

# “Everything in Safeguards is useful”: Exploring consumers and parents/carers’ experiences and views on Safeguards crisis interventions.

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## 1. Background

- Mental health (MH)-related Emergency Department presentations among children and adolescents (C&A) have doubled recently.
- Various factors, including increased psychosocial stress and the COVID-19 pandemic/its aftermath, resulted in low school attendance/performance, poor health, and social outcomes.
- In response, the Safeguards Teams Program (STP) was implemented in 2021.
- This innovative assertive specialist service provides client-centred, outreach, and timely specialist care for C&A experiencing MH crises and their families/caregivers.

## 2. Objectives

- There is limited peer-reviewed literature on the perspectives of consumers and their carers’ views and experiences of MH crisis interventions in Australia.
- We examine the views and experiences of C&As and their parents/carers regarding STP interventions.
- This study extends previous evidence on crisis interventions for MH concerns among C&A worldwide.

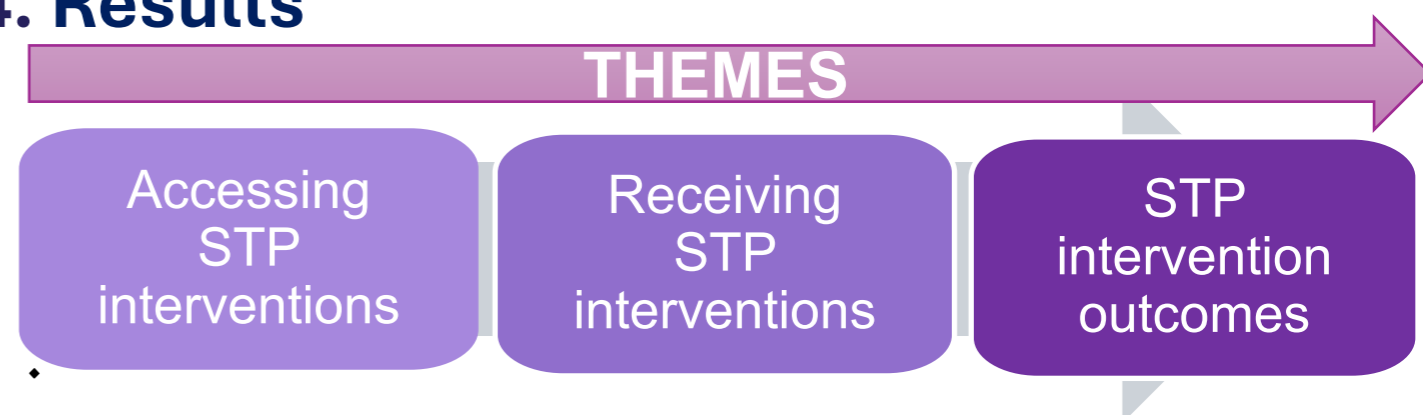
## 3. Methods

- Qualitative descriptive design.
- Ten parents and carers were purposively sampled for semi-structured interviews.

## 3. Methods (contd...)

- Interviews were conducted in-person/online, audio-recorded, transcribed and de-identified
- Coded using NVivo (V-14).
- Data were analysed thematically.

## 4. Results



- **Accessing SG interventions:** Most respondents felt comfortable discussing MH issues with STP clinicians and receiving practical assistance to address MH challenges, including medications and psychological/behavioral strategies.
- **Receiving interventions:** Many reported the support/interventions they received at home, school, and at the centers during their engagement with STP were helpful.
- They were also satisfied with the service interventions’ frequency and overall duration.
- **SG intervention outcomes:** Most C&A felt better/active, less aggressive, tired, and anxious.
- They reported an improvement in school attendance and engagement and attributed this to the involvement and support of STP.
- Some respondents expressed concerns about its suitability for addressing complex MH needs and its short duration.

## 5. Conclusion

- Our findings support the acceptance and effectiveness of STP as it optimizes C&A’s mental health and addresses their and their family’s/carers’ concerns.
- STP is a critical service providing the most appropriate timely outreach specialist interventions for C&A presenting with mental health crises and their families/ carers.

## References

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