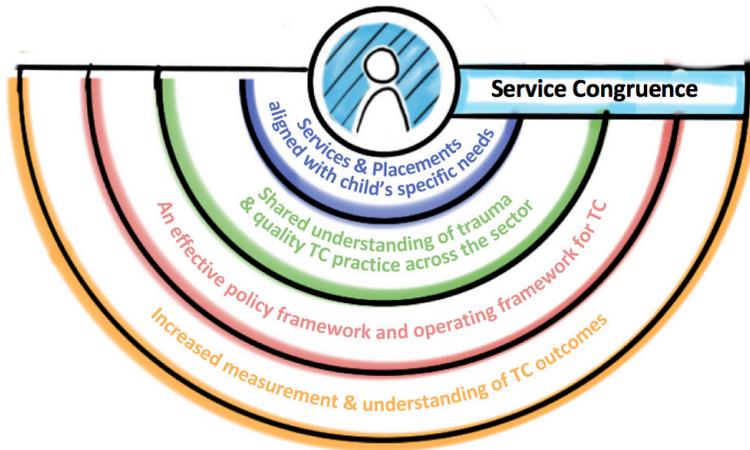


NSW Framework for Therapeutic Out-of-Home Care

A sustainable NSW Framework for Therapeutic Out-Of-Home Care (OOHC) that guides service provision and works towards improving outcomes for children and young people in statutory care.



Children and young people in OOHC have often experienced trauma, abuse, neglect or are faced with severe adversity before being placed into care.

Therapeutic Care is a beneficial Framework that addresses the needs of children and young people in OOHC and has the potential to improve their long-term outcomes.

A DEFINITION OF THERAPEUTIC CARE

Therapeutic Care for a child or young person in statutory out of home care is a holistic, individualised, team-based approach to the complex impacts of trauma, abuse, neglect, separation from families and significant others; and other forms of severe adversity.

This is achieved through the provision of a care environment that is evidence driven, culturally responsive and provides positive, safe and healing relationships and experiences to address the complexities of trauma, adversity, attachment and developmental needs.



Culturally sensitive Therapeutic Care system

It is important to acknowledge the pain and suffering separating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people from their families and communities has caused, especially those from the Stolen Generations and to their families and descendants. For this reason, preservation or restoration to family, kin or community is always the preferred outcome for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people if it can be safely achieved.

In taking a holistic approach to Therapeutic Care, we must consider the cultural context of children and young people. A culturally sensitive perspective affects how we understand underlying issues such as attachment, and recognises that cultural connection is critical to identity and wellbeing.

When Aboriginal people and kids are heard then together we can find stronger ways that meet kid's needs in culturally safe ways... Involving Aboriginal people and Aboriginal ways means we can find real lasting solutions that ease the trauma and loss for our kids and builds resilience for the future.

– Aunty Sue Blacklock (Winangay Chair), Member of the Order of Australia (AM); ACCP Ambassador for Children.

NSW Framework for Therapeutic OOHC Core principles

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FOCUSED

1. Children and young people will be active participants in the development of their care and case plans (where possible). These plans should be based on in-depth assessments that are trauma-informed and responds to their complex needs.
2. Therapeutic Care programs need to be planned and based on appropriate assessments of the child or young person, taking into account their own views and preferences.
3. In residential care, the mix of young people in a service maximises the opportunity to address shared client needs.
4. Children and young people should be encouraged to engage with their family and/or significant others, and to maintain social, community, and cultural connections. This is a particular priority for Aboriginal and Torres Strait children.
5. Therapeutic Care should address aspects of the child or young person's life including community, education, recreation and health.

ENVIRONMENT

6. The physical environment provided to children and young people in OOHC must be safe, nurturing, and predictable to enable effective reparative care.
7. Care teams should aim to create a 'home-like' care environment, which creates positive, healing relationships and experiences.

SYSTEM

8. A shared understanding of Therapeutic Care helps organisations and their external stakeholders to act congruently and with a shared purpose.
9. Congruent action should also be taken across agencies and government bodies such as child protection, health and education – to provide children and young people with an integrated response to their needs.
10. A good system requires robust central-level and district-level governance. The roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, including government, should be clearly articulated and understood to enable agencies to fulfil program requirements.
11. Outcomes for children and young people need to be measured and evaluated.

ORGANISATIONS

12. Organisations should have a clearly articulated statement that outlines the values and culture behind their Therapeutic Care program, informed by relevant trauma and attachment theories; and clearly defines their program logic/ theory of change. This statement should be understood and agreed to throughout the organisation.
13. All care team members should have relevant experience and qualifications, or be working towards those relevant qualifications. They should also receive therapeutic training that addresses the rationale and theoretical underpinnings of practice.
14. Therapeutic Foster Carers should be trained, supported and adequately assessed to ensure their capacity for providing a consistent, healing response to children and young people.
15. Therapeutic Specialists will support staff and carers in providing a safe and healing care environment for children and young people.
16. For residential care, appropriate staff-to-child ratios coupled with consistent rostering of staff should be used to create a stable environment for children and young people.