

## Barnardos and MyStory

Barnardos Australia believes that all children deserve to know their history.

Sadly, when children move between foster care placements or change case workers, their history is at risk of being lost in the process. Barnardos believes we can do better.

The Practice Development Centre (PDC) is a welfare service initiative of Barnardos Australia established to improve the welfare and outcomes for all vulnerable children, young people and their families. We do this through supporting case workers with guided practice case management systems.

Now, the next chapter in Barnardos Australia's ongoing investment in the future of Australian children, young people and families is available. From August 2014, MyStory is ready for use within the sector.

### What is MyStory?

MyStory is a guided practice tool for practitioners in out of home care.

It has been designed by practitioners for practitioners, with optimum outcomes for vulnerable children & young people at the forefront of development. MyStory is a person-centred guided practice case management solution that ensures the child's, young person's voice is at the centre of all decision making.

It has been built on the same practice principles of our existing case management system LACES; we have taken all the best elements of LACES and enhanced them to bring the sector next generation technology in child and family case management.

MyStory has been specifically designed to improve outcomes and experiences for children and young people in care by taking a strengths based approach when exploring key dimensions including health, identity and education

MyStory streamlines workflow. It allows case workers to spend more time helping children and families, and less time on administration.

#### What is Guided Practice?

Guided practice is a way of establishing a common framework and language about how practitioners work. It establishes clear standards and work practice expectations.

Barnardos Australia was instrumental in introducing the concept of guided practice to Australia.

#### Why is guided practice important?

Guided practice is critical in ensuring all children and young people receive the same high-standard of care. It means that no detail is forgotten and no child/young person falls through the cracks.

Guided Practice is fundamental in the philosophy and design of all Barnardos case management tools as a means to embed education into the 'doing' of casework, to create consistency and to achieve best practice across the sector.



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### What does MyStory mean for children in care?

- Opportunity for children and young people to have a voice and contribute to decisions that affect their lives
- Improved experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait children (through culturally-sensitive case management guidance for workers)
- A child's life story is captured in a single location and built up over time, Children will no longer have to retell their story to new/different case workers and relive painful memories
- MyStory promotes transparency in case management practices to assist accountability through ongoing review and assessment
- Case workers are working to current legalisation, policy and evidence-based best practice standards

### Key Messaging of MyStory:

- MyStory is the next generation in child and family case management
- MyStory streamlines case work process allowing workers to spend more time helping children and families, and less time on administration
- MyStory guides and supports case work practice through embedded guidance notes that talk directly to standards, legislation and best-practice principles
- MyStory is based on current evidence and research, policy and legislation
- MyStory Meets State and National OOHC Standards as well as other industry standards
- MyStory is person centred and encourages meaningful client participation
- MyStory is a cloud based application making it accessible on multiple devices
- MyStory can be accessed securely anywhere anytime
- MyStory is intuitive, flexible and user friendly
- MyStory has a suite of easy to navigate case management tools
- MyStory provides diverse reporting & service monitoring capabilities
- MyStory supports transparent and accountable decision making



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## Principles of MyStory

**Guiding best practice:** MyStory is based on extensive evidence and contains guided practice notes in all planning tools to support and guide workers.

**Person-centred :** MyStory focuses on the individual and collective needs of all of those who are involved in the child's day-to-day care. MyStory ensures that the child's voice is captured and remains the focus of all decision making.

**Consultation:** MyStory allows carers, parents and key stakeholders to be part of the decision making process, recognising that each person involved in the care of a child has different concerns and priorities.

**Cultural sensitivity:** MyStory captures the vast and diverse nations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia, so their cultural identity information connects children to their significant place of belonging.

**Life story:** MyStory ensures a child's key events, images and memories are captured during their time in care and held in one central location so clients do not have to tell their story over and over again. Greater detail and accurate information results in better informed placement decisions for individuals.

**Transparency and accountability:** MyStory records and distributes all plans and decisions made regarding the child's care, giving carers the information they need to provide safe care while ensuring parents' concerns are documented.

**Developmental and ecological assessments:** MyStory's assessment framework considers a child's age and developmental needs, while also viewing the child in the context of their family, environment and community.



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