

# Lived Experience Design Project

## Combined Workshop #1 Early Help

# Acknowledgement of Country

The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare and Parent Advisory Group would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the past, present, and emerging traditional custodians and Elders of this country on which we work.

We also acknowledge the injustices and trauma suffered as a result of European settlement, the Stolen Generations, and other policies such as the forced removal of children from their families, communities, culture and land.

We respect the resilience of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the face of this trauma and respect their right to, and aspiration for, self-determination and empowerment.

# Agenda

**Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country (2min)**

**Introduction and Bios (3min)**

**Our brief: How could Early Help be improved? (10min)**

- What we know about the Roadmap for Reform
- What we learnt about Early Help

**Our Circles of Support vs Standard Model of Support (10min)**

- Our key findings

**Design Solutions (45min)**

**Question and Answer (30min)**

# Our brief

- To identify ways in which Early help could be improved.

# Our achievements

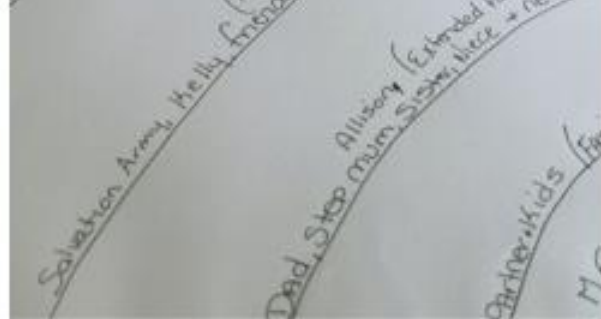
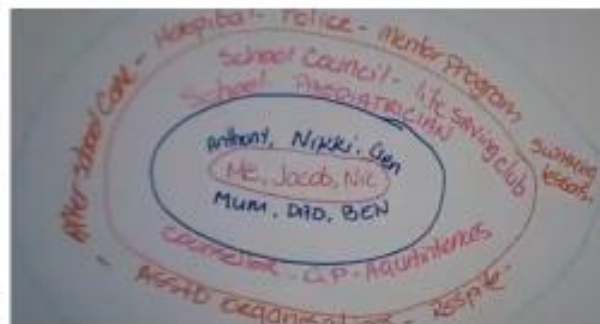
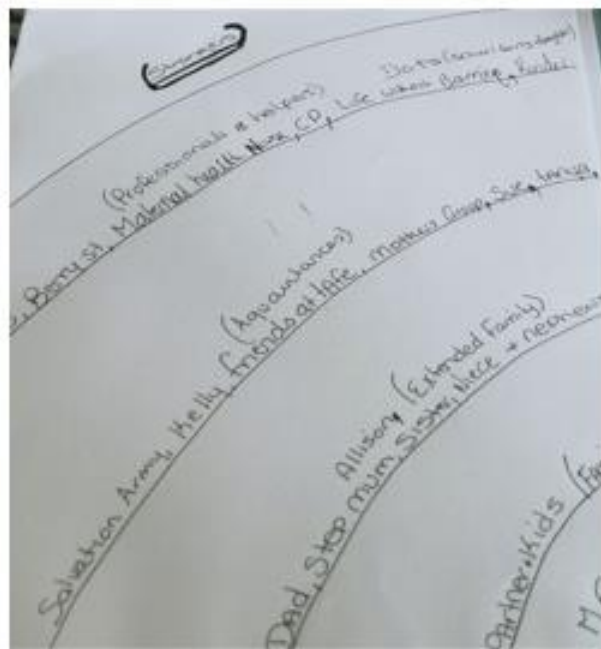
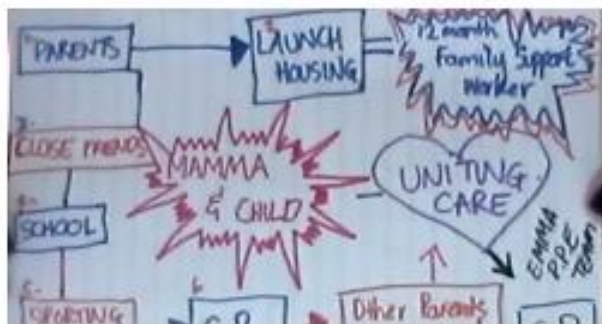
- We understand Early Help, Roadmap for Reform and the goal for Early Help.
- We reflected collectively on our lived experiences and our support networks.
- We developed key insights into how Early Help could be improved.

# What we know about the Roadmap for Reform

- Aims to build a better future for children, young people and families.
- Recognises that the focus of service delivery and investment has been on the crisis end of the system.
- Recognises there is not enough capacity to respond to risks and needs earlier on.
- Acknowledges that many families known to Child Protection, including Aboriginal families, do not access universal and targeted services.

# What we learnt about Early Help

- Early Help is a **shared** responsibility across the service system to support people and families with emerging needs
- Early Help aims to strengthen people's capacity to:
  - identify their support needs
  - build on their strengths
  - self-manage where appropriate/feasible
  - effectively harness and leverage their personal and community capital and resources
  - access help when they need it.



# Circles of Support

# Circles of Support

YOU

\*Family – dad, mum and extended  
\*Alison – extended family

\*Therapist - Joanne

Friends

\*Partner

\*Children

CP Lawyer

Friends

Uniting

\*School

\*Parent from school

TAFE teachers and other students – community

Other services

Family

Vinnie's

\*Mentor/friend

Kelly, \*TAFE friends, mother's group

Sue and Tania

\*Family GP Salvos'

\*DFFH – child protection

CAFS \*Therapist

\*MCH

\*Respite

\*Berry St and Life without Barriers, Gate Ways, Alfred Carers

Police and hospital

\*Child Care centre

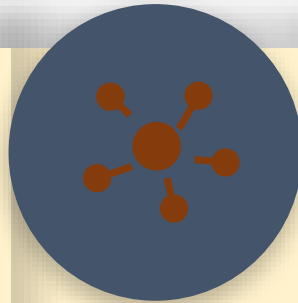
Housing Support worker



# Standard model of support



Early Help  
Safety Net of  
Support  
for Children  
and Families  
Experiencing  
Vulnerability



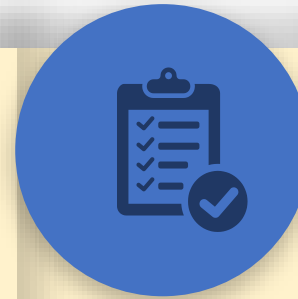
Most important  
supports

Parents, extended  
family members,  
children, partners,  
friends, online  
support groups  
and/or local  
Aboriginal  
community



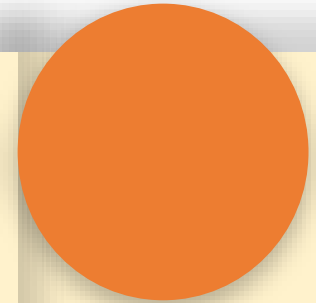
Professional  
community  
supports

School teachers  
and school  
wellbeing staff,  
housing workers,  
early childhood  
educators,  
Aboriginal cultural  
supports,  
employment,  
TAFE/uni teachers  
and wellbeing  
staff, peer  
supports,  
therapists, family  
GP, MCH, respite  
carers, mentors  
and online support  
groups



Specific  
targeted  
specialist  
supports

Centrelink case  
workers, NDIS, AOD  
services, therapists  
and child support  
teams, Berry St,  
Gateways, Life  
Without Barriers,  
Alfred Carers,  
Parents Next and  
family violence  
support workers



Statutory  
Services  
Support

Police and  
lawyers, child  
protection,  
placement  
prevention teams,  
parole, hospitals,  
family group  
conferencing and  
Centrelink  
administration

# What we noticed

- Individual circles of support – small numbers of extended family members or friends.
- Inner most circles – included paid professionals.
- Universal and community services – designed with the “average” or “typical” person or family in mind.
- Designed as “add-ons” for those with substantial resources, including a large network of family and friends, who are themselves well-resourced.

# In our experience

- Early Help is framed by the department as assisting parents to better identify our needs and to make better use of the resources available to us.
- The definition of Early Help assumes that families experiencing vulnerability are not making the most of the resources available to us because we are unknowing, unwilling or afraid.

“There are very few families who are not doing the best they can with that they have, given the circumstances they are under.”

– Sherie, Family Support Worker, Anglicare

- Families experiencing vulnerability are often excellent resource managers.
- We need services that are trauma-informed, accessible, respectful, culturally safe, and that better cater to our needs.

# 8 Design solutions

## Early help workforces **MUST**

1. Be **adequately trained, resourced and equipped** for providing a safer and more inclusive service for vulnerable parents and families, including Aboriginal families.
2. View parents experiencing vulnerabilities with **positive regard, identify strengths** and work with parents to achieve desired outcomes.
3. **Collaborate** with each other to wrap around the entire family and provide support.

## Early help service offerings **MUST**

4. Be **consistently available**, with **alternatives** provided during holiday periods or periods of staff leave, and existing clients linked in with these.
5. Be **flexible and responsive** to an individual family's needs.
6. Be **timely and adequately** resourced.
7. Include programs that **connect** isolated parents who lack extended family or other close supports.
8. Include **respite** for isolated parents in need.

1. Early help workforces must be adequately trained, resourced and equipped for providing a safer and more inclusive service for vulnerable parents and families, including Aboriginal families.

2. Early help workforces **MUST** view parents experiencing vulnerabilities with positive regard, identify strengths and work with parents to achieve desired outcomes.

### 3. Early help workforces must work with each other to wrap around the entire family and provide support.

“Excellent service looks like trained professionals using their skills and experience and resources to provide practical assistance to families – not having meetings discussing what they feel the family needs and expecting families to be able to meet those expectations.”

Sherie, Family Support Worker, Anglicare

4. Early help workforces **MUST** be flexible and responsive to an individual family's needs.



5. Early help service provision must be timely and adequately resourced.

6. Early help programs must continue throughout holiday periods, or alternatives provided, with existing clients linked in with these.

7. Early help programs  
MUST include programs to  
connect isolated parents  
who lack extended family or  
other close supports.

8. Early help must include respite programs for isolated parents in need.

# Thank you