



EMPOWER PRACTICE GUIDE

2024

Part Three: Practicalities, Tools and Processes

Suggested citation:

Douglas, Tessa (2024), *EMPower Practice Guide Part Three: Practicalities, Tools and Processes*, Juno, Preston, Victoria, Australia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Juno acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and recognise the deep relationship and care that First Peoples have with this land. We recognise the ongoing survival and cultural wisdom of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and other First Nations peoples around the world.

PROGRAM ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Juno has worked in partnership with the Economic Mobility Exchange™ to adapt this powerful approach to poverty disruption and trauma recovery. This approach internationally has consistently seen women achieve employment aspirations, increase income - with the flagship EMPATH© program seeing increased income of an average of 183% - and improve their stability in housing and family. This model has been employed in the US, UK and Netherlands and assisted over 200,000 people in the last decade (reference).

The philanthropic support of the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation, Phyllis Connor Memorial Trust, Darebin Council and the Inner North Community Foundation has enabled Juno to pilot and continue this model in Victoria.

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

Juno's EMPower Program has been internationally recognised for its thought leadership and the adaptation of the model for an Australia context, being awarded 'Most Impactful Award' by the Economic Mobility Exchange in 2024.

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PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

The purpose of this practice guide is to document the theories, philosophy, evidence base, and practice approaches that underpin Juno's economic mobility coaching program, EMPower. This guide supports coaches and practitioners with a clear framework to ensure their approach is evidence-based and trauma-informed.

The guide is structured into three distinct parts:

Part 1. Theory and Research: Outlines the theoretical and research foundations behind the program.

Part 2. Spirit of Coaching: Delves into the coaching approach, including its philosophy and application.

Part 3. Delivery: Describes practical aspects such as forms and processes relevant to the program.

The practice guidelines and tools have been adapted for use in Australia by Juno coaches and the program development team. This guide encapsulates refined learnings and approaches and aims to explain the program in an engaging, accessible format. It is best used in conjunction with the EMPower Mobility Mentoring online training, which delves deeper into the neuroscience of trauma and recovery and underpins the development of the program.

DEVELOPMENT AND ADAPTATION

Partnership: Juno has collaborated with EMPower since 2018, gaining knowledge and training in the model as a member of the Economic Mobility Exchange.

Adaptation: Between 2019-2020, Juno adapted the resources for the Australian context.

Pilot Program: The pilot program began in March 2021 and concluded in September 2023, supporting 38 women (cis and trans).

Measurement & Evaluation: A final evaluation report of the pilot program was delivered by For Purpose Evaluations in November 2023. You can read it here: [Endline Evaluation Report of EMPower Pilot Program](#)

PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

The EMPower pilot program ran from March 2021 - September 2023. During this time, 38 women (trans and cis) were part of the program, for varying lengths of time. There were three distinct groups, beginning in March 2021, September 2021 and March 2022.

The participants in each group were offered 24 months, 18 months and 12 months of coaching respectively. Throughout the program, there were three coaches, but only two at any given time.

Participants had to meet certain criteria to be eligible to join EMPower, including living in stable housing and not currently experiencing family violence or housing crisis. This was to ensure participants had the time and energy to engage and commit to the coaching process and didn't have

an urgent need for crisis case management support. This was built into the expression of interest form and clearly articulated that EMPower is a healing and recovery program, not a crisis program.

EVALUATION

The program went through a rigorous measurement and evaluation process by For-Purpose Evaluations from December 2021 to November 2023.

Their final evaluation report was delivered in November 2023 and can be found here:

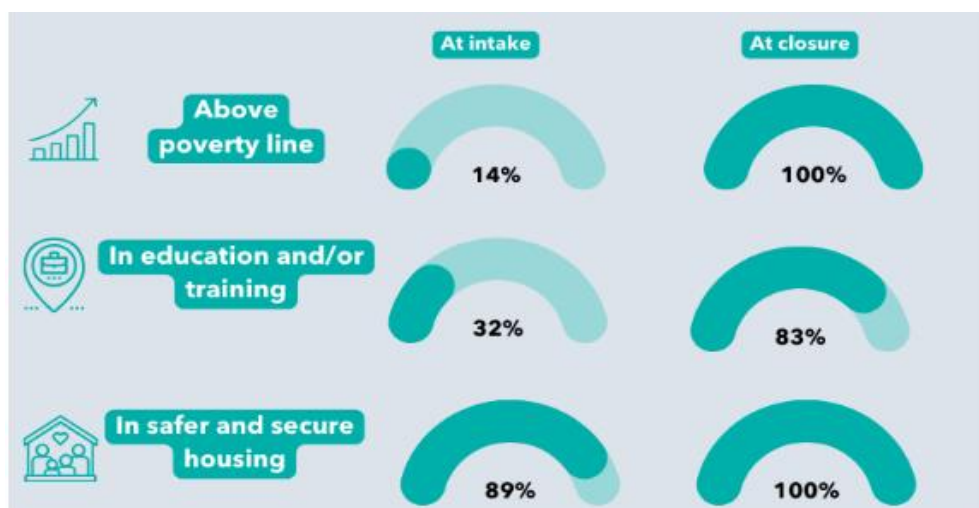
[EMPower pilot endline evaluation summary.](#)

KEY FINDINGS

Findings from this report demonstrated significant change in all inter-linked key life domains for the majority of participants. A few of the key findings from the report:

- › 100% of participants were in safe, affordable and secure housing at 18 months and 24 months. Notably, two participants have successfully achieved home ownership while participating in the program.
- › 100% of participants were living above the poverty line at the end of the program; compared to 14% at the start.
- › Participants built better savings habits during the program. Across the cohort, the median savings rose by 329% from \$490 to \$2,100 per person. 72% of participants increased their savings during their time in the program.
- › After 18 months, 83% of those that were in the labour force were employed in full-time, part-time or regular casual employment.

FIGURE 1: HIGH LEVEL OUTCOMES



THE EMPOWER BRIDGE

 [EMPower Bridge tool](#)

The EMPower Bridge provides participants with a visual tool to map where they are at across five key life domains. The Bridge is comprised of five inter-related core pillars. The pillars include family stability (housing and family), wellbeing (health and networks), financial management (financial wellbeing and savings and debt), career and education, income and employment.

The Bridge is a one-page visual tool that allows participants to assess their current situation, as well as reflect and determine what goals they want to set throughout the program. It provides the universal road map for the program from which individual goals of success are set. Practically, during the conversation, clients will circle whichever statement is the most accurate for them within each pillar. At the next review, the two Bridges will be compared, and the changes discussed together. The Bridge is an incredibly useful tool for participants to really see the major life shifts that have occurred during their time in the program.

The Bridge is designed as a plain English, objective tool that participants can engage with easily to assess a. their current state and b. develop a vision of where they need to be in each life domain, or pillar, to lead a fulfilling life with economic independence. The coach should take time to explain the purpose of the Bridge as a whole and the role of each supporting pillar as participants undertake the self-assessment. The Bridge is based on the Economic

Mobility Pathways Bridge to Self Sufficiency and each pillar has been adapted to consider economic mobility in Australia and local structural considerations.

The model provides high achievement goals, such as reaching 150% of the Australian median household income. Participants are asked to review where they are on the Bridge at regular intervals (depending on the length of the program), with significant movement upwards on the Bridge expected with time. During the pilot project of EMPower from March 2021 – September 2023, we held review appointments every six months. This frequency should be adapted to the length of the program, for instance if a program is nine months long, we would recommend completing the review appointments at the beginning and the end of the coaching program.

Following review appointments, the Bridge data should be entered into the clients' file on SRS and a copy of the Bridge image should be scanned and saved to their file.

FIGURE 2: CHANGES IN SCORES ACROSS THE BRIDGE DURING TIME IN EMPOWER



GOAL ACTION PLAN

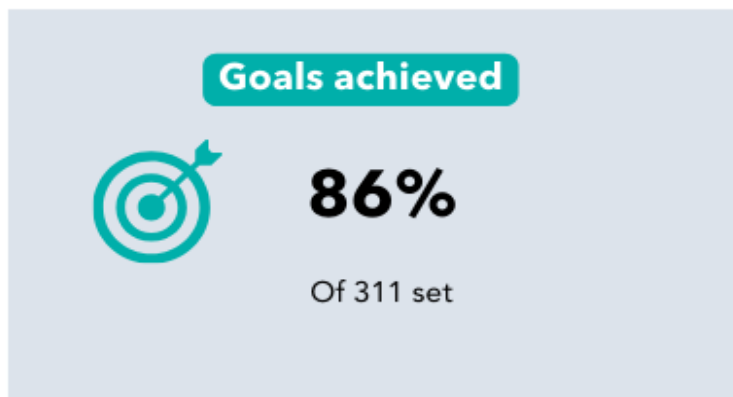
[EMPower Goal Action Plan template](#)

The goal action plan template has been designed to ensure that a meaningful, SMART plan is developed for each goal set by the participant. It's preferable for the client to write the goal out in their own handwriting and language, rather than the coach writing it for them, as this process gives them ownership over the goal, as opposed to feeling like tasks are being set by the coach.

The template outlines the overarching goal, why it is important, and the timeframe for getting it done. These components allow for more conversation to occur about the underlying motivation and optimism for change, as well as potential resistance or barriers that may be present. Following this, we break down the specific steps to take within the established timeframe, with no more than three steps written into the form.

We have also added a confidence scale, to determine how challenging and motivating the goal is, and whether it needs to be scaled back in size or enhanced to be a stretch outside the participant's comfort zone. We also decide on the incentive amount for the goal and how the participant can recognise their accomplishment for themselves. Goal action plans are then reviewed at the following appointment and any issues are discussed together.

FIGURE 3: GOALS ACHIEVED



FUNCTIONING SKILLS ASSESSMENT

[EMPower Executive Skills Assessment](#)

The Executive Functioning Skills Assessment was adapted from Peg Dawson and Richard Guare’s (2008) work on adaptive executive functioning skills. Presenting the form and explaining what executive functioning skills are and how trauma impacts them can be helpful for clients.

The form is filled out at the start of the coaching relationship for both the client and coach to understand where strengths and weaknesses may lie, and to brainstorm on how the stronger skills can support the weaker ones. This assessment can then be completed at review meetings to see what has changed and open up conversations around executive functioning skills.

FIGURE 4: IMPROVED EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING



INCENTIVES

Incentives are attached to each goal to reflect the time and effort that goes into working towards each goal. The incentives are intended to create extrinsic motivation before intrinsic motivation is present. Many clients spoke about how motivating the incentive was at first, but as time went on, their goals became more personal and meaningful, and the achievement of the goal was inherently rewarding in and of itself and the incentive became less important.

The average goal had an incentive of \$50. However, if it was a particularly large goal, this amount could be increased. The value of the incentive was always discussed with clients, and there was flexibility in what it could be. For example, a goal related to education may have an incentive of a voucher to put towards buying a new laptop. Each person had a set incentive budget; this changed depending on the length of the program and the program budget at the time. The maximum incentive amount was \$1000 per year.

On top of the incentives, we also ran a Matched Savings program. This varied between \$300 - \$500, depending on the length of the program. Essentially, a participant would create a goal around saving a particular amount of money, e.g., \$500, but be required to break it into small chunks that could be put away weekly or fortnightly from their pay, to build a small, sustainable savings habit. Once they reached their savings goal, they would screenshot the savings amount and share this with their coach, and a matched amount would be transferred directly to them.

The ANZ Saver Plus program could also be explored with interested participants, although there are more specific eligibility requirements to engage:

 <https://www.anz.com.au/about-us/esg/financial-wellbeing/saver-plus/>

GRADUATION

Graduation ceremonies are a beautiful way to celebrate and bring together the EMPower group. We held graduation ceremonies for the three groups that completed EMPower in April 2023 (Group 1) and September 2023 (Groups 2 and 3). It was a beautiful opportunity for participants to come together and reflect on their progress, what had changed in their lives, and how they felt differently about what was possible for their futures. Coaches facilitated the space, and incorporated a mixture of meditation and grounding exercises, future dreaming, narrative therapy (<https://dulwichcentre.com.au/the-tree-of-life/>) reflective pieces, and a sound and movement workshop facilitated by Voice Coach, Deb Burnett. Participants were presented with a certificate and flowers or seedlings. There was immense value in having a meaningful graduation ceremony to mark the end of the program and being able to come together to speak about the incredible changes and achievements each person had made for themselves and their families.

PROCESS TIMELINES

Reviews of the Bridge, executive functioning skills assessment (optional) and an overall check-in on goal progression are done at regular intervals. This is flexible and dependent on how long the program goes for, but we aimed to hold reviews every 6 months. The timeframe for the review will depend on the length of the program. This can be discussed within the EMPower team. Within a 12-month period, we would recommend an initial assessment, 6-month review, and final 12-month review. Reviews should be no more frequent than once every six months.

Detailed breakdown of appointment structure and use of relevant forms:

 [Coaching process timeline](#)

GROUP WORK

Group work and targeted workshops are a supportive, informative, empowering complement to one-on-one coaching. This is a space for participants to come together to learn new skills and build community. We designed group workshops in response to hearing from participants on what they were hoping to learn more about. We ran a mixture of skills-based workshops, such as employment readiness talks by Melbourne Polytechnic Skills and Jobs Centre and social wellbeing workshops, such as trauma-informed yoga or a social lunch. All information on past workshops can be found here: [EMPower Group Work](#)

We also partnered with a local neighbourhood house, Bridge Darebin, who facilitated a 6-week financial literacy program, *Money Matters* multiple times throughout the program specifically for EMPower. We know that experiences of financial abuse and control are incredibly common amongst women and non-binary people who have experienced homelessness and family violence, so learning about financial abuse, financial literacy and re-writing their relationship with money was often spoken about as an incredibly empowering process.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Coaches don't work directly with children, but they are often included in conversations with clients regarding their goals and what is most meaningful and important to them moving forward. Children will sometimes also attend appointments.

All Juno workers are required to have a valid Working with Children Check as a child safe organisation.

PARTNERS AND REFERRAL PATHWAYS

If EMPower clients begin to experience housing instability or family violence again, a direct referral to a Juno housing case manager or family violence worker should be made. Each client's experience will be different; some will need to leave EMPower and focus solely on their work with their new worker, whilst others may prefer to work with both at the same time, on different goals. Discussing all options and landing on a plan that feels supportive and flexible with the participant is essential. This focus on safety, choice and collaboration is at the heart of trauma-informed care.

› [Link to partners](#)

RESOURCES AND TRAININGS

Trainings

- › EMPath Mobility Mentoring Foundations Training
- › EMPath Mobility Mentoring Supervision Training
- › Mentha Consulting Motivational Interviewing Beginner and Advanced Trainings
- › Trauma-informed trainings

Articles

- › Harnessing the Power of High Expectations - Elisabeth Babcock - [Harnessing the Power of High Expectations](#)
- › Coaching for Economic Mobility - Nicki Ruiz De Luzuriaga - [Coaching for Economic Mobility](#)
- › Goal, Plan, Do, Review/Revise Guide - Center on Budget and Policy and Priorities and Global Learning Partners - [Goal, Plan, Do, Review Guide](#)

Books

- › Playing Big - Tara Mohr
- › POWER - Kemi Nekvapil
- › Tiny Habits - BJ Fogg
- › Your Money or Your Life - Vicki Robin and Joe Dominguez

REFERENCE LIST - PART THREE

Dawson, P., & Guare, R. (2008). Smart but scattered: 50 activities for improving executive skills at home and at school. The Guilford Press.