



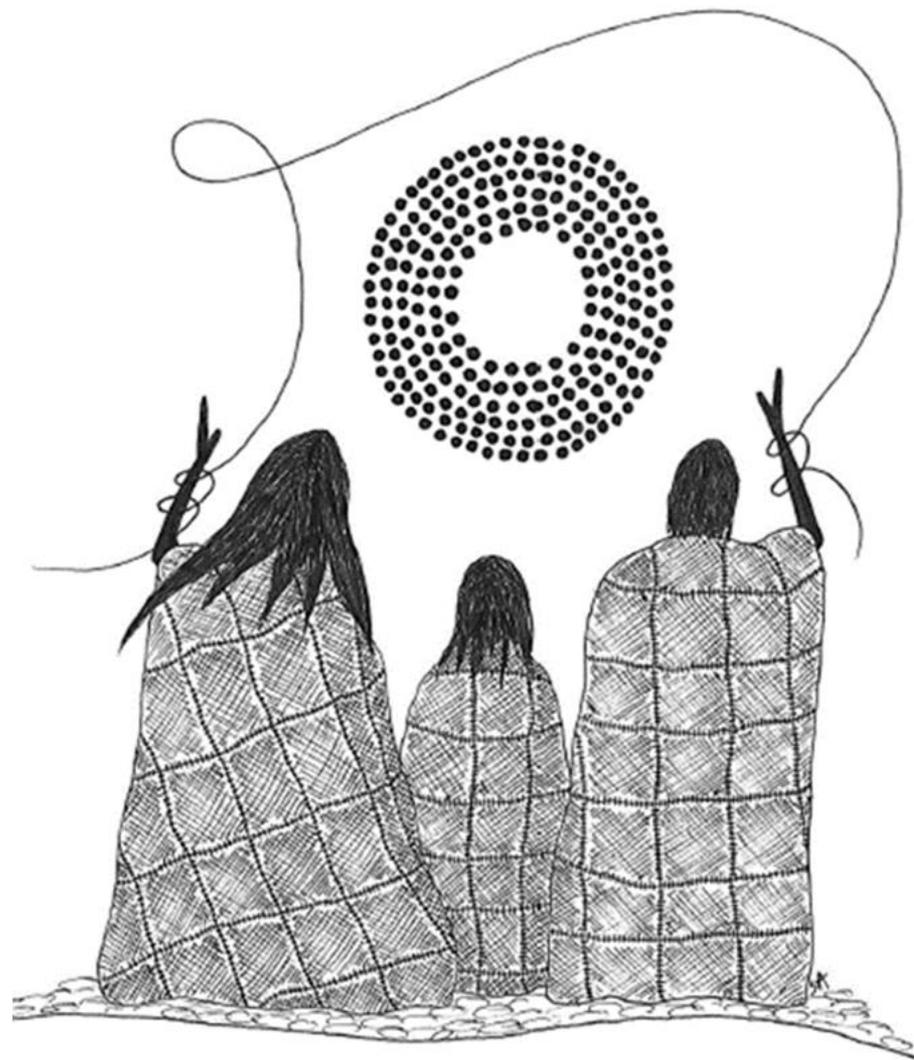
**CRITICAL ROLE OF MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH
NURSES IN SUPPORTING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES
STRAIT ISLANDER FAMILIES TO TRANSFORM
CYCLES OF INTER-GENERATIONAL TRAUMA**

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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

1. Importance of perinatal period for addressing intergenerational trauma
2. How can we Heal the Past by Nurturing the Future? what community have told us
3. Scaling up: Replanting the Birthing Trees

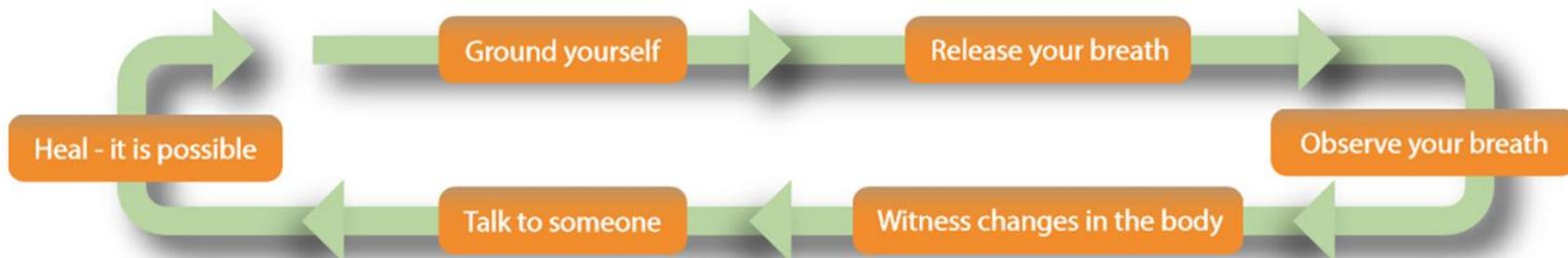


Songs of Strength, Ink on paper, 2018 © Shawana Andrews

A father, mother and child wearing possum skin cloaks and looking to the ancestors and past generations. The parents are connected with a songline which gives them strength. The stones below represent a strong foundation and the stitching on the cloaks represent the relational connectedness of Aboriginal people and worldview.

Self-Care for Managing “Triggers”

GROWTH – Ground, Release, Observe, Witness, Talk and Heal



www.wealli.com.au

STAYING GROUNDED AND SELF-CARE WHEN TALKING ABOUT TRAUMA



3 THINGS YOU
CAN SEE



2 THINGS YOU
CAN HEAR

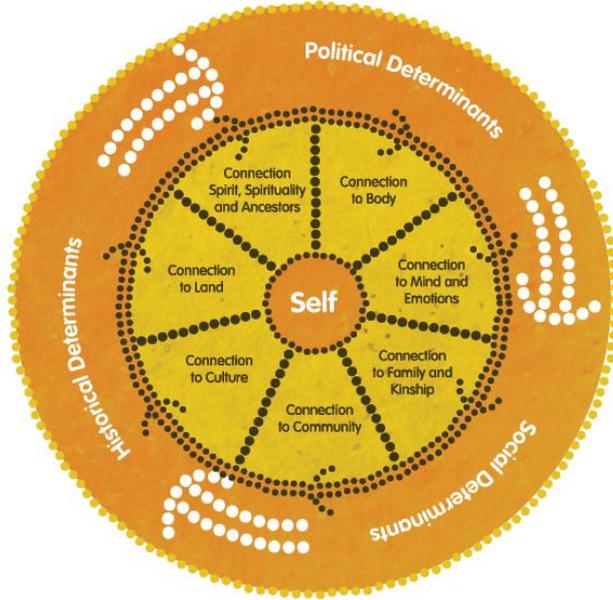


1 THING YOU
CAN FEEL

1. IMPORTANCE OF PERINATAL
PERIOD IN LIFE COURSE
APPROACHES TO ADDRESSING
INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA



Determinants of Social and Emotional Wellbeing



Artist: Tristan Schultz, RelativeCreative. Reference: Gee, Dudgeon, Schultz, Hart & Kelly, 2013
on behalf of the Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association



**SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL
WELLBEING OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES
STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN HAVE BEEN
NURTURED FOR MILLENNIA**

RECLAIMING THE WISE PERSON



Founding members of CATSINaM (1997)

Source: <https://news.csu.edu.au/latest-news/prestigious-appointment-for-female-first-nations-leader>

Leadership

Article

Leadership
2016, Vol. 12(3) 346–363
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Traditional midwifery or ‘wise women’ models of leadership: Learning from Indigenous cultures

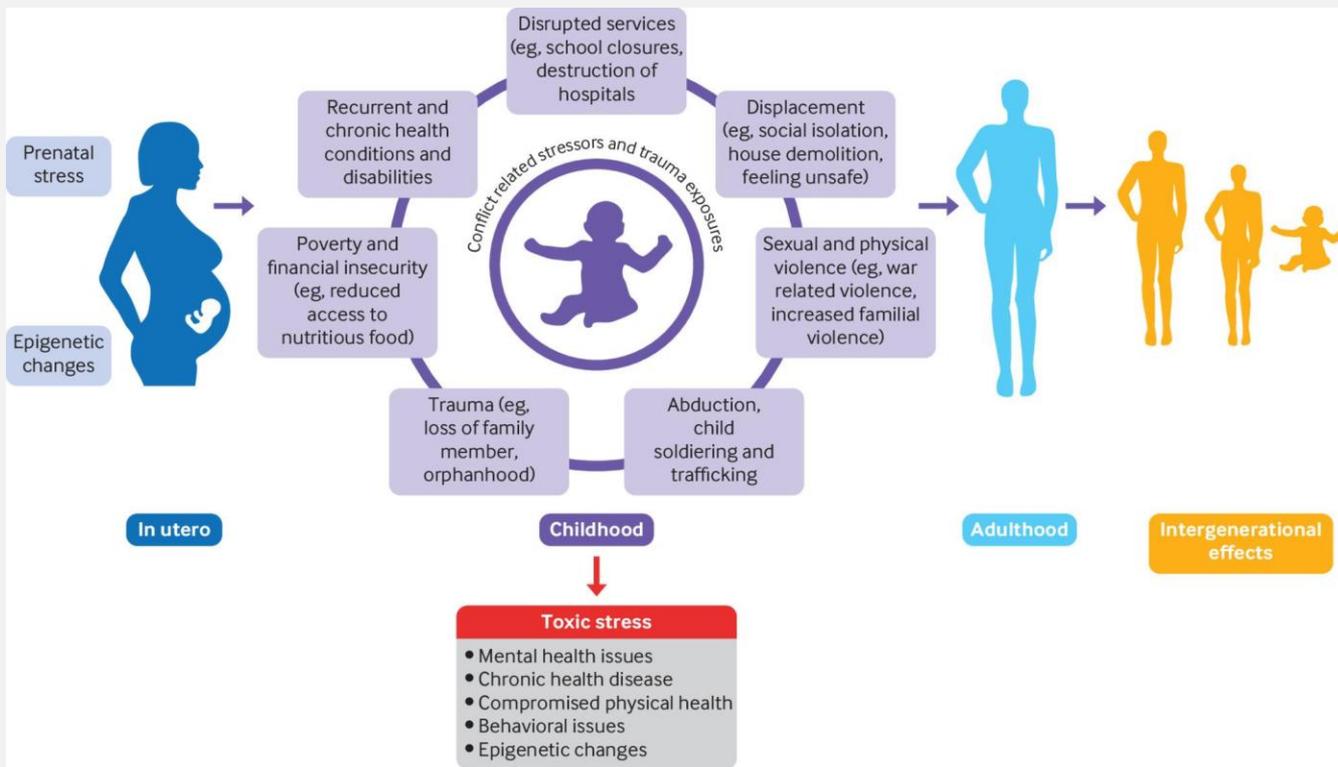
*‘...Lead so the mother is helped, yet still free and in charge...’
Lao Tzu, 5th century BC*

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Colonisation

Overt violence

Covert structural violence
directly on families

Psychosocial domination & restricted
access to social determinants of health

COLONIZATION AND VIOLENCE LEAD TO
TOXIC STRESS, COMPLEX TRAUMA AND
INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

WHAT IS COMPLEX PTSD/ TRAUMA?

PTSD & Complex PTSD symptoms

Sense of threat

Avoidance

Re-experiencing

PTSD

Interpersonal
disturbances

Negative self-
concept

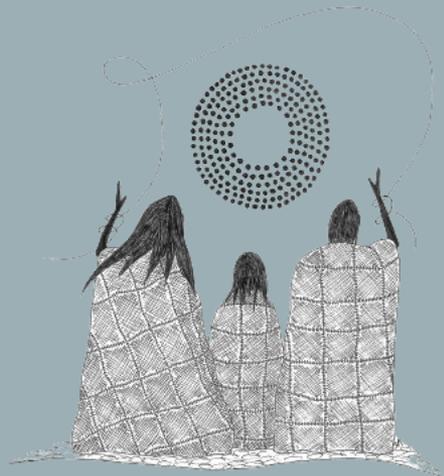
Affect
dysregulation

Sense of threat

Avoidance

Re-experiencing

Complex PTSD

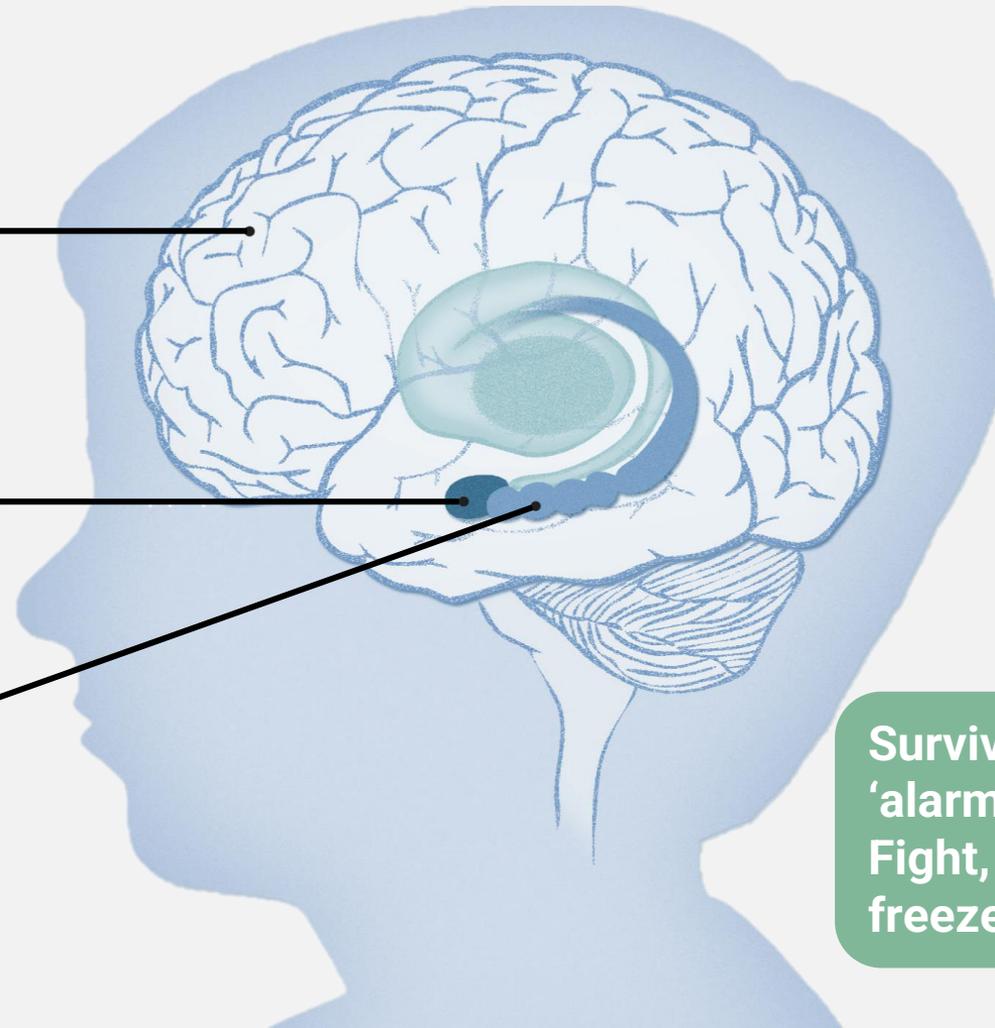


COMPLEX TRAUMA IS CAUSED BY SUSTAINED THREAT
FROM WHICH SEPARATION IS NOT POSSIBLE

Prefrontal cortex
Control centre

Amygdala
Emotional response

Hippocampus
Emotions, links
memory of event to
context

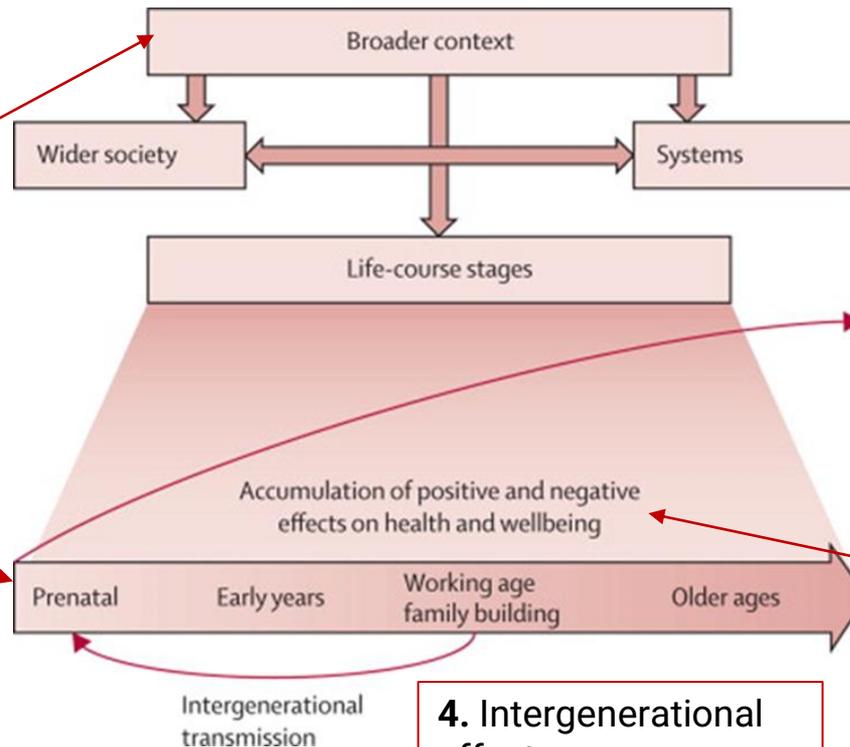


Survival or
'alarm system' -
Fight, flight or
freeze

COMPOUNDING INTERGENERATIONAL EFFECTS OF COMPLEX TRAUMA ON HEALTH EQUITIES

2. A range of socio-ecological influences compound effects of violence across all life-course stages

1. Historical violence has led to increased rate of direct exposure to violence and child maltreatment



5. Compounding effects on health equities, as exposure to violence concentrates in some communities and not others.

3. Increased health risks and decreased effectiveness of preventive interventions

4. Intergenerational effects

12 Children are not overrepresented in the child protection system



Closing the Gap Target: By 2031, to reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in OOHHC by 45%

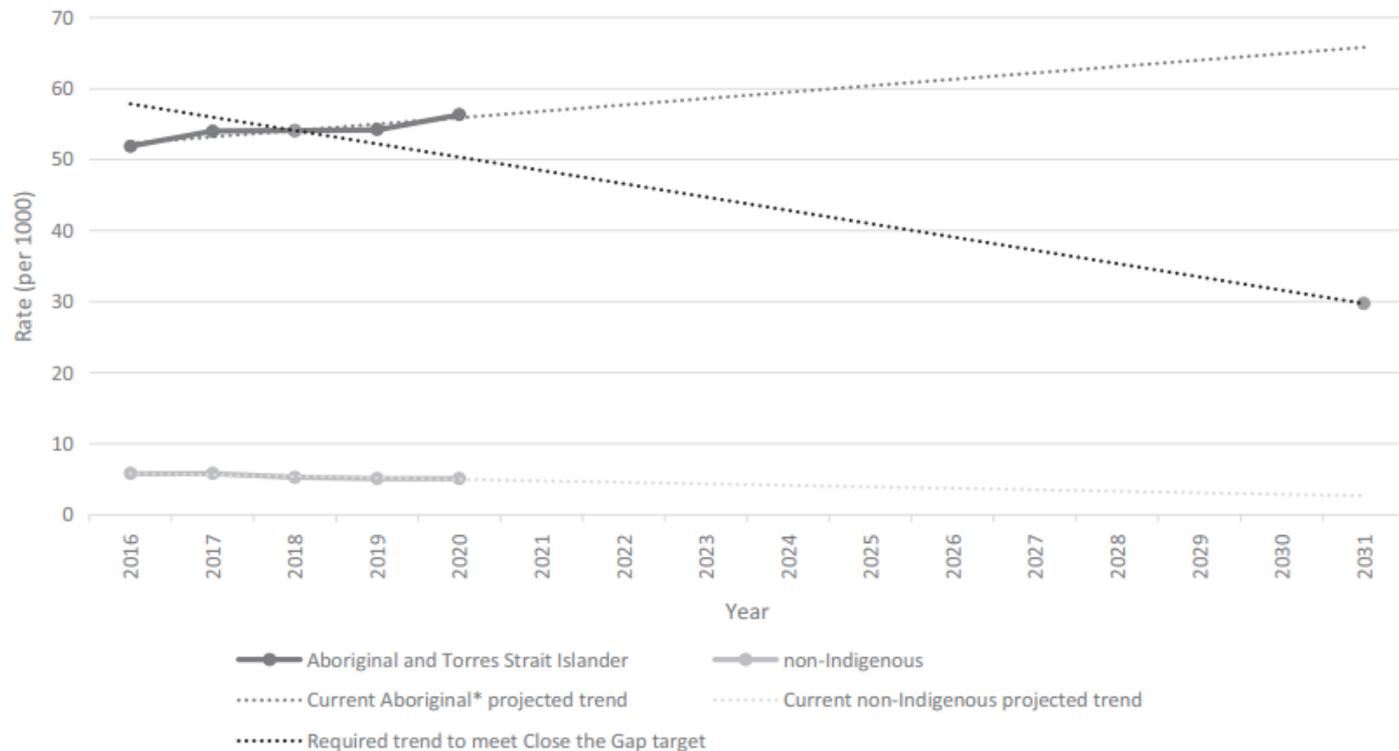
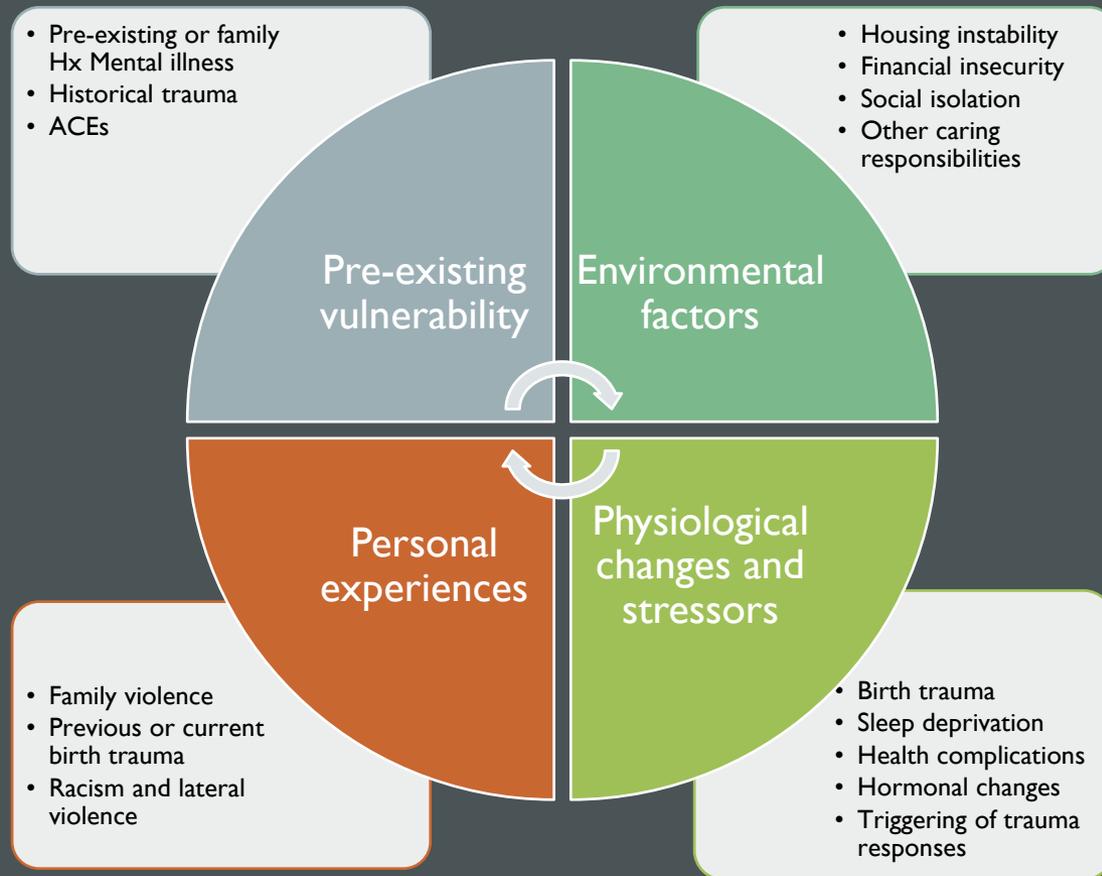


FIGURE 1 Australian children in out-of-home care at 30 June each year, by Indigenous status, with projections based on current trends

- SAFEST Start. <https://theconversation.com/first-nations-families-need-support-to-stay-together-before-we-create-another-stolen-generation-159131>
- Chamberlain et al. Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Families to Stay Together from the Start (SAFeST Start): Urgent call to action to address crisis in infant removals. Australian Journal of Social Issues, 2022. 1– 21.

PREGNANCY AND BIRTH: A UNIQUE LIFE-COURSE OPPORTUNITY FOR HEALING AND PREVENTING INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF TRAUMA

- 1. Convergence of risk** for experiencing complex trauma related distress during perinatal care and attachment needs of baby.
- 2. Potential to disrupt the cycle of trauma** through loving relationships that promote healing ('earned security').
- 3. Frequent scheduled contacts** with service providers for the first time since childhood for most people.

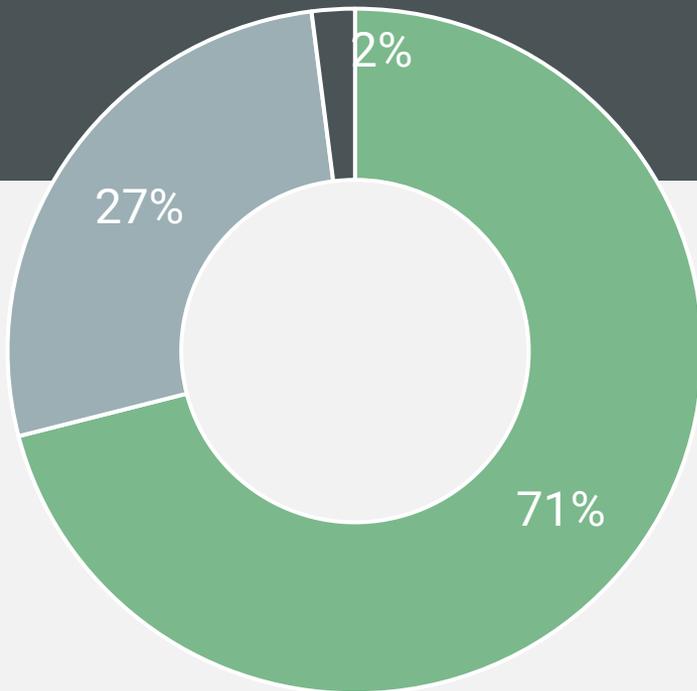


<https://mspgh.unimelb.edu.au/centres-institutes/onemda/research-group/indigenous-health-equity-unit/research/HPNF>

Chamberlain C, Gee G, Harfield S, Campbell S, Brennan S, et al. (2019) Parenting after a history of childhood maltreatment: A scoping review and map of evidence in the perinatal period. PLOS ONE. 2019;14(3): e0213460. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0213460>

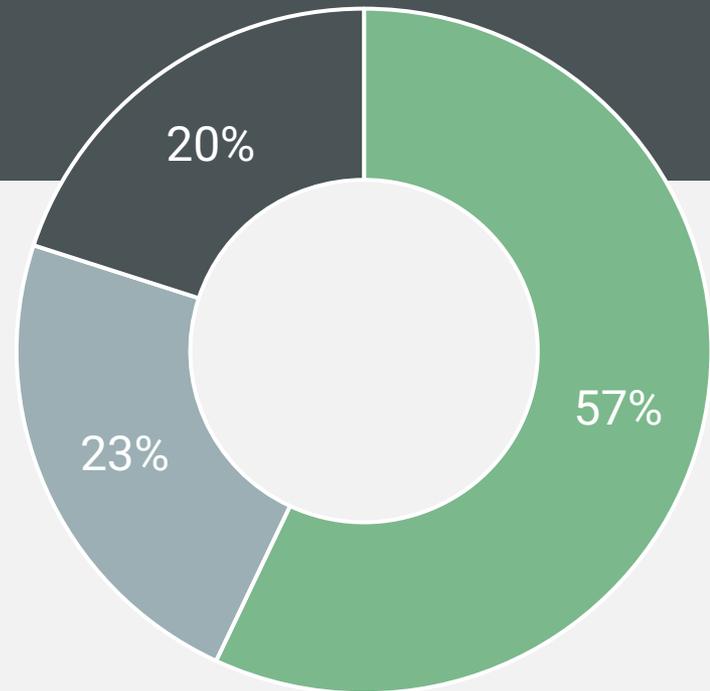
SERVICE PROVIDERS KNOW TRAUMA IS IMPORTANT BUT DON'T FEEL ABLE TO ADDRESS IT

How significant do you think trauma, stress & grief are?



Very significant Significant Neutral

How satisfied are you with the ability of your service to address these issues?



Satisfied Dissatisfied Neutral

2. HOW CAN WE HELP FAMILIES
TO HEAL THE PAST BY NURTURING THE
FUTURE:
CO-DESIGN AND PILOT KEY LEARNINGS



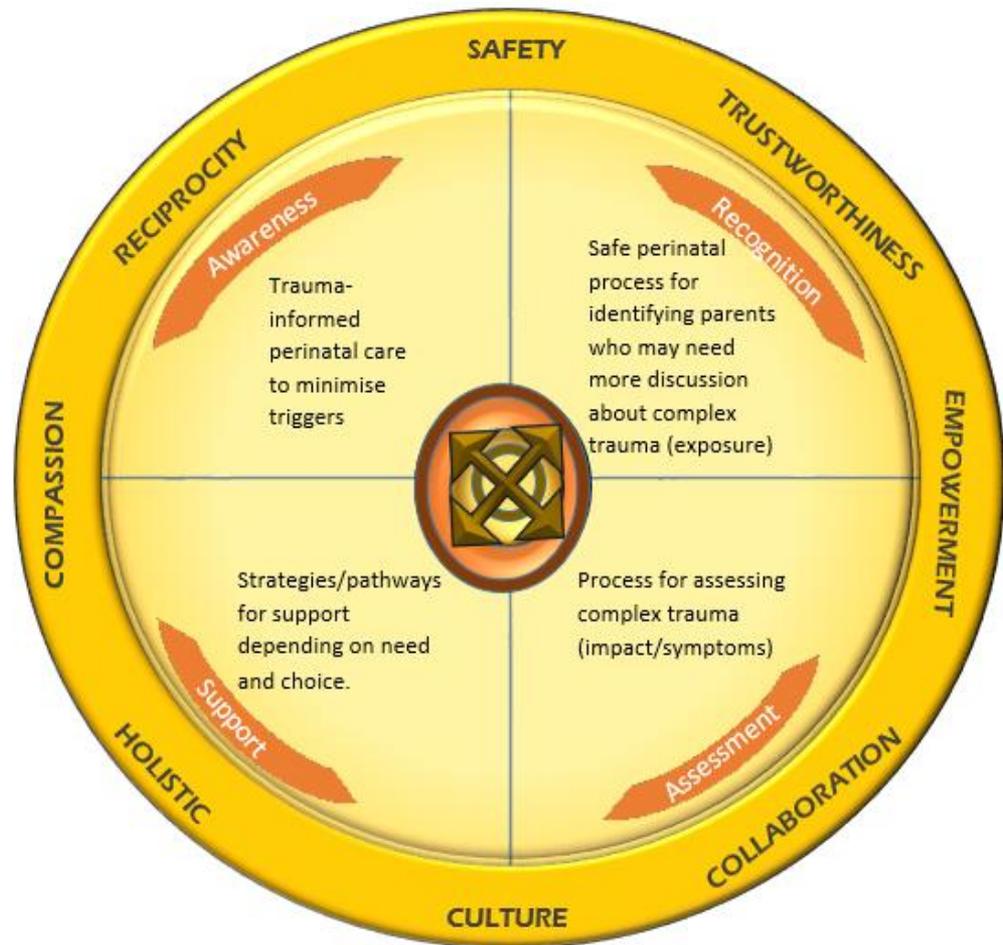
HPNF CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The aim of this study is to co-design acceptable, safe and feasible perinatal strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents experiencing complex trauma, including:

Recognition and assessment

Awareness and support

Using the values and principles around the outer circle



Chamberlain C, Gee G, Brown SJ, Atkinson J, Herrman H, Gartland D, Glover K, Clark Y, Campbell S, Mensah F, Atkinson C, Brennan S, McLachlan H, Hirvonen T, Dyall D, Ralph N, Hokke S, Nicholson JM. Healing the past by nurturing the future - co-designing perinatal strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents experiencing complex trauma: framework and protocol for a community-based participatory action research study. *BMJ Open*.

PERINATAL VIEWS OF PARENTS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED CHILD MALTREATMENT

- ***New beginnings:*** Becoming a parent is an opportunity for ‘a fresh start’, to put the past behind them and move forward with hope for the future to create a new life for themselves and their child.
- ***Changing roles and identities:*** Becoming a parent is a major life transition, influenced by perceptions of the parenting role.
- ***Feeling connected:*** The quality of relationships with self, baby and others has major impacts on the experiences of becoming a parent.
- ***Compassionate care:*** Kindness, empathy and sensitivity enables parents to build trust and feel valued and cared for.
- ***Empowerment:*** Control, choice and ‘having a voice’ are critical to fostering safety.
- ***Creating safety:*** Parents perceive the ‘world as unsafe’ and use conscious strategies to build safe places and relationships to protect themselves and their baby.
- ***‘Reweaving’ a future:*** Managing distress and healing while becoming a parent is a personal ongoing and complex process requiring strength, hope and support.



HOW CAN WE INSPIRE AND FOSTER 'HOPE'



Source: unsplash

FUNDAMENTAL PRE-REQUISITES FOR
SAFE RECOGNITION: WHY, BY WHOM,
WHERE AND HOW DISCUSSIONS ABOUT
COMPLEX TRAUMA SHOULD BE HELD
WITH ABORIGINAL PARENTS

- **Emotional, physical and cultural safety must be clearly established.**
- **A trusting relationship with the person talking about complex trauma is critical.** Relational vulnerabilities underpin complex trauma and can impact on readiness to trust. Time is taken to build trust and establish relationships or involve people who have established a trusting relationship.
- **Must have the capacity to respond effectively**, including being able to 'hold the space', have time to listen and the skills and support services available. This may involve collaboration with a range of holistic clinical and non-clinical support options.
- **Incorporate cultural methods of communicating gently and indirectly** to understand the effects of trauma, including the likelihood that parents may be using avoidance as a coping strategy.
- **Use strengths-based approaches and offer choices to empower parents**, normalise complex trauma responses and affirm hopes and dreams for their family.
- **Respect, caring and compassion** underpin all discussions and are an essential element for building safety, relationships and trust.

Chamberlain C, Gee G, Gartland D, Mensah FK., Mares S, Clark Y, Ralph N, Atkinson C, Hirvonen T, McLachlan H, Edwards T, Herrman H, Brown SJ, Nicholson JM. **Community perspectives of complex trauma assessment for Aboriginal parents: 'Its important, but how these discussions are held is critical'**. Frontiers in Psychology. 2020.



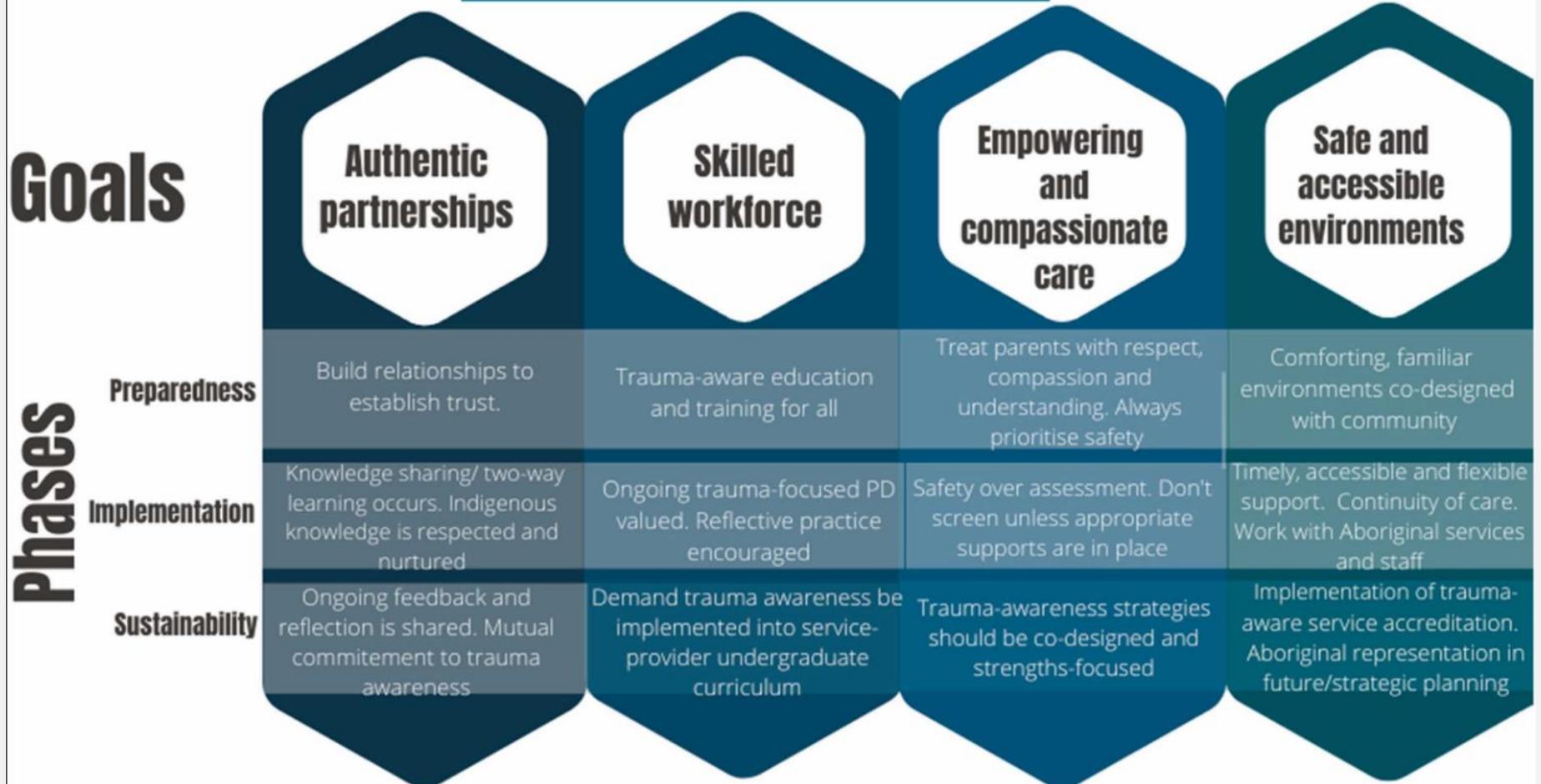
COMPASSION AND CARING: OUR SUPERPOWER



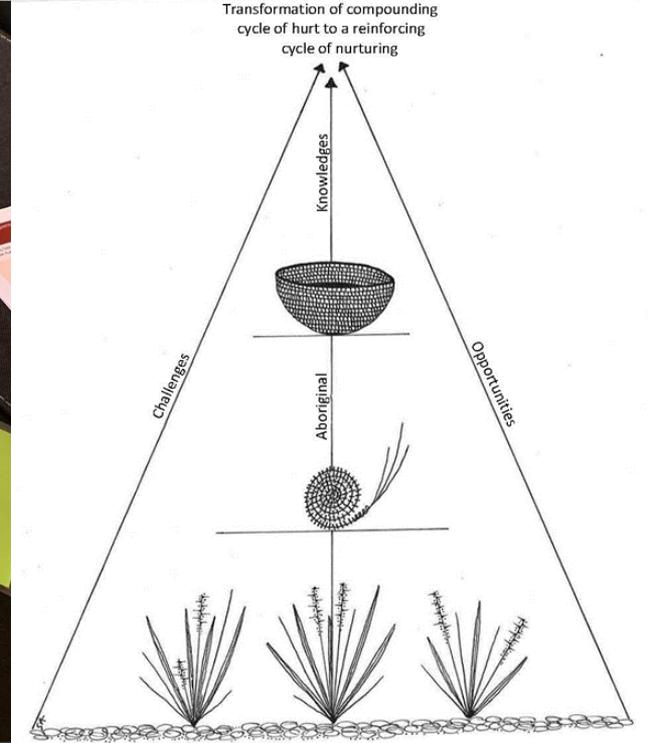
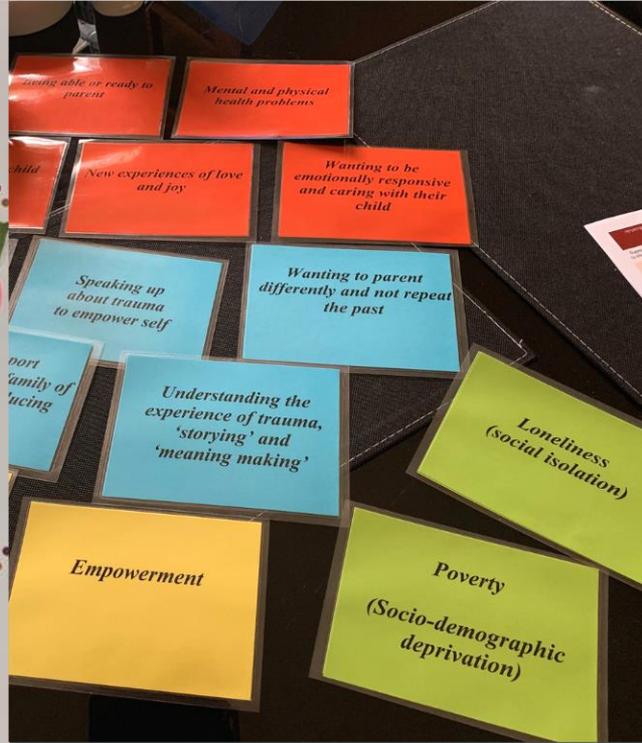
SOURCE; UNSPLASH

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES: WORKSHOP 3

Trauma-aware and Safe Perinatal Care



Renee Fiolet, Cindy Woods, Anni Hine Moana, Rachel Reilly, Helen Herrman, Helen McLachlan, Jane Fisher, Johanna Lynch, Catherine Chamberlain. 2022 . Community perspectives on delivering trauma-aware and culturally safe perinatal care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents. Women and Birth.

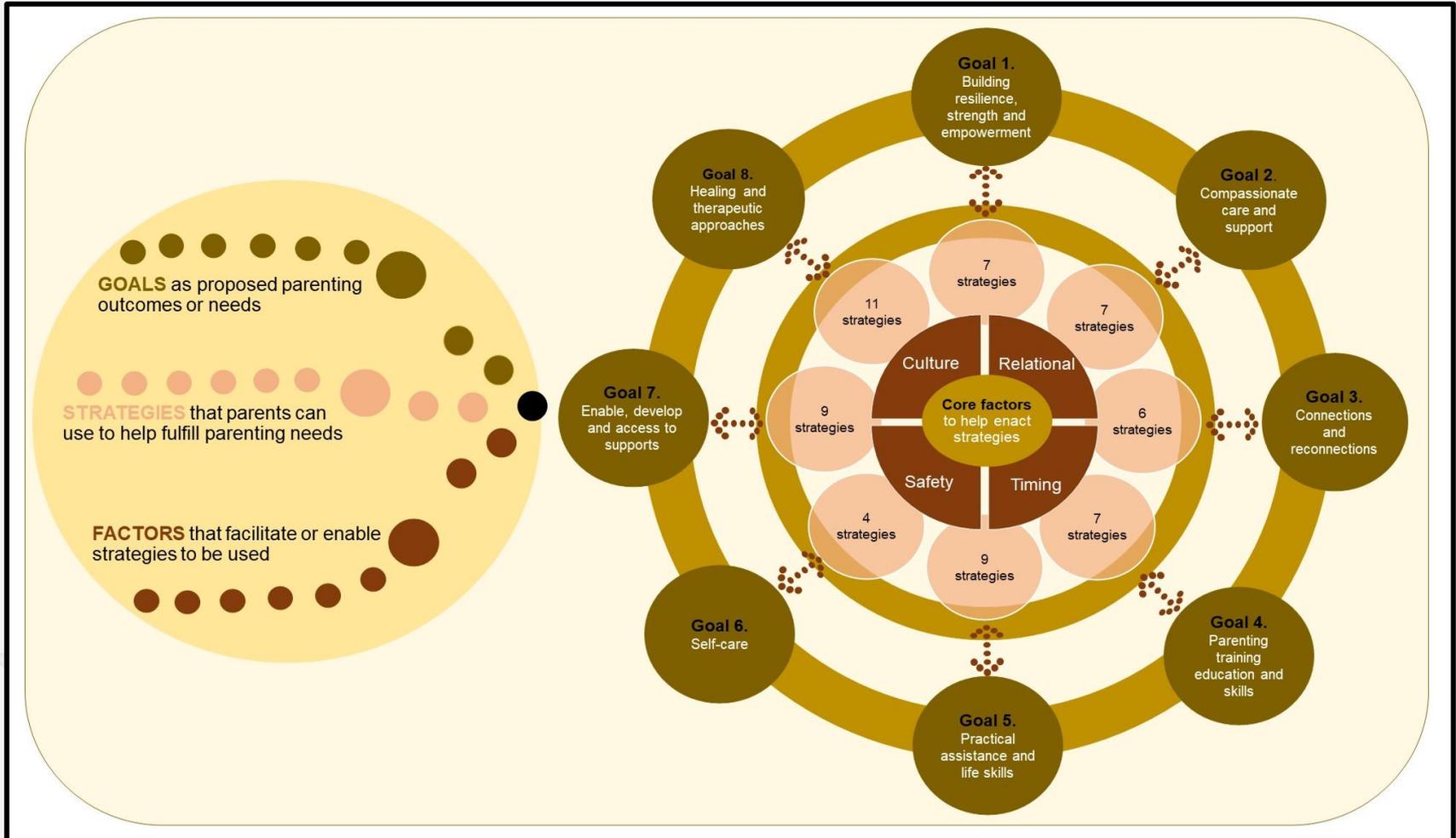


ABORIGINAL PARENTS' VIEWS (SUPPORT)

There is a unique opportunity to transform the compounding cycle of hurt to a reinforcing cycle of nurturing around three interdependent elements:

- *parents' connectedness,*
- *wellbeing and*
- *the transition of parenting.*

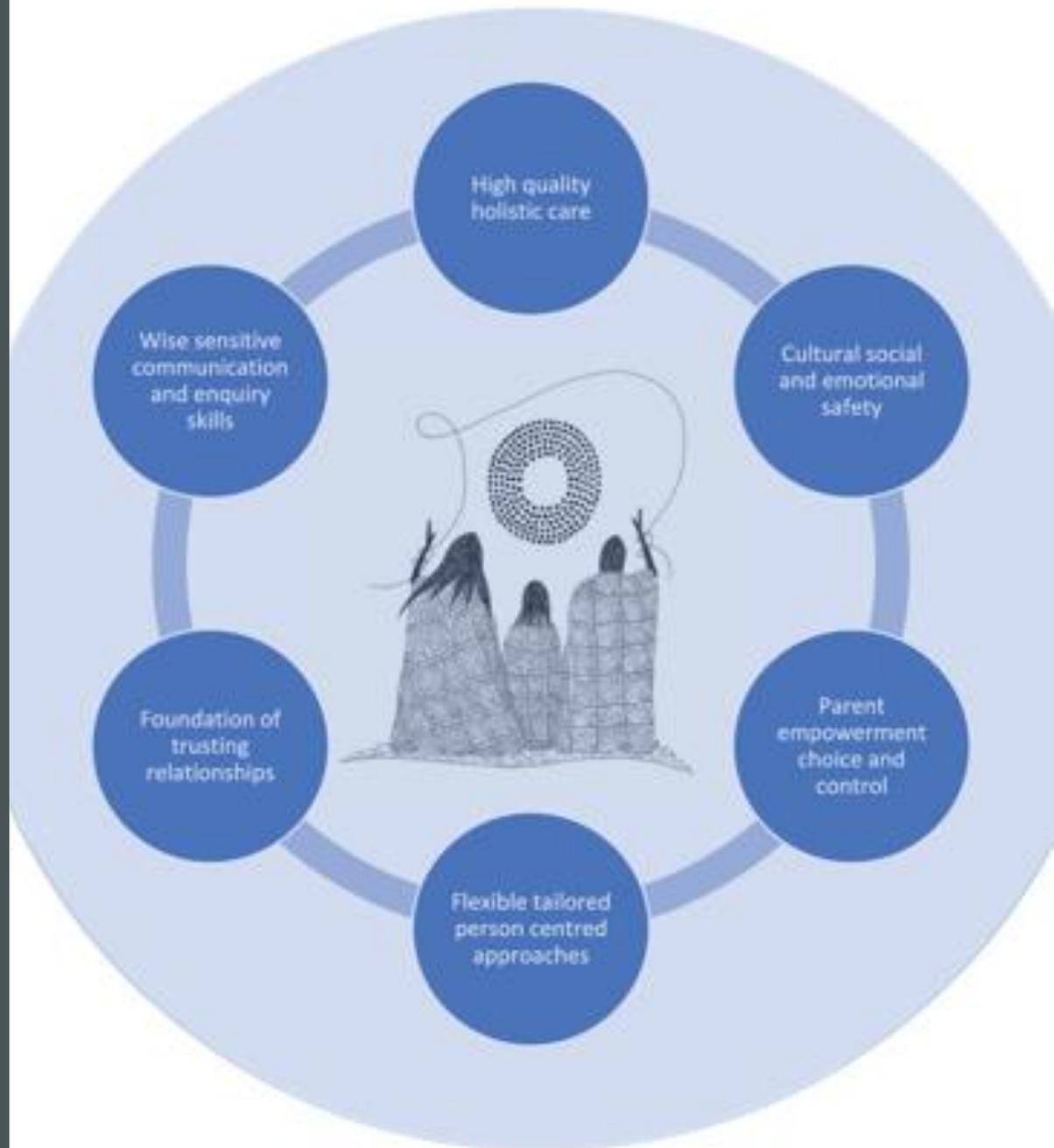
SUPPORT STRATEGIES



Reid C, Gee G, Bennetts SK, Clark Y, Atkinson C, Dyall D, Nicholson JM, Chamberlain C. Using participatory action research to co-design perinatal support strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents experiencing complex trauma. *Women and Birth*. 2021 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1871519221001980>

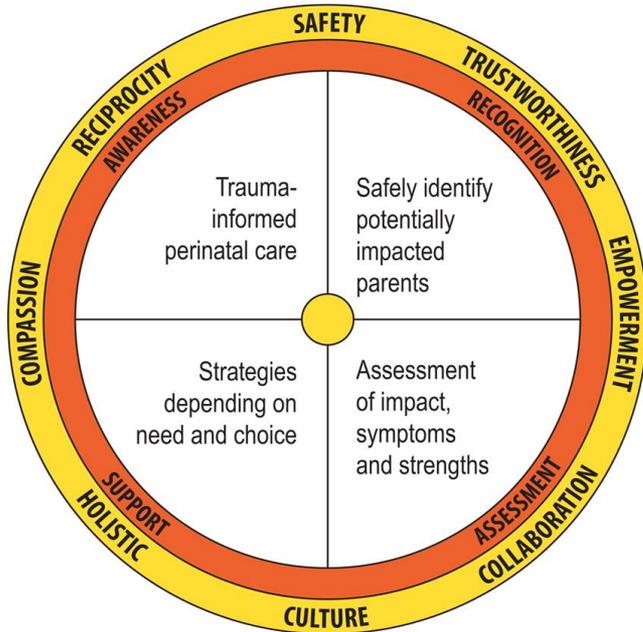
Community views on ‘can perinatal services safely identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents experiencing complex trauma?’

Chamberlain et al. Child Abuse Review. 2022. e2760.





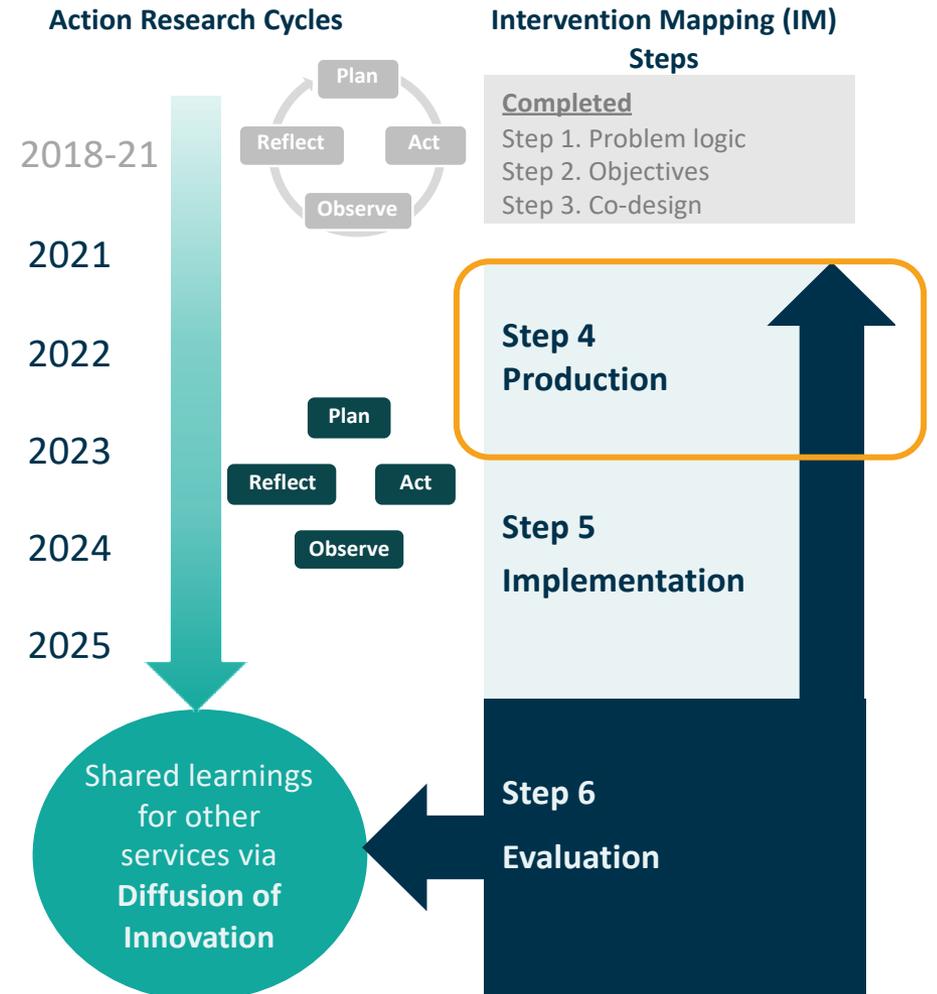
PILOT PROJECT



HPNF CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Problem: Lack of acceptable, effective perinatal strategies to reduce the adverse effects of complex trauma on Aboriginal parents

How: Demonstration project in an exemplar site.



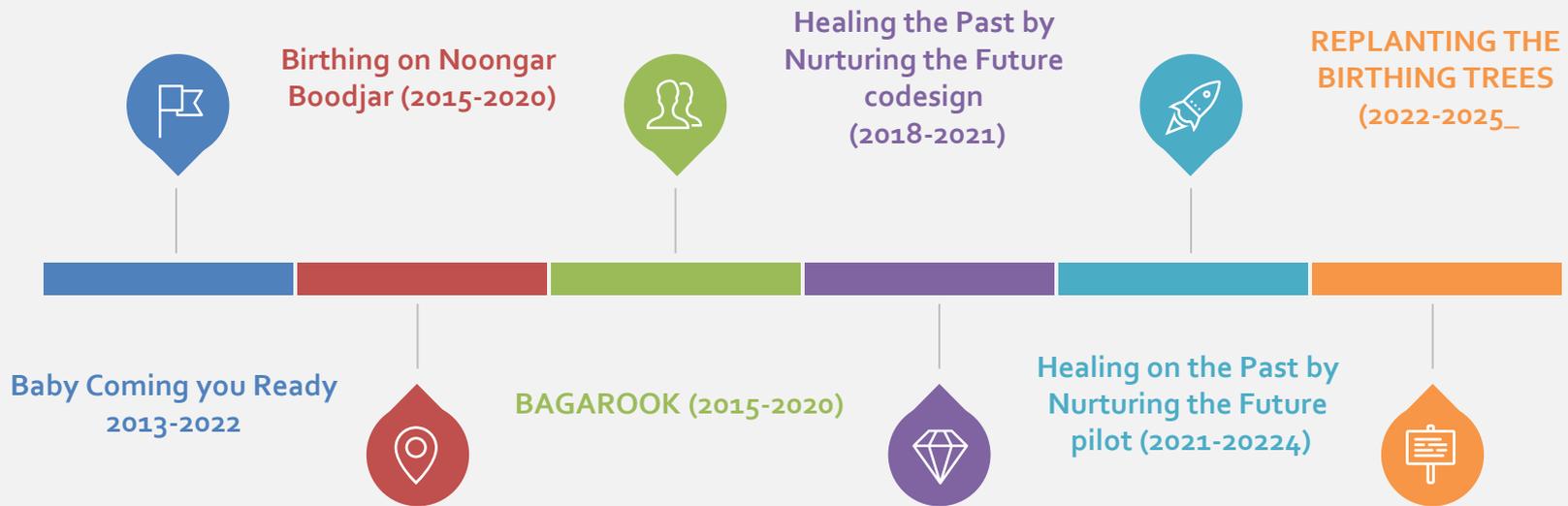


3. SCALING UP:

REPLANTING THE BIRTHING TREES

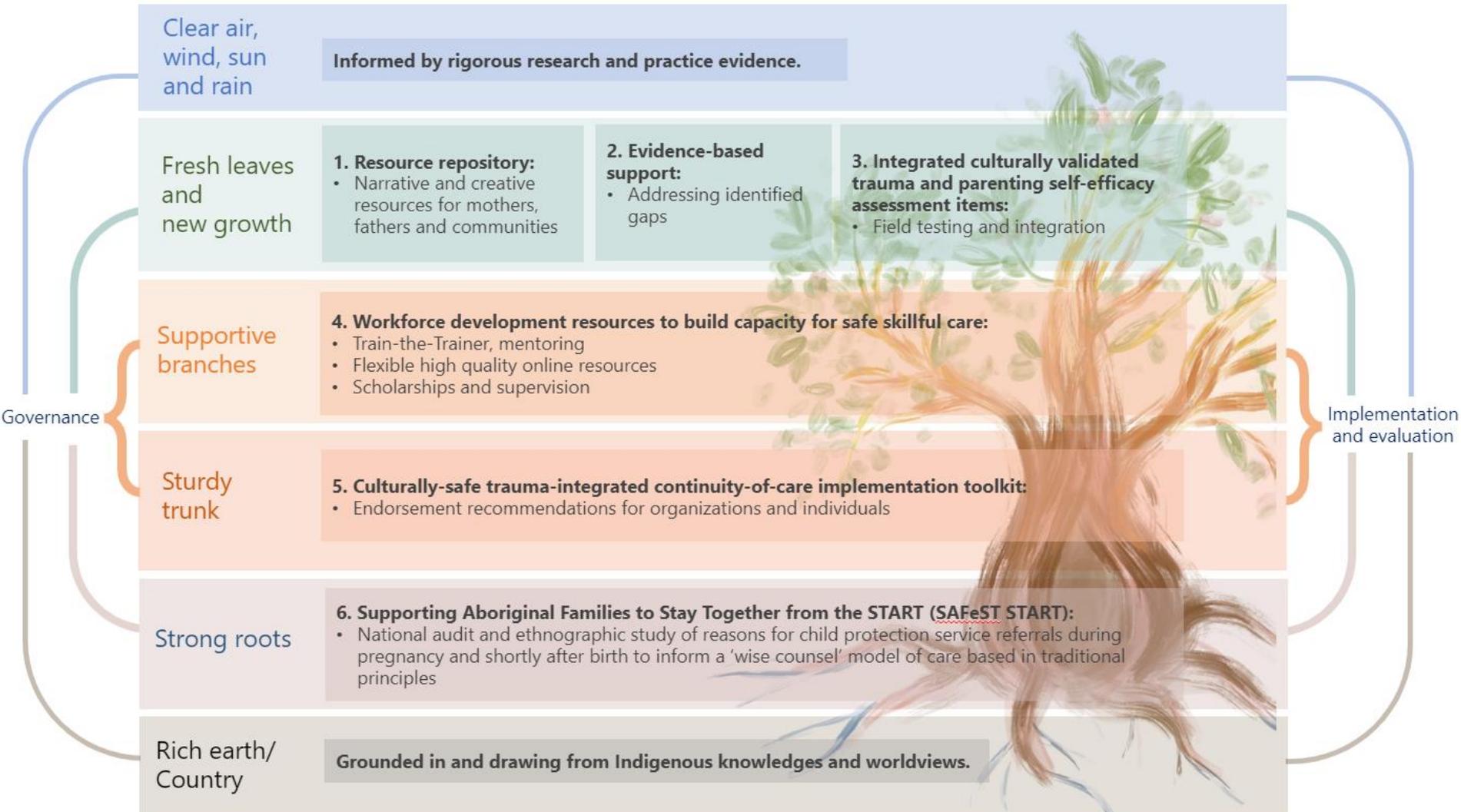
<https://mspgh.unimelb.edu.au/centres-institutes/onemda/research-group/indigenous-health-equity-unit/research/replanting-the-birthing-trees/news-and-events>

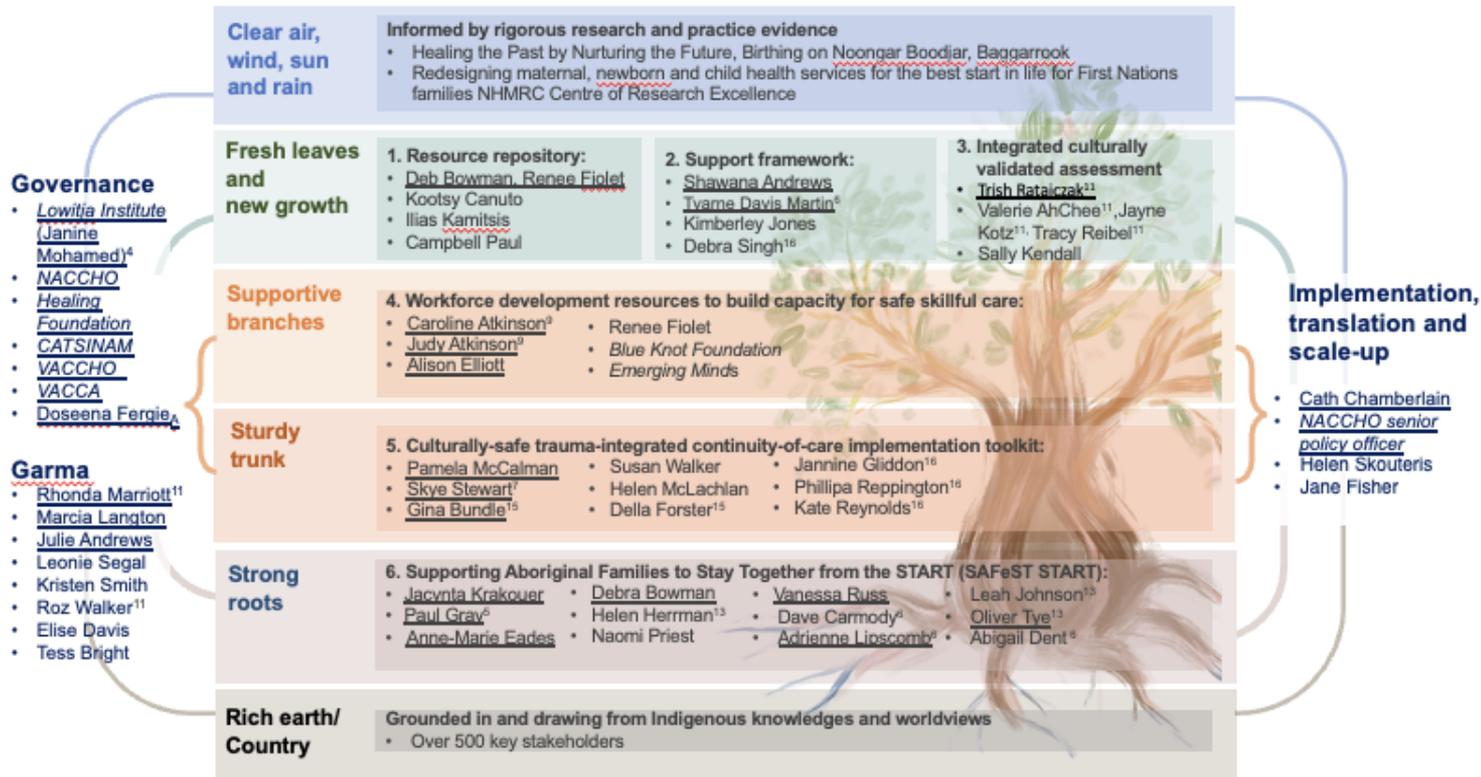
© Valerie AhChee 2022



CO-DESIGN FOR CULTURALLY-SAFE TRAUMA-INTEGRATED PERINATAL CARE FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PARENTS

REPLANTING THE BIRTHING TREES: CONCEPTUAL MODEL





Partner organisations

1. *National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)*
2. *Healing Foundation*
3. *Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINAM)*
4. *Lowitja Institute*

First Nations Peak Bodies

5. *SNAICC – National Voice for our Children*
6. *Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)*
7. *Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)*

Implementing site partners

8. *Blue Knot Foundation*
9. *We Al-li Pty Ltd*
10. *Centre of Perinatal Excellence (COPE)*
11. *Naagak Yira Research Centre for Aboriginal Health and Social Equity*
12. *Emerging Minds*
13. *Orygen Youth Mental Health*
14. *Mercy Hospital*
15. *The Royal Women's Hospital*
16. *Western Australia Country Health Service*
17. *Armadale Health Service*

Key: First Nations Investigators and partners are underlined, Partner organisations are *italicised*, Advisors=^A, Investigator partner affiliations=^{superscript n}

PARTNERS AND INVESTIGATORS

SUMMARY

- Perinatal period is a critical life-course opportunity for addressing intergenerational trauma
- We can Heal the Past by Nurturing the Future by fostering wellbeing, connectedness and parenting.
- Replanting the Birthing Trees – transforming



Cultures Child, Ink on paper, 2018 © Shawana Andrews

A father, mother and child wearing possum skin cloaks sitting by a myrnong daisy, the father holds the stem and looks to the daisy as it holds history and knowledge of the ancestors, this gives him strength. The mother holds a newborn and rests against the stem, it supports her. Mother and father are on different sides of the stem representing their different paths and roles in caring and nurturing for children. The daisy is in flower but also has a new bud and speaks of future generations and continuity. The stones below represent a strong foundation of many generations and the stitching on the cloaks represent the relational connectedness of Aboriginal people and worldview. The mother's hair blows in the wind, representing change.



THANK YOU

EMAIL: HPNF-PROJECT@UNIMELB.EDU.AU

INTERIM WEBSITE: [HTTPS://MSPGH.UNIMELB.EDU.AU/CENTRES-INSTITUTES/CENTRE-FOR-HEALTH-EQUITY/RESEARCH-GROUP/INDIGENOUS-HEALTH-EQUITY-UNIT](https://mSPGH.UNIMELB.EDU.AU/CENTRES-INSTITUTES/CENTRE-FOR-HEALTH-EQUITY/RESEARCH-GROUP/INDIGENOUS-HEALTH-EQUITY-UNIT)

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