



FMC
Mediation and
Counselling Victoria

Who is the Expert?

**Developing Service Literacy Amongst
the Assyrian Chaldean Community**

Foundation House Mission

*To advance the health, wellbeing
and human rights of people from
refugee backgrounds who have
experienced torture or other
traumatic events.*



FMC Mission Statement

*We believe that people can
improve the quality of their lives
through the services we provide*



FMC Mediation and Counselling Victoria

- FMC services include mediation, parent education, counselling, financial counselling, family therapy, children's counselling and groups
- We provide services to over 6,000 clients annually
- Our values are Professionalism, Optimism and Compassion



Meet the Presenters

Kath Cooney

Kathy is a social worker and trainer at Foundation House (The Victoria Foundation for Survivors of Torture), and is currently working on a number of innovative projects with newly arrived refugee communities. Kath has previously worked in both metro and rural/regional Victoria as a secondary school maths teacher, a school social worker and a manager with Kids Help Line. Working with young people who have arrived in Australia from refugee backgrounds enables her to extend here interest in social justice and rights-based approach to education.



Hoda Nahal

Hoda has a Bachelor of Social Work and Graduate Diploma in Family Therapy. She has been practicing in the field of child and family counselling for over 20 years. In that time she has specialised and refined her skills and expertise in the area of separation and conflict and their impact on child and adolescent development and wellbeing. Hoda has a strong commitment to service delivery enhancement and to the importance of collaborative practice across the service sector to enhance early intervention responses and improve outcomes for vulnerable children and families.



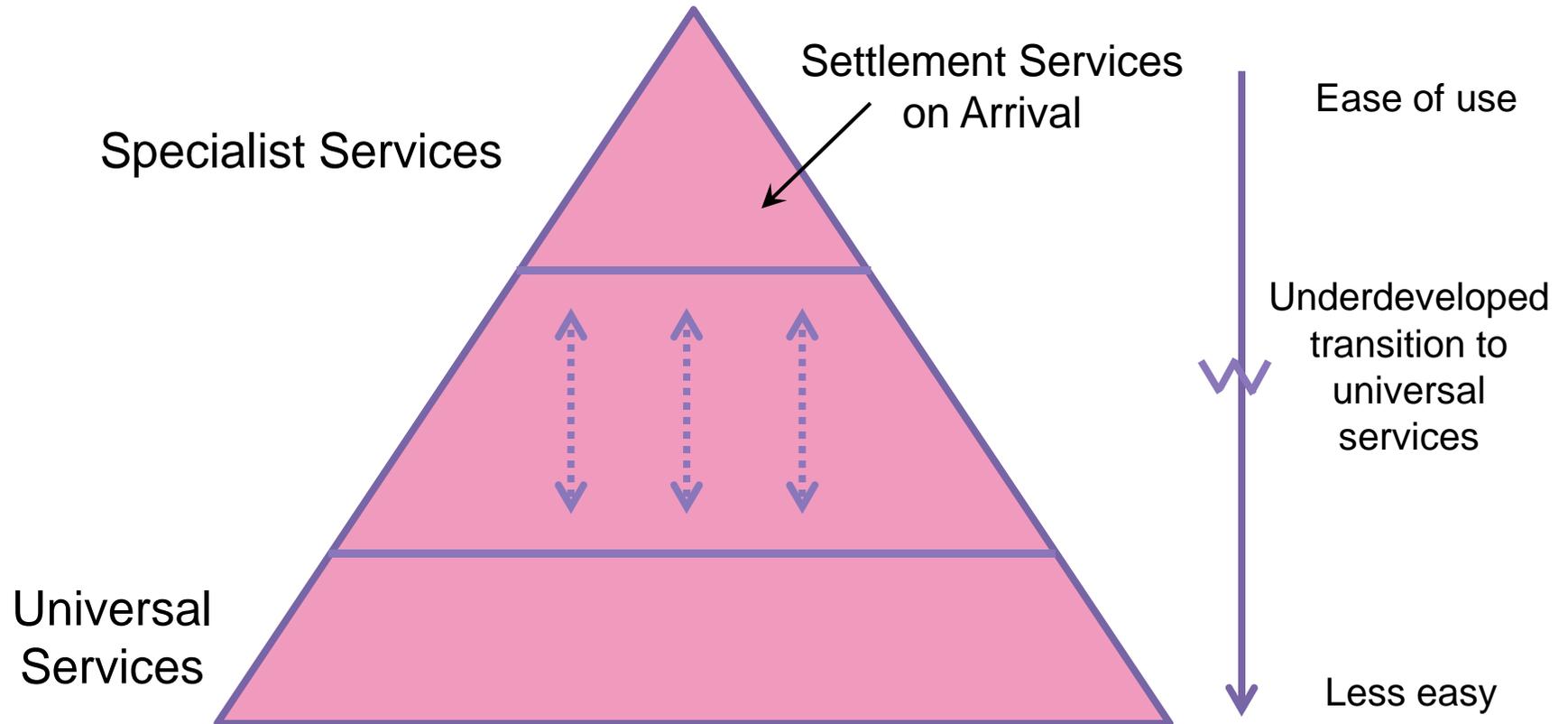
Today's Aims

- To raise awareness about a respectful way to work with a refugee background community
- Highlight a sustainable and transferable model to engage and build capacity within agencies and a community
- Encourage the utilisation of this model in other communities

Why this Community?

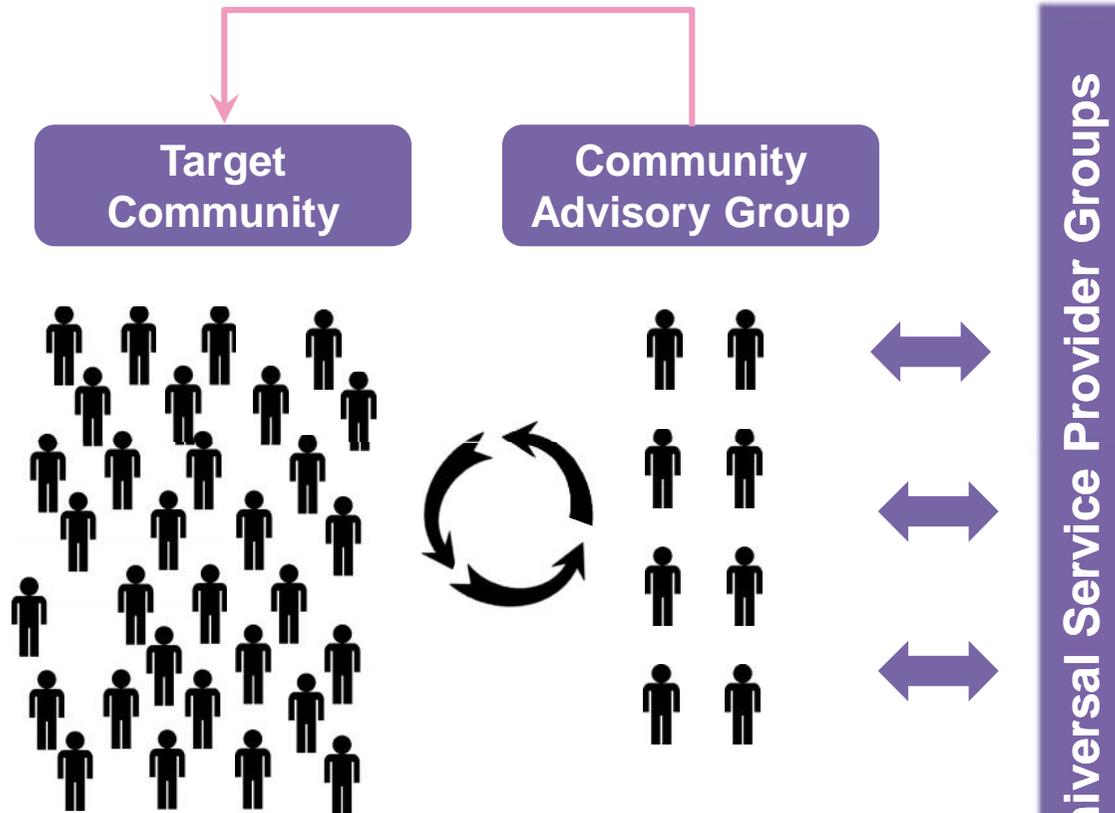
- Hume is home to second largest Assyrian/Chaldean community in Australia
- Demographics indicate Hume is one of Victoria's largest proportions of AS4's
- As people from refugee backgrounds move through the settlement continuum, their eligibility for support moves from specialist early settlement services to universal service systems
- Obvious gap in the provision of services to this community by universal agencies

Service Literacy



There was a low participation rate and hence the need to establish a collaborative network to build community capacity

The Strategy



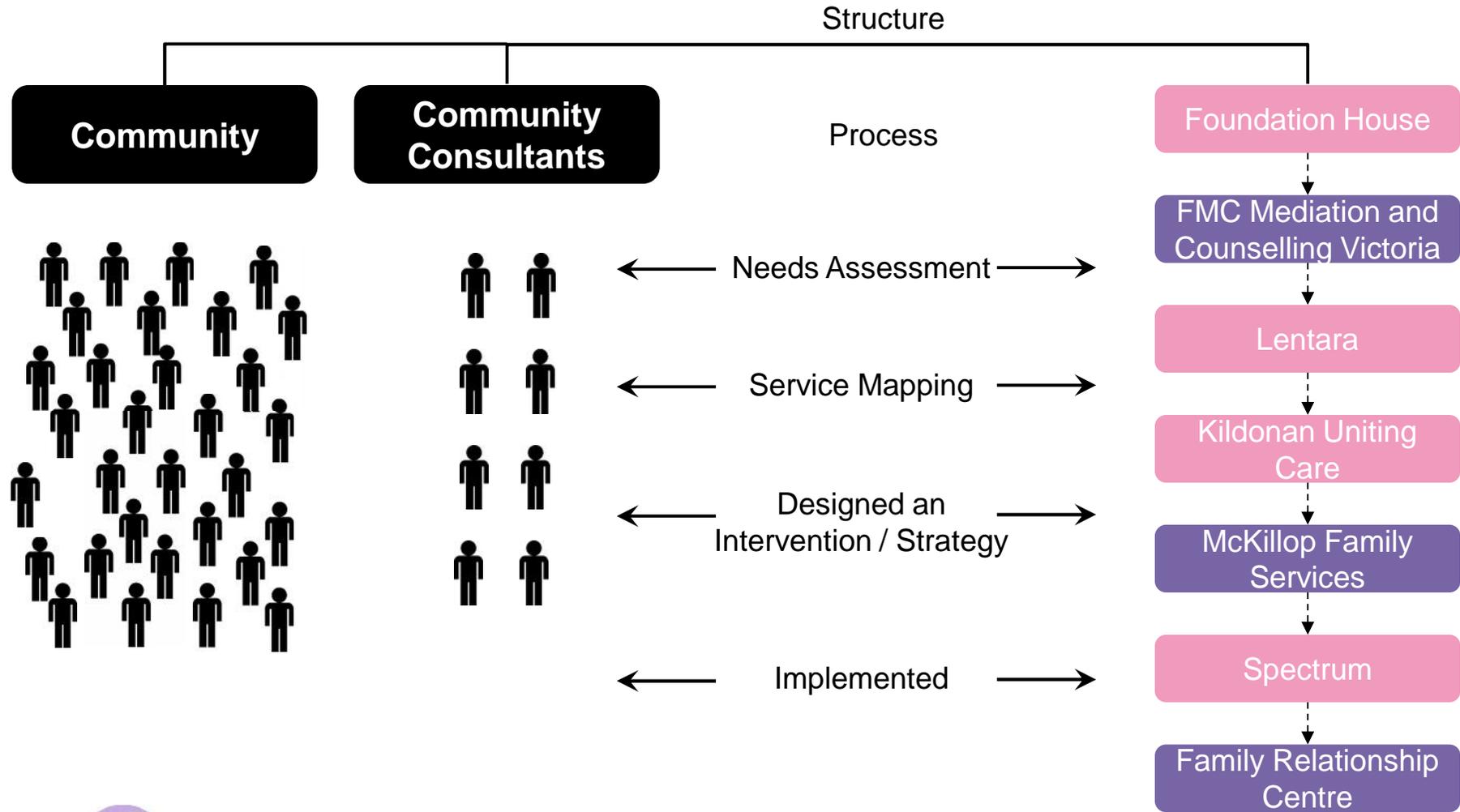
2013

- Establish consultant group
- Identify concerns of the community
- Identify barriers and facilitators to access
- Design strategy

2014

- Run strategy

The Strategy

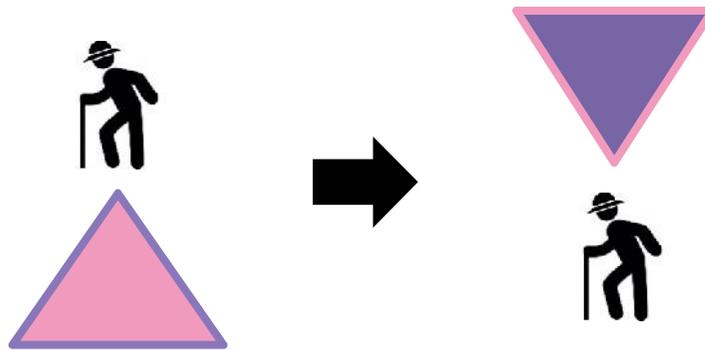


Community Issues Identified

- Spousal relationships and conflicts
- Impact of conflict upon children
- Country of origin conflict and impact today

The Project Method

- Refugee family dynamics triangle considerations shape messages



- Stepping stones activities
- Parenting Support

Strategy In Action

1. Networking

Assyrian Chaldean Women's' Group

- Kildonan Uniting Care
- MacKillop Family Services
- Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre
- Family Relationship Centre

2. Coordination

7 Play Groups

VICSEG

Hub

Schools

Australian Mesopotamian Womens Assoc.

Men's Group

3. Cooperation

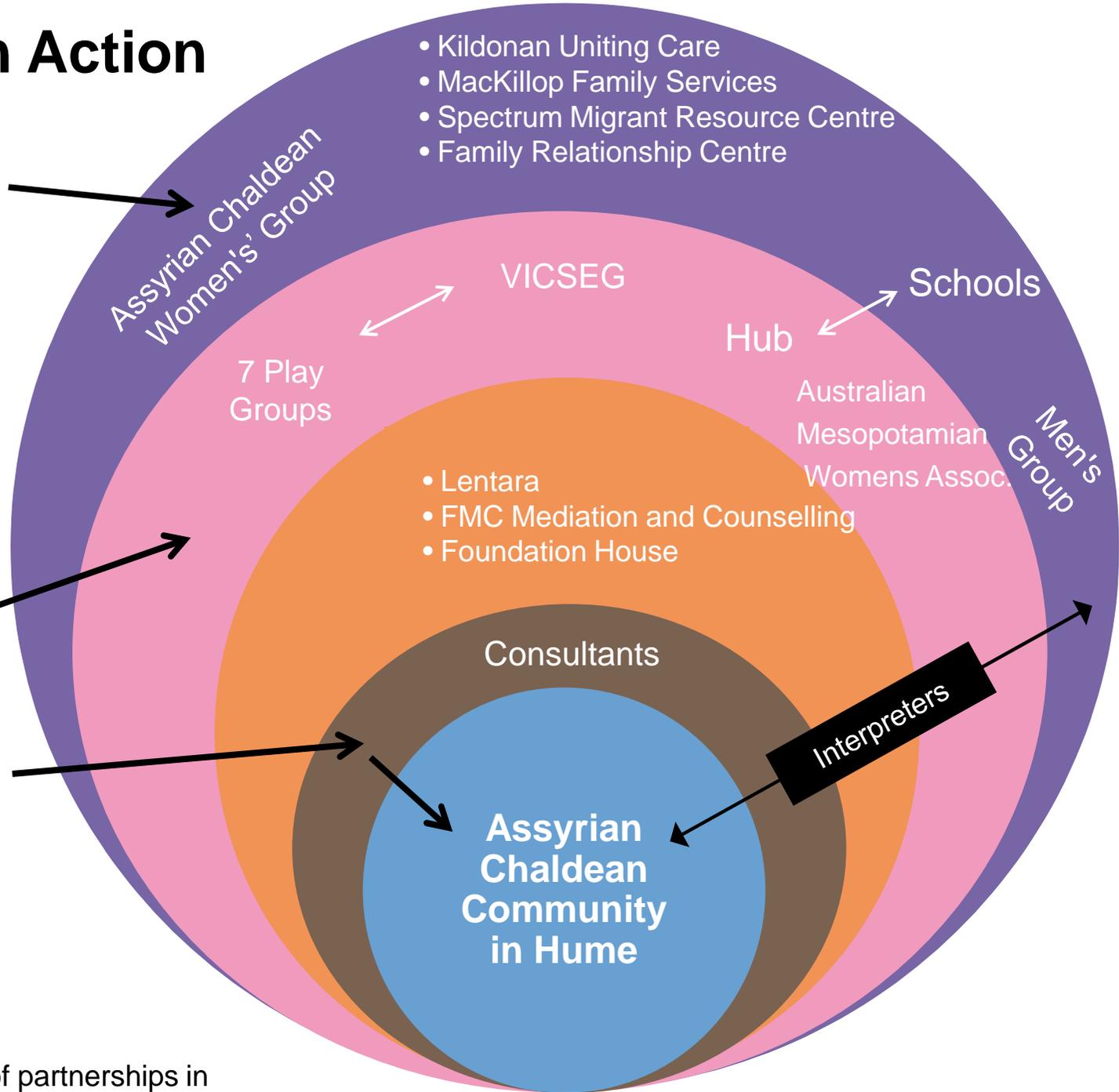
- Lentara
- FMC Mediation and Counselling
- Foundation House

Consultants

4. Collaboration

Interpreters

Assyrian Chaldean Community in Hume



The Challenges for this Project

Barrier

- Low initial attendance at group sessions
- Frustrating progress with community and agency partnerships
- Community advisers changing the project scope
- Funding



Mitigation

- Go to where the community goes
- Understand the partnership development will be slow so allow adequate time
- Recognise that the project values the community's advice-challenge in working only with women
- Demonstrate the community value for further \$



Other Learning from Agencies

- Value the contributions of all by employing community consultants (PAID!) and supporting them to work within the project's structure.
- Go to the community where they are going, and be fully guided by community consultants
- Expect the agencies to change as much if not more, than the community
- Nothing is new! The ways you have worked before will probably work here, but check it out with consultants
- Flexibility – children in the room whilst being mindful of kids safety

Other Learning from Agencies

- Model what you are saying (treat the kids respectfully). Relate confidentiality in this group to the same confidentiality that will be given in the agency
- Expect tears and set up for that with good containment
- Get good at using interpreters. Use interpreters who are part of the community so they also will spread the message. Using interpreters when workers can speak in language – we use both languages so participants comfortable and are learning English vocab specific to relationships.
- Acknowledge the refugee experience as a pivotal influence on settlement

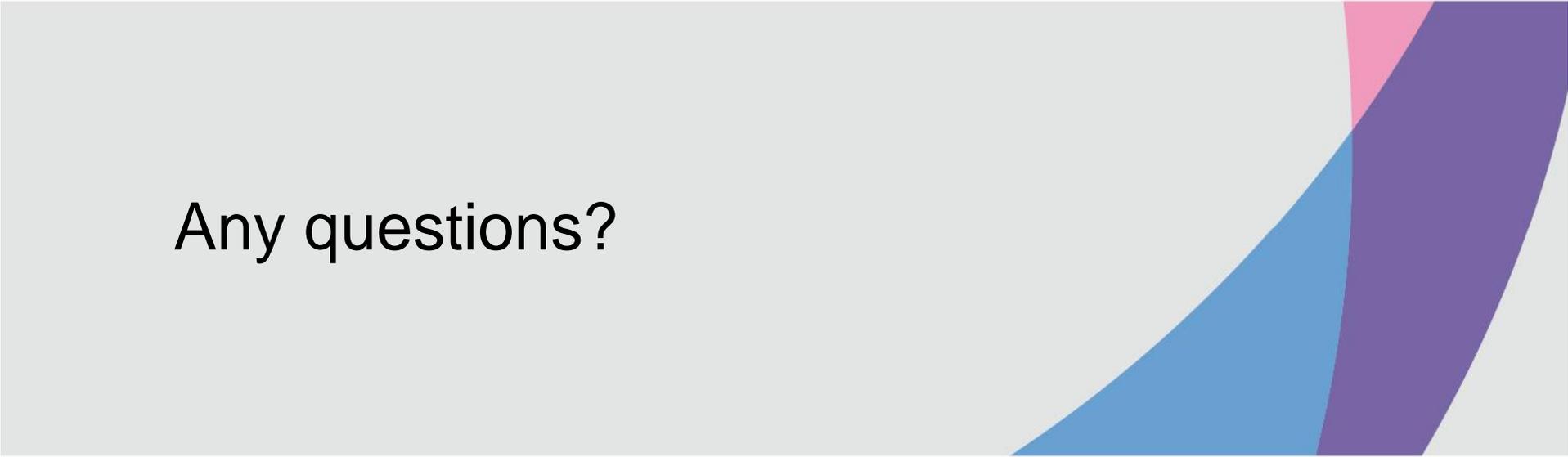
Next Steps?

- Men – follow up on relationships with playgroups
- Hub and AMWA
- Men's groups
- Disseminate the model and learnings

Evaluation

- Feedback gathered after every session
- Attendance at sessions recorded to learn how increase session attendances
- Follow up interviews conducted with key people

Any questions?



FMC Broadmeadows



Groups



Counselling



Art



Art





For more information, please contact....

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