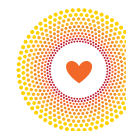




ANNUAL REPORT

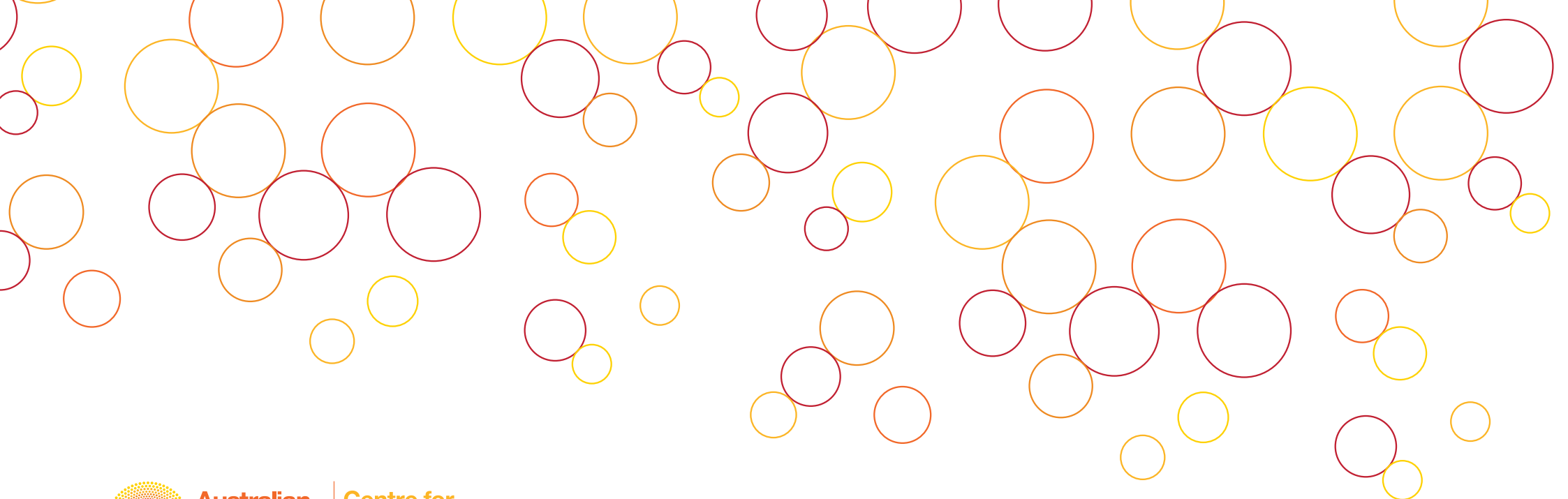
2020



**Australian
Childhood
Foundation**

**Centre for
Excellence in
Therapeutic Care**

Delivered in Partnership with Southern Cross University



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Foundation**

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Excellence in
Therapeutic Care**

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The Centre for Excellence in Therapeutic Care acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters across Australia in which we share. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and to the children who are the leaders of tomorrow. We acknowledge the histories, living cultures and the many thousands of years in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have raised their children to be safe and strong. We recognise and accept it is the oldest continuous living culture in the world and that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sovereignty has never been ceded.

The Centre for Excellence in Therapeutic Care is an inclusive, safe and respectful organisation which celebrates diversity and actively supports the inclusion of children, young people and adults from LGBTQIA+ communities, people with disabilities, people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and people with diverse religious beliefs or affiliations.

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A Message from our Director



I am pleased to be able to present our annual report that reflects the year January to December 2020. It goes without saying that 2020 presented significant and unprecedented challenges for Therapeutic Care providers as well as for our Centre for Excellence in Therapeutic Care (CETC) due to the pandemic.

Intensive Therapeutic Care (ITC) providers in New South Wales (NSW) faced the challenge of implementing a major reform whilst continuing to provide quality care for young people. COVID-19 disrupted organisational systems and processes and impacted workers and young people in a multitude of ways. For some, this period of slowing down opened unique windows for therapeutic healing in partnership with young people.

In response, the CETC pivoted to adapt to the evolving needs of providers throughout the year. We grew our digital learning strategy to offer virtual professional development sessions, including webinars, videos, virtual classrooms and integrated online learning courses tailored to the specific implementation needs of the intensive therapeutic care system.

We actively built on and strengthened our working relationships with ITC providers to understand their needs and support their work. We witnessed a growing sense of community and shared understanding about the nature of this challenging and rewarding work amongst Therapeutic Specialists, direct care workers and beyond.

We consolidated our reputation as a trusted 'go to' source of high quality resources and training on therapeutic care. We extended our reach beyond NSW ITC into all Australian states and territories. We partnered with young people with lived experience, practitioners, national and international leaders to bring the sector the most up to date synthesis of knowledge about effective approaches to understanding complex trauma and therapeutic care. We built on sector knowledge about culturally strong approaches to care and strengthened capacity to address diversity and inclusivity within the care environment.

It has been a busy and rewarding year. Thank you to the amazing team at the CETC for their hard work and commitment. In partnership with young people, practitioners, agencies and governments, we continued to make steady progress towards realising better outcomes for children and young people with complex needs living in out of home care.

I also take this opportunity to recognise the immense effort of our ITC community in showing up and staying open to learning, knowledge and collaboration during an extraordinary year.

Janise Mitchell
Director, Centre for Excellence in Therapeutic Care
and
Deputy CEO of the Australian Childhood Foundation

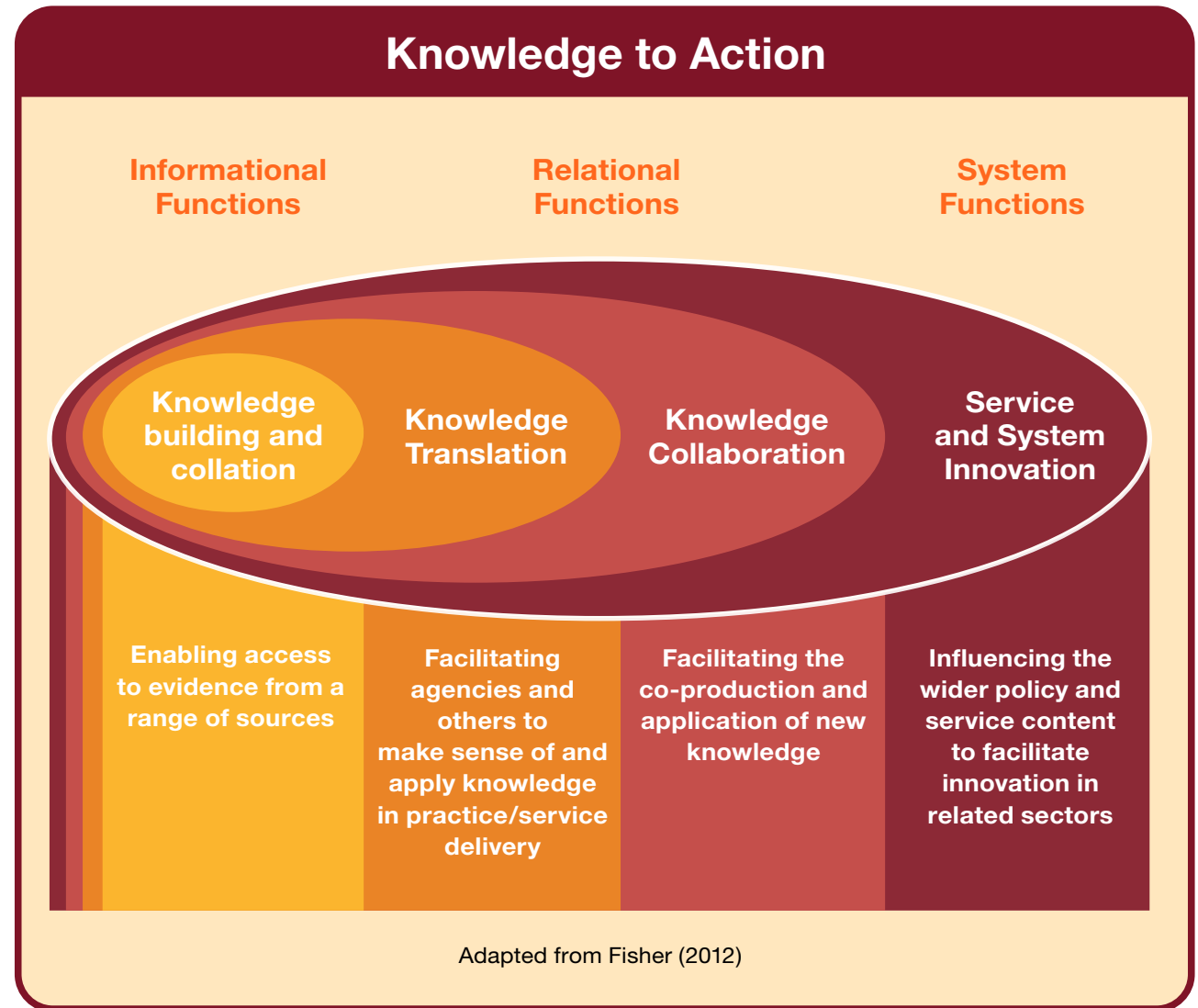
About the Centre for Excellence in Therapeutic Care

The Centre for Excellence in Therapeutic Care (CETC) was established in 2018 to support significant reforms in out of home care in NSW for children and young people with complex needs. This reform saw the development of an Intensive Therapeutic Care (ITC) system which offers a range of placement types, including rostered short and longer-term intensive therapeutic residential care, therapeutic home based care, significant disability options, therapeutic sibling options and therapeutic supported independent living.

A partnership between the Australian Childhood Foundation (ACF) and Southern Cross University (SCU), the Centre for Excellence in Therapeutic Care is an Australian first intermediary organisation established to support the implementation of the NSW reform.

Through the application of its 'Knowledge to Action' Framework, depicted below, the CETC aims to

- systematically build, synthesise, translate and disseminate knowledge;
- support the development of a collective understanding and capacity to enact therapeutic care across the ITC and other out of home care systems and related sectors; and,
- foster shared ownership for the achievement of high-quality outcomes for children and young people.





The Knowledge to Action Framework assumes a complex systems perspective and situates knowledge producers and users within a system of knowledge that is responsive and adaptive. As such, the process of moving knowledge to action is iterative, dynamic and complex. Using this approach, the CETC builds a shared body of usable knowledge through real time interactive processes that continuously improves capacity and leads consensus and congruence about practice, policy, organisation and systems interfaces.

The CETC seeks to disseminate the right information to practitioners, policy makers and other key stakeholders at the right time and in the right format to shape practice, build sector capacity and influence policy, program and system design. The CETC's activities are underpinned by a dynamic understanding of the ways in which people know, learn and act within complex systems of change, of which the CETC is itself a part.

Since the CETC started, we have seen increasing interest in its work coming from other jurisdictions across Australia and internationally, with our resources and support being accessed both locally and abroad. This is a heartening sign as out of home care and custodial youth justice organisations and systems continue to build their capacity to understand children and young people with complex needs and develop robust, trauma informed and culturally strong approaches to practice, program and system design to effectively care for and support them.

Meet the team



JANISE MITCHELL, Director

Janise is the Director of the CETC and the Deputy CEO of the Australian Childhood Foundation. She completed a Master of Social Work in 2008 in which she researched the implementation of therapeutic foster care in Victoria. In doing so, she researched best practice elements in therapeutic models of care and looked at the change process required to move an existing way of delivering care to a therapeutic model of service delivery. Janise has 30 years' experience in the field of child protection and therapeutic care. She has extensive experience providing consultancy to governments and organisations, policy analysis, program development and evaluation. Janise is the lead editor of a Handbook on Therapeutic Care to be published in September 2019 by Jessica Kingsley.



NOEL MACNAMARA, Deputy Director

Noel is the Deputy Director of the CETC, and the Executive Manager, Research and Policy at the Australian Childhood Foundation. Noel brings 30 years of experience to the CETC in therapeutic out of home care and child protection having worked in operational and senior management roles, policy and organisational consultancy. In 2013, Noel's contribution to the field was acknowledged in his being awarded the Robin Clark Award in Victoria for his contribution to the field of child protection and out of home care. He has a particular interest in supervision and leadership and organisational development.



DR LYNNE MCPHERSON, Director of Research (SCU)

Lynne brings a strong professional and academic background in child protection and out of home care spanning more than 30 years in practice, management, training and research. She has considerable research and organisational consultancy experience, including but not limited to evaluation of therapeutic care programs, numerous organisational consultancy and development projects and leadership, supervision and change management. In 1997, she was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to examine international best practice in child protection. In 2017 Dr McPherson and Noel Macnamara released a book 'Supervising Child Protection Practice: What Works?' An Evidence Informed Approach. This book was published and distributed internationally by Springer Publishers. Alongside Dr Lynne McPherson is an SCU based Research Team.

Research Team:

DR KATHOMI GATWIRI, Senior Research Officer (SCU)

Kathomi is a researcher and senior academic based with an interdisciplinary PhD in Social Work and cultural studies. In my current role, I teach across a range of social work and social policy subjects and conduct interdisciplinary research on trauma, race and gender.

DR NADINE CAMERON, Research Officer (SCU)

Nadine is a social work researcher, wellbeing consultant, meditation teacher, writer and occasional performer. Her research and publication interests reflect a strong interest in the developmental impact of trauma and child and family practice leadership.

NATALIE PARMENTER, Research Assistant (SCU)

Natalie specialising in studies about young people, disability, women, and violence prevention.

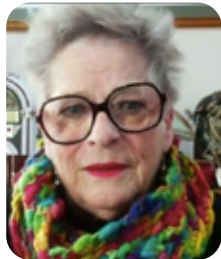
Meet the team



DR KELLY ROYDS, Senior Advisor

Kelly is a Senior Advisor for the CETC and works to translate research into practice by developing policies, training, and learning resources in partnership with therapeutic care providers and other stakeholders. She has spent the past 15+ years' developing youth-centred programs, policies and evaluation systems that lift up and respond to the voices of young people and families within

human services and not-for-profit sectors in Australia, South-East Asia and the United States. Kelly holds a PhD in Social Science, with a background in childhood studies, community development and participatory media.



DR GLENYS BRISTOW, Senior Advisor

Glenys is a Senior Advisor for the CETC and brings over 35+ years' experience in therapeutic residential care as a residential care worker, manager, trainer, and consultant. In 2003, Glenys was awarded the Robin Clark Award and later the Residential Care Learning & Development Strategy (RCLDS) Leadership Award in Residential Care for demonstrating achievement and innovation having

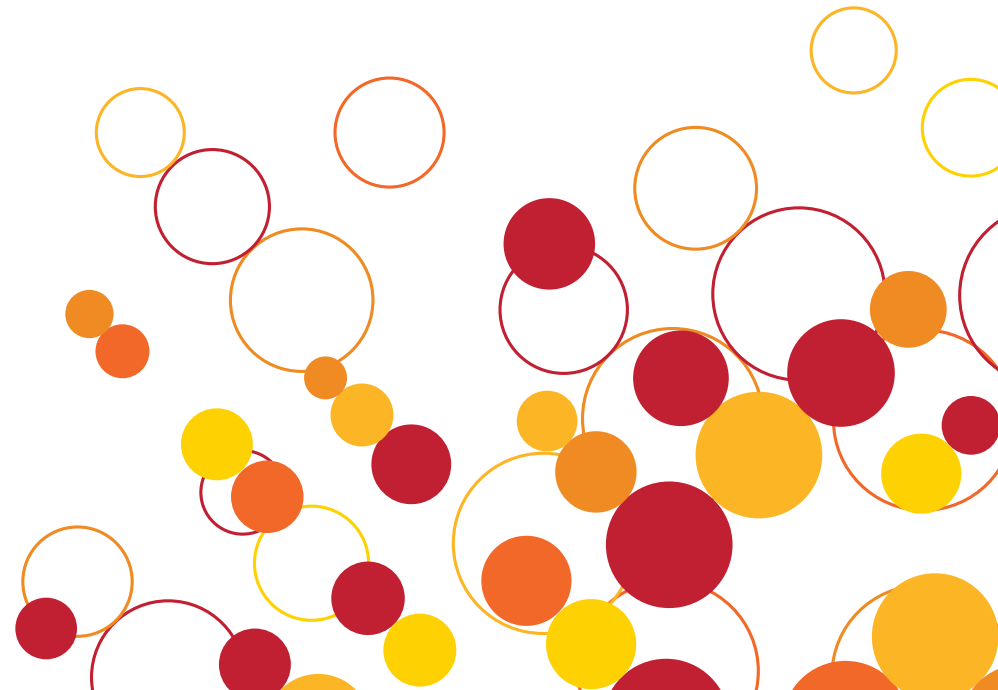
significant impact on residential care systems and outcomes for children and young people. Glenys is passionate about providing relevant and up to date industry informed training and caring support for the workers who care for the young people. Glenys recently completed her Doctor of Education researching what makes a good residential worker – Artistry Fact or Fiction?



LAURA MOLONEY, Research to Practice Coordinator

Laura is the Research to Practice Co-Ordinator for the CETC and brings 16 years' experience into the sector. Laura has worked in child protection in Sydney, London and Dublin in a range of different roles from social worker to team manager to reform specialist to area manager. Laura was a reform specialist for the UK child protection practice reform which saw the interweaving of family

therapy approaches and trauma informed approaches into child protection risk assessment and intervention. The core of this reform was the belief that it is the human connection and relationship the worker has with a child and their family which will lead to change.



What we do

We make knowledge accessible

The CETC produces a knowledge architecture of research, organisational and practice-based resources to support the delivery of effective therapeutic care in the Intensive Therapeutic Care system in NSW and elsewhere. These include Research Reports, Research Summaries, Scoping Reviews, Practice Guides and Tools, Practice Reflections and a range of training and multimedia resources. These can be accessed through the CETC's website www.cetc.org.au.

We support the use of knowledge

The CETC offers a range of activities to support capacity building through the application of knowledge including:



Education and Training

- Mandatory Foundational Training in Intensive Therapeutic Care for all ITC staff in NSW
- Online self-paced courses
- Webinars, face to face and virtual classrooms with local and international speakers in the field of trauma and therapeutic care
- Microlearning resources
- Nationally accredited qualifications including
 - Graduate Certificate in Developmental Trauma
 - Diploma in Child Youth and Family Intervention
 - Cert IV in Child Youth and Family Intervention
 - Cert IV in Youth Justice

- Tailored training programs to meet the needs of organisations and sector workforces
- National and international conference presentations



Communities of Practice and Forums

- Facilitation of communities of practice for Therapeutic Specialist/Clinical Leadership roles within therapeutic care programs
- Facilitation of communities of practice for leaders within therapeutic care programs
- Facilitation of communities of practice for specialist areas, eg. significant disability
- Bi-annual Practice Forums for Therapeutic Specialists



Implementation support

- Collaboration and support of agencies in their implementation of therapeutic care
- Consultancy with agencies to address specific implementation challenges
- Participation on agency implementation teams
- Participation in sector/statewide implementation forums
- Advice and support to government agencies to align to the reform agenda



Sector Collaboration

- Participation on sector working groups and statewide advisory groups
- Collaboration with governments, regulatory and peak bodies
- Lead and/or participate in forums to explore practice, service delivery and policy
- Cross-sector collaboration with child welfare, education, health, justice and other related sectors

We co-produce and build new knowledge

Knowledge about what constitutes ‘best practice’ regarding therapeutic care is constantly evolving as is the need to understand and adapt to the contexts within which the knowledge is being applied. As such, the CETC uses a definition of knowledge that encompasses:



- **Theoretical knowledge** including trauma theory, strengths-based practice, loss and grief, complexity theory, organisational change and leadership theory.



- **Research knowledge** including the outcomes of systematically organised literature reviews identifying empirical evidence.



- **Lived expertise knowledge** where the in-depth narratives, experiences, feedback and active engagement of survivors have been privileged.



- **Procedural knowledge** that promotes a working knowledge of policy, guidance procedure and process requirements to enable practitioners and services ‘buy in’ to undertake new ways of working.



- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledges** including cultural frames of knowing, being and doing. The CETC recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems are dynamic and constantly evolving.



- **Practice and service wisdom including the self-knowledge** related to professional experience.

The CETC responds to the evolving knowledge landscape, identifying and addressing gaps through research, knowledge generation and evaluation projects in collaboration with children and young people, practitioners, sector stakeholders and our university partners.

We use knowledge to develop tailored solutions

The CETC undertakes a range of large and small tailored consultancies and projects for organisations and governments in an effort to reform service delivery and practice in out of home care and youth justice. This work can include:

- Development of ‘fit for purpose’ practice frameworks to aid improved therapeutic care service delivery
- Support the implementation of therapeutic care models
- Organisational/sector readiness and needs assessments
- Review and evaluation of programs, policies and system design
- Large scale workforce development programs





**We stayed
connected**



**We built
community**

OUR IMPACT



**We shared
what works**



**We extended
our reach**

We made knowledge accessible

Knowledge to Action Resources

Our Knowledge to Action strategy in 2020 was driven by three core objectives:



Engagement

- To increase the engagement of ITC practitioners (in NSW specifically, and nationally) as consumers and producers of credible knowledge about best practice approaches to therapeutic care.



Shared language and ownership

- To support the development of a collective understanding of therapeutic care across the ITC system



Responsiveness to sector needs

- To engage in ongoing processes of feedback and consultation to identify and respond to emerging needs from the field and elevate examples of promising practice

The CETC worked collaboratively with the ITC community and other key stakeholders to identify the best ways to strengthen the engagement of practitioners, leaders and organisations as knowledge consumers and producers.

Together with young people and/or practitioners we co-produced a range of resources in the form of blogs, microlearning videos and invited contributions from young people and the practitioner community.

Over 2020, the CETC produced 58 Knowledge to Action resources in collaboration with research leaders, young people and therapeutic care practitioners in response to identified needs including:

7 Practice Guides

- Client Mix and Match in Therapeutic Care
- Care Teams – Collaborative Process for Creating Healing and Change
- Creating a Balance Between Empowerment and Limit Setting in Therapeutic Care
- What makes a good Therapeutic Residential Care Worker?
- Responding to Harmful Sexual Behaviour in Therapeutic Care
- Responding to Behaviours that Challenge
- Leading a Therapeutic Approach to Care



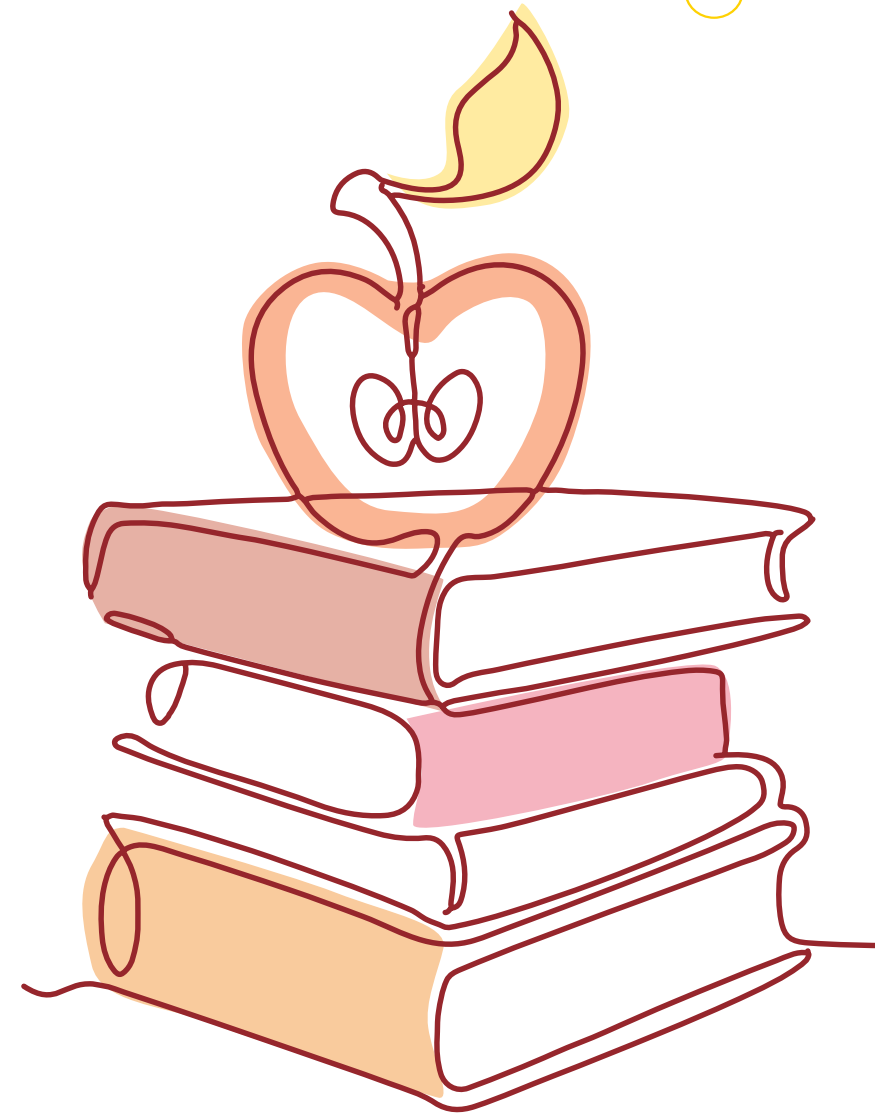
3 Practice Tools

- Practice tips for supporting young people through COVID-19
- Applying polyvagal theory to relationship-based therapeutic care
- Exploring the meaning behind the behaviour



7 Research Briefings

- What are the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care?
- Enabling Young People's Participation in Residential Care Decision Making
- What is known about Child Sexual Exploitation in Residential Care?
- Stepping Down and Transitioning from Therapeutic Care: What do we know? A Scoping Review
- Therapeutic Foster Care: A Literature Review
- Vicarious Trauma and Secondary Traumatic Stress in Therapeutic Care
- Preventing Self-harm Among Young People in Out of Home Care



8 Video Resources



The CETC produced 8 multimedia resources this year, including a series of interviews with national and international experts on trauma-informed care, interviews with Therapeutic Specialists, and a training video for the Joint Protocol for young people in Out of Home Care with the Criminal Justice System in NSW. These are available on our website, "[Watch Now](#)" page. Topics include:

- Harmful Sexual Behaviours
- Supervision for Trauma Informed Practice in Intensive Therapeutic Care
- Pause, Reflect, Act: Understanding and responding to the trauma backgrounds of young people in Intensive Therapeutic Care
- Being Authentic and Owning Mistakes
- Relationships and Behaviour
- In Conversation with Dr. Lorraine E. Fox (US)
- Therapeutic Opportunities during COVID-19
- Supporting Young People in Residential Care during COVID-19

33 blogs on what works in therapeutic care

Our blog covered a range of topics and was contributed to by young people and practitioners from the field in addition to the CETC's own team.

The most viewed blogs in 2020 were:

- [What is the role of cultural safety?](#) By Glenda Kickett (CETC)



- [The role of praise in working with young people.](#) By Noel MacNamara (CETC)
- [Tahlia's Story: Having a Voice in Out-of-Home care.](#) By Therapeutic Specialists, Kimberley & Lauren and Tahlia (Lifestyle Solutions)
- [Isaac's Story: Having a Voice in Out-of-Home Care.](#) By Therapeutic Specialists, Kimberley & Lauren and Isaac (Lifestyle Solutions)

Our impact

Feedback received from users of our knowledge resources reflects the contribution they are making to the field of therapeutic care and out of home care more broadly. Key themes from feedback speak to the following strengths of the resources:

Relevance

“This has made such a difference to the way I think about my role.”

“I feel like I have a better framework for making sense of the challenging behaviours and needs of young people and can better support care staff.”

Uniqueness

“These resources are great. There is nothing like them anywhere else.”

“We have stopped developing our own resources and now rely on yours as part of our internal staff learning and development programs.”

“I love that young people and practitioners are able to be involved in the development of resources, there is so much wisdom to be shared.”

Quality

“I always find your resources so informative and comprehensive. It’s great that you have such a range to choose from to suit the time I have available.”

“Your resources are a regular agenda item in our meetings so that we can share learnings from them and consider how we integrate new ideas into our work.”

Usability

“The resources are really clear and easy to use. I regularly use them in care team meetings, house meetings and reflective practice to help with planning for young people.”

“It’s great to have locally developed resources that really understand the context of our work. Many of the resources from overseas aren’t easily translatable.”

Our reach

Reflective of the CETC's own implementation journey since May 2018, we experienced both a consolidation of our reputation and an expansion of our reach over 2020.



Users
14,418



New Users
14,483



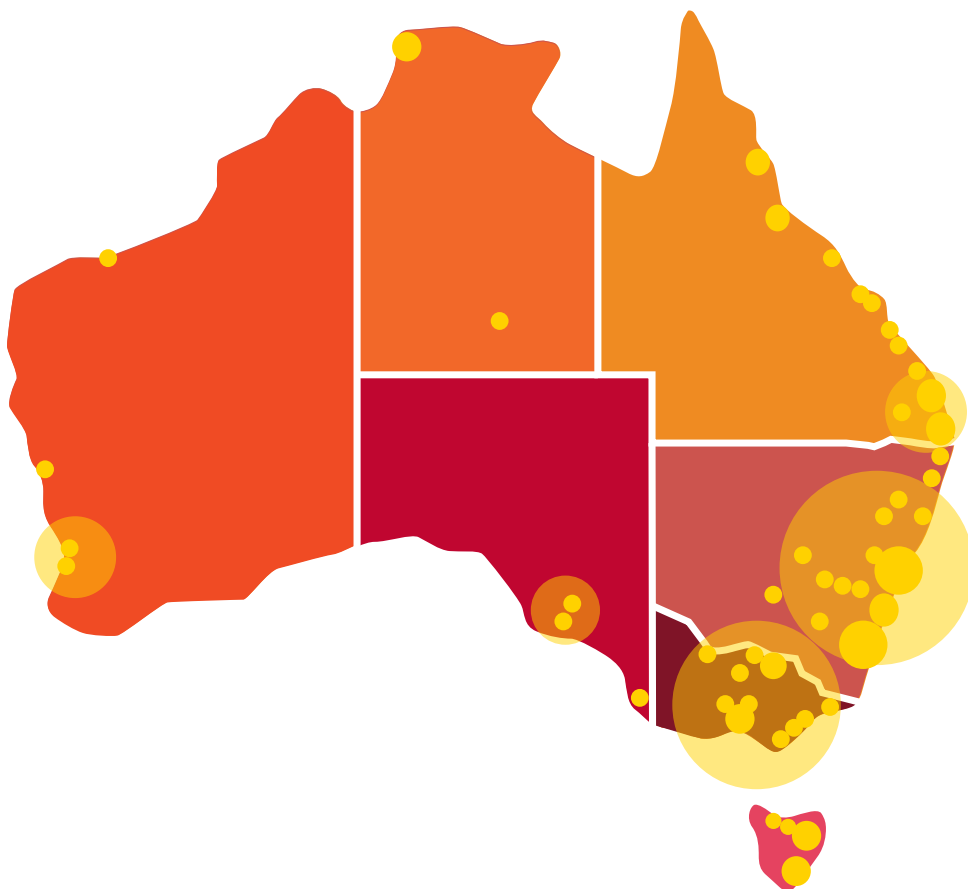
Page views
29,168



Sessions
17,596









Audience growth in NSW and beyond

The CETC saw a good distribution of visitors from all over Australia, with a focus on users from NSW. This highlights the relevance of and interest in its resources to out of home care sectors across Australia.



Website traffic reached 24 000+ Page Views

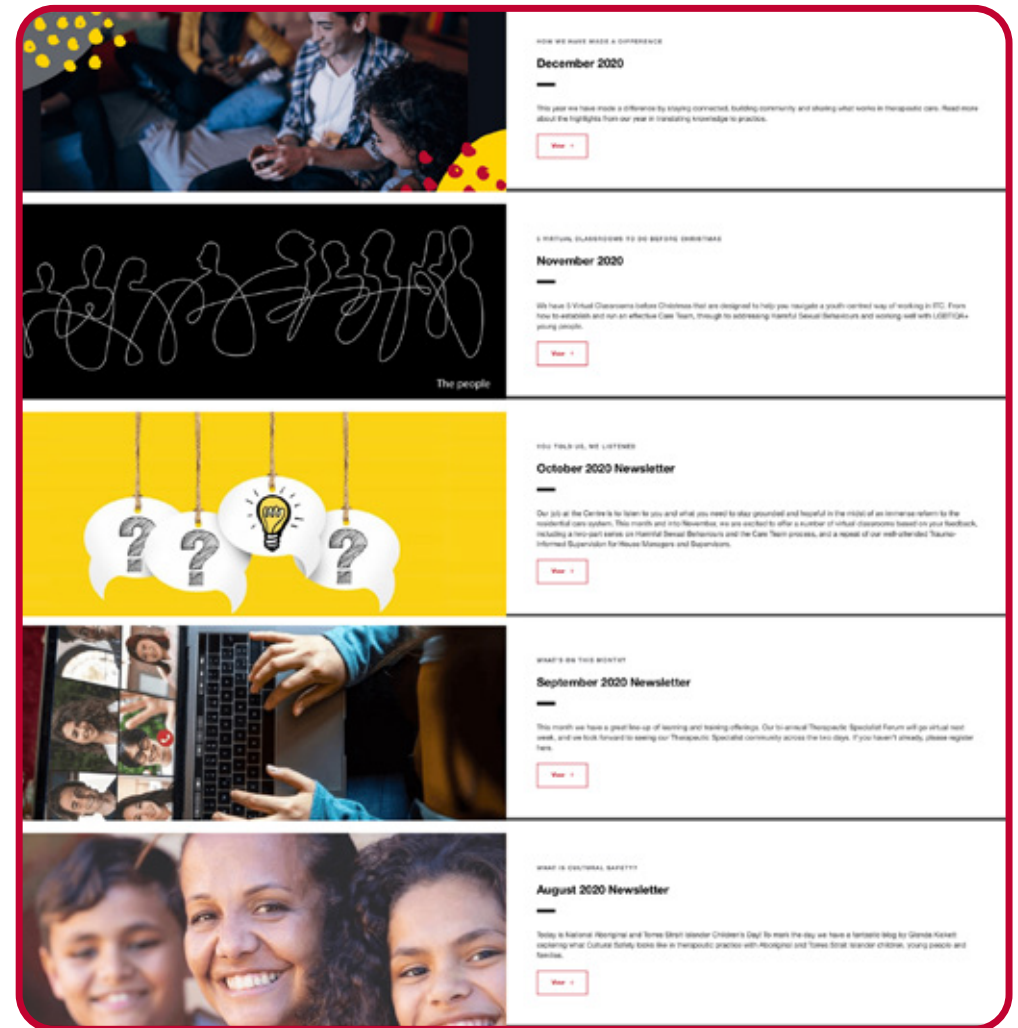
The following table demonstrates the level of interest in the range of resources and activities delivered by the CETC over 2020 highlighting the significant interest in the resources and publications, training and the blog.

PAGE	VIEWS
 Home - CETC	9,458
 Blog - CETC	8,881
 Our Publications - CETC resources	2,179
 Our Training - CETC - Learning opportunities in ITC	2,270
 Watch Now - CETC	706
 About Us - CETC - an Intermediary Organisation	579
 CETC Sign Up - CETC	172
 Total Page Views	24,245

Monthly e-Newsletter

Our monthly e-newsletter has grown and become a core medium of communication between stakeholders and the CETC's work.

Readership
grew from
150 subscribers
to 823 over
2020.



We supported the use of knowledge

The Foundational Training was officially launched in May 2020 and comprises 12 online modules and a half day virtual classroom. This equates to approximately 26 hours of training.



In the context of COVID-19, from March 2020 the CETC pivoted quickly to a fully digital strategy across its education and training delivery, communities of practice and forums.

Education and Training

Foundational Training in Therapeutic Care



“The Foundational Training in ITC reflected our work better than any other training we’ve ever done” Participant

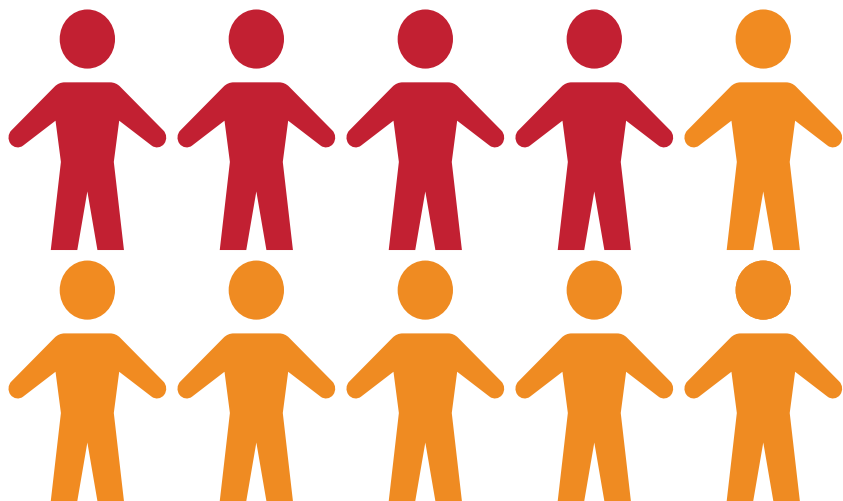
The Foundational Training was identified by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (the Department) as a mandatory and key platform through which all providers could share a common language and common approaches to the therapeutic care and support of young people in the ITC.

ITC providers were invited to review the training and discuss the roll-out to staff across their organisation. The Foundational Training was designed to augment training delivered at an organisational level that is specific to each organisation’s adopted model of therapeutic care. Early feedback from the ITC leaders was that training was comprehensive and did not replicate any existing training and filled significant gaps in learning related to working with Aboriginal and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse young people and those with Significant Disability in the context of therapeutic care.

Foundational Training Participation

To date, 249 ITC staff have enrolled in the program in the period May - December 2020.

Completion Rate



As of 31 December, there have been 96 completions (39%) with 153 staff working towards completion (61%).

Participation by Agency

All ITC providers have engaged with the Foundational Training in 2020 and been involved in regular conversations about the best approach to induct new staff into the process. The rollout of the training has been negotiated agency by agency to align this course to organisational training efforts. The larger organisations have, in general, found a staged roll out by role or location most effective.

ITC AGENCY	COUNT
Allambi Care	7
Anglicare (including St. Saviors)	51
Catholic Care Broken Bay	22
Central Access Unit (Department of Communities and Justice)	10
Life Without Barriers	15
Lifestyle Solutions	8
MacKillop Family Services	37
Marist 180	53
Southern Youth and Family Services	3
Wesley Community Services	41
Westhaven	2
Grand Total	249

Participation by Role

As can be seen from the distribution of roles performed by staff who have enrolled in the training, there is a strong commitment from organisations to ensure that all levels of therapeutic care program staff are sharing the knowledge within their organisations, building congruence and commitment to the therapeutic care approach. Leaders are thus well positioned to support the translation of the training into practice through supervision, reflective practice and staff meeting structures.

ROLE	COUNT
Case worker	25
Direct care worker/Youth Worker - Intensive Therapeutic Care House	73
Direct care worker/Youth Worker - Intensive Transitional Therapeutic Care	36
Direct care worker/Youth Worker - Therapeutic Home Based Care	10
Direct care worker/Youth Worker - Therapeutic Sibling Placement	3
Direct care worker/Youth Worker - Therapeutic Supported Independent Living	5
Education support worker/Tutor	5
House Manager/Supervisor	14
Manager	19
Multidisciplinary Team Member (excluding Therapeutic Specialist)	16
Team Leader	2
Therapeutic Specialist	41
Total	249

Participant feedback

Feedback on the Foundational Training has been overwhelmingly positive. Some highlights from the CETC's end of training evaluations include:



“The training was beautifully presented, easy to comprehend and got the message across”

“I have enjoyed all aspects of the training”

“Thank you for the experience, I have learnt a lot”

“It was all invaluable”



When asked how the training would impact practice participants shared the following comments:



“More confidence that the way that ITC is shaped is the way of the future for children and young people in care”

Reflection tools, deeper understanding of trauma and stress and how the impacts of these can be deeply rooted, how behaviour always comes from a reason or reaction”

“The importance of reflection and sharing with the team for continuous improvement”

“That there is a need behind every behaviour”

“The theory and science behind emotions and behaviour”

“That it is critical to make sure young people have a say on issues that concern them”

“Need for empathetic care, no racism environment”



Extending the reach of the Foundational Training

Due to strong positive feedback about the quality of the training, staff from the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) also undertook the training to support collaboration between the DCJ and the ITC providers.

The quality and strong reputation of the training program has also resulted in:



- a desire by some ITC providers to use it more broadly across all of their out of home care programs; and,



- requests from other out of home care providers within NSW and in other states and territories to be able to access the training as part of their workforce capacity building efforts.

In response to these requests, the CETC will launch a universal version on the Foundational Training in Therapeutic Care Program in March 2021 for use by agencies outside of the funded ITC providers in NSW.

Professional development opportunities

Webinars and virtual classrooms

The CETC provided an additional **30+ sessions** of professional development during 2020, including **150+ hours** of content delivery, attended by more than 650 out of home care staff, using a combination of webinars, video, virtual classrooms and forums involving local, national and international speakers. Many webinars were recorded and recordings made available through the website for future access.



Topics covered included:

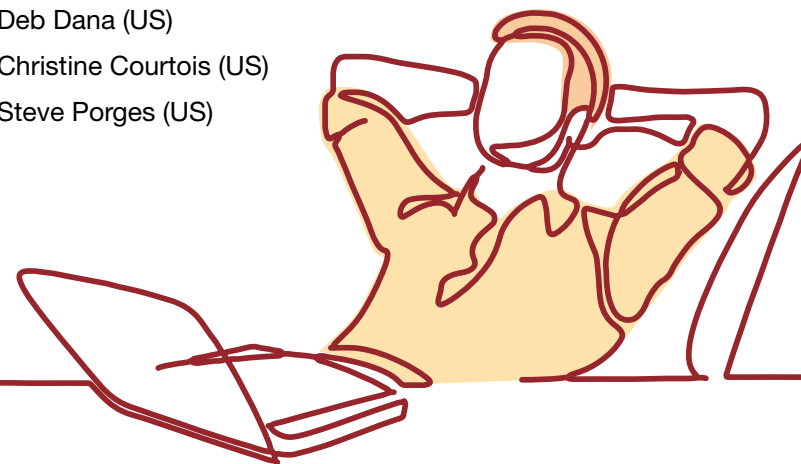
- The Neurobiology of Self Care
- Care Teams
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- Trauma informed supervision
- Grounded neuroscience of leadership
- Therapeutic work with young people in the online space – a trauma responsive approach
- Supporting young people in residential care through COVID-19
- Supporting young people from LGBTQIA+ communities

Many of these sessions were offered on multiple occasions.



Webinars with national and international experts in the complex trauma and therapeutic care fields included:

- Dan Siegal (US)
- Dan Hughes and John Baylin (US)
- Judy Atkinson (AUS)
- Gabor Mate (Canada)
- Ed Tronick (US)
- Deb Dana (US)
- Christine Courtois (US)
- Steve Porges (US)





Courses and accredited qualifications

Through the Australian Childhood Foundation's (ACF) Registered Training Organisation, the CETC offered a range of nationally accredited qualifications to ITC and out of home care workforces nationally.

These included:

- Graduate Certificate in Developmental Trauma
 - Diploma in Child Youth and Family Intervention
 - Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention
 - Certificate IV in Youth Justice
-

The CETC worked with organisations to tailor the delivery methodology to enable some qualifications to be delivered at an agency level to specific staff groups.

Over 2020, a total of 150 staff employed in out of home care across Australia engaged in these qualifications. A further 50 custodial youth justice staff engaged in the Certificate IV in Youth Justice.

The CETC, through ACF's partnership with Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy International, has also continued to offer this highly relevant course to staff in out of home care nationally.

Child Sexual Exploitation

In response to recommendation 12.14 of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) in NSW contracted the CETC to work in partnership with DCJ, out of home care providers and NSW Police to develop and deliver a suite of training packages and resources to build the capacity of residential and out of home care providers and NSW Police to work effectively together to address the needs of young people at risk of or experiencing child sexual exploitation.



Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

Recommendation 12.14

Preventing and responding to child sexual exploitation

All state and territory governments should develop and implement coordinated and multi-disciplinary strategies to protect children in residential care by:

- a. identifying and disrupting activities that indicate risk of sexual exploitation
- b. supporting agencies to engage with children in ways that encourage them to assist in the investigation and prosecution of sexual exploitation offences.

In response, the CETC has developed the following training programs and resources that will be launched in April 2020:



- **Online self-paced training program** for residential and out of home care staff to build understanding about and capacity to respond to young people at risk of or experiencing child sexual exploitation and engage in collaborative work with police to disrupt offenders.



- **Safe Connections Resource Kit** for residential and out of home care staff to use with young people. This psychoeducation resource provides resources and strategies to talk to young people about a range of key issues related to child sexual exploitation and its prevention including

1. Introduction to Child Sexual Exploitation
2. Strengthening Protective Factors
3. Healthy Relationships
4. Consent, Risk, Responsibility and Safety Planning
5. Self-Care and Sexual Health
6. Staying Safe Online
7. Getting Help



The Safe Connections Resource Kit will be available from the CETC website following the launch in April 2021 and will be accompanied by an online training session to support the effective use of the resource.



- **Learning resources for NSW Police.** The CETC is working with NSW Police to develop a set of microlearning modules and more detailed training for police in local and specialist divisions to support effective responses to young people at risk of or experiencing child sexual exploitation and disruption strategies and processes.



24 two-hour dedicated communities of practice for Therapeutic Specialists employed across ITC in NSW



6 two-hour bi-monthly knowledge sharing sessions for ITC Significant Disability providers in NSW

Communities of Practice and Forums

The CETC strengthened its delivery of community exchange and learning through



2 x two-day Practice Forums for Therapeutic Specialists in March and September 2020



Leadership forum regarding Intensive Therapeutic Transitional Care practice and service design.



Therapeutic Specialists

The role of the Therapeutic Specialist is to provide clinical leadership and work with care staff and the care team to anchor therapeutic care practice and drive excellence. This is a new role, and thus a new workforce in NSW, implemented as part of the ITC reform.

In 2020, the CETC provided support and capacity building to Therapeutic Specialists through access to our online resource library, community of practice groups, specialised training, secondary consultation and collaborative forums.

Our focus has been to evolve our strategies and structures to reflect the often complex, fast moving and high-pressured environments within which Therapeutic Specialists work.



Through an ongoing process of reflection, feedback and engagement, we have seen the Therapeutic Specialist **engagement more than double from the beginning of the year from 25 to 60 participants** at the end of the year.

Our Therapeutic Specialist Communities of Practice continue to provide a consistent and safe space for the sharing of practice and learning.

The CETC facilitated 24, two-hour communities of practice for Therapeutic Specialists during 2020. At the beginning of the year, Therapeutic Specialists self-nominated into three communities of practice groups that met on the last Wednesday of every month. A meeting protocol was developed and used to guide reflection, knowledge sharing, and peer learning, while also allowing scope to respond to critical and emerging themes.

Who was involved?

AGENCY	NO. OF THERAPEUTIC SPECIALISTS
Allambi Care	12
Anglicare	4
Catholic Care	4
Life Without Barriers	5
Lifestyle Solutions	7
Mackillop	6
Marist 180	15
Southern Youth and Family Services	2
Wesley	3
Westhaven	2
Grand Total	60

What are Therapeutic Specialists saying?



“Participating and gaining professional guidance and support from the monthly Therapeutic Specialist Community of Practice really has helped to ground me and feel connected with my Therapeutic Specialist colleagues. It’s a shared community of learning and growing together”

Tram Nguyen, Anglicare

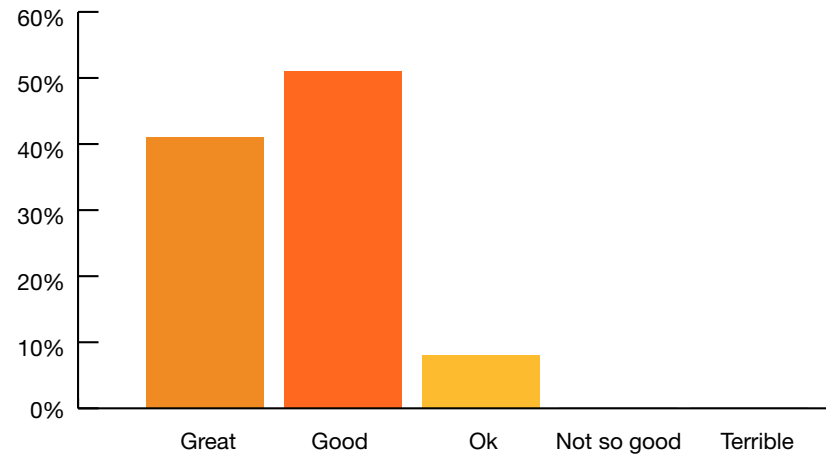
“I have found the sessions to be highly engaging, informative and formative in many a sense. It does offer space to unpack theory within the context of shared discussions and the input of knowledge is of high quality. I feel personally enriched by the group. Likewise, I have gained new insights into trauma informed work as a Therapeutic Specialist.”

Dominic Savio, Marist 180

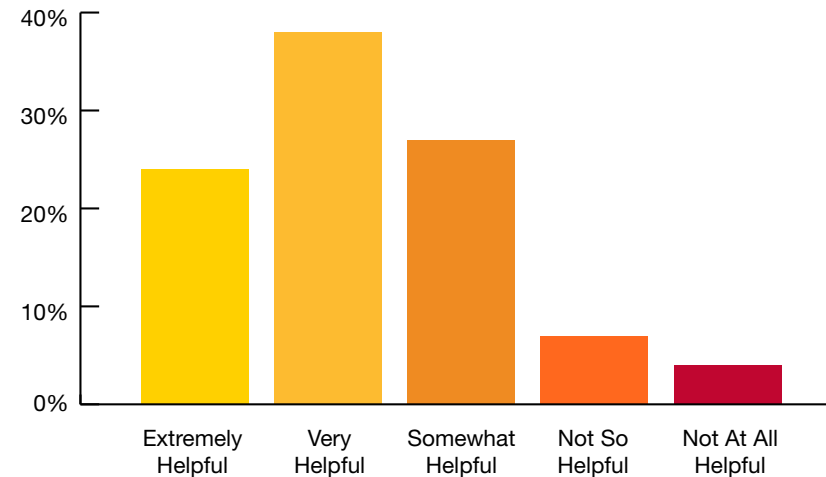


As part of commitment to working in partnership with Therapeutic Specialists, we provided multiple opportunities for feedback and reflection directly after each Community of Practice and overall.

How did you find today’s Community of Practice?



How helpful was this Community of Practice in supporting your work in therapeutic care?



How did you find today's Community of Practice?



- **Sharing Experiences:** “the opportunity to share experiences in a non-judgmental environment”



- **System Issues:** “A chance to talk collectively about system issues”



- **Collective Reflection:** “Shared discussion, thoughts, and ideas around best practice”



- **Taking Time, Going Deeper:** “Taking time to reflect on an issue and apply it my practice”

What did Therapeutic Specialists like least about the Communities of Practice?



- “Not everyone participates. It feels, at times, as if they weren't present”

What did Therapeutic Specialists learn?



- “To continue to be mindful of group dynamics, trust knowledge and feeling around client presentation”



- “The common issues we are all experiencing despite the different service providers and geographical locations”



- “Just how important the process of these meetings are. I believe they are a necessary space for our voice to be communicated and advocated for”



- “Issues are affecting the sector as a whole, not just me”



Therapeutic Specialist Forums

March 2020 - 2 Day Face to Face Forum



A total of 36 Therapeutic Specialists and Senior Executives attended the Therapeutic Specialist Forum in Sydney in March 2020. The forum provided an opportunity for Therapeutic Specialists to explore:

- The context of Intensive Therapeutic Care in NSW
- Why the role of Therapeutic Specialist is so critical to Therapeutic Care
- The 10 Essential Elements that underpin the approach to therapeutic care in NSW



“It is always great to be with a group of people who are engaged, enthused and committed about the work they do. It creates an energy all of its own and this was evident in all aspects of the two days. The other aspect of the process was the how clear it was that all members of the group felt so strongly about the rights, needs and outcomes for the young people in the therapeutic care system.”



The reflective and critical approach to practice displayed by the group demonstrated a clear desire to engage in the complexity of the work as opposed to the need for simple, predictable answers. There was an openness to new or different ideas that was refreshing.

Some of the outcomes of the forum were:



- Developing cross-functional collaboration trust-building and communication



- A shared understanding of the therapeutic journey in Intensive Therapeutic Care



- Review of the methods and type of support required by Therapeutic Specialist from CETC



- Sharing differing perspectives around the concept of safety and residential care



- Exploration of different approaches to group reflective practice



- Redesign of the Communities of Practice structure

What did participants say?



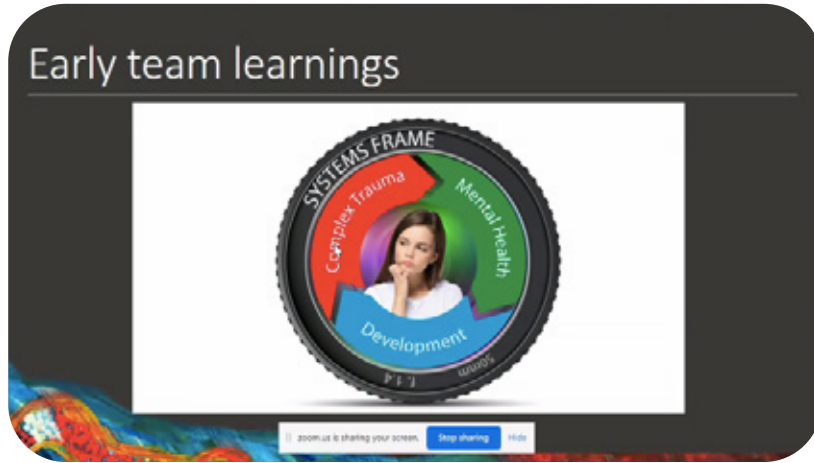
- “Those of us from Allambi spent a lot of time on the drive back discussing the PSP and how we look into our service provision, meaningful client participation and groupings.”



- “As professionals we all took something different away from the forum, and that speaks volumes for the quality of your facilitation”

Therapeutic Specialist Forums

September 2020 - 2 Day Virtual Forum



Shifting to a virtual forum as a result of COVID-19, **44 Therapeutic Specialists** attended the two half-day Virtual Forum in September.

10 presenters, including three Therapeutic Specialists and four external representatives from the Department of Communities and Justice (Elver Program, Sherwood Program), NSW Education and the CREATE Foundation, helped to facilitate:



- **Reflective Practice Workshop**
- **Secondary Traumatic Stress and Staff Wellbeing Workshop**
- **Panel on Services that Wrap Around Young People in ITC**
- **Working well with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People workshop**

What did participants say?

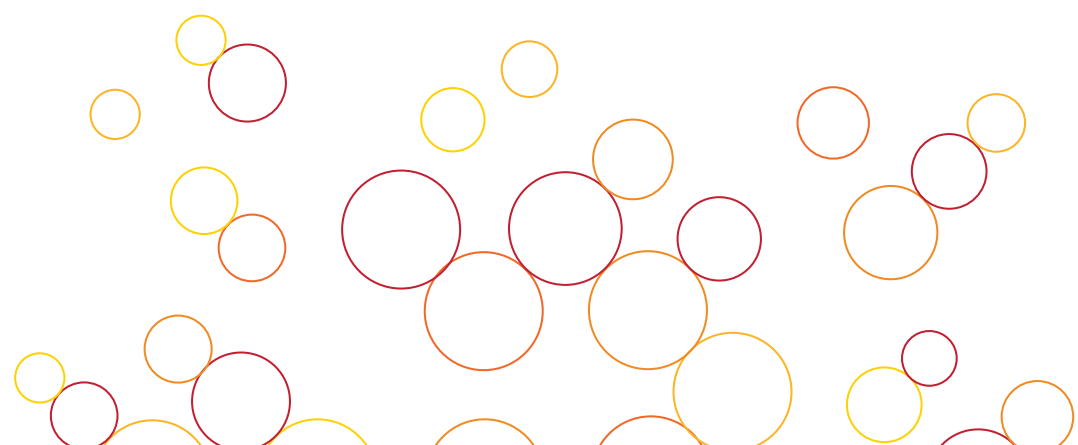
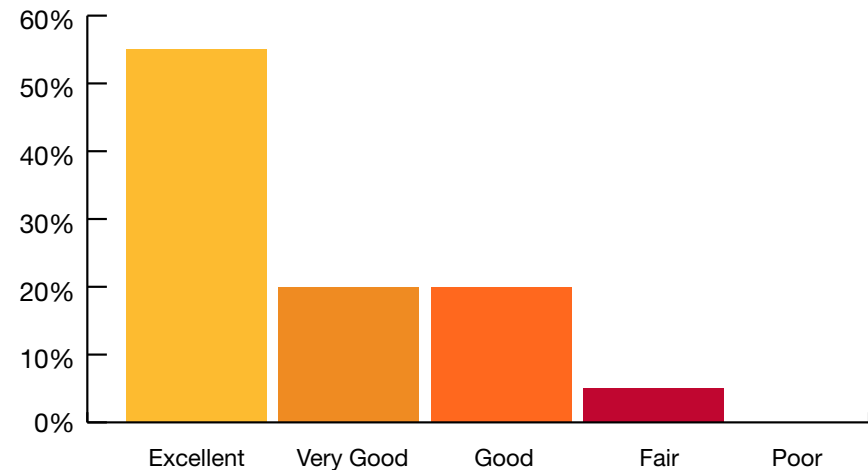


• “What I keep coming back to is the shared experience and how we are working through this together. The content is helpful but the connections just as important.”



• “We’re all in on it together! We reap what we sow, in terms of being responsible for our own learning and development and support/nurture that of others!”

Overall, how would you rate the Therapeutic Specialist Forum?



ITC Significant Disability Community of Practice

The significant disability placement type (ITC-SD) was added to the ITC system following the initial implementation of the reform. These placements are specifically for young people in care who have significant disabilities (developmental, sensory, communication and/or physical) often accompanied by high medical needs.

A needs analysis undertaken with the ITC-SD providers in 2020 identified the need for a specific community of practice for ITC-SD providers. A total of **6 two-hour bi-monthly knowledge sharing sessions** for ITC Significant Disability providers in NSW have been conducted to support their implementation of therapeutic care, share learnings, explore common practice and implementation challenges and offer consultation and training tailored to the needs of the ITC-SD providers.



This group plays a critical role in keeping a focus on the significant disability dimensions of working in the ITC system.

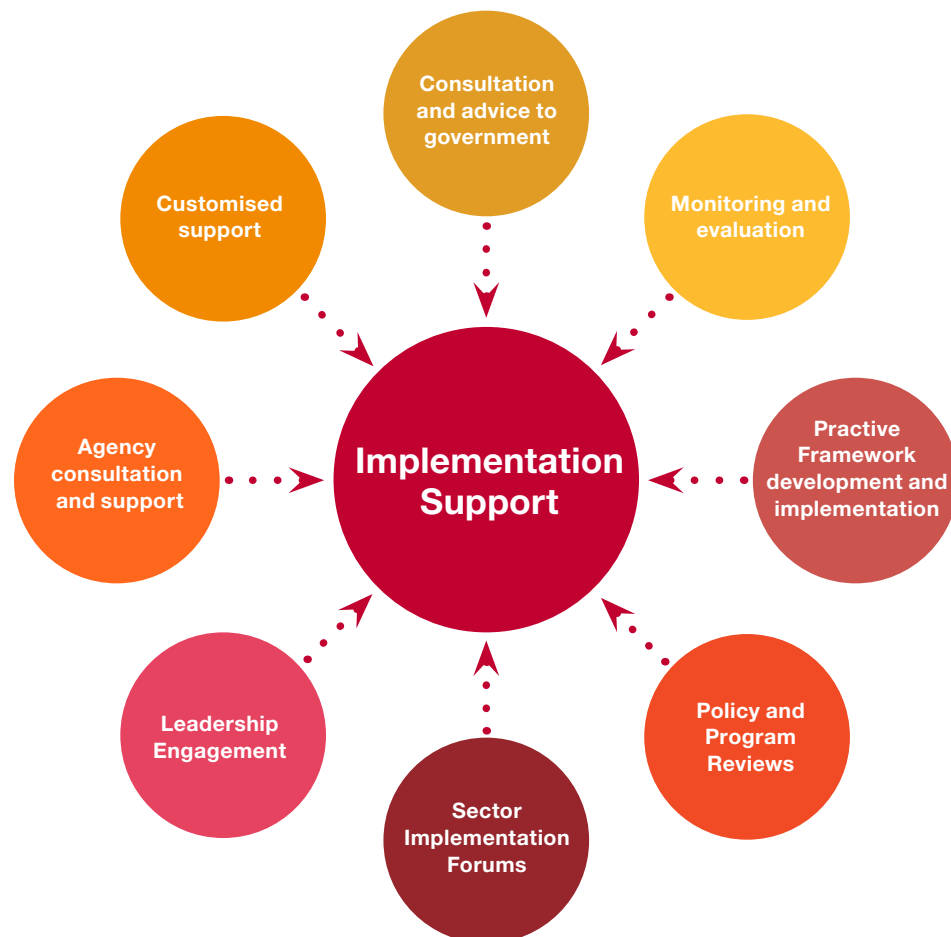
Intensive Therapeutic Transitional Care Leadership Forum

The CETC responded to sector need and met with a leadership group across the ITC system responsible for the delivery of the Intensive Therapeutic Transitional Care Units - a 13 week placement model that has a focus on assessment and needs identification for young people. In 2021, the CETC will run regular forums and/or communities of practice for leaders in this model of care to support practice development and service delivery.

Leadership Community of Practice

The CETC has responded to sector interest in the establishment of a community of practice for House Managers and operational leaders across the ITC system to come together to share and reflect on practice, generate learning and capacity building and strengthen the implementation of the ITC system. Work has been undertaken to establish the terms of reference for this group which will also commence in 2021.

Implementation support and sector collaboration



The CETC has engaged in **750+ hours of implementation support and sector engagement** to ITC providers and the sector more broadly in NSW through a combination of:

- Regular monthly meetings with leadership teams within each of the ITC providers to maintain regular contact and communications around implementation challenges and strengths and information sharing
- Regular consultation and support to ITC providers about specific implementation challenges such as recruitment, staff training, critical practice issues, model and program design
- Customised support to agencies such as external supervision of key staff
- The Year Two Pulse Survey of ITC providers to monitor and receive feedback about the experience of implementation
- Regular advice and support of the Department of Communities and Justice re-addressing service design and implementation challenges, including further model design options within ITC and broader out of home care systems, opportunities to alignment of initiatives across sectors (such as youth mental health and ITC)
- Participation on the Blacktown ITC Hub Governance Group
- Active participation on the cross sector Joint Protocol Steering Group with ITC agencies, NSW Police, peak bodies and the Department of Communities and Justice
- Regular meetings with the Central Access Unit, Department of Communities and Justice
- Participation on the PSP Learning Hub Advisory Group to address broader sector learning needs across the funded child welfare and out of home care sectors in NSW

- Active participation at and presentations to ITC Forums and working groups
- Regular meetings with the statutory and regulatory bodies including the Office of the Children’s Guardian and Official Community Visitor Program
- Participation of a range of sector working and advisory groups led by the NSW peak body, ACWA
- Leading a series of consultation workshops to with ITC providers and the Department of Communities and Justice regarding the practice of Client Mix and Client Matching
- Monitoring and review of the 10 Essential Elements of Therapeutic Care that underpin the ITC reform in NSW


Year Two – ITC Pulse Check Survey

The ITC reforms represent a significant change in how out of home care services are delivered to young people with complex needs in New South Wales. The scale of the ITC reform has yet to be undertaken by any other jurisdiction in Australia.

In November 2020, the CETC launched a survey to ‘take-the-pulse’ of how workers within ITC perceived the success and challenges of the reform after two years of implementation.

The anonymous survey was distributed through the CETC’s communication channels and in partnership with ITC organisational leaders. The survey comprised 48 questions, differentiated by role type within ITC.

A total of 217 Intensive Therapeutic Care workers completed the ITC Pulse Check Survey including: Case Managers (24), House Supervisors/ Manager (39), Operational/Senior/Executive Manager (28), Residential Workers (95) and Therapeutic Specialists (31). All ITC hubs were represented in the survey.



**YOUR
VOICE**

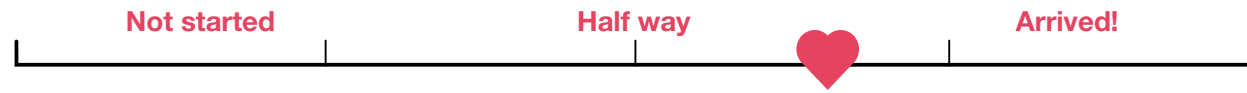
SURVEY

Intensive Therapeutic Care - Two Year - Pulse Check

TAKE NOW

ITC Pulse Check Survey Key Findings

The survey found the majority of ITC workers (66%) believe their organisations are over half way along the continuum of change toward trauma-informed therapeutic care, but most want ongoing access to training and support to continue this journey.



63% workers found the **advice, support and strategies offered by Therapeutic Specialists easy to understand and useful** in work with young people. 84% House Supervisors and Therapeutic Specialists felt they worked as an effective team to support staff to apply their therapeutic model of care.



The ITC workforce is very **new to therapeutic care**, with 65% of workers having been in their role less than 2 years, of which 35% have been in their roles for less than a year.



There is overwhelming **support** (96%) for a trauma informed way of working with most workers (80%) having **received appropriate training** and 77% of workers indicating they understood the 10 Essential Elements that underpin the ITC reforms.



Confidence that their agencies are doing a good job meeting the needs of young people is very high across role types (86% for case managers, 92% for House Supervisors, and 65% for residential workers).

67% workers had previously worked in general residential / disability care with 62% reporting they **had to change the way they think** in the context of therapeutic care and that 59% believed this had involved **changed expectations of them**.



ITC workers are divided on whether DCJ case managers understand the ITC system and trauma informed ways of working, with 23% feeling they do understand and 28% believing they do not understand trauma informed ways of working. Roughly half (49%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.



Overall, 82% **workers feel confident** in applying trauma-informed approaches to their roles however this reduced to 66% for therapeutic residential direct care workers.



The majority of workers (76%) said young people have **good relationships** with staff and feel cared for.

ITC Pulse Check Survey Key Findings

43%

Workers believed young people's connection to culture had improved.

51%

Workers believed young peoples' connection with siblings had improved.

53%

Workers believe young people's behaviour is more settled.

58%

Workers believe young people's emotional wellbeing improved.

69%

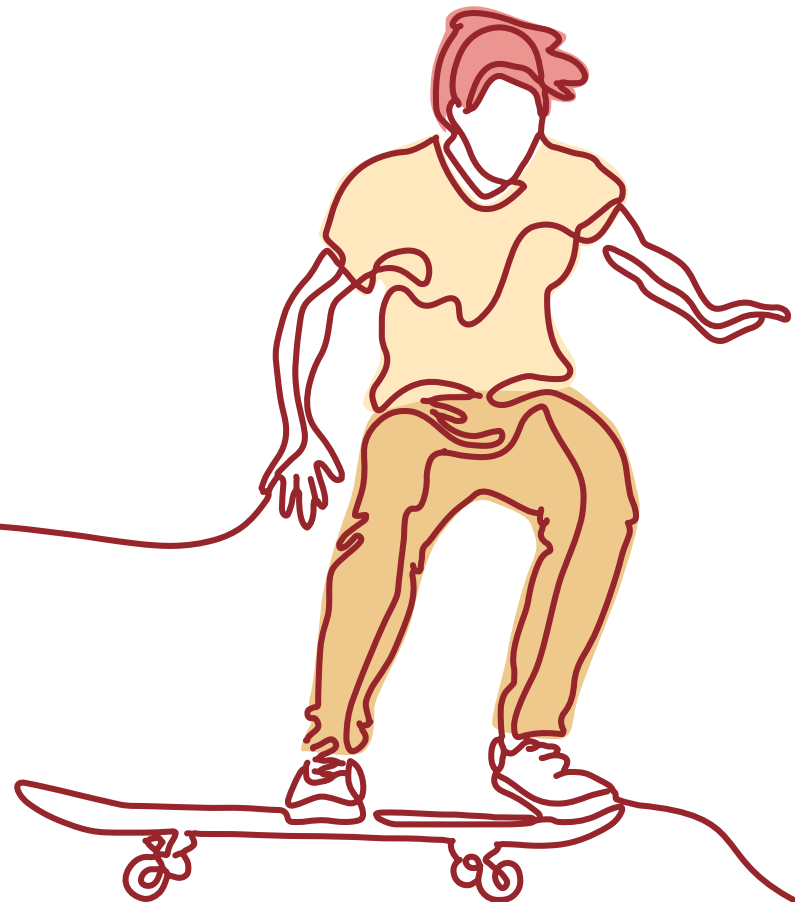
Workers believe young people feel listened to and understood.

63%

Workers believe young peoples' sense of hope for their lives had improved.

62%

Workers believe young peoples' connections to family had improved.



A trusted ‘go to source’

Over 2020, the CETC has consolidated its reputation as a trusted ‘go to’ source for therapeutic care information, advice and support for practitioners, agencies and governments across Australia.

The CETC is now working with governments and agencies across Australia to support efforts to implement therapeutic care, build capacity and develop new approaches to the delivery of out of home care and youth justice.

We are collaborating with people with lived experience, national and international leaders in the field of trauma and therapeutic care and practitioners to design, implement and evaluate robust approaches to meeting the needs of children and young people in foster care, kinship care, residential care and youth justice.



Ministerial Expert Panel, Tasmania

Our CETC Director, Janise Mitchell has been appointed by the Tasmanian Minister for Human Services to participate on an Expert Panel, formed to provide advice to Government on how best to meet the safety and wellbeing of Tasmanian children and young people in care experiencing severe and/or complex psychological and behavioural support needs.

Chaired by the Tasmanian Commissioner for Children and Young People, the Expert Panel will consider findings from an analysis of responses to young people with exceptional needs in other states and territories and provide advice on the essential therapeutic elements that underpin the effective approaches to therapeutic care for this group. This will inform the development of future program options in Tasmania by the Department of Communities Tasmania.

We co-produced and built new knowledge

Research Projects

The CETC has progressed a number of research projects over 2020, in addition to the development of major proposals for future research grant funding through the Australian Research Council and other funding bodies.

LGBTQIA+ Young People in Care

Young people who are placed in out of home care are amongst the most vulnerable in our community. They may have experienced the trauma of abuse or neglect. They have been removed from or rejected by their families and have to learn to live with carers who may be strangers. On leaving care they may experience isolation and marginalisation. For LGBTQIA+ young people, being placed in out of home care may serve to exacerbate and compound their experiences of marginalisation and social isolation.

This study adopted a case study approach to explore the lived experience of young LGBTQIA+ adults growing up in out of home care in Australia. Data collection is now complete, and findings will be available early 2021. Emerging themes highlight the value of relationships with trustworthy adults who embrace diversity and actively mitigate against young people's experiences of minoritization and marginalisation.

Placement decision making for young people with complex needs in NSW

This project aims to support the ITC system to better understand the young people who are entering the ITC system and will comprehensively describe how the ITC system is making decisions about their care in response to the referral. It will provide an insight into the extent to which the profile of young people initially expected to be looked after in the ITC system matches the need profile of the young people actually entering the ITC system.

This project involves a review of 100 young people with complex needs referred to the Central Access Unit, Department of Communities and Justice. This Unit is responsible for all assessing all referrals to the ITC system. The research project will describe and analyse



- the relevant background and demographic profile of the young people referred into the ITC system;



- the trauma, developmental and relationship histories of the young people referred into the ITC system;



- the needs of the young people that have been referred into the ITC system;



- the pathways of the young people through the child protection and out of home care system that have led to their referral into the ITC system;



- the decision making factors which are considered in accepting or rejecting a referral into the ITC system;



- the responses by the ITC Agencies leading from the CAU decision to accept them into the ITC system; and,



- the factors which contribute to successful placement of young people in the ITC system.

Data collection is scheduled to commence in March 2021.



Yarning with Sky Country: Developing principles and protocols for reintroducing Youth in Intensive Therapeutic Care to traditional stories.

In partnership with Indigenous researchers from the Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples, Southern Cross University, and Aboriginal Elders, the CETC is working to pilot a program that will strengthen the sense of belonging and connection of Aboriginal young people in care to culture and Country through story telling. Yarning is a protocol-based methodology and means of communicating Indigenous Knowledge that will be used throughout the project. The project will collaborate with Elders from a number of Aboriginal Nations, bringing Elders and young people together to yarn about stories, strengthening young people's Aboriginal identity and their connection to culture, Country and community.

Delayed due to COVID-19, this project is planned for 2021.

Conference Presentations

McPherson, L., Mitchell, J & Vosz, M. (2020) Presentation by invitation to the *International Therapeutic Residential Care Summit on Therapeutic Residential Care* November 4th & 5th, 2020: Facilitating Young People's Participation in Therapeutic Residential Care. Milwaukee, USA.

Journal Publications

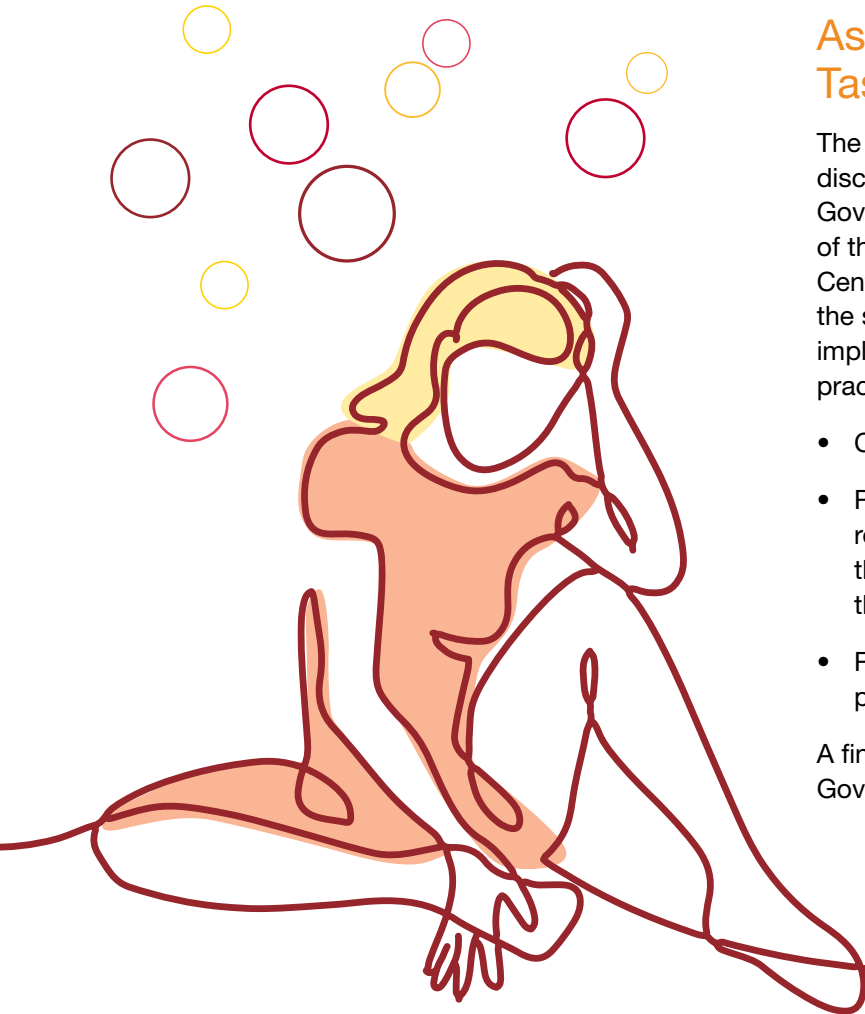
Vosz, M., McPherson, L., Gatwiri, K., & Parmenter, N. (2020) Overcoming the isolating impact of COVID-19 by promoting young people's participation in residential care programmes. *Scottish Journal of Residential Care*. Volume 19.3

McPherson, L., Vosz, M. Gatwiri K, Parmenter N., Macnamara, N., Mitchell, J., Tucci, J., (2021) What does research tell us about young people's participation in decision making in residential care? A systematic scoping review *Children and Youth Services Review* 122, 105899 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2020.105899>

Gatwiri, K Cameron N. McPherson, L., Parmenter N., (2020) What is known about child sexual exploitation in residential care in Australia? A systematic scoping review *Children and Youth Services Review* <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2020.105188>

Gatwiri, K., McPherson L., Parmenter, Cameron N. and Rotumah D. (2020) Indigenous Children and Young People in Residential Care: A Systematic Scoping Review. *Trauma Violence and Abuse* doi-org.ezproxy.scu.edu.au/10.1177/1524838019881707

We used knowledge to develop tailored solutions



Ashley Youth Detention Centre - Tasmania

The CETC was contracted to undertake a rapid discovery phase as the first step in the Tasmanian Government's desire to implement a robust model of therapeutic care into the Ashley Youth Detention Centre. The discovery phase sought to determine the scope of works required to further develop and implement a robust, evidence informed therapeutic practice framework and included:

- Consultation with key stakeholders;
- Review recent relevant documentation including reports, reviews and documentation relating to the current practice approach and operation of the Detention centre; and,
- Review of current learning and development program.

A final report was provided to the Tasmanian Government in May 2020.

Jewish Care - Victoria

The CETC was contracted by Jewish Care to develop therapeutic principles and practice framework to maximise the care and safety of young people with disabilities and who may also have experienced trauma. The CETC is currently working with Jewish Care to implement the practice framework using a combination of training, mentoring and reflective practice.

Barnardos - NSW/ACT

The CETC was contracted by Barnardos to develop and implement an evidence-informed practice framework within the therapeutic residential care program of the ACT Together (ACTT) consortium and provide advice on a range of step down models of care for young people exiting therapeutic residential care, in addition to intensive therapeutic foster and kinship models that may prevent entry of young people into rostered care arrangements.

Over the 20 month project the CETC will use an active implementation methodology to work with Barnardos to embed the practice framework and new service models into operations.



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