

## MEASURING OUTCOMES TOOL EXAMPLES

# Understanding and supporting children's mental health

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This resource is Emerging Minds' 'road map' for accessing measuring outcomes (MO) points through the RACGP's 'Measuring Outcomes Tool for Quality Improvement Activities' in myCPD.

## Background

GPs oversee patients' mental health across various ages and stages. As such, they are ideally placed to advise patients on how to best maintain and monitor their mental health. This creates an ideal climate for population-based mental health promotion activities and stigma reduction.

Child mental health promotion, early intervention and prevention involves increasing parents child mental health literacy by:

- providing parents with information about children's social and emotional wellbeing
- checking in on children's social and emotional wellbeing as a part of a routine practice.

**Parents' mental health literacy** is crucial for promoting actions (protective, supportive and/or help-seeking) that can protect and optimise children's mental health (National Mental Health Commission, 2021).

Mental health literacy is commonly conceptualised as:

- being able to recognise signs of mental health difficulties
- understanding risk and protective factors
- knowing about available information and professional help and how to access it
- being able to seek help (e.g. overcoming stigma) (Jorm, 2012; Hurley et al., 2020).

For more information on how to record this MO activity using the RACGP Quick Log tool please watch RACGP's *Quick tips for using Quick Log* (3 minutes): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8\\_mf1gKf8w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8_mf1gKf8w)

## Measuring Outcomes (MO) tool: Examples

The following table contains examples of MO activities that can be self-recorded using the RACGP Quick Log tool in myCPD. You can use one of the examples below when logging your MO activity or use it as a guide to create your own.

MO tool prompt	Notes and examples (examples used)	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
<b>Please enter a description of the activity that resulted in you updating/quality improving your practice followed by 'QI reflection', e.g. Patient feedback survey – QI reflection</b>	Activities that are goal-directed and demonstrate a practice improvement.	Promote child mental health literacy in parents/carers presenting for routine child health care.	Promoting access to child mental health resources for families of children with emotional or behavioural concerns.	Improving my practice through enhanced knowledge around how parents can support their child's mental health.

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<p><b>Describe an improvement or change you have implemented in your practice and what prompted you to make the change.</b></p>	<p>Practice refers to any role in which you are currently employed, e.g., your regular clinical practice, university teaching, research studies, or locum work.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Improving the day-to-day operations of the practice, such as: appointment scheduling, record-keeping software and practices, recall and reminder systems, patient/carer feedback and complaint handling processes.</li> <li>– Updating patient resources to facilitate improved health literacy.</li> <li>– Responding to feedback from members of the practice team.</li> <li>– Auditing clinical databases using an audit tool (e.g. PENCAT or Primary Sense). PROSPECTIVE AUDIT.</li> <li>– Analysing near misses, errors, and adverse events to improve future outcomes.</li> </ul>	<p>Preventative health care for children includes mental health care. In the well child, this includes checking in on social and emotional wellbeing.</p> <p>Examples are provided in the RACGP Redbook (see 'Related resources', following), namely:</p> <p>Neontatal checks – i.e. 'Identify family strengths, elicit concerns and promote parental confidence, competence and mental health' (p. 33).</p> <p>For example, four-year-olds coming for vaccinations – '... consider the quality of family functioning and the possible contribution of factors in the child's wider social environment (C; refer to Practice Points h and l in Table 3.2). Elicit concerns regarding development, social and emotional wellbeing (refer to Practice Point l in Table 3.2)' (p. 34).</p> <p>Optional prospective audit for more hours:</p> <p>I conducted a prospective audit of <i>n</i> newborns and their parents presenting for the six-week baby check; or <i>n</i> children presenting for their four-year-old's vaccinations; <i>and</i> asked if they would like information on child social and emotional wellbeing.</p> <p>Y% were keen for more information, Z% said they were not sure and X% declined more information at this time.</p> <p>80% (4 out of 5) parents in the last group said they were glad to know they could get this information in the future if they needed it.</p> <p>I now routinely show parents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The two-minute Emerging Minds video 'What is child mental health?'; and</li> <li>2. A brief handout on child mental 'wellness' on my desk which has a QR code to the 'What is child mental health?' video and Understanding and supporting children's mental health (see 'Related resources', following).</li> </ol>	<p>Multiple children presenting to the practice with emotional or behavioural problems, affecting the child at both home and school.</p> <p>This is a complex and difficult area for GPs and can have several contributing factors that require the patient to return for at least two longer visits, plus referral to child psychology services.</p> <p>I am looking for a way to support these families between visits. I provide information on understanding children's emotions and behaviour (see 'Related resources', following). particularly the section 'Behaviour as communication' and the iceberg model. Tips shared from other parents such as 'name the emotion twice' are a good starting point to help the family manage and understand the behaviour while they wait to access a child psychologist.</p> <p>Optional prospective audit for more hours:</p> <p>I conducted a prospective audit of <i>n</i> families of children presenting with behavioural issues affecting them at both school and home.</p> <p>X% said they did not know this was such a common problem.</p> <p>Y% said they didn't realise that children's behaviour is usually a reflection of their emotional world.</p> <p>Z% parents said they weren't sure where to access information on how to best support their child.</p> <p>I now keep links to social and emotional wellbeing resources easily accessible to give patients the online information and/or a print out for patients when children present with behavioural or emotional concerns.</p>	<p>I am increasingly supporting families whose child has been experiencing an emotional or behavioural concern for an extended period while their family waits months to access a paediatrician, child psychologist or child mental health services. I wanted to increase my knowledge and skills in supporting families 'while they wait'.</p> <p>I read the Emerging Minds resource <i>Five ways to support your children's mental health</i> (see 'Related resources', following) and watched the accompanying 'What is PERCS?' and 'How PERCS works for families?' videos.</p> <p>The three-minute videos were very helpful as they recommended topics or areas I can explore with families.</p> <p>I now suggest parents watch and read this information while they are waiting to access a psychologist at supportive consultations.</p> <p>This has given me the knowledge to help parents support their children with a particular challenge. This has helped improve the child mental health literacy of my patients. For example, I can assist them to start with a small but important step in their child's external world, like getting into a good sleep routine (as covered in Routines – see 'Related resources', following) and perhaps reading stories together at bedtime (as covered in <i>Communication and meaning making</i> – see 'Related resources', following). This can really help while they wait to get specialist psychological support for the child's internal emotional world.</p> <p>Optional activities:</p> <p>For more professional development opportunities in this area I can access accredited online courses and resources through the Emerging Minds GP toolkit (see 'Related resources', following).</p>

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<p><b>What impact or outcome are you expecting as a result of the change/s you have implemented? If you have already observed an impact or outcome, please describe it.</b></p>	<p>Example answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Day-to-day operations of practice have improved, such as: up-to-date and on-time appointment scheduling; updated record-keeping software and practices; updated recall and reminder systems; patient/carer feedback were reviewed and updated; and reviewed and updated complaint handling processes.</li> <li>- Patient resources have been updated to ensure currency and to facilitate improved health literacy.</li> <li>- Process and/or system has been created to ensure feedback from practice team members are captured and responded/actioned in a timely manner.</li> <li>- Conducted or commenced an audit of clinical databases using an audit tool (e.g. PENCAT or Primary Sense).</li> <li>- Identified or setup a process and/or system for analysing near misses, errors and adverse events to improve future outcomes.</li> </ul>	<p>Impact/outcomes expected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Higher rates of families who know how to support their child's mental health when things get tough.</li> <li>- Families knowing where they can get help so they can best support their child's emotional and psychological wellbeing.</li> </ul>	<p>Impact/outcomes expected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved patient knowledge and confidence about how they can support their child.</li> <li>- Higher rates of feeling supported in their parenting.</li> <li>- Improved understanding of the feelings and emotions underlying their child/ren's behaviour.</li> </ul>	<p>Impact/outcomes expected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improvements in my knowledge and confidence in discussing child mental health with parents and providing them with support strategies.</li> <li>- Improved support to families on long wait lists for definitive care.</li> <li>- Improved patient knowledge and confidence about how they can support their child as the people who know their child best.</li> <li>- Improved knowledge so parents can support their child/ren through future challenges.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>How do you plan to monitor and/or evaluate the effectiveness of these changes?</b></p>	<p>Example answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct regular practice meetings and discuss the changes as a team; and continue to seek feedback from the team about how effective the changes have been at improving patient outcomes.</li> <li>- Create monitoring guidelines (including a template) for recording the outcomes of these changes</li> <li>- Seek feedback from a peer/ practice manager on the effectiveness of the changes after a set period.</li> <li>- Develop roles and responsibilities for practice staff that include monitoring and recording outcomes of these changes.</li> <li>- Regularly review the outcomes against the set standards or targeted outcomes.</li> <li>- Seek, consider and respond to patients' feedback on their experience in relation to the changes made.</li> <li>- Compare patients' data before and after using audit tools (e.g. PEN CAT).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review the outcomes annually to evaluate steps towards the expected outcomes.</li> <li>- Seek, consider and respond to patients' feedback on their experience in relation to the changes made.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review the outcomes annually to evaluate steps towards the expected outcomes.</li> <li>- Seek, consider and respond to patients' feedback on their experience in relation to the changes made, e.g. at the follow up appointment ask the family how useful was the provided information and whether they were able to put in place any strategies learned.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review the outcomes annually to evaluate steps towards the expected outcomes.</li> <li>- Seek, consider and respond to patients' feedback on their experience in relation to the changes made.</li> </ul>

## Related resources

Emerging Minds GP toolkit

<https://emergingminds.com.au/practitioners/gp-resources/>

RACGP Redbook

<https://www.racgp.org.au/getattachment/52e81aef-5dec-4cf3-a903-fd202246c65f/Guidelines-for-preventive-activities-in-general-practice.aspx>

## Child mental health literacy resources to use with families

*Understanding children's emotions and behaviour*

<https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/in-focus-understanding-childrens-emotions-and-behaviour>

*Understanding and supporting children's mental health*

<https://emergingminds.com.au/families/understanding-and-supporting-childrens-mental-health>

*Five ways to support your children's mental health*

<https://emergingminds.com.au/families/five-ways-to-support-your-childrens-mental-health>

*Routines: Creating family routines to support children's mental health*

<https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/routines-creating-family-routines-to-support-childrens-mental-health>

*Communication and meaning-making: Why good communication is key to children's mental health*

<https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/communication-and-meaning-making-why-good-communication-is-key-to-childrens-mental-health>

## References

Hurley, D., Swann, C., Allen, M. S., Ferguson, H. L., & Vella, S. A. (2020). A Systematic Review of Parent and Caregiver Mental Health Literacy. *Community Mental Health Journal*, 56(1), 2–21. DOI: 10.1007/s10597-019-00454-0.

Jorm, A. F. (2012). Mental health literacy. *The American Psychologist*, 67(3), 231–243. DOI: 10.1037/a0025957.

National Mental Health Commission. (2021). *The National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy* [Report]. Australian Government.

<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/projects/childrens-strategy/childrens-mental-health-wellbeing-strategy>

For more examples of quality improvement initiatives and guidance on using the RACGP Measuring Outcomes tool into your CPD activities watch *Measuring your outcomes for psychological medicine with RACGPSI Chair Dr Cathy Andronis*: <https://www.racgp.org.au/racgp-digital-events-calendar/online-event-content/measuring-your-outcomes-for-psychological-medicine>