The effect of social & geographical isolation & remoteness on the ability of women to disclose, report, seek help & receive appropriate interventions

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Introduction

• Introduce the 5 sites.
• Overview of research project
• Emerging themes from South Australian sites.
• Emerging themes from Western Australia, Derby.
• Where to from here?
MOUNT GAMBIER

5 WOMEN INTERVIEWED
1 FOCUS GROUP

450 KM SOUTH EAST OF ADELAIDE & 17 KM FROM VICTORIAN BORDER

POPULATION 27,000
UNEMPLOYMENT 7%

MEDIAN WEEKLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME $899
MURRAY BRIDGE

5 WOMEN INTERVIEWED
1 FOCUS GROUP

76 KM SOUTH EAST OF ADELAIDE

POPULATION 19,743

UNEMPLOYMENT 7.3%

MEDIAN WEEKLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME $837
RIVERLAND

5 WOMEN INTERVIEWED
1 FOCUS GROUP

247 KM NORTH EAST OF ADELAIDE

POPULATION ~30,000

UNEMPLOYMENT 5 - 8%

MEDIAN WEEKLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME $830
WHYALLA

3 WOMEN INTERVIEWED
1 FOCUS GROUP

395 KM NORTH WEST OF ADELAIDE

POPULATION 22,108
UNEMPLOYMENT 8%

MEDIAN WEEKLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME $932
Derby

5 women interviewed
1 focus group
2,500 km from Perth
Population of 8,400 with around half Aboriginal
Unemployment around 5%
Median weekly household income $1,210
The Research Project

**How does social and geographic isolation impact on women’s decisions to disclose and seek help for domestic and family violence?**

**How does social and geographic isolation shape women’s coping abilities when experiencing domestic violence?**

Qualitative case study design & collaborative community consultation

Women interviews, focus groups, H2H data
Data Analysis

Analysis of all case studies to create a broader set of policy recommendations for service delivery in rural and remote regions.

5 case studies – delivering site specific analysis

Mount Gambier, Murray Bridge, Riverland, Whyalla, Derby

Data
Context
Interviews with women
Focus groups
Major Themes – South Australia

- Crisis
- Workforce
- Geography
Crisis (SA)

“We do crisis management predominantly, it has an impact on certain systems, we don’t have the people on the ground to deal with the tsunami.”

“Counselling appointments are few and far between because we are dealing with crisis all the time. I have to cancel counsellor appointments more often than not because there is always more pressing need.”

“If there is even a sniff of DV all the services just refer to us straightaway but we can only deal with high risk.”
Workforce (SA)

“What works between services is sustainable relationships enhanced by a lot of us being on DV actions groups and meeting regularly.”

“My world is getting smaller everyday. For example, if I go out to a hotel and there is our client who has reconciled with their partner and they are sitting a few tables away – he starts staring at me. I have had threats and have asked police to patrol my house.”

“My case managers have to be Jill of all trades.”
“The diversity of women and families your actually trying to engage with requires different strategies and another level of complexity which I think is often invisible.”

“You cross your fingers that you aren’t going to too many remote referrals in the week. I feel powerless as there is nothing I can do for those women. There are no services I can put in place for them – my worry is intensified, amplified – the isolation makes everything louder, brighter.”

“As a manager I worry constantly about not having the capacity to have two workers go out for home visits. We try and problem solve for the women to come here. We ask what is the closest place we can meet them so we aren’t going into something directly we don’t know? And what about mobile phone coverage?”
Major Themes – Western Australia – Derby

• Crisis
• Workforce
• Geography
Crisis (Derby)

“For the man to realise that they actually need to change the way they do things… counselling support and some sort of service delivered you’ll just have these very angry men out there.”

“This is like this cycle … it’s like the women who come into our service, they're self-referred most of them, but we also have two [other families]… she can’t keep her baby in one room with four or five kids … “

“We used to go to Darwin but the Territory won’t accept anyone from interstate …. We sent one lady to Darwin and they said you’re no longer in a domestic violence situation you’re in a safe area so had to bring them out and find a hostel where she could go into … it’s getting harder”

“A lot of the families that are coming in for financial assistance are actually private rental and neighbours complaining they’ve now been evicted and there’s a lot of DV the drug rate in DV … service that comes up every fortnight to prevent families from being evicted through the courts because there’s just that same cycle around the DV side of it, … children and you get families that have never rented privately before and they’ve got private rental and kids have come … before you know it they've got three strikes and they’re out … it’s also prevention of them actually being on the list for housing, public housing and of course they’re struggling as it is with private rental.”
Workforce (Derby)

“Break down the barriers between the organisations for the purpose of making the person safe whether it’s a woman or kids. It’s communication … one referral to fit everybody so you’re not breaching confidentiality or privacy and you’re protecting the victim.”

“There seems to be indigenous staff who stay, … and there seems to be a high level of non indigenous staff who move, … we really need to support local indigenous people, because it’s not a field that a lot of people go into … they have the heart of the community and want to stay on.”

“If we’re having a shitty day or whatever, it would be nice to be able to have someone outside, [who] can provide a counselling service for when you’re feeling unmotivated. It can be so mentally draining that you become unmotivated at work … better support for workers in their space.”
Geography (Derby)

“We know a lot of people in town and we’re all related or connected in some way so if you’ve got a family that walks in the door who’s a victim of domestic violence and you’re the only worker there getting that service to that person or that family is extremely hard. Being on top of personal boundaries as well to do the work that she needs is one of the biggest things I find.”

“The positive side of things is that they know you and you’re a familiar face so they feel they can be more relaxed and comfortable and I guess you get more out and that way you can think about how to support them and how to refer them better.”
Conclusion

Plan for the sustainability and investment in the specialist nature of domestic violence work.

Acknowledge the gendered nature of this work…

How long can we continue to rely on the “good will of good women”? 