



Culturally responsive life story work

Digital Life Story Work

Life story work strengthens children and young people's identity and understanding of themselves, their culture and community, allowing them to make sense of why they came into care, why decisions were made and other important moments of their life.

For the social and emotional wellbeing of an individual it is of paramount importance to know our cultural roots and have a sense of community belonging, the lack of which can result in experiencing a varying degree of disconnect with society. The children in care are more susceptible to feeling this disconnection. As part of life story work, SSI goes a step further and focuses on *My Life and Me*, cultural life story work, to gather records and information about a child's family, cultural background and history, parent's culture, ethnicity, faith, life in their country of origin and settlement journey. This will help the child connect with their family and be proud of their heritage, where the first step of the healing journey starts.

We believe that it's important for all children to learn about and understand their cultural heritage and identity, supporting children to grow up strong and proud, knowing who they are, where they have come from and how they fit into their communities.

Over time, we found it sometimes challenging for the children and carers to store the *My Life and Me* booklets, or to add sleeves to the books. Sometimes, these books might be lost or not transferred with the child when they change placements.

Matching the pace with technical advancement and the level of ease and convenience that comes with it, SSI has digitalized *My Life and Me* folder and suite of resources. It is envisioned that by the end of this financial year, all our carers will be using the digital app to upload and share photos, videos and information about children and young people in OOHC.

The app has been creatively designed to be very interactive and simple to use, making it efficient for our Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) foster carers to upload and share information. The app also features all the chapters found in the *My Life and Me* folder, making it simple for carers to add information about children's, Milestones, Culture, Care Story, Health info, and looking into the Future.

It is anticipated that young people will also start using the app to share their own thoughts, photos, mementos and memories onto the app. Upon reaching 18 years and leaving care, young people will be provided with a copy of all their records and photos to look back on.