



**FAMILY-CENTRIC EVALUATION FOR  
FAMILY LED DECISION MAKING:  
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT  
ISLANDER PRACTICE REFORMS IN  
QUEENSLAND**

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**GAME CHANGERS**



# FAMILY-CENTRIC EVALUATION FOR FAMILY LED DECISION MAKING: ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PRACTICE REFORMS IN QUEENSLAND

## Overview

- What was the FLDM Trial
- Understanding the context
- Rational for methodology
- Family-centric evaluation approach
- Developing a program theory
- What did the evaluation teach us





*What is the Family Led Decision  
Making Trial*

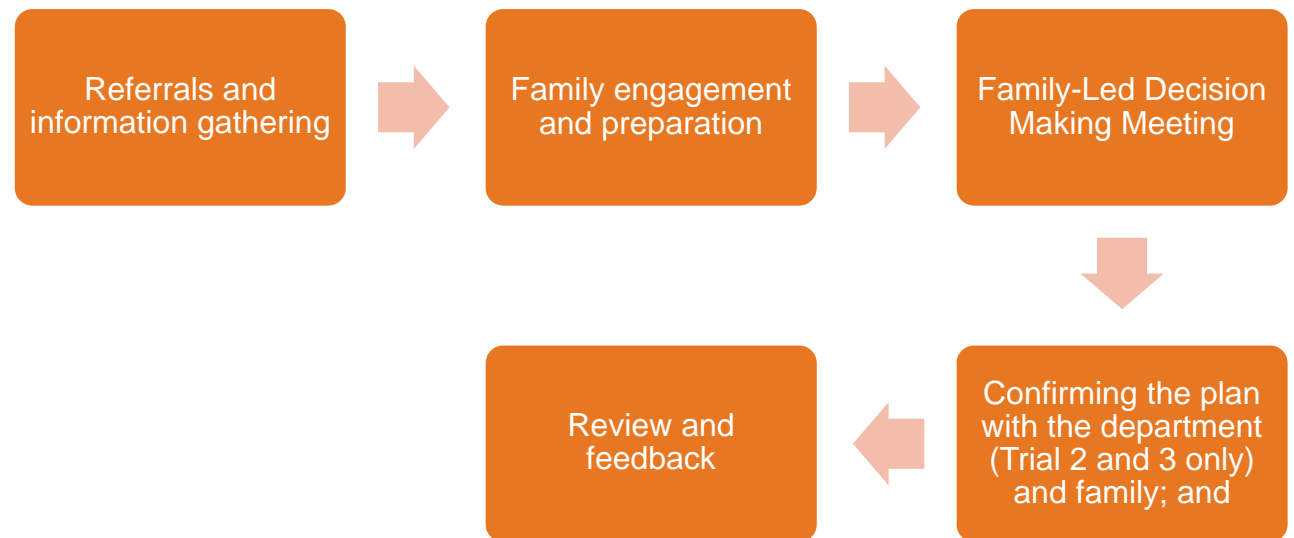
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## The trial

- Grounded in Family Group Conferencing
  - Evidenced-based practice
  - Strengths-based practice
  - Implementation partner
- 
- Worries
  - Working well
  - Safety plan
  - Cultural plan
  - Transition plan (if relevant)



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## Trial aims

- Promote self-determination and shared decision making at different phases of the child protection continuum
- Empower families to make informed choices and decisions about what's best for their children, while the department ensures safety concerns are addressed by the process
- Develop and trial the capacity of the Recognised Entity (RE) to lead decision making and case planning in a culturally sensitive way
- Test the practice implications and effect on existing legislative arrangements and delegations
- Assess the time and resources taken to undertake a full family-led process
- Review the efficiency of FLDM at different phases of the child protection continuum

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## Practice principles

- Recognises the family group as a key contributor and decision maker
- Family is a culturally defined and informed concept
- Independent worker
- Family groups should always have the opportunity to meet on their own
- ensures the safety of the child as central focus



*Understanding the  
context*

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# Stages of the child protection continuum

- Early intervention and family support (Trial 1 - Region A)
- The Investigation and Assessment (IA) process (Trial 2 - Region B); and
- The legislated Family Group Meetings (FGMs) process (Trial 3- Region C and Region D).





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# Trial sites

	Trial 1 – Region A	Trial 2 – Region B	Trial 3 – Region C and Region D
Phase of child protection system	Early intervention where there is no requirement for ongoing departmental contact / intervention	Department has the investigation and assessment process open and statutory protection is likely or being considered	Child Protection Orders or Open Intervention with Parental Agreement is in place (the trial is both for initial case plan development, as well as case plan review)
Primary outcomes sought	Divert families from future departmental intervention Keep children connected to family, community & culture	Reduce entry to out-of-home care Promote rapid re-unification Keep children connected to family, community & culture Increased role of the RE	Identify alternatives to OOHC & culturally appropriate placement options Improve quality of case plans, cultural support plans, and transition from care plans Increased role of the RE

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## Complexity of the caseload

- Diversity in the target audience
- Each family is unique
- The characteristic and dynamics of the issue evolves
- There are no obvious right or wrong set of solutions
- Objective measures of success are difficult to collect
- Too small to detect significant differences





*Rationale for the methodology*

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## Grounded in theory

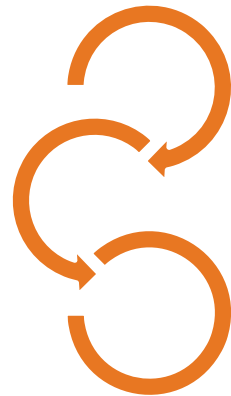
- Realist evaluation (*how does it work?*);
- Outcome evaluation (*to what extent did it work*); and
- Implementation review (*what was done and how can it be done better?*).



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## Evaluation methods

- Qualitative data from in-depth interviews and discussion groups
- File audits
- Performance data





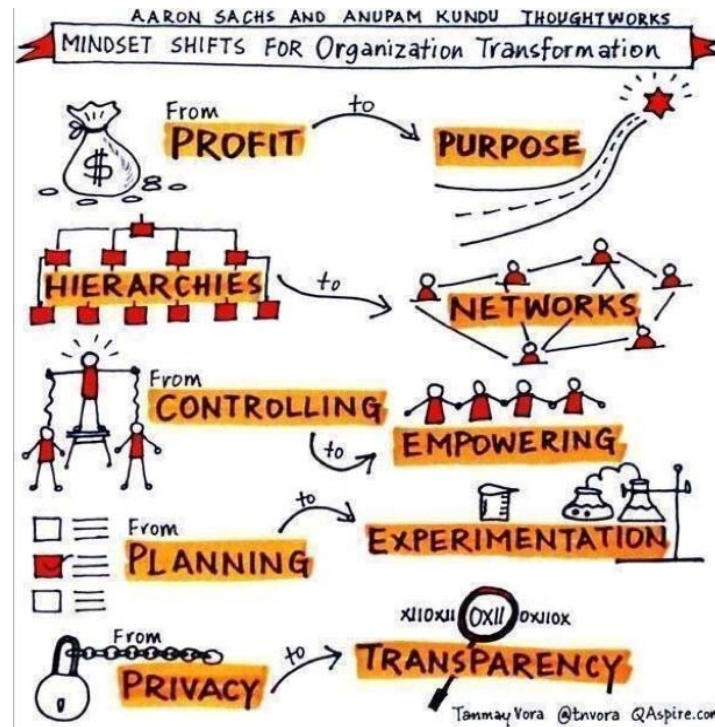
*Family-centric evaluation approach*

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# Family-centric service delivery

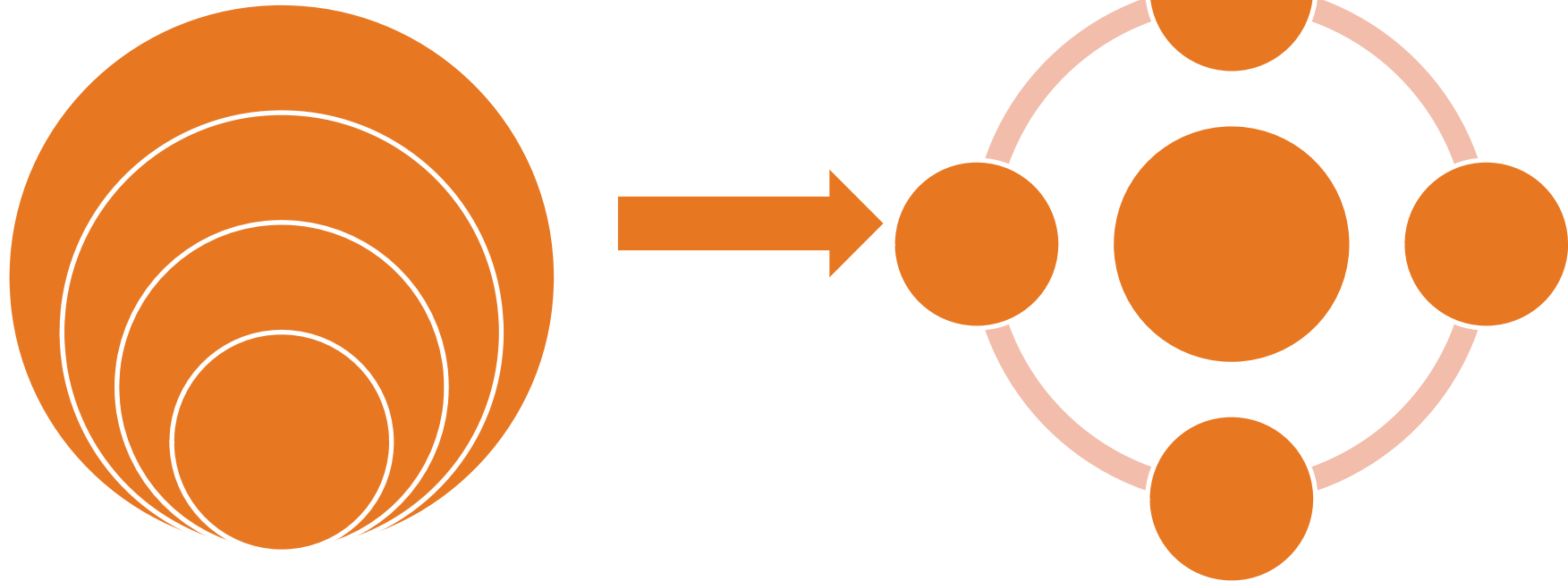


*Mechanisms that drive it:*

- *Exchange of ideas and values*
- *Shifts in roles and relationships*

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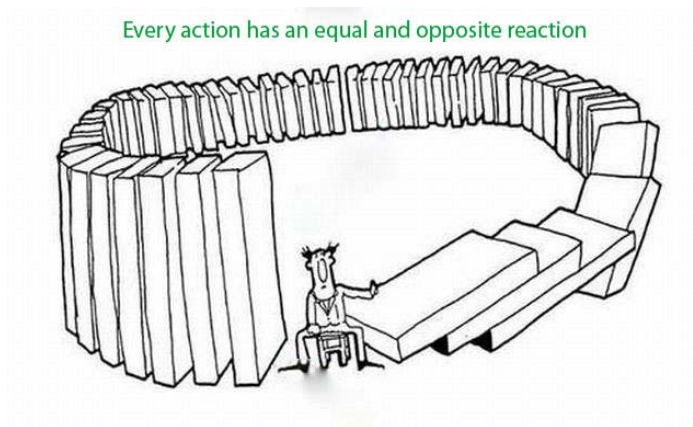
## Family-centric systems





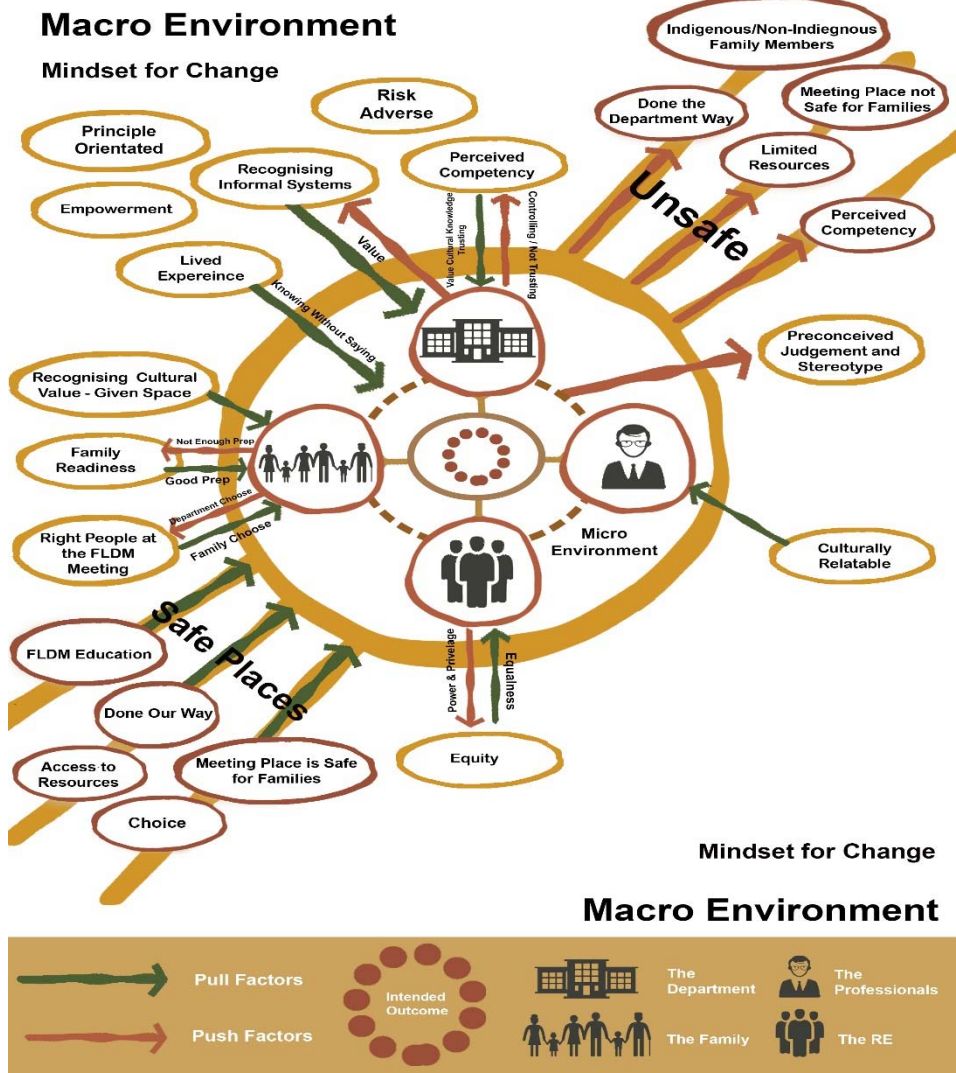
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# What does that mean for families





*Developing a program theory*



- interventions consist of a chain of steps/processes with negotiation and feedback at each stage
- the chain is often not linear
- interventions are embedded in social systems
- interventions are prone to modification
- interventions are open systems and change through learning





*What did we learn*

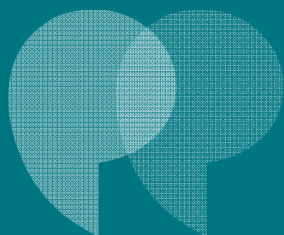
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# Learnings

- Realist theory proved helpful in proposing key ingredients of an adequate program theory but more testing needed
- Too soon to measure outcomes for families
- Needed longitudinal administration data
- Needed data collection from start of trial from families
- Developmental evaluation would have minimised implementation challenges
- Sparked evaluative thinking and critical thinking on the ground
- Intention for action/learning – but too little too late due to contracting then waiting for ethics



# IMPROVING SERVICE DELIVERY FOR ABORIGINAL AND/OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES



Thank you for listening