



we care.

Shifting Culture & Challenging
Assumptions about

Connecting Families

Presented by Barry McGrady, Glen Simpson, Nekia Stewart, Rebecca
Sheils-Earl, Sally Sutton, Paul Baker & Tineal Corrigan.

ALLAMBI CARE

Acknowledgement of Country

Terambamba Woka
Rising Above

Artwork created for Allambi Care by Saretta Fielding



**What does family
mean to me?**

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Barry McGrady
*Cultural Therapeutic
Case Manager*



Glen Simpson
*People Support and
Culture Manager*



Nekia Stewart
Lead Psychologist

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Dr Paul Baker

Director of Clinical Services



Rebecca Sheils-Earl

*Family Search & Engagement
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Sally Sutton

Practice Coach



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*Fostering and
Permanency Manager*

Today's Agenda

What will we cover?

1

'The beginning of our journey'

2

'The start of the Permanency Support Program'

3

'The Statistics'
Cultural and structural

3

'From our Fostering & Permanency Lens'
What do we see, what are we achieving & where to next?

4

'A Clinical perspective, our changes'
How do we support the change needed

5

'T's Story'
The honest recount of the obstacles and triumphs required to reunite this family back.

6

'What now? Where next?'
'How can we enhance'?

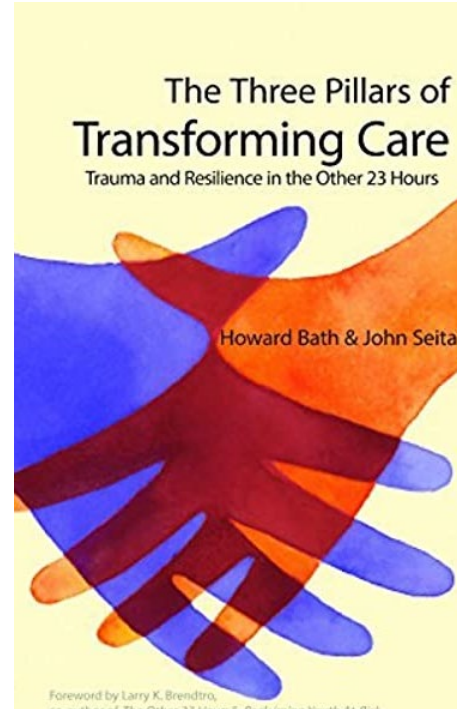
1.

The start of our journey

You can't go back and
change the beginning,
but you can start
where you are and
change the ending.

—C.S. LEWIS





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NBRF Training

OUR NEEDS BASED RESTORATIVE FRAMEWORK

Business as usual

UNIVERSAL NEEDS



INDIVIDUALLY ASSESSED NEEDS

Mental Health
Behavioural
Development

TRAUMA RELATED NEEDS

Felt Safety
Healthy Connections
Adaptive Coping

CIRCLE OF COURAGE

Mastery, Generosity, Independence & Belonging.

POWER

Defaulted position was power over families.

US AND THEM/SINGLE STORY.

Families, youth and services personnel

OUTCOMES

We had everything 'wrapped' around the youth, but they were still not thriving and having poor outcomes post care.

PROTECTORS

Programmed by the sector to be the 'protector' from unsafe family.

The outcomes of “business as usual”

<https://untilthelastchild.com/group-homes-and-aging-out-of-foster-care/>

A VICIOUS CYCLE IN UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES FOR KIDS WHO HAVE BEEN IN THE CARE OF GOVERNMENT



* "Youth Leaving Care – How Do they Fare" by MiSWAA – childhelp.org
* 25 is the New 21
* Conference Board of Canada Report – Success for All
* When Youth Age Out of Care – Where to from There

So what did we do?

TRAINING

- Collaboration with Seneca in 2017 – Kevin Campbell's Family Finding/Seeing Training
- 2022 being mentored as trainers of Family Finding/Seeing Model
- Ongoing internal staff training, support and role modelling

SHIFT THE NARRIATIVE

- Challenge misconceptions and stigma of parents and family
- Acknowledging power imbalances, fear and mistrust
- Challenging implicit bias and stigma

INTERNAL SPECIALISTS

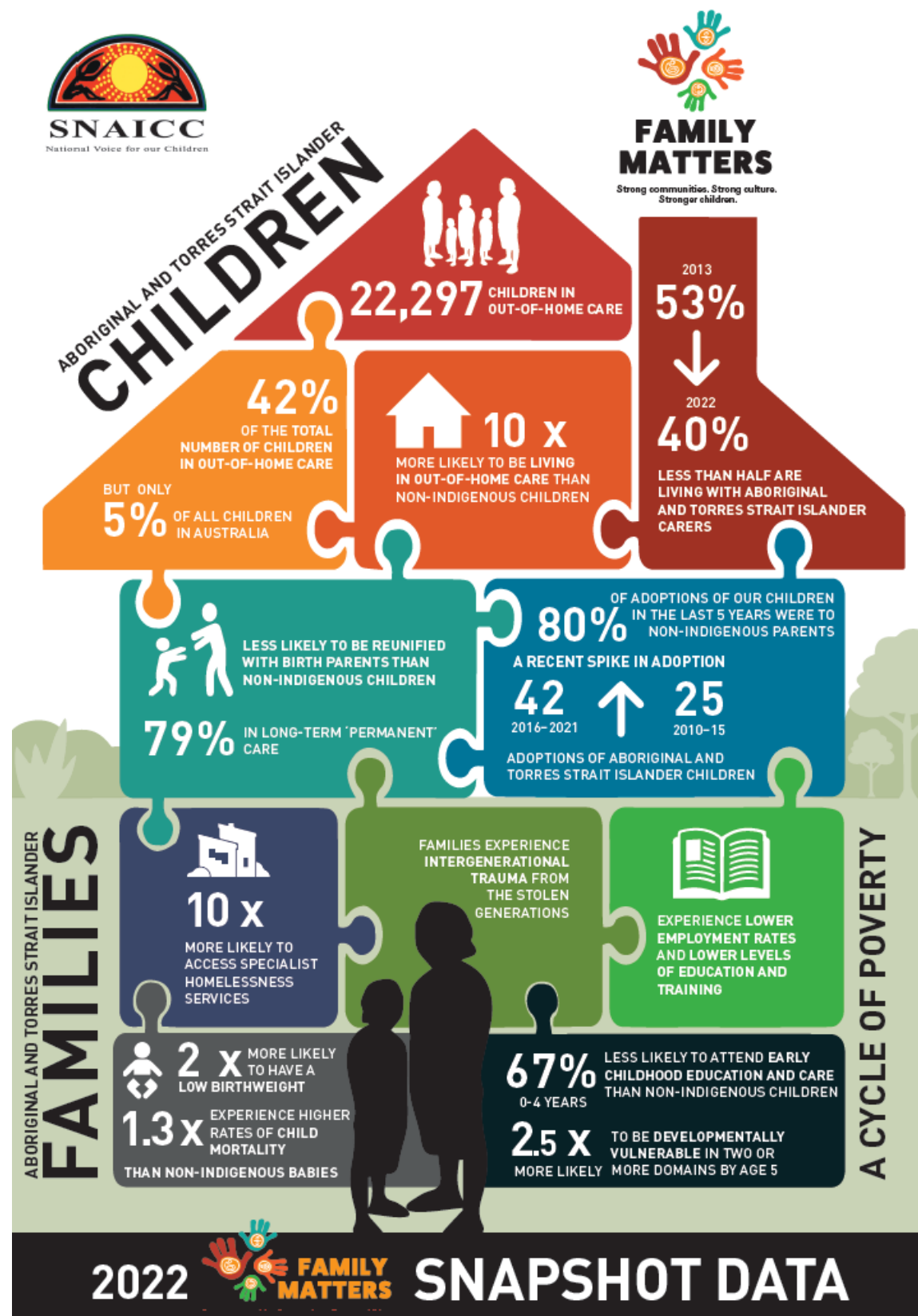
- A team focussed on finding and connecting family to our youth.
- Embedding culture change through training and supervisions.
- Focus on relational permanence

MOTIVATION

- Sharing success stories of family reconnection
- Tapping into the values of staff, that keeps them coming back to work
- Using real language

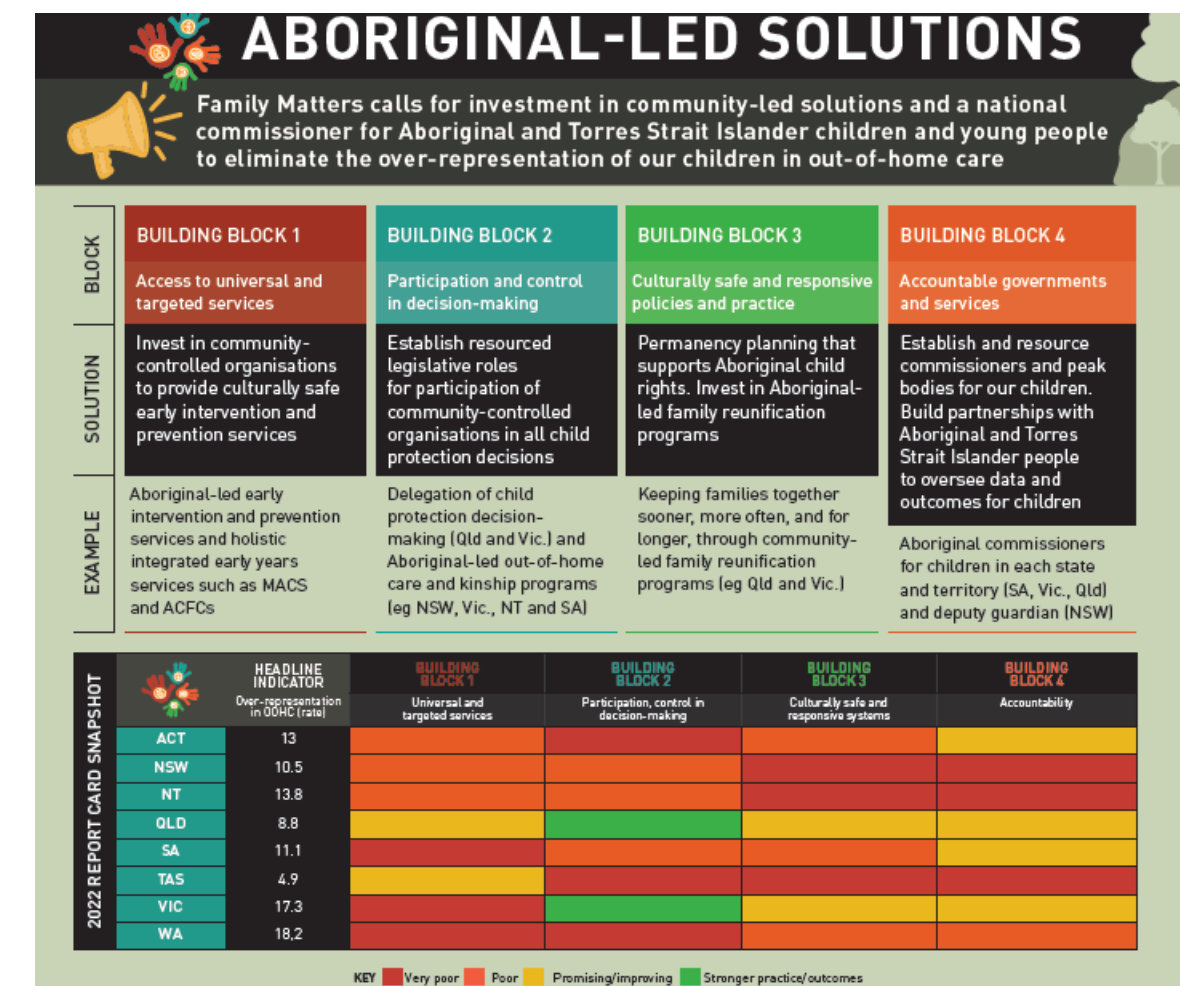
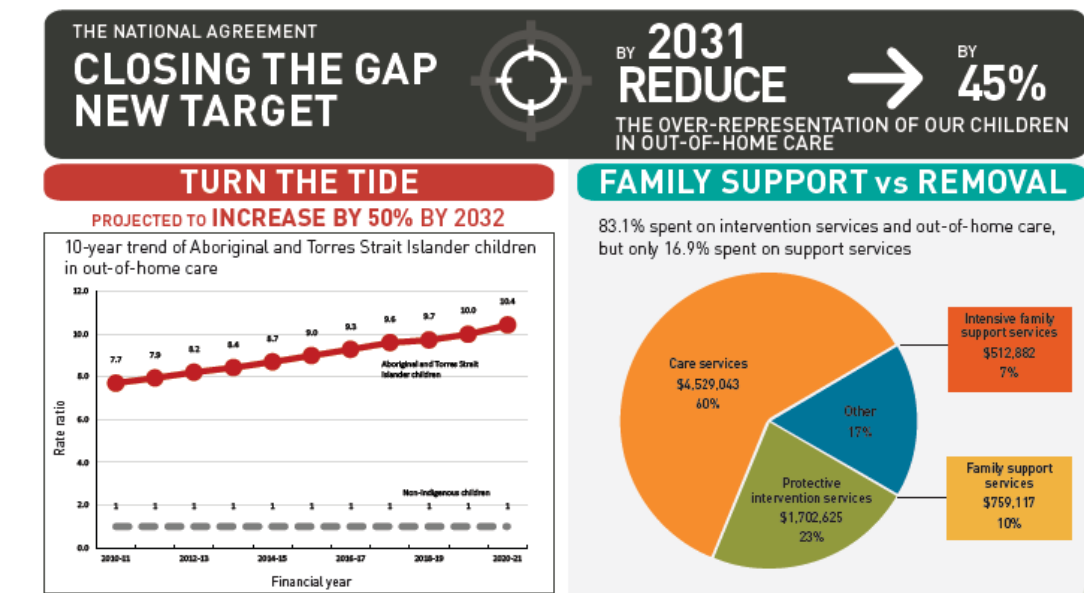


2.
The start of the
Permanency
Support Program



The Permanency Support Program reform was initiated in NSW in October 2017 with **three primary goals** of:

- Fewer entries into care - by keeping families safely together.
- Shorter time in care - by returning children home or finding other permanent homes for more children.
- A better care experience - by supporting children's individual needs and their recovery from trauma.





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The iceberg holds a meaningful place in Allambi Care's framework given its historical ties to the core training and philosophies of the organisation.

By focusing on the surface we see only a small part of the picture for a child or young person. We often see the challenges rather than the needs of a positive environment which creates a therapeutic milieu that is the basis of positive, safe and healing relationships.

The '*Bergy Seltzer*' forum will provide the opportunity to explore what is beneath the surface.

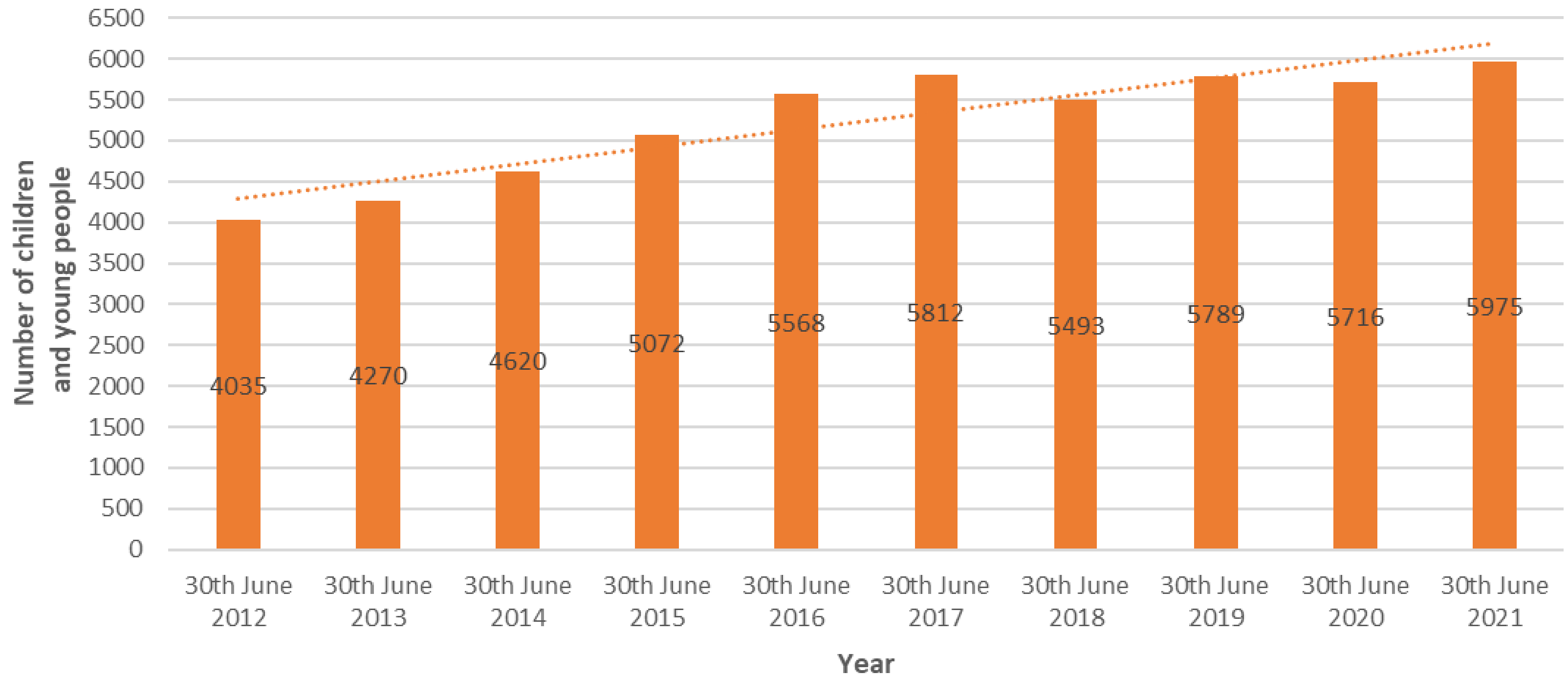
Through a comprehensive assessment process and engaging a multidisciplinary panel of experts the *Bergy Seltzer* will provide a forum for creative discussion, questioning, collaboration.

Idea sharing will support positive outcomes for the children and young people in Allambi's Care.

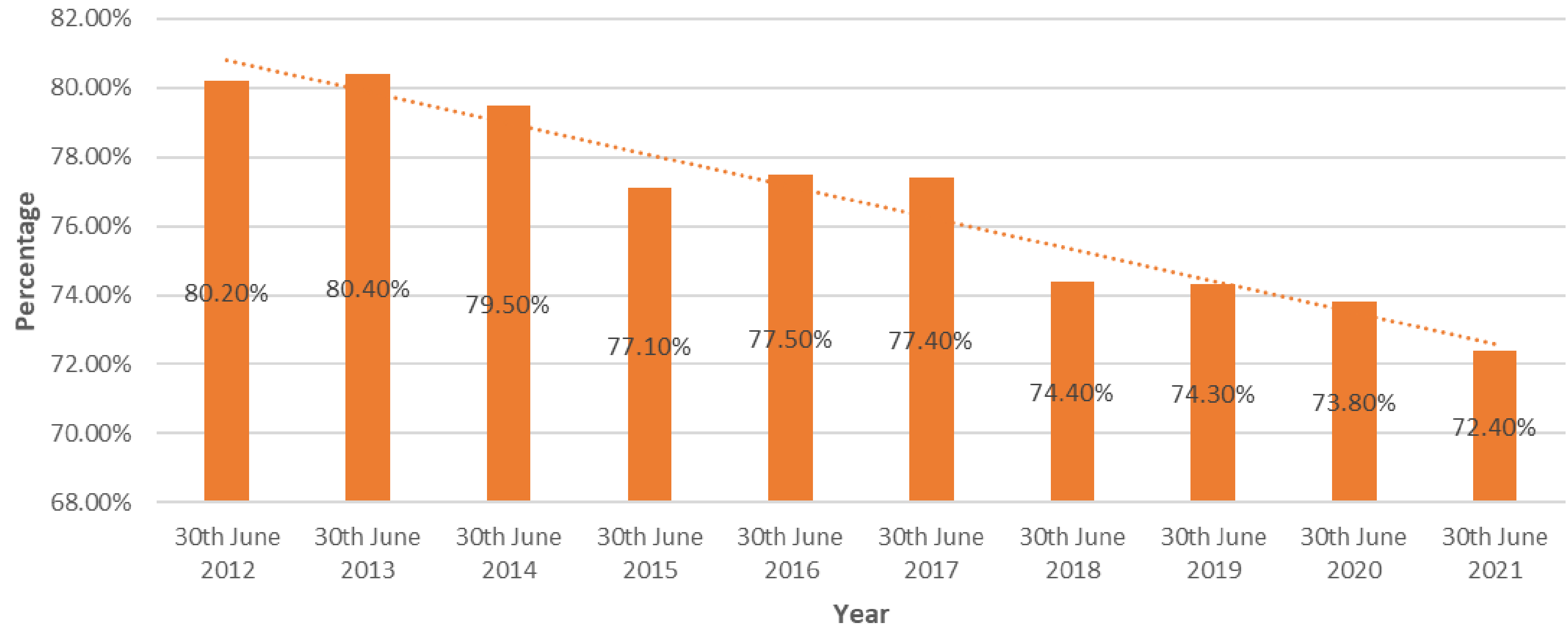
**bergy
seltzer**
noun

the continuous fizzing or sizzling sound which is attributed to the breaking out of air bubbles from a melting iceberg

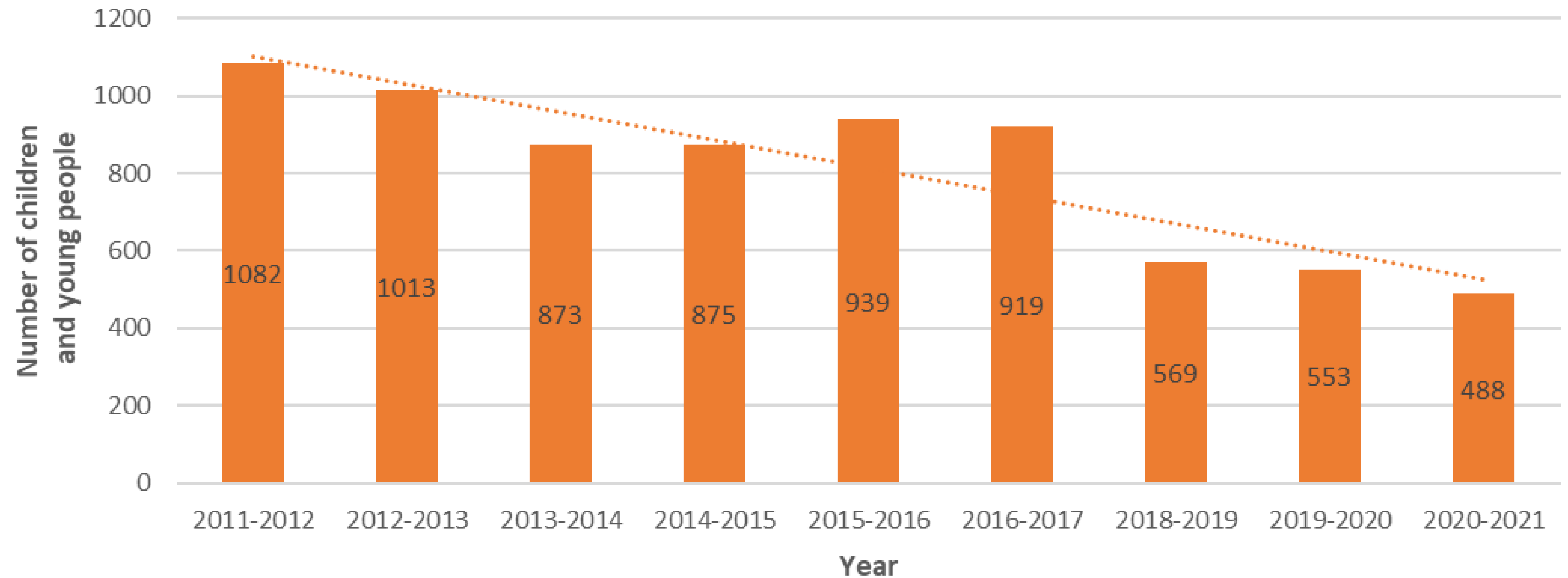
Aboriginal children and young people in statutory out-of-home care (OOHC)



Percentage of Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care (OOHC) who were placed with a relative or an Aboriginal caregiver



Children and young people reunified with parents from 2011/12 - 2020/21



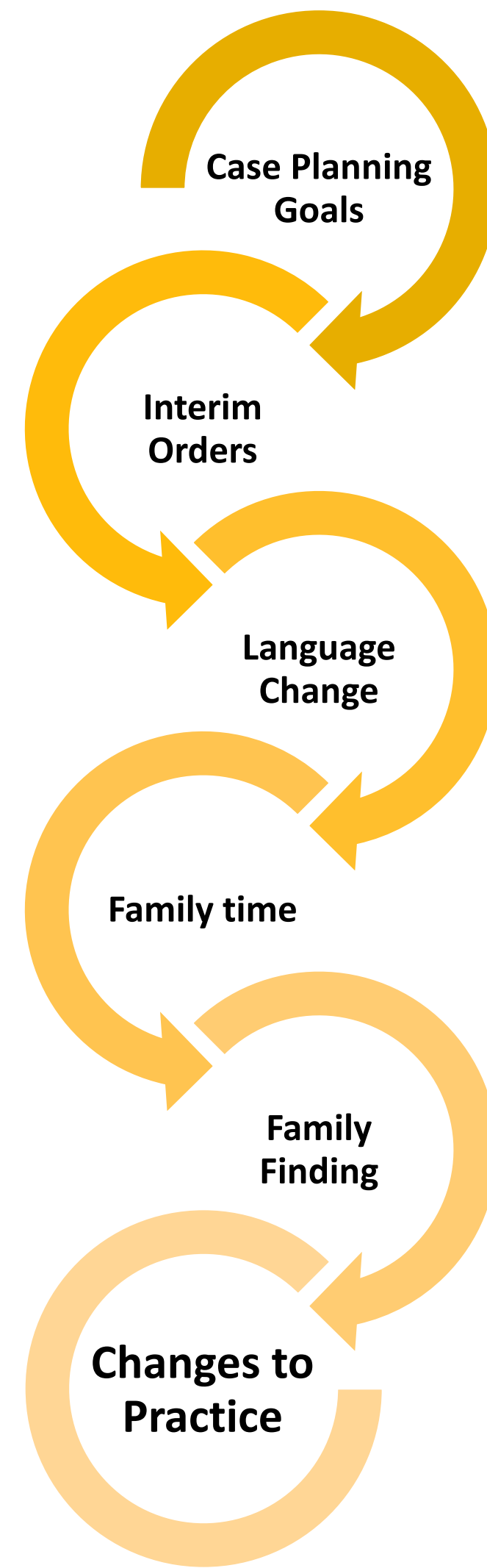
3. From our Fostering and Permanency lens



What is Foster Care?

- Support families by caring for children while parents get help to change.
- For a period of time, foster carers take on the responsibilities of a parent to provide, safe, nurturing and secure family environment for children and young people needing care
- Foster Carers are involved in the decision and planning for the child's care along with family and other important people in the child or young person's life
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people who come into out-of-home care must be placed according to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child and Young Person Placement Principles

The changes we made due to the PSP

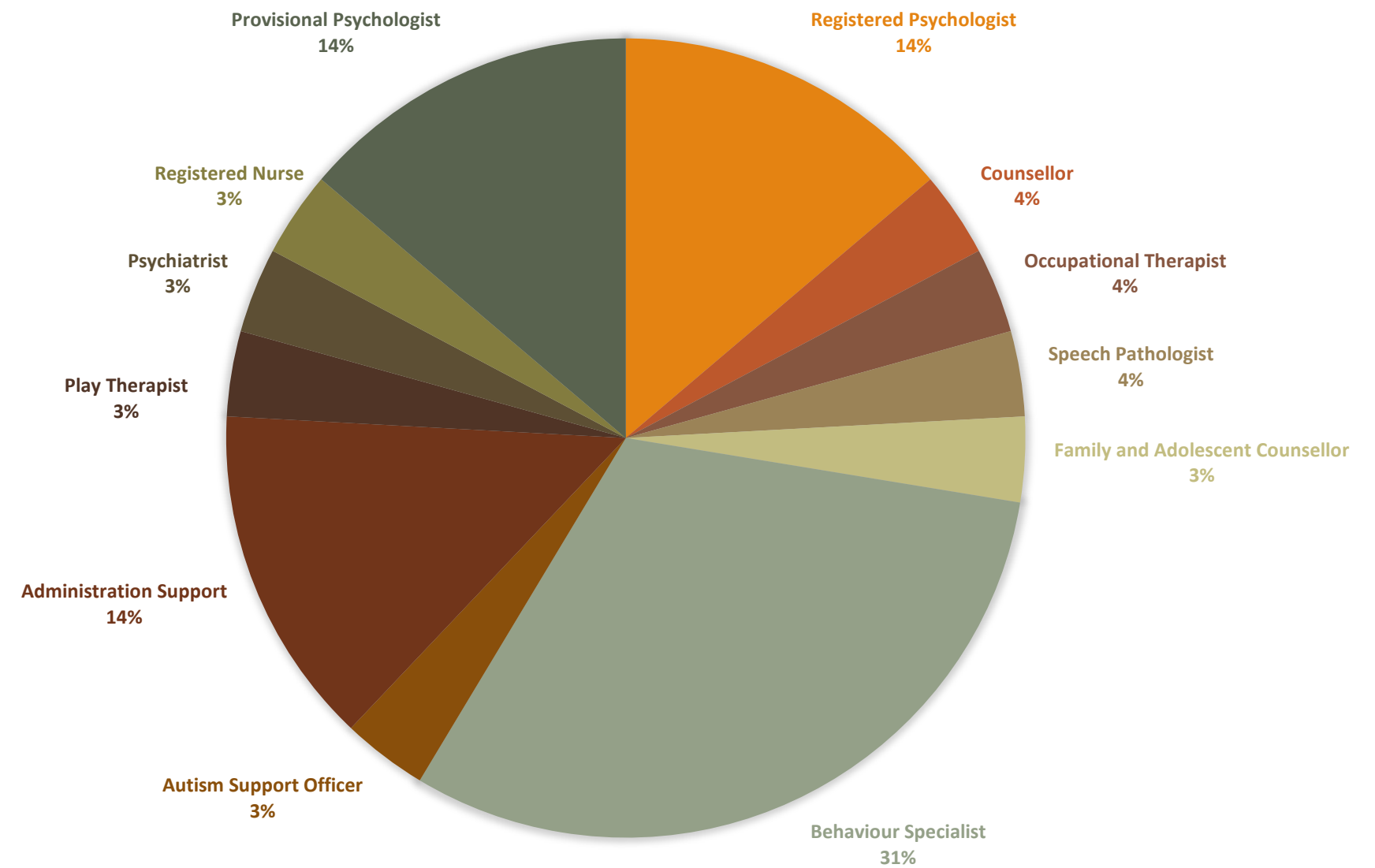


4.

A clinical perspective & changes



Clinical Services: Our Team





Services Provided

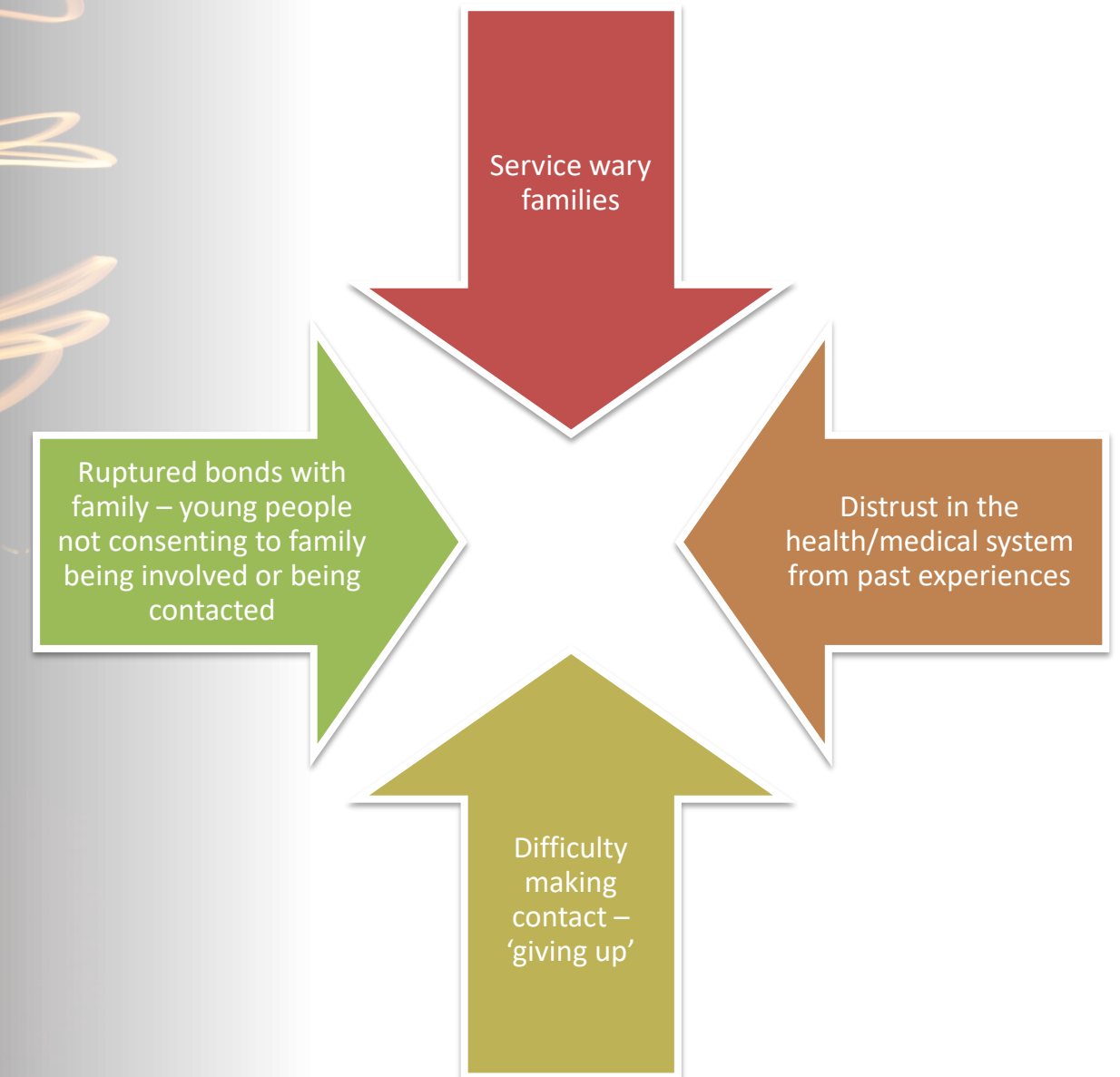
- Therapy
- Psychological Assessment
- Behaviour Support
- Skills Sessions
- Parenting Programs
- Risk Assessments
- Psychiatry – medication review and management
- Speech and Language Assessments and Interventions
- Consultant Services
- Training and Support

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Old vs. New Way of Thinking – Clinical Perspective

- Limited involvement with family
- Language used – “Family Contact”
- Narrow focus
- Clinicians have direct involvement with family
 - Consultation when writing behaviour support plans
 - Consultation when conducting psychologist assessments
 - Consultation during Psychiatric Appointments
 - Invitations to attend client appointments (where appropriate)
- Advocacy for reunification, restoration and close family bonds
- Change in language

Challenges/Barriers Faced



An honest story that demonstrates that the power of connection can preserve through assumptions and will challenge and change perspective for many.



Structures & Frameworks

Families contributing to
decisions made about the
care of their children

Partnering with Parents,
family and care survivors

**We see hope, but we
know that there are
changes still needing to
be made.**





A photograph of three children in a park setting, performing a yoga-like pose. In the foreground, a young girl with dark hair, wearing a black long-sleeved shirt with a colorful graphic and black pants, is in a low lunge with her right leg forward and her arms extended. Behind her, a boy in a green hoodie and blue pants is also in a similar pose. In the background, another child in a blue and white shirt is visible, also participating. The scene is outdoors on grass with trees and a park structure in the background.

WHAT NOW?

What are we doing now?

- Continually embedding across all departments
- Being active advocates
- Holding alignment conversations
- Challenging language and assumptions
- Focus on respectful and dignity driven practice
- Valuing the expertise that family bring to the table
- Continually sharing experiences and knowledge among teams
- Supporting and celebrating the staff who are doing this work daily

Where next?

What are we still working on?

- Embedding practice across the sector & with government bodies
- Family at the table of every meeting for their child
- For the system to truly be a temporary support rather than a long-term sentence
- Parents and youth survivors being employed as lived experience experts

The more healthy relationships a child has, the more likely he will be to recover from trauma and thrive. Relationships are the agents of change and the most powerful therapy is human love.

Thoughts & Questions?