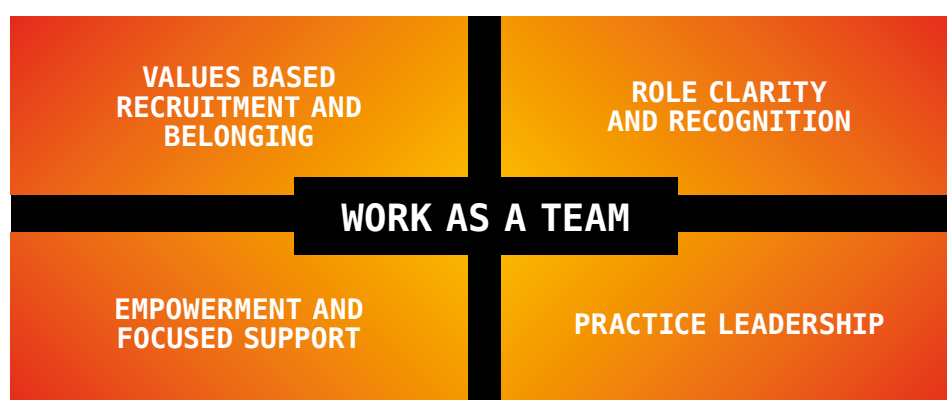
LWB is also committed to collaborative practice and working in partnership with other agencies, recognising that to be responsive services are often required by a network of government, non-government and other community supports. The complex needs of some individuals or families may require diverse expertise, skills and knowledge from a number of personnel across a range of agencies. Collaboration in this context means valuing other perspectives, having a willingness to learn from the practice knowledge of others, respecting professional differences and prioritising the time to plan together. This is also about

finding a common focus around the best interests of the individual and identifying how each agency can contribute.

Staff thrive on making a difference and being recognised for achievements. Staff generally uphold the best interests of the people they support and one another in the work they do. Staff will work together to achieve outcomes that they can be proud of. This means that managers can 'let go' and trust staff to do their jobs. Managers can provide coaching and mentoring, good quality supervision using person centred tools, maintain connected positive dialogue and set clear directions.

Reflective practice questions include:

- How do recruitment processes elicit whether the values of applicants align with LWB values?
- Are staff roles clear and do they receive the training and support they need?
- Do we have processes in place which build relationships and support and value team processes?
- Do we support staff within the team who may be struggling?
- Do we have an organisational culture where staff are valued as team members and feel part of the organisation?
- Do teams have evidence-based tools to support best practice?
- Does our team work cultivate practice leadership, based on demonstrated expertise not tied to positions?



# CHOOSE THE MODEL THAT WORKS

LWB provides services across different program areas, which involves implementing a range of models, based on the characteristics and needs of client groups. The Pillars of Practice framework consolidates the common elements and shared approaches, across all program areas.

The selection of models and practice approaches will be made based on the evidence of their effectiveness and the fit for proposed use within the business. In certain circumstances LWB has currently endorsed the use of person centred planning (PCP), therapeutic crisis intervention (TCI), therapeutic residential care (TRC), and multi systemic training (MST). Other evidence-informed approaches in use organisation wide include the use of high risk medical and clinical registers and associated panels.

We are committed to developing our practice through research and continuous improvement strategies. This commitment is supported by investing in people and infrastructure to provide a solid foundation for our programs and activities. LWB is transparent in sharing experience and learnings, to contribute to the development of the sector. Our unique

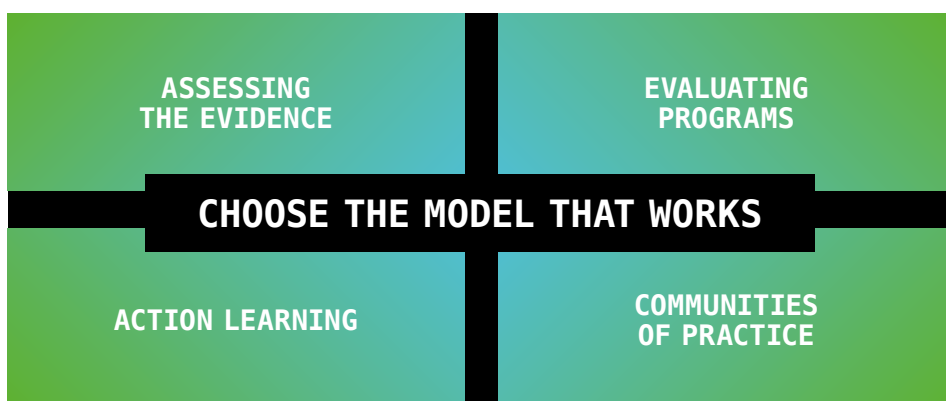
approach has enabled us to provide services that transcend traditional sector boundaries and reach more children, young people, individuals, families and communities in need.

We recognise the importance of being evidence-based as research can provide important guidance relevant to our practice including what model of care or what interventions might be expected to be most effective in response to the individual's circumstances. It is important to take the time to consider the research base for our practice and allow it to inform our choice of model and our service responses. LWB promotes staff being involved in Communities of Practice to examine implications of research for their work and through action learning processes. The purpose of the Communities of Practice model is to promote reflective practice and to apply research findings as part of this process.

Communities of Practice can also support our knowledge and use of established and emerging theories to seek to understand or make sense of what we experience or observe. Theories can assist practitioners to make predictions, develop hypotheses, explain what is being observed and identify new ways to intervene in a complex situation (Tilbury et al. 2007). There are many theories that have relevance and applicability to our practice including understanding trauma and attachment, child development, life course theory, ecological and systems theory, social oppression theory. The various theories have their strengths and limitations in how they might be usefully applied and we need to critically consider how different theories may best inform our particular practice circumstance.

Reflective practice questions include:

- Do we regularly draw on key messages from research to inform our practice?
- Are the approaches we use evidence-based?
- Are we paying attention to program integrity?
- How do we evaluate our practice approaches and our programs?
- Do we support teams and individuals to take part in action learning processes?
- Are there opportunities to partner with universities and centres of excellence to undertake research?





# THE WAY FORWARD — EMBEDDING THE PILLARS OF PRACTICE

Strategically the Pillars of Practice framework needs to be embedded into all aspects of our organisation so that our activities are focussed on supporting good practice and improving outcomes for our clients. The Pillars of Practice will be implemented through a range of practice culture and leadership activities and embedded through service improvement planning and team and individual supervision.

Key enablers, which are conditions or activities that are required to underpin good practice, will also need to be identified and strengthened where required. Generally, the absence or poor organisational and technical factors will have negative impacts on practice in some way. For example, lack of data systems means there is a lack of information to evaluate effectiveness of different practice. Enablers include our activities to recruit, select and retain skilled staff, our communication and information technology systems and our data systems.

Our leaders at every level throughout the organisation have a key role in embedding the Pillars of Practice into our day to day activities, whether it is direct service delivery, human resources, management, finance or administration. A leader can be anyone who helps define and change the ways things are done.

The next key steps at an organisational level will be to establish agreed processes to assess practice and service maturity and to develop service improvement plans targeted to the assessed level. Broadly the levels of implementing the Pillars of Practice framework may be conceptualised as:

Level 1 We concentrate on the basics and use LWB step by step tools

Level 2 We consolidate and tailor advice

Level 3 We retain capacity, use LWB guidance, try new things and push on

Level 4 We innovate through evidence-based and peer based learning.

To be effective both the leadership approach and the service improvement plans need to be targeted to the performance level or practice maturity for different groups of staff. This is a recognition that growth in performance occurs at the boundary of current performance. The first step in this process is to identify and agree the level of practice and service maturity in an area or program and then develop service improvement activities that aim at lifting the performance to the next level.

When the processes for assessing the level of practice and service maturity have been agreed, the development of service improvement plans will allow an adoption of integrated actions guided by the Pillars of Practice framework. In order for this to be effective, the plan of integrated actions should include:

- many change agents not just the usual few
- a 'want to' and not 'a have' to mind set
- head and heart not just head – so messaging is important
- more leadership than management – encouragement, authorizing and interest.

Service improvement planning will need to be a continuous activity not an activity that occurs only when there is free time in a service or in reaction to issues.

In conclusion, the development and adoption of the Pillars of Practice framework symbolises a key developmental point for LWB in pursuing its mission to provide quality services to children, young people, families and individuals to achieve the best possible outcomes. The Pillars of Practice also reflect LWB's commitment to demanding the highest level of accountability of itself to provide the maximum return on investment for its funders and stakeholders.

## LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS: PILLARS OF PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

PRACTICE LEADERSHIP	Clients live life to the full – and choose what’s right for them					
THE FOUR LEVELS OF IMPLEMENTING OUR PILLARS OF PRACTICE TO ACHIEVE LEADERSHIP	LEVEL 4: We innovate through evidence – based and peer based learning					
	LEVEL 3: We retain capacity, use LWB guidance, try new things and push on					
	LEVEL 2: We consolidate and tailor advice					
	LEVEL 1: We concentrate on the basics and use LWB step by step tools					
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OUR PURPOSE	To partner with people and change lives for the better					

“Life Without Barriers, although a relatively young organisation is committed to continuous improvement, to changing with the times and learning from our past to shape our future direction... championing opportunity for all.”

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