



RESPOND Wangaratta: Community-led action!

A case study from Gateway Health's Health Promotion Team

<p>Aim</p>	<p>Using an exciting approach, community members and organisational representatives came together to better understand and address the health and wellbeing of children and their families living in the Rural City of Wangaratta.</p>
<p>Rationale</p>	<p>RESPOND is a shared community approach to healthy children. Supporting children’s health and wellbeing is an important approach to addressing long term health outcomes. RESPOND Wangaratta applied a systems approach and allowed organisations to work with communities to identify the barriers and enablers to healthy, thriving children and to work together to address them. Initiatives that are community led are more likely to meet local community needs and be more sustainable.</p>
<p>Partnerships</p>	<p>Rural City of Wangaratta (RCoW), Northeast Health Wangaratta (NHW), Deakin University</p>
<p>Links to state policy/initiatives</p>	<p><u>RCoW Health and Wellbeing Plan</u>, Community Health, Health Promotion Plan, <u>Healthy Kids</u>, <u>Healthy Futures</u></p>
<p>Resources</p>	<p><u>Systems Thinking in Community Knowledge Exchange (STICKE)</u> <u>RESPOND Ovens Murray and Goulburn Regional Data Report 2019</u> <u>RESPOND Ovens Murray and Goulburn Regional Data Report 2022</u> <u>RESPOND Wangaratta Summary Report</u></p>



Outcomes

- Development of a 'systems map' outlining underlying factors that influence children's health and wellbeing locally
- Identification of five key themes in the map that the factors lie under; Food, Physical Activity, Family Factors, Pressures and Safety
- Identification of 46 action ideas by the community, with 22 of those deemed as priorities (i.e., ideas that were considered to be feasible and have high impact)
- Within the 22 priority ideas, many community members committed to support, progress on these now taking place

Objectives

1. To better understand the health and wellbeing of children and their families living in the Rural City of Wangaratta.
2. To identify and prioritise ideas from the community regarding children's health and wellbeing and to support community led action to implement these.

The story

Overview of RESPOND

The theory that underpins this process is called RESPOND (Reflexive Evidence and Systems interventions to Prevent Obesity and Non-communicable Disease). It is a National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) funded Partnership Project Grant being delivering between 2018 and 2023.

Deakin University is behind RESPOND as the funded research body and is supporting a Partnership Group to deliver it. The project has been delivered in many areas of North East Victoria, and provides the opportunity for community members and organisations to work together to support local children's health and wellbeing.

RESPOND Wangaratta

Local factors influencing childhood health and wellbeing were identified and explored throughout three community workshops held in March, May and June 2023. Based on information gathered, action ideas were developed and will be led by the community, with support from partner organisations.

The organisations working in partnership that facilitated this RESPOND process and will support action ideas are Gateway Health, the Rural City of Wangaratta and Northeast Health Wangaratta.

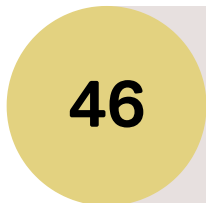
What did we achieve?



A 'systems map' outlining factors that influence children's health and wellbeing locally (see Figure 1)



Five key themes in the map that the factors lie under; Food, Physical Activity, Family Factors, Pressures and Safety



46 action ideas identified by the community, with 22 of those deemed as priorities (i.e., ideas that were considered to be feasible and have high impact)



Within the 22 priority ideas, many community members committed to lead/support/keep up to date

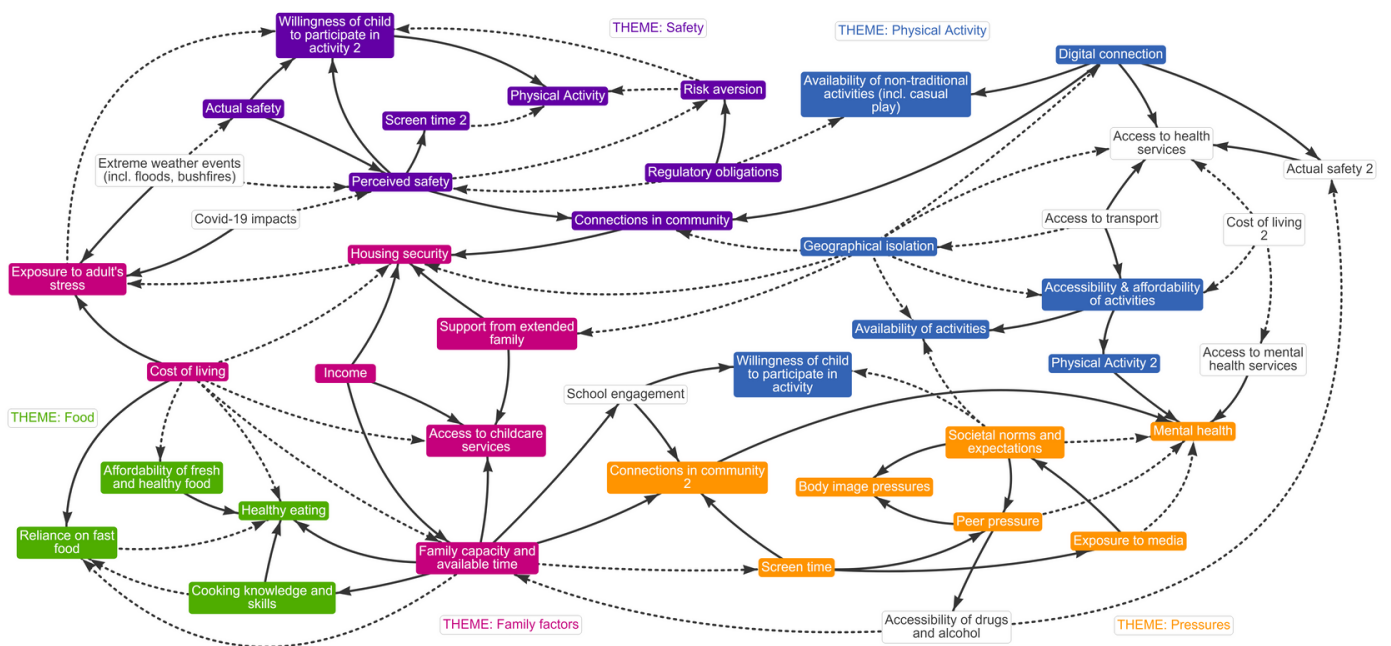


Figure 1: Systems map

Table 1: Key action ideas

Physical activity	Community Come and Try Days for recreational activities (e.g., scouts, gardening, drama)
Food	<p>Cooking skills classes with kids/parents/families/older people (partner with schools, early childhood and aged care services and community groups)</p> <p>Set up community gardens/food growing spaces in public areas/playgrounds/early childhood or aged care settings to share, learn skills and connect</p>
Family factors	Mobile recycle art bus/nature play for schools and community groups
Family factors, food & physical activity	Community Directory/Information Hub – online directory for community to find out what activities/services are available and to support easier navigation of information
Other	Make action ideas accessible for everyone (i.e., so that principals of accessibility underpin any project)

What difference did we make?

Community members reasons for attending the workshop:

“To support the local community in making clear goals and actions around addressing access to physical activity, adequate food/social connection avenues and to also gauge the barriers to accessing good/better/stronger, health and wellbeing outcomes for our children.”

“To find out more about this initiative and to make a contribution on behalf of the organisation I represented. To network with other ‘like minded’ community members”

When asked if community members were satisfied that their aim in attending the workshop had been met:

“excited to hear how I can assist the actions”

“yes, to establish working groups to identify in the areas where the local people can assist. It is a first good move”

Overall, it was reported that the workshop:

“Had a lot of content covered and it was well organised”

“Was very well run, both informative and informal”

“was great. It was really helpful to begin with the context of how we reached where we were up to, and the collaboration of table groups sharing ideas and perspectives on the way forward was really productive.”

Included “lots of information. Sparked ideas of how I can be a voice.”

Evaluation and lessons learnt

Partnership group	Community workshops
<p>A partnership group was established. Members completed a partnership survey to understand how the group was functioning and how the partnership could be improved. A summary of survey results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 per cent completed (9 members, 4 agencies) and said it was an effective partnership • Relationships, shared workload and organisation commitment were the most valuable aspects identified • All members committed to continuing partnership beyond community workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop one, aimed at key leaders in the community and organisations: 11 participants • Workshop two, aimed at key leaders in the community and organisations: 7 participants • Workshop three, whole of community invited: 28 participants <p>Workshops were promoted widely (Facebook, LinkedIn, posters, email, word of mouth) and key organisational and community members were represented.</p>

Workshop three was evaluated through a participant survey, summary of survey results:

- 10 surveys completed
- 90 percent of respondents felt that their aim in attending was achieved
- Respondents reported that the workshop was informative, enjoyable, sparked ideas and was well organised.

Post Workshops

- Summary report written and shared with community, this can be viewed [here](#)
- Engagement with priority groups that weren't represented at the community workshop to address diversity, equity and inclusion

Implementation

The Partnership Group:

- Have established working groups to support community-led actions
- Is providing ongoing coordination and support of working groups
- Is working closely with Deakin University regarding implementation, evaluation and sustainability

Recommendations and next steps

The Partnership Group have begun to support local action. This project phase involves working closely with Deakin University around 'implementation science'; the study of methods and strategies that facilitate the uptake of evidence-based practice and research into regular use by practitioners and policymakers. This involves the application of tools and frameworks, including the use of Systems Thinking in Community Knowledge Exchange (STICKE) tool that changes the way insights surrounding complex health issues can be obtained, shared, analysed and tracked through the power of systems thinking. This is the tool in which the systems map was developed at the community workshops and shown in the map above.

The partnership group enjoyed gathering insights from our community and exploring community led action ideas and look forward to working with organisations and community members to further promote the health of children and their families in the Rural City of Wangaratta.

For more information and to stay up to date about RESPOND Wangaratta, please visit the Gateway Health website [here](#) or email at HealthPromotion.Team@gatewayhealth.org.au.

