Reconnect Action Research Kit

Written by Phil Crane and Leanne Richardson, School of Human Services, Queensland University of Technology

with the support of the Reconnect Action Research Committee and Reconnect services

For the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services, Youth and Students Branch

October 2000
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
This kit was developed for the Reconnect Program. The authors acknowledge their debt to Suzi Quixley, whose Action Research Resource Kit developed for the Youth Homelessness Pilot Programme had a major influence on this work. The authors also thank the services and practitioners who made valuable contributions.

Reconnect Action Research Committee
Karen Gauntlett, Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (co-Chair)
Phil Crane, School of Human Services, Queensland University of Technology (co-Chair)
Paul Regan, Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services
Melisah Feeney, Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services, New South Wales State Office
Ann Buxton, Anglicare Top End, Northern Territory
Bruce Hudson, Reconnect Integrated Youth Service, Sunshine Coast
Tamsin Jones, Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (administrative support)
Janet Murphy, School of Human Services, Queensland University of Technology (administrative support)
Leanne Richardson (research assistant)
Janet Willis (editorial support)
Kevin Lindeberg (cartoons)
## CONTENTS

Message from the Minister viii

### SECTION ONE

**ABOUT ACTION RESEARCH**

#### Why an Action Research kit?

- Developing the kit 1.2
- Aims of the kit 1.2
- Using the kit 1.3

#### Background to Reconnect Action Research

- Youth Homelessness Pilot Programme evaluation findings 1.4
- How Action Research relates to early intervention 1.5

#### What is Action Research?

- Action Research cycles 1.7
- Cycle characteristics 1.9
- Values and Action Research 1.10
- Culture and Action Research 1.11

#### What’s in it for stakeholders?

- For front-line early intervention practitioners 1.13
- For young people and their families 1.14
- For management 1.15
- For other service providers 1.15
- For government 1.15
- For the community 1.16

### SECTION TWO

**ACTION RESEARCH PROCESSES**

#### Aspects of participatory Action Research

- The ‘action’ aspect 2.1
- The ‘research’ aspect 2.2
- The ‘participatory’ aspect 2.3
SECTION THREE

IMPLEMENTATION

How and where to start

- Doing a scan of internal and external environments
- Competencies audit—building on your strengths
- Selecting topics to focus on
- Posing Action Research questions
- Starting small but thinking broad
- Examples of questions used in practice

Implementation issues

- Participation
- Suggested participation strategies
- Examples of commonly-used participation strategies
- Rigour
- Ethics and Action Research

SECTION FOUR

CHALLENGES AND TROUBLESHOOTING

- Making assumptions about Commonwealth expectations
- Building Action Research
- Setting priorities and timing
- Developing Action Research skills and processes
- Committing to Action Research
- Dealing with resistance to change
- Dealing with resistance to participation
SECTION FIVE

CASE EXAMPLES AND TOOLS

Three useful case examples

Case example one – applying the cycles for a particular question
Case example two – from question posing to evidence-based findings
Case example three – a ‘day in the life’ of a Reconnect worker using Action Research

Practical tools to help with Action Research processes

Undertaking scans of internal and external environments
Undertaking a competencies’ audit
Six examples of documenting Action Research processes

SECTION SIX

ACTION RESEARCH RESOURCES

References/further reading

The Reconnect Action Research web site: ‘Reconnectar’
Action Research and the Youth Homelessness Pilot Programme
On-line resources
Glossary