

Enabling Young Peoples Participation in Residential Care Decision Making

Lynne McPherson, Janise Mitchell and Meaghan Vosz



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The Centre for Excellence
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acknowledges Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander
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custodians of this land and
we pay our respect to their
Elders past, present and
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The Centre for Excellence in Therapeutic Care

- The Centre for Excellence in Therapeutic Care is an Australian first Intermediary Organisation established to support practitioners and key sector, stakeholders of Intensive Therapeutic Care in New South Wales, Australia.
- The Intensive Therapeutic Care (ITC) reforms underway in New South Wales provide an integrated continuum of therapeutic care options that are positioned to more effectively address the needs of traumatised children and young people and achieve improved outcomes across the domains of safety, permanency and well-being.
- As a key element of this reform, the Australian Childhood Foundation (ACF) and Southern Cross University (SCU), in partnership, have been contracted by the NSW Government in Australia to support all providers of Intensive Therapeutic Care in NSW.



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In this presentation.....



- What is participation and why is it an issue ?
- What is research telling us?
- Elements of participation
- Implications for organisations and practice in a therapeutic residential care context
- The work of the CETC

Why Participation?

- Participation as a *process* of involving young people in decisions.
- Children and Young People have certain rights- UNCROC 1989...more than three decades ago
- Why a particular focus on residential care and participation?
- Our scoping review



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Overview of Scoping Review

- Methodological framework and theoretical lens
- Research question: What does research tell us about young people's participation in decision making in residential care?
- Retrieving and charting the data

Key Messages from Research

Five core themes were identified inductively from an analysis of the results....

1. Genuine participation about 'everyday life' decisions but little or no say about 'major life' decisions
2. Bureaucratisation and formal processes impact participation

Key Messages from Research (cont.)

3. Professionals' attitudes and beliefs about young people and participation influencing their behaviour
4. Organisational culture facilitating or constraining young people's participation
5. The central role of relationship and relational practice in facilitating young people's participation

Enabling young people's participation

1. Why participation?

2. Key concepts in young people's participation

3. Implications for practice

UNICEF on participation rights

- All young people
- A means and an end
- As individuals and as a group
- All matters affecting them
- Not removed by protection
- Different from adults
- Builds empowerment and citizenship
- A right, not an obligation

(Lansdown 2018)



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Participation includes

- Everyday decision making
- Decisions about health, education, transport and housing
- Everyday activities like sports, arts and music
- Administrative and judicial decisions
- Community, country and culture
- Diverse groups of young people

Children's rights

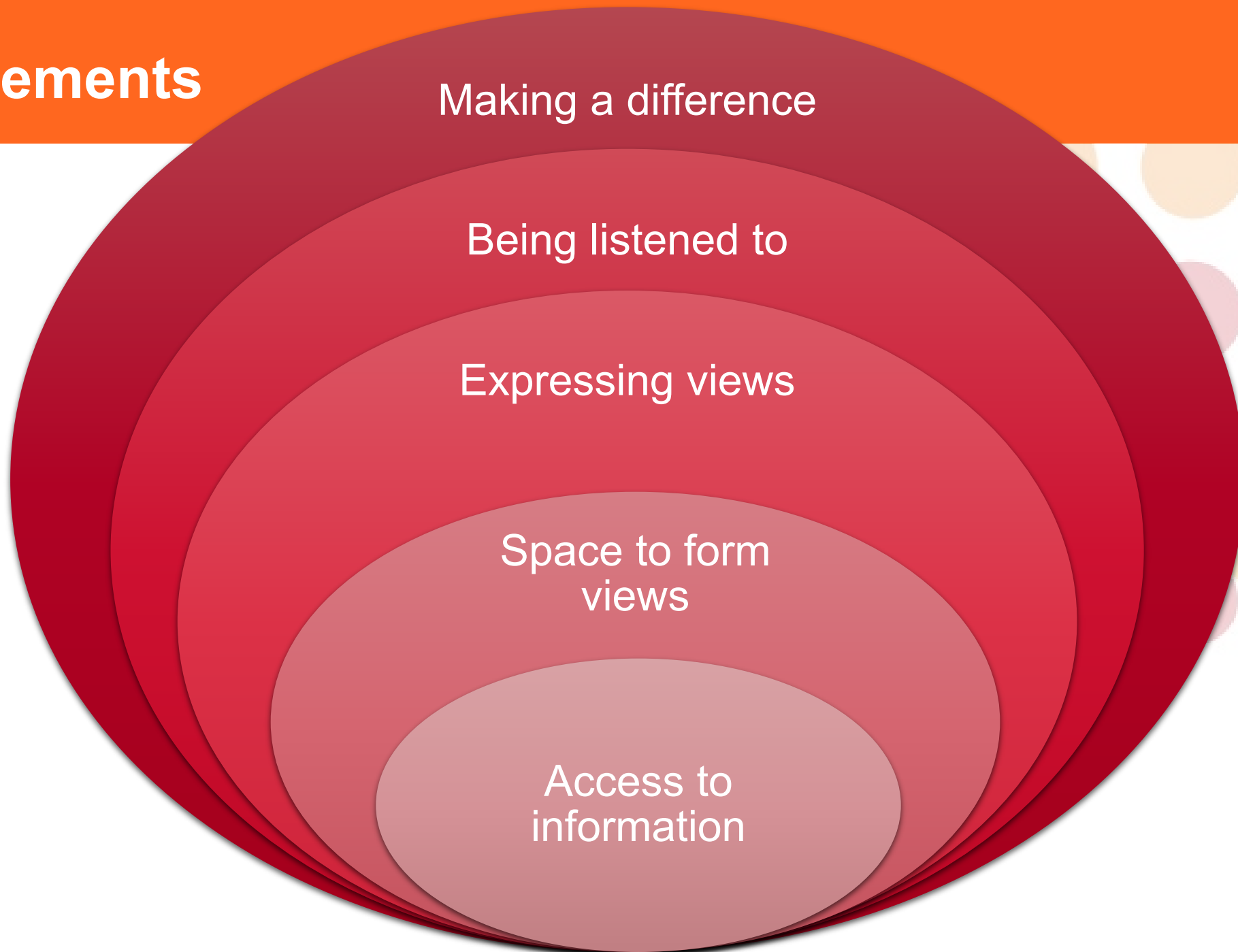
Individual,
community and
organisational
benefits

Why
participation?

Redress tokenism
and build authentic
participation

Ethical practice

Five elements



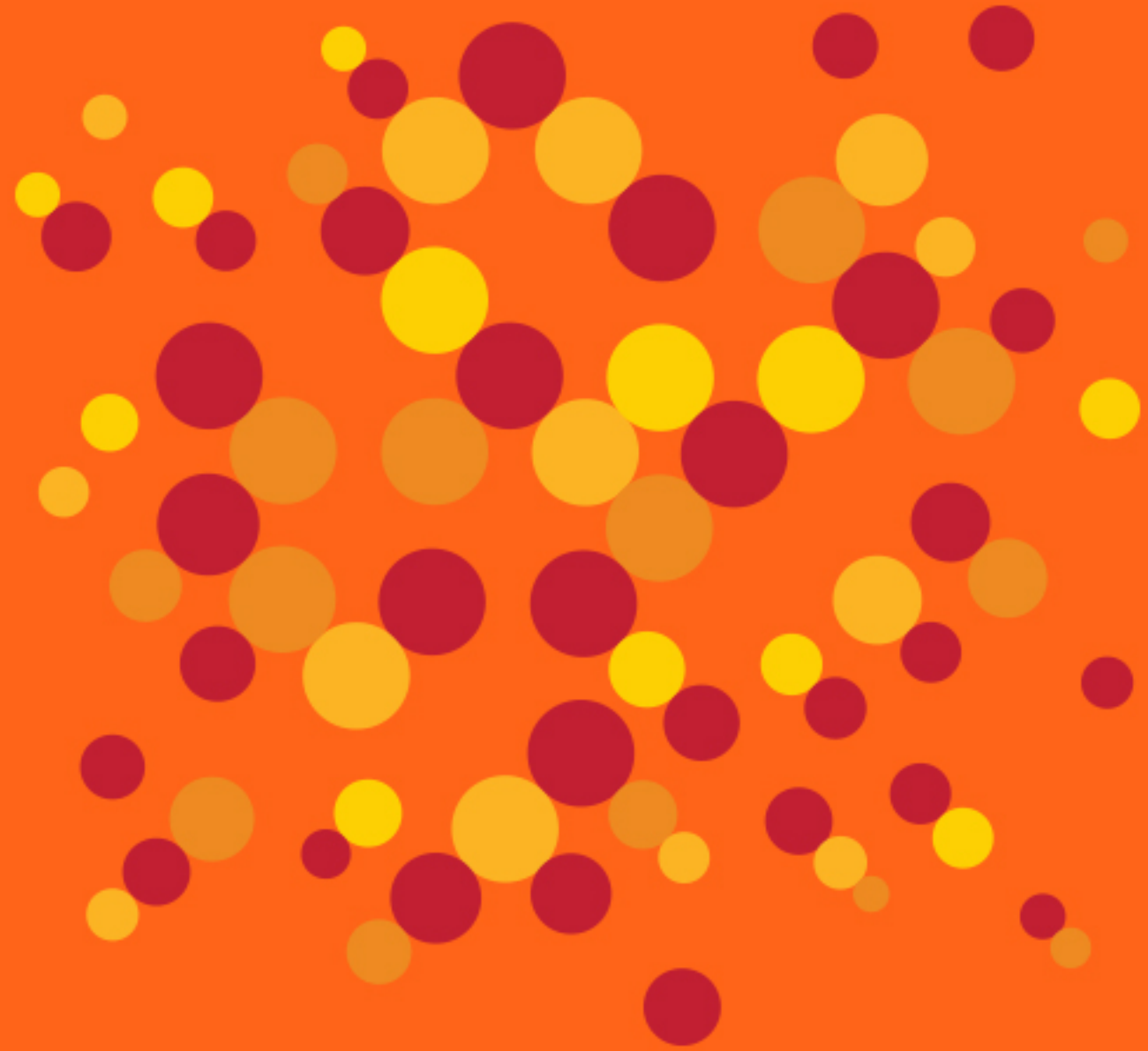
Implications for practice

“A lot of my friends who have been in care say they’d like for the older person — ...to listen to us more. I feel there would be a lot of very strong-minded and very opinionated children who are between a young teen kind of young adult age. Like I feel like they would have a lot to say. I am out of care for like that few months now, and I feel very opinionated about the care system”.

Nika, 18, co-researcher

What practices might you use to enable the participation of young people you work with?

In what ways does organisation enable/constrain those practices?



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Principles for inclusive practice

- Practice **safety**, cultural safety, accessibility and inclusion
- Build young people's **capability** to participate
- Engage in **dialogue** with young people, at the decision-making table
- Recognise **agency** and demonstrate **respect** and take their views seriously
- Practice **accountability**, integrity and transparency


Implications for practice

Reflection is critical

- What are the spoken and unspoken biases/assumptions in the practice of individuals, programs, organisations and systems that work against the participation of young people?
- Binary constructs about the rights discourse can be unhelpful in achieving meaningful participation

“more say - less say”

Critical elements of authentic participation

- Culture
 - Leadership
 - Therapeutic Intent
 - Staff capability
 - Processes that support participation
 - Relationships of trust and respect
 - Planning and preparation of young people and others
- 
- A decorative graphic on the right side of the slide consisting of numerous overlapping circles in shades of pink, orange, and yellow, creating a bokeh-like effect.

Enabling participation in organisations

Thank you!

For more information visit
www.cetc.org.au

Contact: jmitchell@childhood.org.au

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