

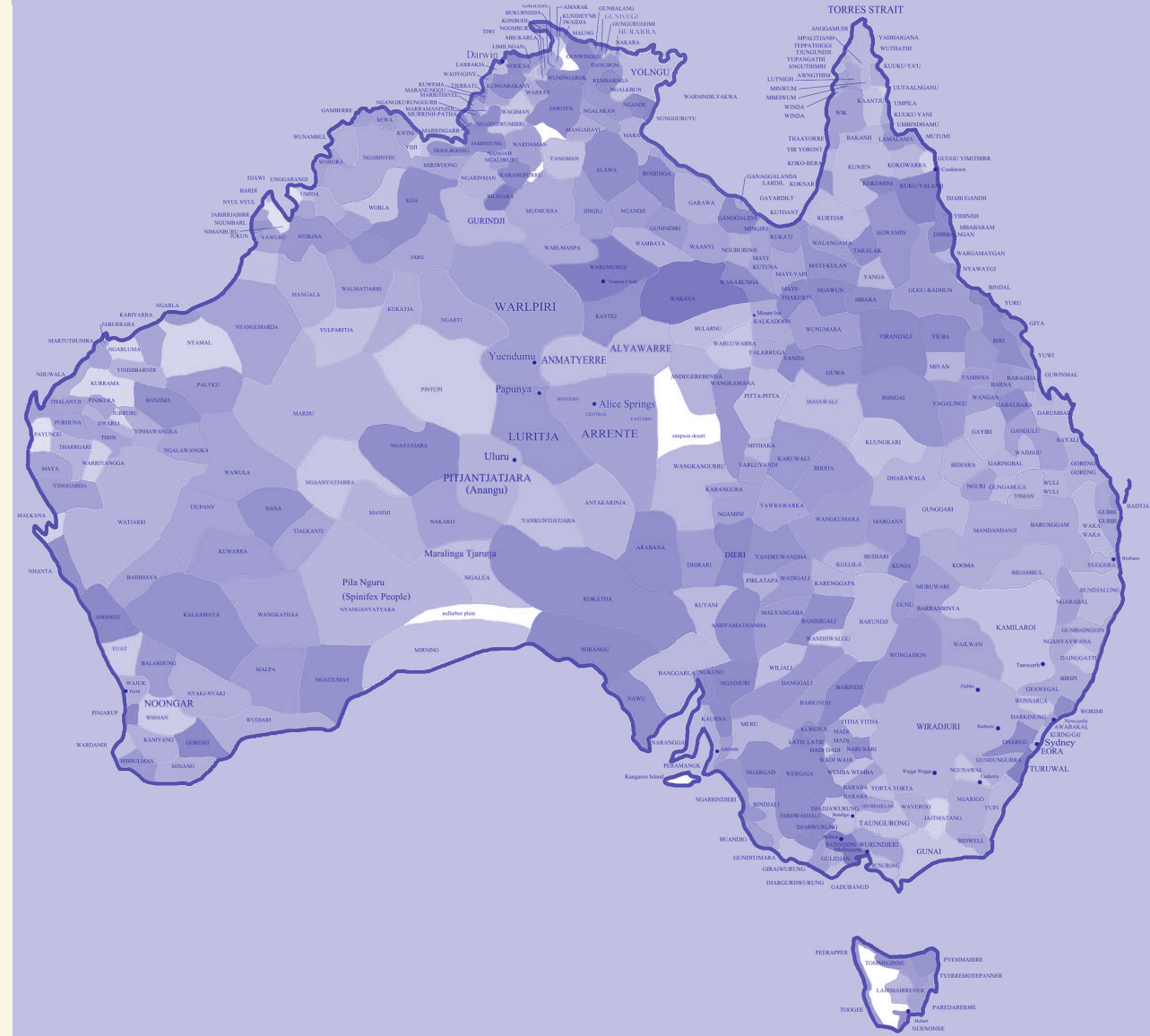


Applying the emerging Meaningful Evaluation approach

Eleanor Booth – Founder & Managing Director

Sam Cooper – Project Lead

Acknowledgement of Country



About For-Purpose Evaluations



Our Values

Excellence | Enthusiasm | Integrity | Pragmatism

Our Vision

A human services sector that knows its impact.

Our Purpose

To provide for-purpose organisations with the tools and capacity they need to measure their social impact, because every person deserves a service that works.

Key Learnings



1. It has made us better evaluators – it’s really worth doing!



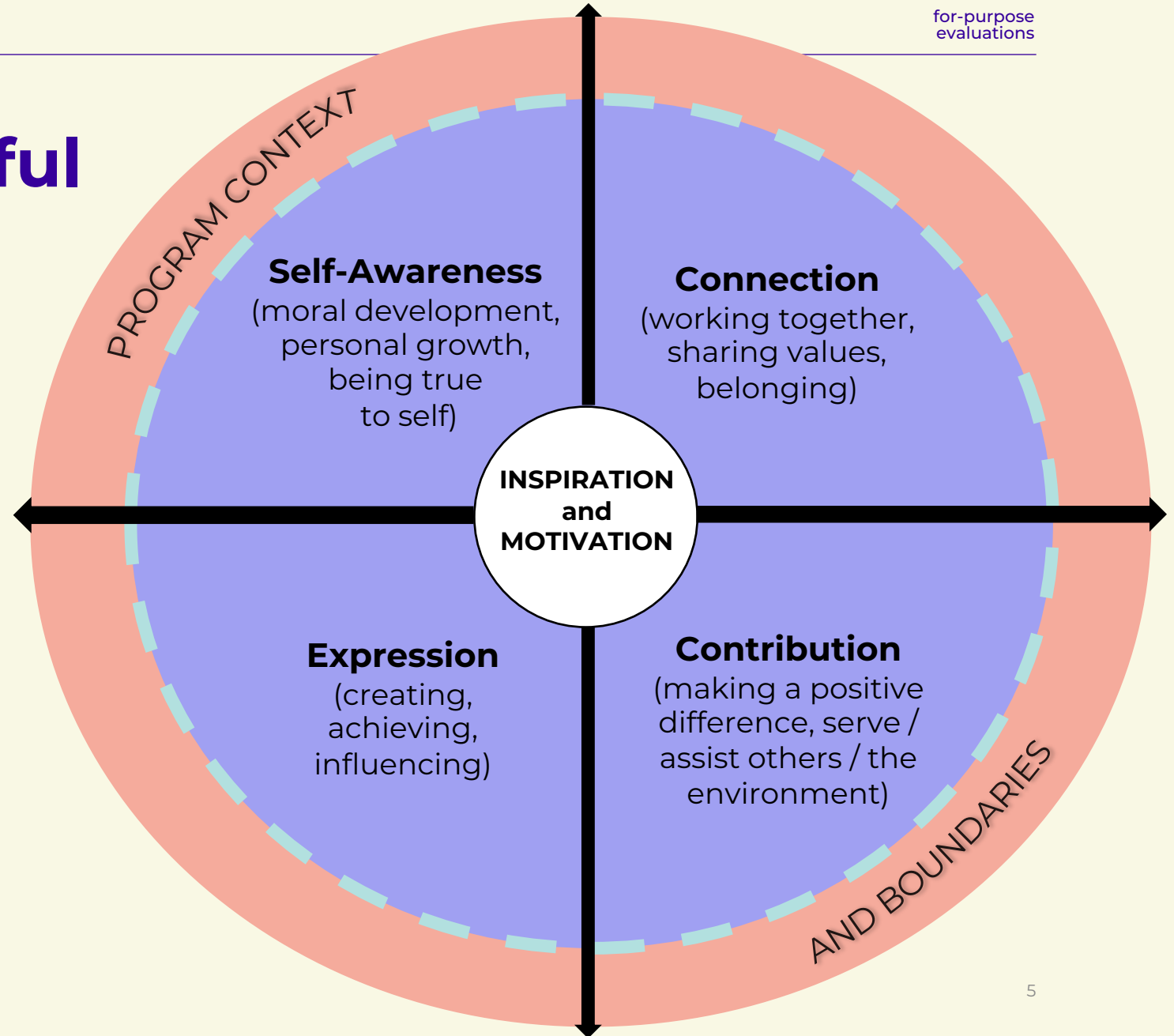
2. ME complements other evaluation approaches. We haven’t experienced a need for “trade-offs”.



3. Communicating ME findings can be challenging. Particularly in a KPI dominant context.

What is Meaningful Evaluation?

- First put forward by Gianni Zappalà in December 2020
- Combines the Map of Meaning with next generation evaluation approaches



Why Meaningful Evaluation?

It is an answer to...

1. An over reliance on the Impact Value Chain
 - change is not linear, meaning leads to sustained change
2. The de-contextualisation of Outcomes
 - change is complex and happens in context
3. The monetisation of Outcomes
4. The focus on external Outcomes
 - tyranny of the tangible, long term change short term programs, activities not outcomes
5. A positivist approach to validity
 - people aren't objects in programs or evaluations, no one, should ever feel evaluated



How to use Meaningful Evaluation

Alongside other approaches

- ME is a complementary approach but also new and unfamiliar
- Couples well with Theory-Based Evaluation, Outcomes Harvesting, Feminist Evaluation approaches and principles
- Can add depth and nuance to value chain and the blunt 'tangible' KPIs

Works with a range of methods:

- Semi-structured interviews
- Focus groups
- Survey

Can help organisations to feel more 'at ease' with evaluations

Case Study: Women's coaching program

About the program

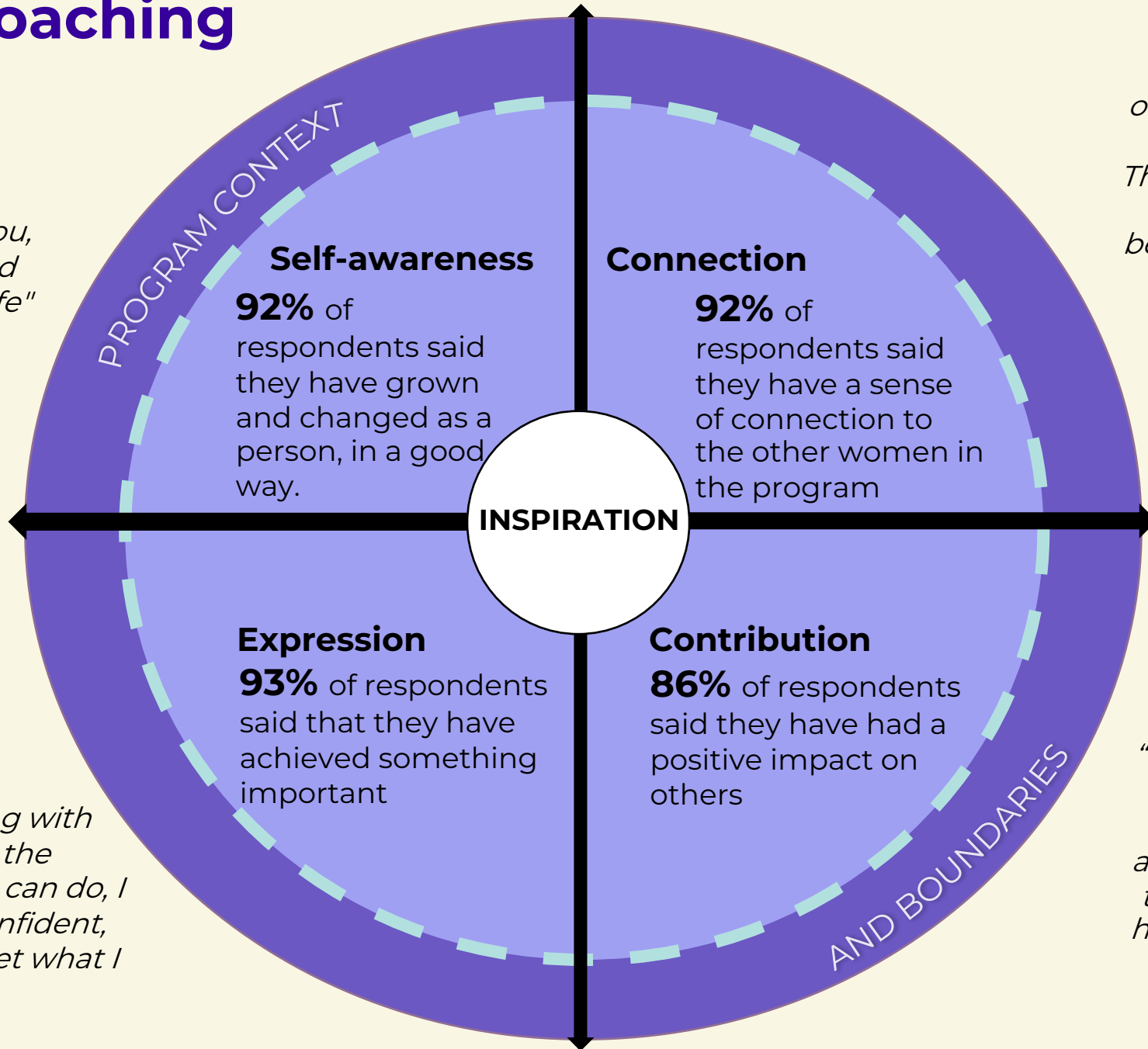
- Working with women who have previously experienced homelessness and / or family violence.
- 1:1 coaching, structured goal setting holistically across different life domains, towards a “Big Vision Goal”

What we did

- Theory-Based Evaluation + CBA + Meaningful Evaluation
- Semi-structured interviews + Focus group
- Also 4 survey questions as part of a larger survey

Women's coaching program

"When you discover yourself, the authentic you, it gives you pleasure and positive energy in your life"



"I sat with them [the other women] and I felt like I was not alone. There were other people who were damaged because something had happened to us."

"The work I've been doing with [coach] has given me the confidence to know what I can do, I can achieve things, be confident, advocate for myself and get what I deserve"

"I started studying three weeks ago. Early childhood education and care. I want to teach the little ones, I want to help the parents and the kids have the connection"

ME Learnings

- A holistic and person-centred tool for a holistic, person-centred program
- The internal or soft outcomes were a key factor in generating tangible outcomes
- Participants said they enjoyed the interviews with us: a chance to reflect on how far they'd come
- Challenge: Adds a layer to communicating a complex program

Case Study: Mentoring program for criminalised young people

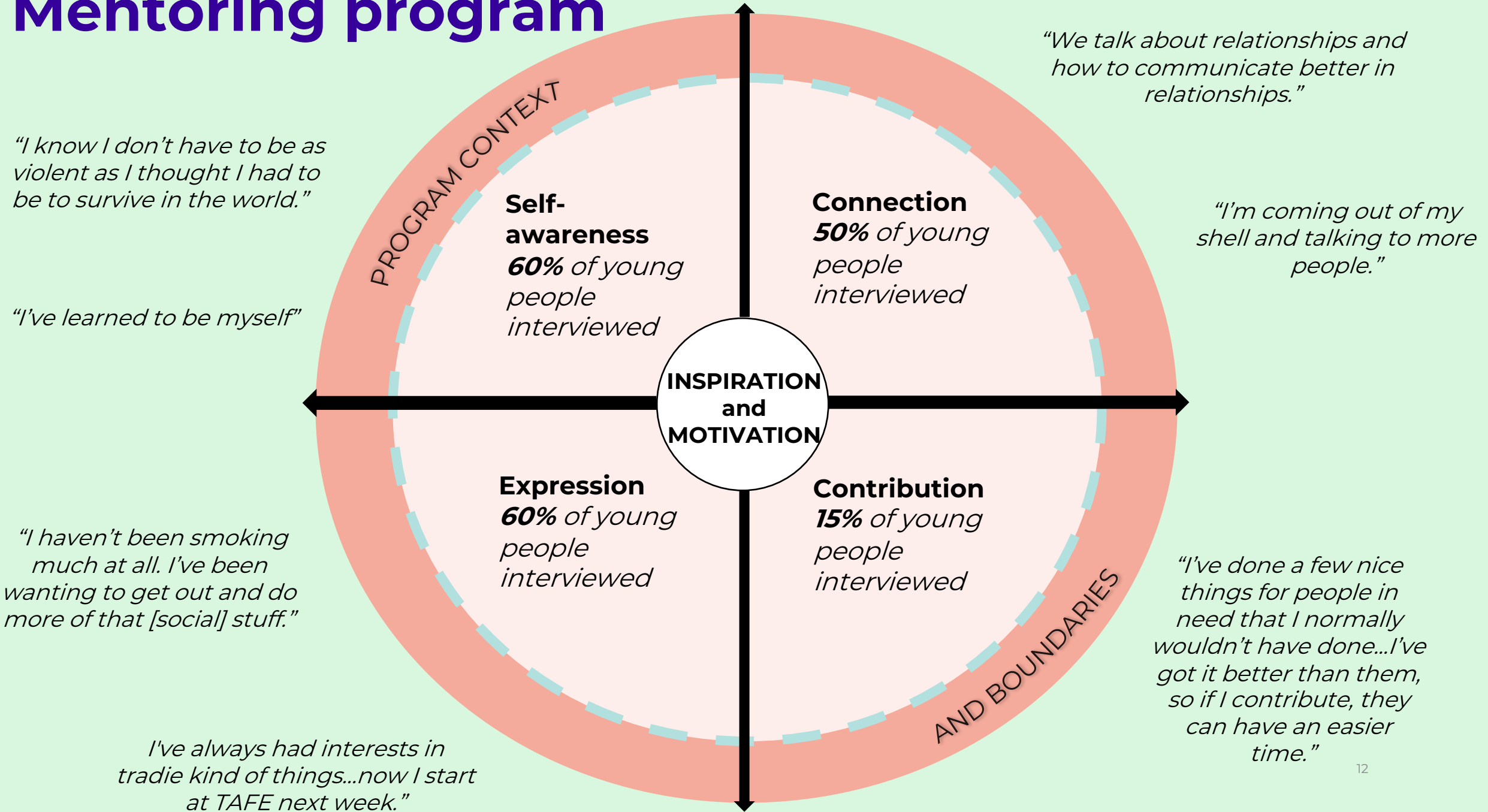
About the program

- Intensive mentoring for young people who have been made the subject of an AVO
- Client-directed, youth-centred program.

What we did

- Theory-Based Evaluation + Meaningful Evaluation
- Semi-structured interviews

Mentoring program



"I know I don't have to be as violent as I thought I had to be to survive in the world."

"I've learned to be myself"

"I haven't been smoking much at all. I've been wanting to get out and do more of that [social] stuff."

"I've always had interests in tradie kind of things...now I start at TAFE next week."

"We talk about relationships and how to communicate better in relationships."

"I'm coming out of my shell and talking to more people."

"I've done a few nice things for people in need that I normally wouldn't have done...I've got it better than them, so if I contribute, they can have an easier time."

**INSPIRATION
and
MOTIVATION**

Self-awareness
60% of young people interviewed

Connection
50% of young people interviewed

Expression
60% of young people interviewed

Contribution
15% of young people interviewed

PROGRAM CONTEXT

AND BOUNDARIES

ME Learnings

- Able to align the interview approach with what felt safer for young people
- ME pathways aligned with many of the outcomes in the PLM
- Challenge in communicating findings: expectations of funders around accountability for one or two KPIs

Case Study: Participatory evaluation with culturally diverse young people

About the program

- Network-type program of events and activities for young people from diverse cultural communities to build skills, connect with others, and influence policy

What we did

- Participatory Evaluation + Theory-Based Evaluation + Meaningful Evaluation
- Semi-structured interviews, focus groups, survey

Self-Awareness

Connection

“ I was not confident in my identity...[It has helped to] develop my confidence, self-esteem.

“ Still being me without having to change myself.

“ I managed to finish my degree, secure employment.

“ It's so cool to have your voice heard and be considered important.

91% feel they have grown and changed as a person, in a good way*

89% feel they are more able to be their authentic self *

80% feel they have learned new skills*

Expression

84% feel more connected to young people from diverse cultural communities*

78% feel they have made friends*

85% feel they have had a positive impact (on others, for their community, on society, for other young people etc)*

Contribution

“ I get to meet others who, like me, would like to make change in our communities.

“ [It's] my tribe, my community, a place where you can have safe conversations.

“ I've become more politically engaged... instead of just watching things happen.

“ It was great to participate in [giving] advice to government... and see funding come out the other side.

Inspiration

ME Learnings

- Many programs struggle to support the “contribution” pathway
- ME resonated with participants who felt that a linear Program Logic Model did not reflect their experience
- Successful communication of how the program worked and its outcomes.



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