

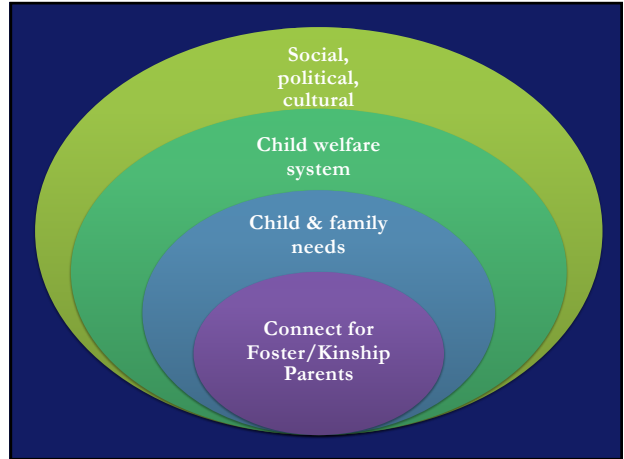
**Implementing Connect for foster and kinship caregivers in Australia**

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**Child protection system in Australia**

- State/territory governments are responsible for statutory child protection
- Kinship & foster caregivers are typically case-managed by government child protection & community out-of-home care (OOHC) agencies, respectively
- Rate of children entering OOHC has remained constant over past few years
- BUT kinship care is on the rise

**System in crisis?**

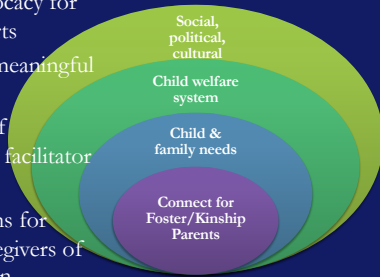
- Indigenous children are 11 times more likely to be placed in care
  - Lack of cultural support planning for children
- Kinship caregivers' mistrust of & stress re the system
- Shortage of foster caregivers
  - More exiting than entering
- Focused on crises vs promoting wellbeing?
- High staff turnover

**SAY NO TO A SECOND STOLEN GENERATION**

The workforce in the child protection system needs urgent reform

### Implications for implementation of Connect for Foster/Kinship Parents

- System-level: Advocacy for therapeutic supports
- Shared agenda re meaningful outcomes
- Effective system of providing ongoing facilitator training
- Cultural adaptations for foster/kinship caregivers of Indigenous children



### Implications for delivery of Connect for Foster/Kinship Parents groups

- Containing caregivers' distress
- Who will be the facilitators?
  - Considering the most appropriate teams within services from which to recruit facilitators
- Need for separate foster & kinship groups
  - Led to program adaptations for kinship caregivers
  - Focus on unique family dynamics
- Location?



### Program fit & uptake: Kinship caregivers

"This program is highly recommended. It opened my eyes & understanding of what our children went through"

"It would be great if this could continue as it was lovely to connect with other caregivers going through similar experiences"

"The uniqueness of kinship care was recognised"

"This course should be offered to kinship caregivers in the early stages of placement. It might stop a lot of placement breakdowns"

- ✓ On average **caregivers attended 85% of the sessions** across the program (range = 50% - 100%)
- ✓ Dropouts = 2 (*due to work or family commitments*)

### Other factors to consider for delivery & implementation

- Shorter school terms in Australia
- Overlap with other mental health interventions?
- Change in Directors & managers

New grant-funded trials



**RCT of Connect for Kinship Parents**

- Partnering with statutory child protection



**Pilot RCT of eConnect for Foster Parents**

- Partnering with out-of-home care agencies

