

# HELPING CHILDREN HEAL

Healing and recovery for  
children and their  
families who have  
experienced domestic  
and family violence



Manda Rochester  
Program Manager

Trauma-informed healing and recovery 3-year pilot program for children and young people who have experienced Domestic and Family Violence. Aims:

- Improve social, emotional and educational outcomes for children and young people, and
- Restore and strengthen relationship with safe caregiver/s

Who is eligible?

Children aged 6-12 years, their siblings and safe caregiver/s



# Key Principles:

- The need to look beyond a child's immediate behaviour and recognise how to meet their genuine relationship needs.



# Key Principles:

- The need to look beyond a child's immediate behaviour and recognise how to meet their genuine relationship needs.
- The need for a calm, trusted adult to assist children to increase their ability to recognise and manage big feelings and reactions.



# Key Principles:

- The need to look beyond a child's immediate behaviour and recognise how to meet their genuine relationship needs.
- The need for a calm, trusted adult to assist children to increase their ability to recognise and manage big feelings and reactions.
- The importance of parent/carer reflection to consider the impacts of their own experiences in their parenting.



# Key Principles:

- The need to look beyond a child's immediate behaviour and recognise how to meet their genuine relationship needs.
- The need for a calm, trusted adult to assist children to increase their ability to recognise and manage big feelings and reactions.
- The importance of parent/carer reflection to consider the impacts of their own experiences in their parenting.
- The power of play & creativity to process trauma, shift patterns and explore new ways of being



# Key Principles:

- The need to look beyond a child's immediate behaviour and recognise how to meet their genuine relationship needs.
- The need for a calm, trusted adult to assist children to increase their ability to recognise and manage big feelings and reactions.
- The importance of parent/carer reflection to consider the impacts of their own experiences in their parenting.
- The power of play & creativity to process trauma, shift patterns and explore new ways of being
- Strengths based practice that includes children and young people's rights to information and opportunities to have a voice and choice in things that affect them



# Key Principles:

- The need to look beyond a child's immediate behaviour and recognise how to meet their genuine relationship needs.
- The need for a calm, trusted adult to assist children to increase their ability to recognise and manage big feelings and reactions.
- The importance of parent/carer reflection to consider the impacts of their own experiences in their parenting.
- The power of play & creativity to process trauma, shift patterns and explore new ways of being
- Strengths based practice that includes children and young people's rights to information and opportunities to have a voice and choice in things that affect them
- Recognition that children are much more than their experience of trauma - they bring their own strengths, cultural practices, resources & choices



# Key Principles:

- The need to look beyond a child's immediate behaviour and recognise how to meet their genuine relationship needs.
- The need for a calm, trusted adult to assist children to increase their ability to recognise and manage big feelings and reactions.
- The importance of parent/carer reflection to consider the impacts of their own experiences in their parenting.
- The power of play & creativity to process trauma, shift patterns and explore new ways of being
- Strengths based practice that includes children and young people's rights to information and opportunities to have a voice and choice in things that affect them
- Recognition that children are much more than their experience of trauma - they bring their own strengths, cultural practices, resources & choices
- The importance of moving through developmental milestones and engaging with learning for future stability & functioning



- An ability to talk with family about feelings
- The sense that family is supportive during difficult times
- The enjoyment of participation in community traditions
- Feeling a sense of belong in school
- Feeling supported by friends
- Having at least two non-parent adults who genuinely care
- Feeling safe and protected by an adult at home



# How we help

## THERAPEUTIC PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

We know every child is different, so we offer a variety of therapeutic programs for children to support their healing and recovery after trauma, including:



**Secret Agent Society:** Online sessions using games and creativity to build children's self-esteem, confidence, and social skills.



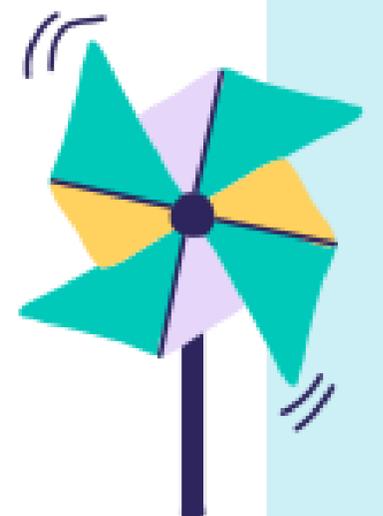
**School Holiday Program:** Activities that maintain children's sense of normalcy, connection, and fun while addressing educational and social needs.



**Rain or Shine Program:** A creative group that supports children aged 6-12 to improve their wellbeing and recovery.

### These programs support children to:

- Develop processing skills and resilience
- Connect safely with others, and know they aren't alone
- Understand all feelings are OK
- Learn co-regulation and self-regulation strategies
- Enhance wellbeing through playful, nurturing activities



# How we help

## LEARNING SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY

We provide services that assist families to navigate education systems when children need extra support with learning and recovery. These include:



**Advocacy Support:** We provide assistance with school liaising, learning resources and navigating systems like schools and the NDIS.

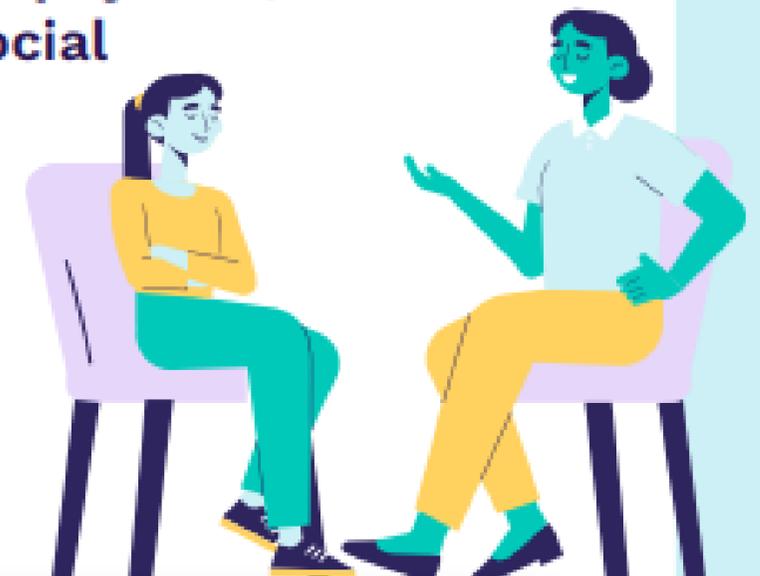


**Learning Hub:** Children can access tutoring during school, and therapeutic activities during the holidays.



**Allied Health Service Support:** We can help fast-track access to psychology, occupational therapy, speech therapy and healthcare services.

These services provide holistic, wrap-around support to ensure children have their **physical, developmental, social and education needs met** while they recover from trauma.



# How we help

## TAILORED FAMILY SUPPORT

We help families rebuild trust and connection through intensive sessions using holistic approaches including play therapy and parent coaching. Support includes:



**In-person or online individual and family support sessions** that create positive childhood experiences to help children thrive after trauma.



**In-person or online counselling or psychology sessions** using a range of creative tools including art and play.



**Group or individual support helping parents and carers** rebuild trust with their children, respond to their needs, and foster playful, caring relationships.



**Our Child and Young Person Specialists walk alongside families to build tailored support plans specific to their needs.**

# Positive Childhood Experience Framework



Therapeutic Groups & Activities

Learning & Allied Health Support

# A few examples of child/family activities

Shared with permission



Hero's Battle Ground - child sand play



The Great Big Rainbow - a parent and child story creation

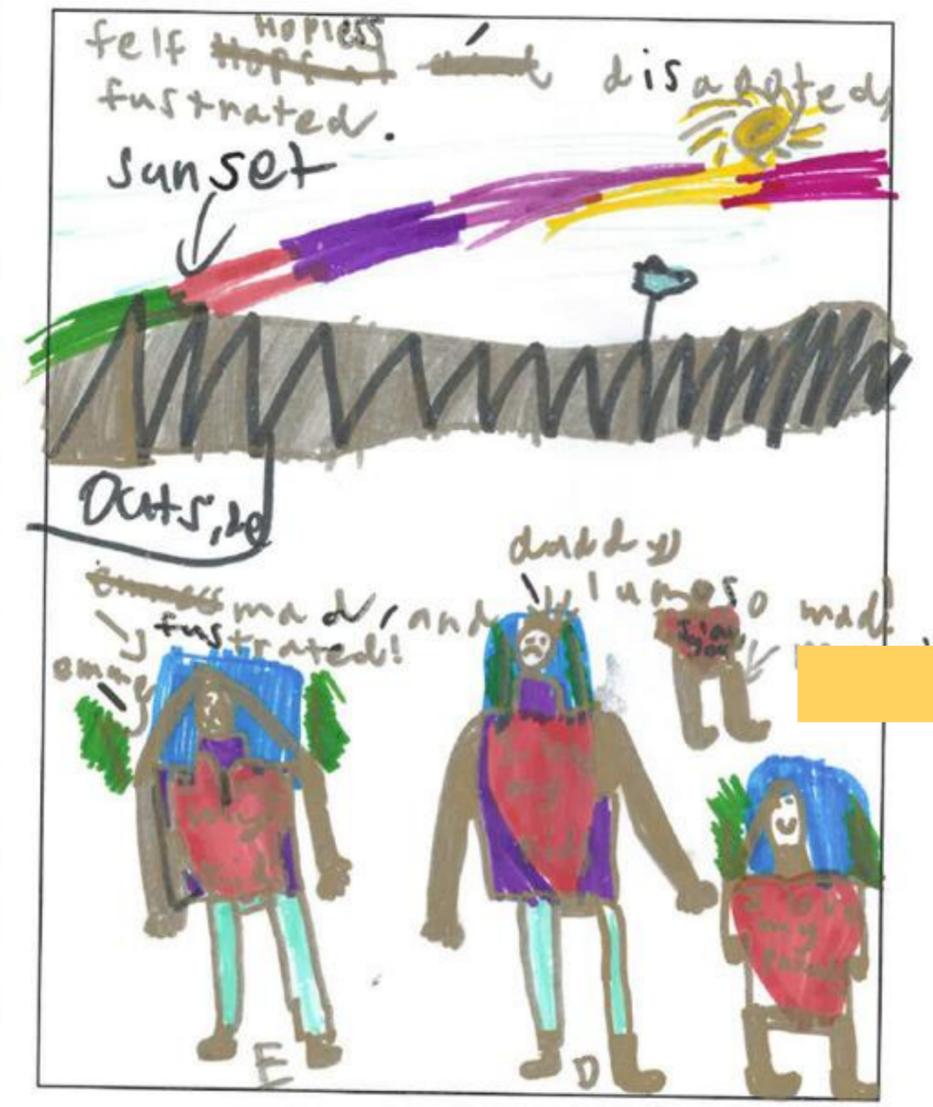
All About Me:



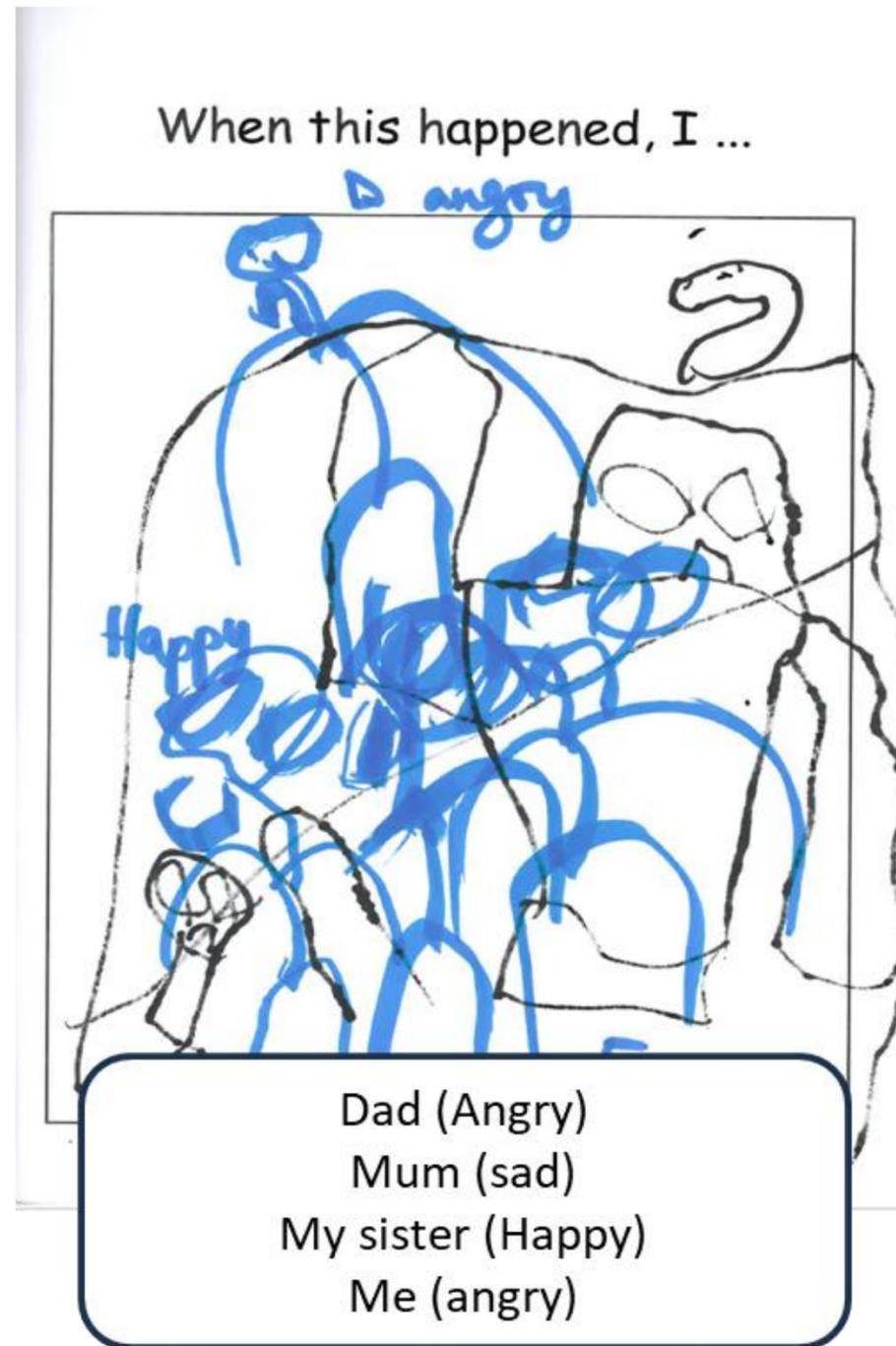
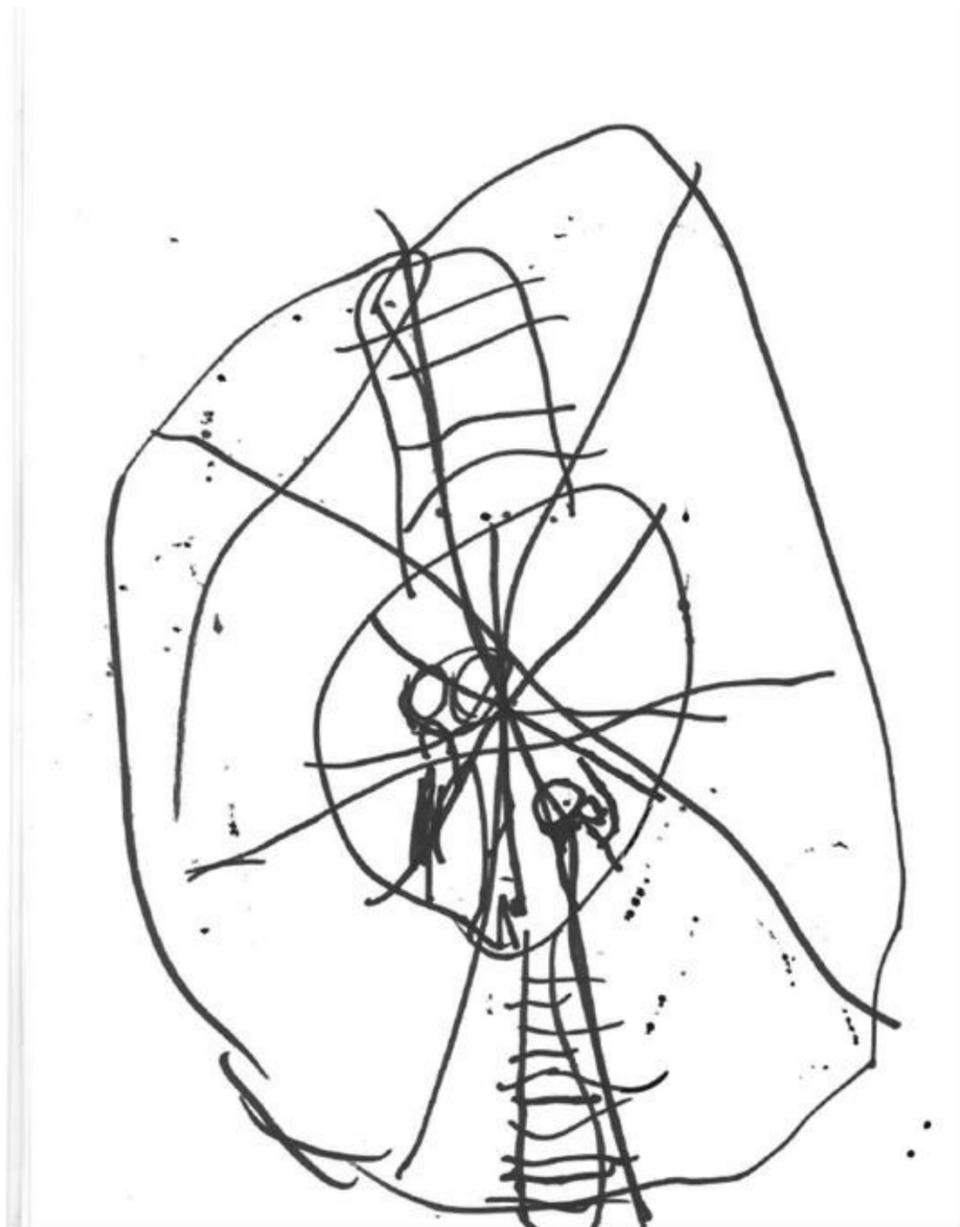
When Dad hurt Mum



When this happened, I ...



Social Story - created to help make sense of things

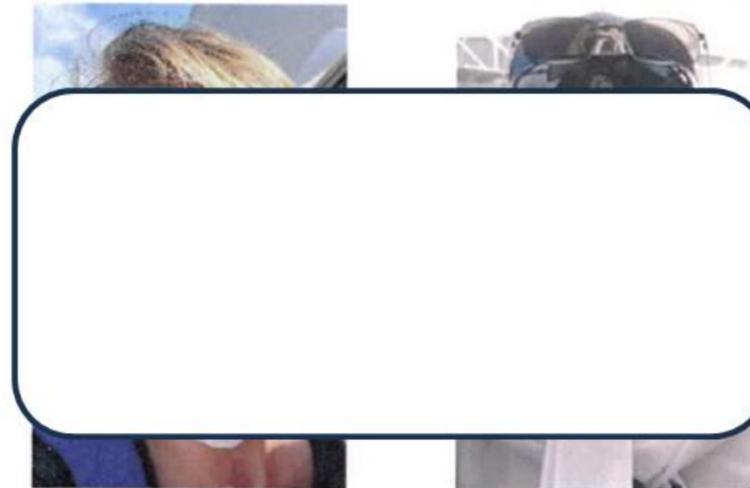


Understanding what happened (4 yrs)

Sometimes I feel a lot of  
different emotions.  
This is ok.



Me and  still love  
both our mum and dad,  
and this is ok.



Understanding what happened (4 yrs)



Hand-molded clay play -  
sensory activity



Hand painted box - a  
way to regulate  
emotions

# Downloadable Resources

## No child should recover from violence alone

Helping Children Heal is a free program that provides specialist support for children and their families who have experienced domestic and family violence.

[LEARN MORE](#)



## Helpful Links

### Accessing the NDIS

Applying to access the NDIS.

[WEBSITE](#)

### Keeping Kids Well

Free mental health resources for families - Emerging Minds.

[WEBSITE](#)

### Parenting Help

Raising Children Network.

[WEBSITE](#)

### ParentLine

Parent Helpline | How Parentline Can Help You | Kids Helpline

[WEBSITE](#)

### Leaving Violence Safely

[WEBSITE](#)

### Ask Izzy

[WEBSITE](#)

### WAGEC Service Directory

[WEBSITE](#)

### Women's Safety and Privacy Toolkit

Staying safe from technology facilitated abuse f families (in various languages).

[WEBSITE](#)



#### All About Me

An activity for children to strengthen their sense of identity and prompt conversations about what is important to them.

[DOWNLOAD](#)



#### Making Art With Kids

A fact sheet for parents and carers with tips on spending creative time with children that builds opportunities to connect and have fun together.

[DOWNLOAD](#)



#### Helping Kids heal and recover from family and domestic violence

A fact sheet for parents and carers to provide tips about what is most important to help children thrive even after adversity.

[DOWNLOAD](#)



#### How was School?

Parent Top Tips: Ten ways to ask about children's experiences at school, that don't involve one word answers!

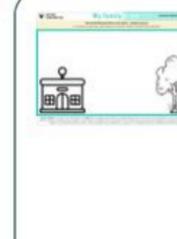
[DOWNLOAD](#)



#### My Culture

An activity sheet for children and young people to help them reflect on their personal and cultural identity and prompt conversations and questions about family history, stories and passed down wisdom.

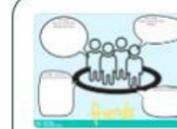
[DOWNLOAD](#)



#### My Family

An activity sheet for children and young people to help them reflect on family and what/who that means to them.

[DOWNLOAD](#)



#### My Friends

An activity sheet for children and young people to help them reflect on their sense of belonging and connection with peers.



#### Rising Water

An activity sheet for children, young people or adults to support development of mind and body awareness and help them map

[hch.wagec.org.au](http://hch.wagec.org.au)

u

# Youth Council : Purpose &

Scope

Co-designing with children  
and young people

The Youth' Council is designed to:

- Empower children and young people to make a difference
- Provide a positive experience that is meaningful and helpful to the children and young people who participate
- Gather information & feedback about children and young people's experience of seeking support and help from services following an experience of domestic and family violence
- Test WAGEC's existing program design against feedback
- Gather feedback & input into future program design



# Youth Council : Key Principles

- Children and Young People have the capacity and the right to participate
- Participation must be safe, voluntary and informed
- Ethical and Trauma-informed Consultation
- Mutual Respect and Power Sharing
- Equity and Diversity

Co-designing with children  
and young people



# Youth Council : Planned

## Outcomes

- Increased confidence and capacity to speak up for children and young people connected with the project
- A felt sense of belonging and inclusion for participants
- Creative presentations of answers to the following questions:

Co-designing with children  
and young people



- During periods of difficulty, what forms of service support were most needed to assist children and young people in their recovery?
- Which types of service responses or supports have been experienced as the most effective or beneficial?
- What barriers or challenges have made it more difficult for children and young people to access the support they needed?
- What aspects of existing support programs are most valued by children and young people?
- In what ways could existing programs be adapted or improved to better meet the needs of children and young people?
- What key elements should be included in a new program to effectively support children and young people?

# Youth Council : Project

## Plan

### Phase 1

Building relationships  
and partnerships

Comms &  
Consultation strategy

Creative Planning

Recruitment &  
Selection

### Phase 2

Group sessions

Individual Support

Key Consultation  
themes

Data & experience  
collection

### Phase 3

Thematic analysis  
of data and  
creative  
presentations

Production of  
Creative Outputs &  
Reports

### Phase 4

Presentation of  
Outcomes and  
celebrations

Incorporation of  
feedback into  
program design

Annual Report &  
Conferences

# Questions



?

HCH Community Hub  
Level 2, 16-24 Elsie St Burwood

[helpingchildrenheal@wagec.org.au](mailto:helpingchildrenheal@wagec.org.au)

Manda Rochester 0421 637 804

Azi Shobeiri 0418 697 876