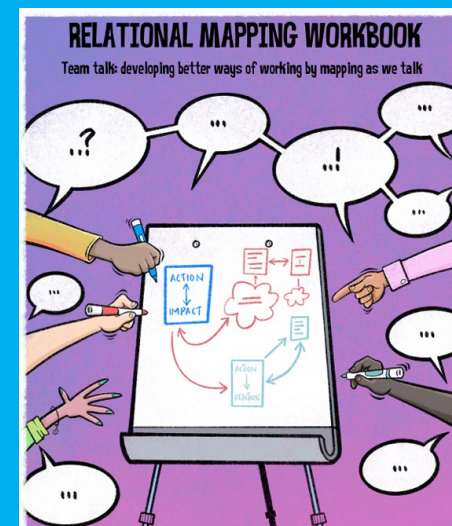# Can a Structured Approach to Reflective Practice Enhance Team Skills and Influence Culture?

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Acknowledgment of country

Mind acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and we pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We recognise the intergenerational impact of the history of invasion, dispossession and colonisation and are committed to the recognition, respect, inclusion and wellbeing of Australia's First Peoples.

Inclusion statement

Mind values the experience and contribution of people from all cultures, genders, sexualities, bodies, abilities, spiritualities, ages and backgrounds.

We are committed to inclusion for all our clients, families and carers, employees and volunteers.

Lived and living experience statement

We value the expertise and leadership of people with personal lived and living experience of mental health challenges and alcohol and other drug use, and families and carers as we work together to influence and transform the services and systems in which we work.

Plan

- Explaining Relational mapping 7 mins

The research 5mins

Conclusions and take aways 3 mins

Relational mapping as an approach to supervision

Practitioners can feel the challenges of their work as well as conflict and pressure within a team, leading to stress, and overwhelm.

- We wanted to be responsive, at an organisational level, to these challenges.

- We wanted to put something in place that had an impact on practitioners, the team and consumers.

This pilot project introduced relational mapping to the teams' group supervision to see if it made a difference to:

- Awareness of dynamics
- Team formulation
- Team culture
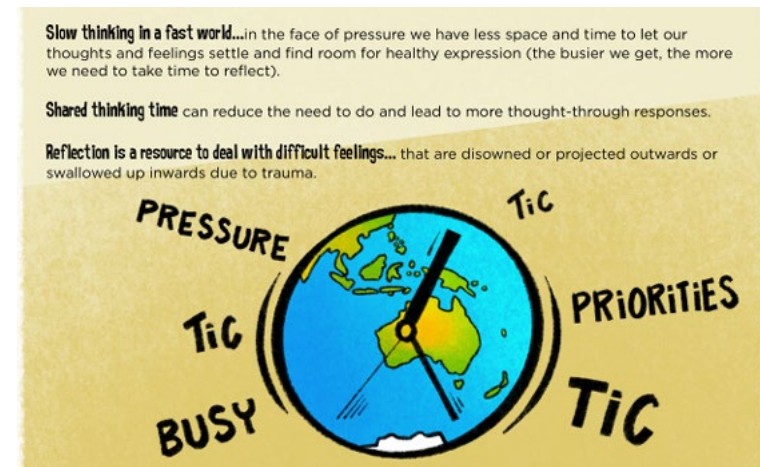
What is relational mapping & how does it work?

Relational mapping is a tool to understand and validate the differing perspectives of team members, while looking beyond to find a common ground and synthesise a whole team perspective.

- Team dynamics can be approached with curiosity rather than judgement and enhanced through reflective supervision.

- Dynamics can be better understood and the team supported to pay attention to others and themselves, to notice relational patterns as they occur in the work and to use this awareness to enhance understanding of specific practice challenges.

- Evidence-based approach from Cognitive Analytic Therapy (CAT), a frequently adopted model for team supervision/formulation (second only to CBT).

- A group member starts to describe a practice challenge or issue.
- Another group member puts key words on the board (as identified by the group)
- The group discuss how things are linked and make connections to better understand what's going on.

Why map?

Content:

- It helps us see patterns of interaction that are happening at work with consumers and between team members.

- When we can see relational patterns, it gives us more choice to think about how we can respond in a more helpful (or corrective) way.

- It helps us talk more openly about 'complex' situations and feelings that are floating around.

Process:

- Enhances conversational quality by:

  - Perspective taking
  - Picture-detail
  - Externalising of strong feelings
  - Making links & understanding connections
 - Narrating and putting together
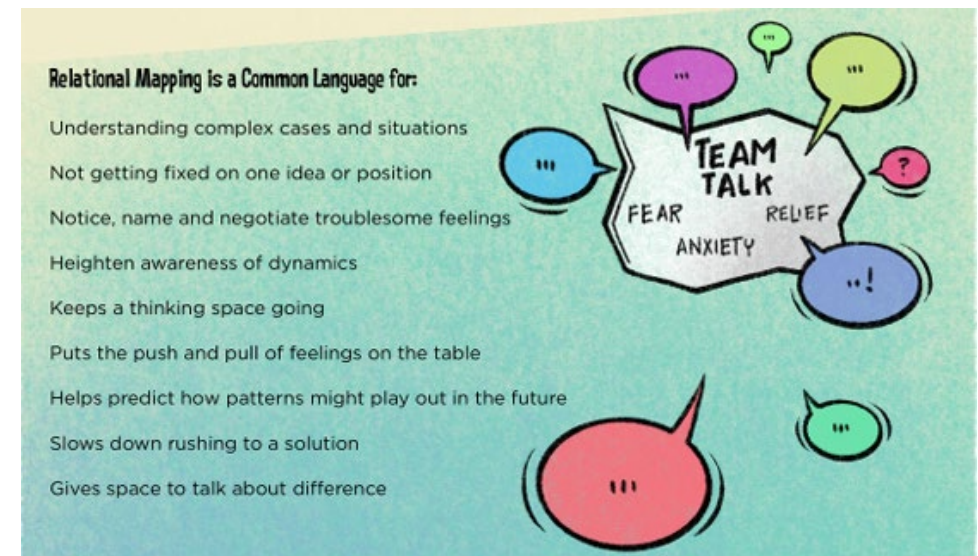
What is an 'exit'?

- 'Exits' is a word used in Cognitive Analytic Therapy to speak about how things can be done differently

- Exits come into play when an issue or 'challenge' has been better understood

- Exits provide the team with ideas about how they can all respond to better manage an issue or 'challenge' e.g:

  - Recognising that strong opinions can 'segregate' the team so make time to talk them through

  - Help each other notice when they are experiencing strong emotions to a specific issue or challenge and provide space to listen

  - Practice 'micro-mindfulness' to help reduce reactivity when anxiety is high

  - Instead of being 'rejecting' or 'rescuing' let's find a place in the middle
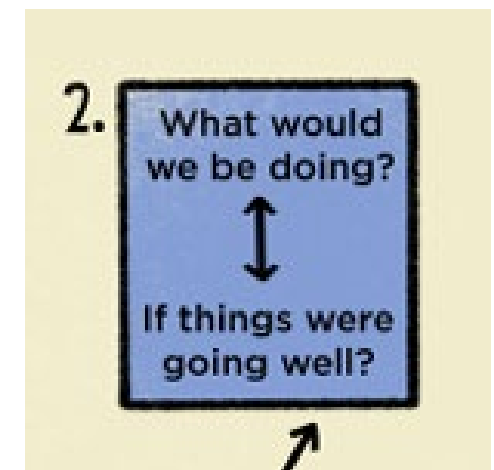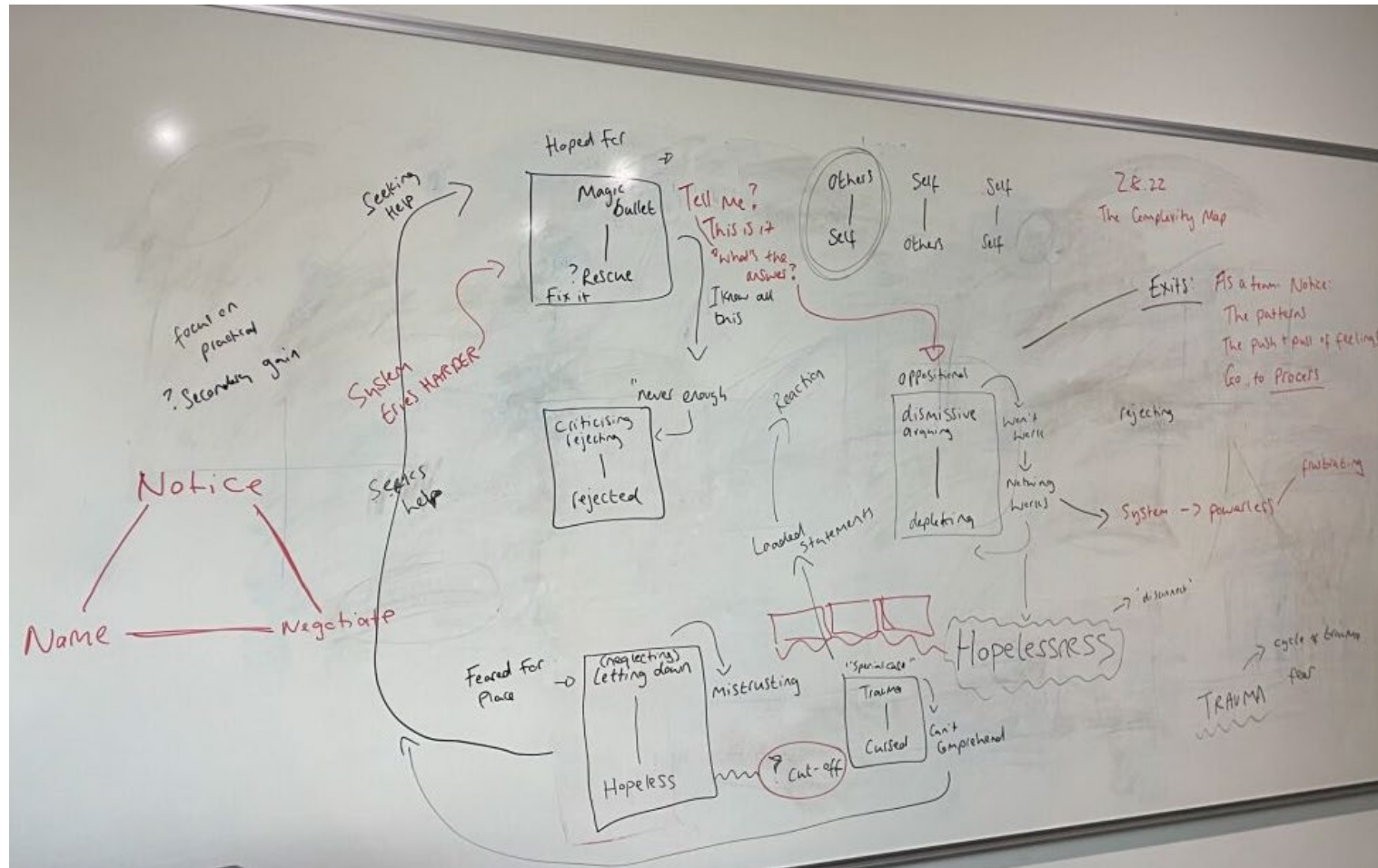
2. What would we be doing?

If things were going well?

An example of a relational map
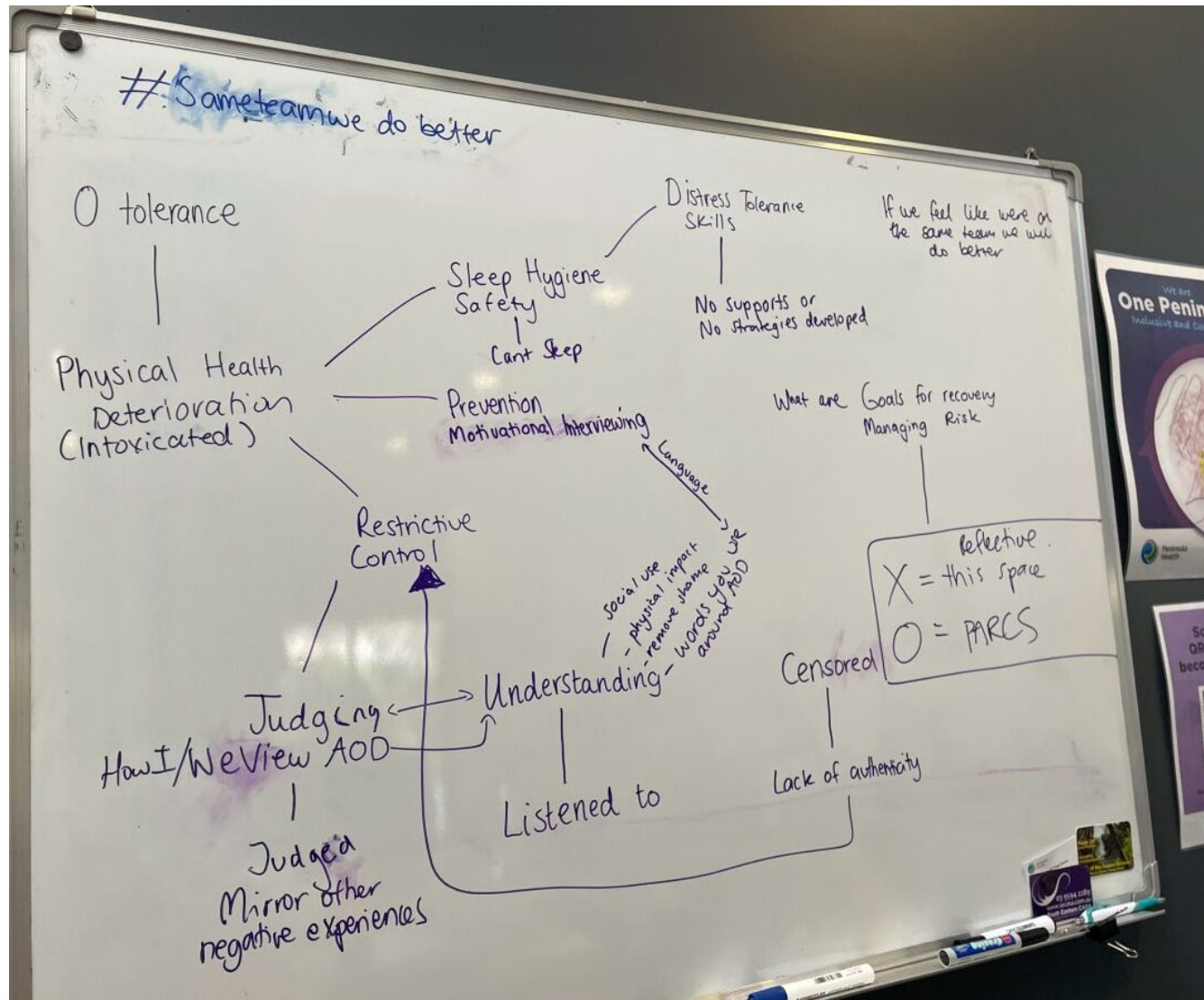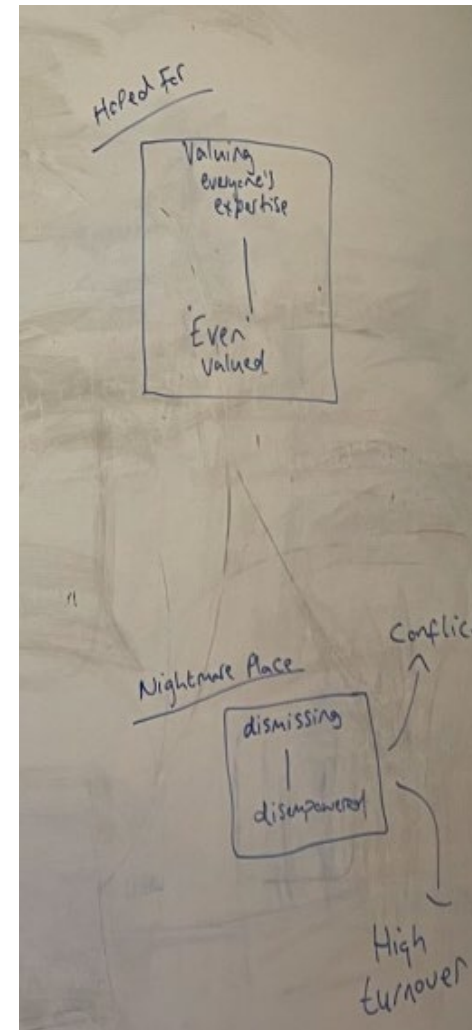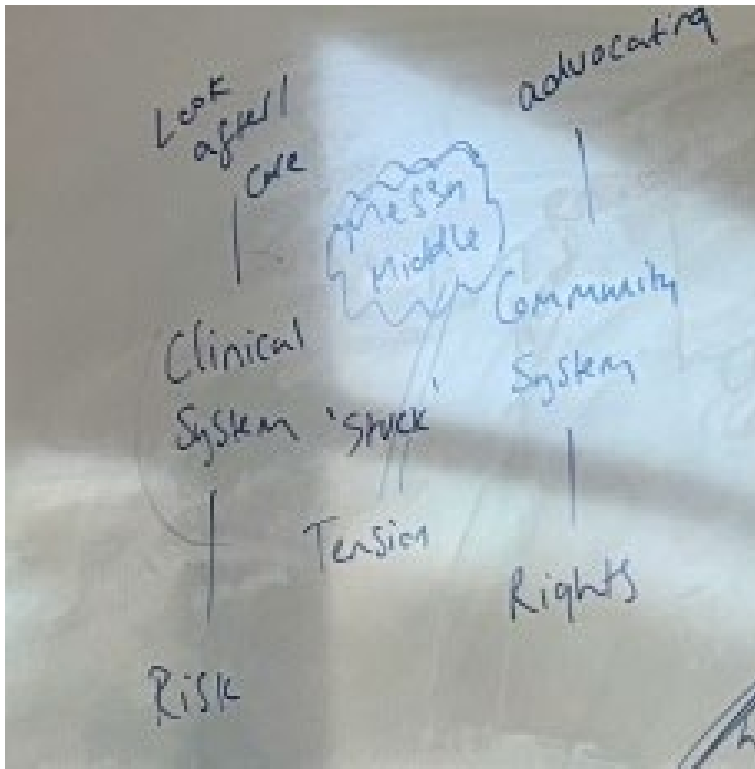
An example of a relational map
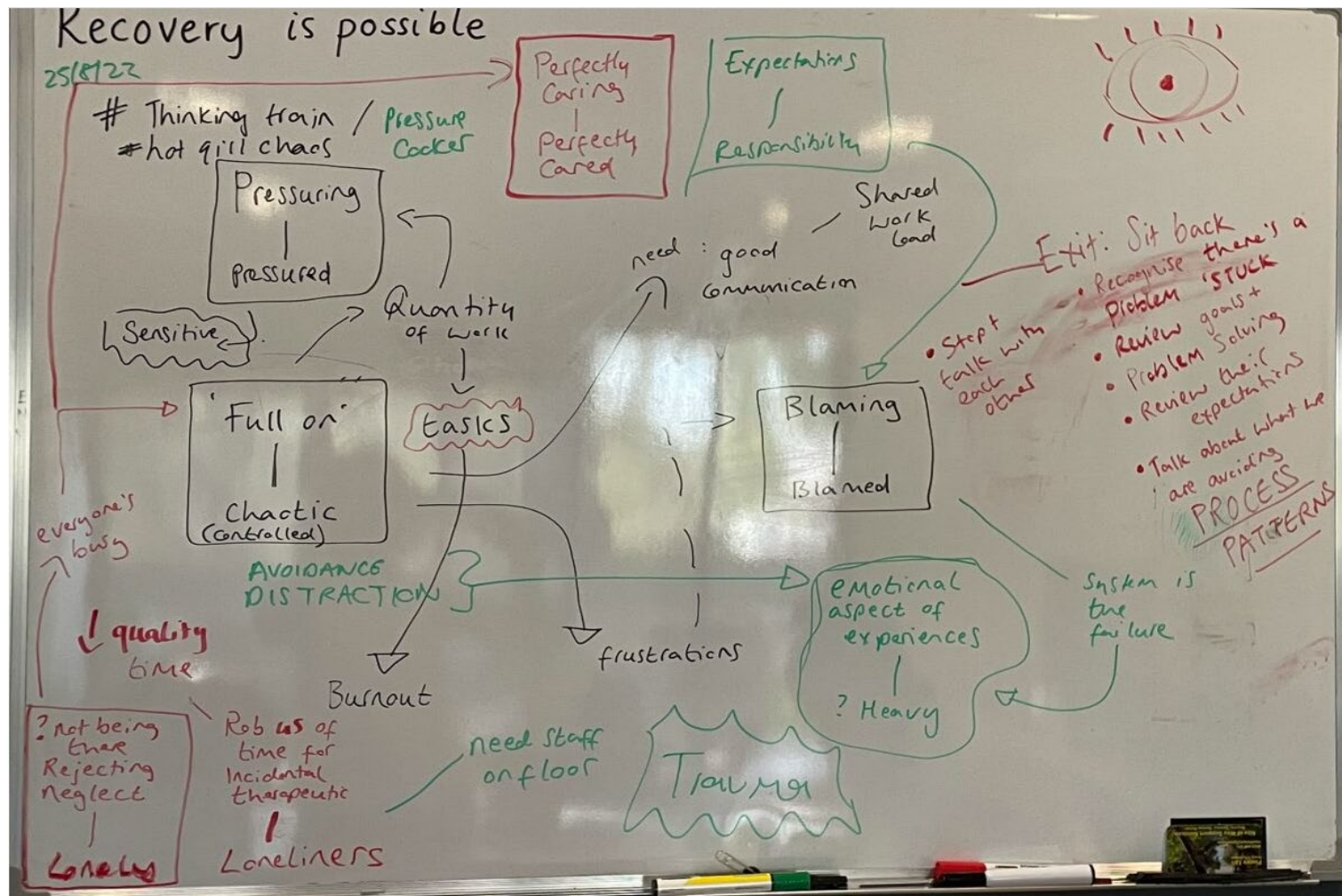
An example of a relational map

Another example of a Relational Map – Team Focus

Implementing relational mapping sessions

Relational mapping was introduced to respond to practice challenges that had been identified

- Strengthen collaboration between clinical and psychosocial team members
- Resolve differences in opinion around approach to clients
- Help the team step beyond being 'reactive' to clients
- Build a shared way, or common language, to identify what is happening dynamically
- Enhance a trauma-informed response to clients

Relational mapping sessions were conducted fortnightly at adult and youth sub-acute services led by Clinical Psychologist

- Anyone working could attend
- Management was in support of the project

The evaluation

Intervention

Reflective practice with relational mapping

Implementation outcome

Skill development and insights

Intended outcomes
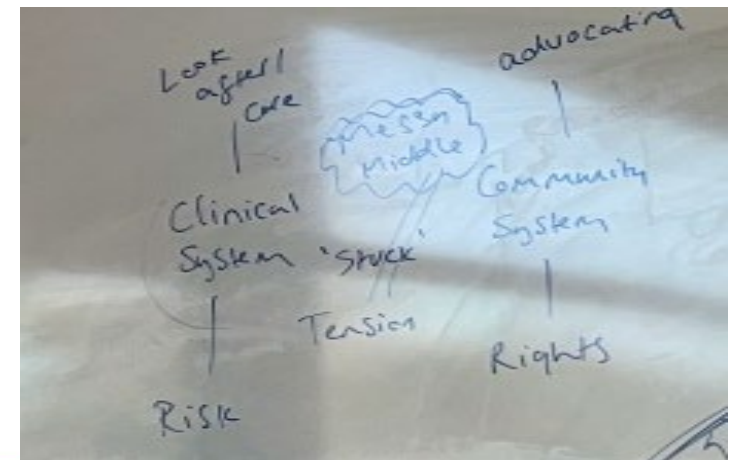
Team formulation
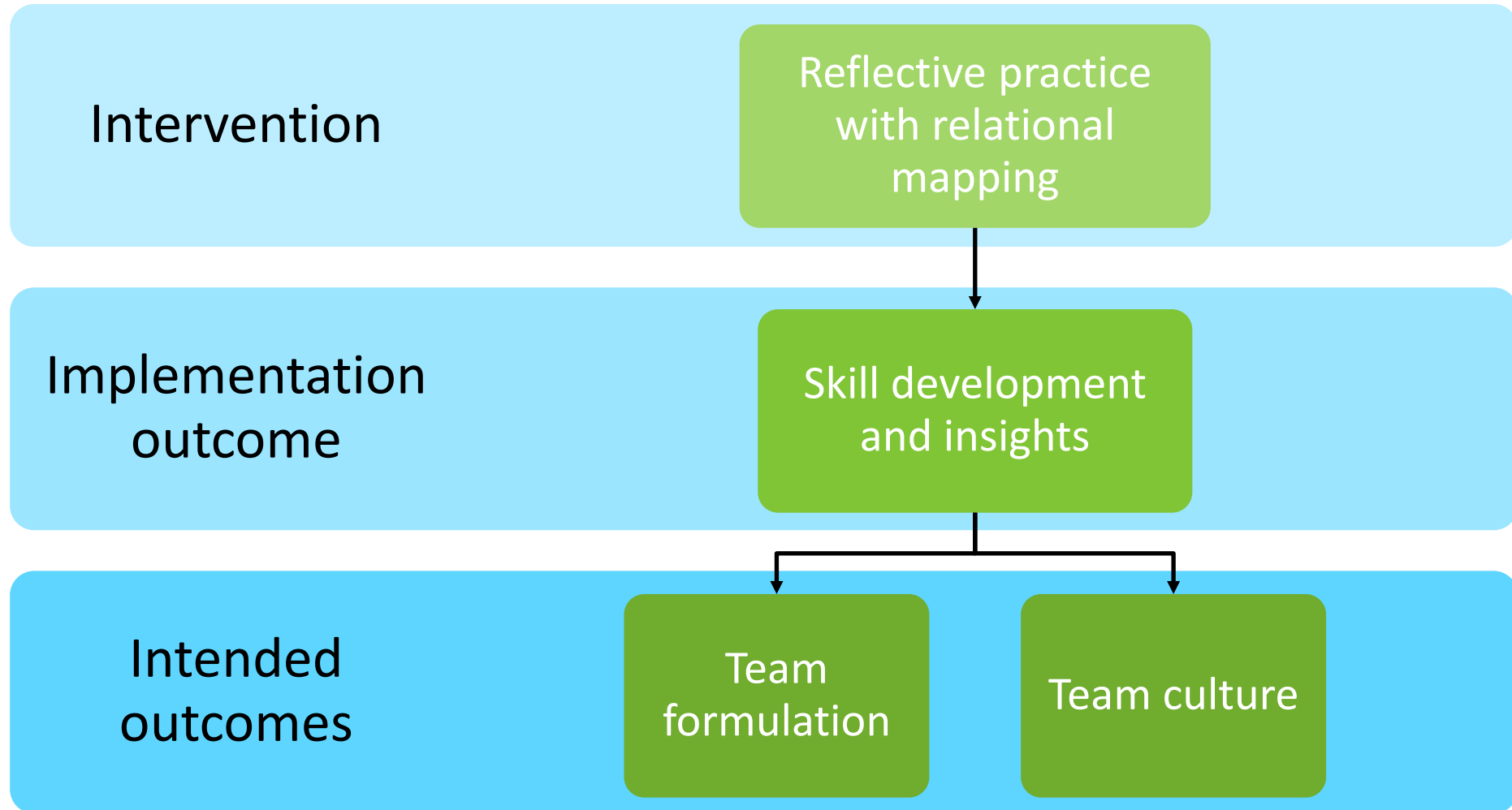
Team culture

Measures

Skill and insight
- Relational Awareness Measurement (RAM)
- After each relational mapping session

Team formulation
- Consultation Outcomes Scale (COS)
- After selected relational mapping sessions

Team culture
- Team-Referent Emotional Intelligence Scale (TRIES)
- Pre and post 6 months of relational mapping

Twenty-six staff from Mind & PH participated

Gender

Male 5%

Female 95%

Qualification

Diploma 15%
Degree 40%
Post-graduate diploma 20%
Masters 25%

Cultural identify

Multiple 17%

Other 16%

Australian 39%

Caucasian or "Anglo" 28%

Employer

Clinical partner 40%

Community mental health 60%

Site

Both 10%

YPARC 40%

APARC 50%
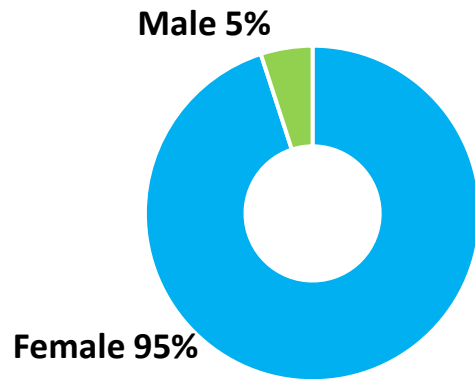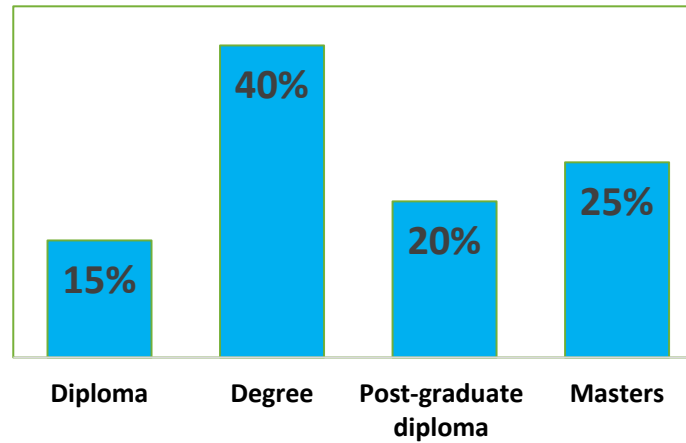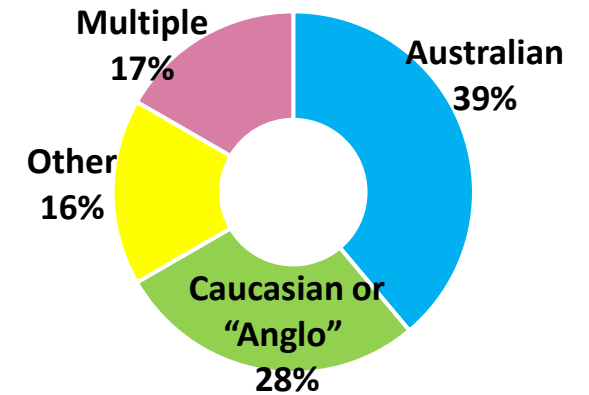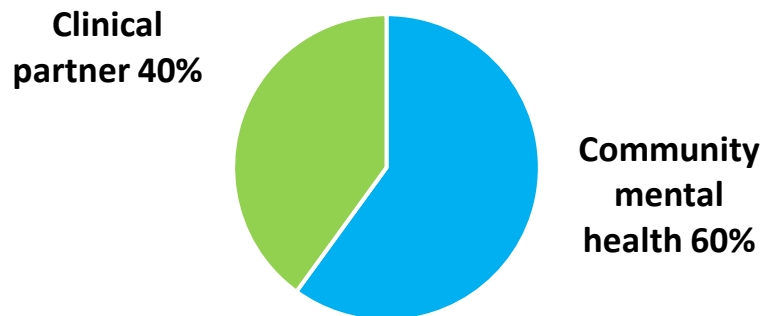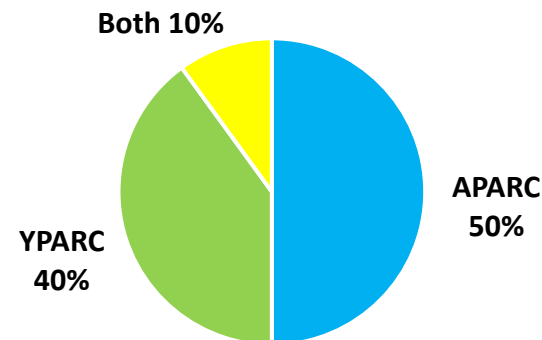
Time in workforce

10.3 years (SD 11.3)

Skill and insight - Relational Awareness Measure

Average Relational Awareness Measure scores after supervision sessions

106.9	116.1	117.5	113.7	123.6	122.0
After first session (n=23)	After second session (n=19)	After third session (n=11)	After fourth session (n=6)	After fifth session (n=5)	After sixth session (n=2)

Team Formulation - Consultation Outcomes Scale

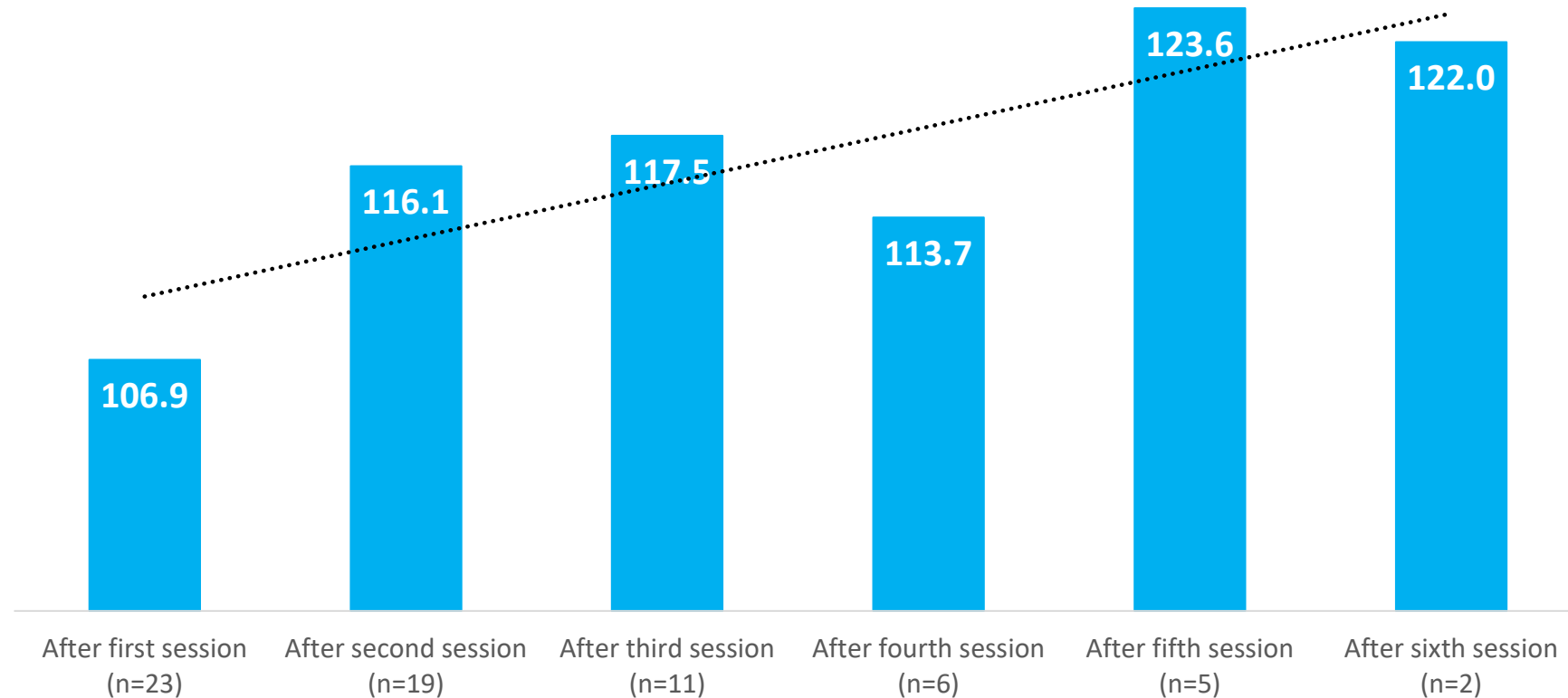| Supervision impact on...	N	Mean	SD	Comments on how the supervision impacted this domain
Understanding of practice challenges	14	9.5	2.6	Understanding emotions, seeing links between different thoughts and ideas, being less judgemental,
Skills and practice	14	9.3	3.1	Increased communication skills, learning a new model
Learning applied in other situations	14	10.0	2.5	Could apply it to self-understanding or exploring any situation
Wellbeing and reduced work stress	11	8.8	2.8	Debrief and sharing experiences, understanding diverse thinking across the team, time to reflect together
Improved relationship with clients	11	8.0	4.1	Space to support reflection rather than reaction, understanding why some clients react in certain ways,
Outcomes for clients	11	8.3	3.8	Greater understanding of clients and the challenges they are facing, identifying triggers
Meeting hopes and goals	9	8.8	3.8	Opportunity to debrief and explore practice challenges in a structured way
Average improvement	11	8.9	2.9	-

Team Culture - Team-Referent Emotional Intelligence Scale

Team cohesion before and after reflective supervision

53.46	60.50
Pre (n=13)	Post (n=12)
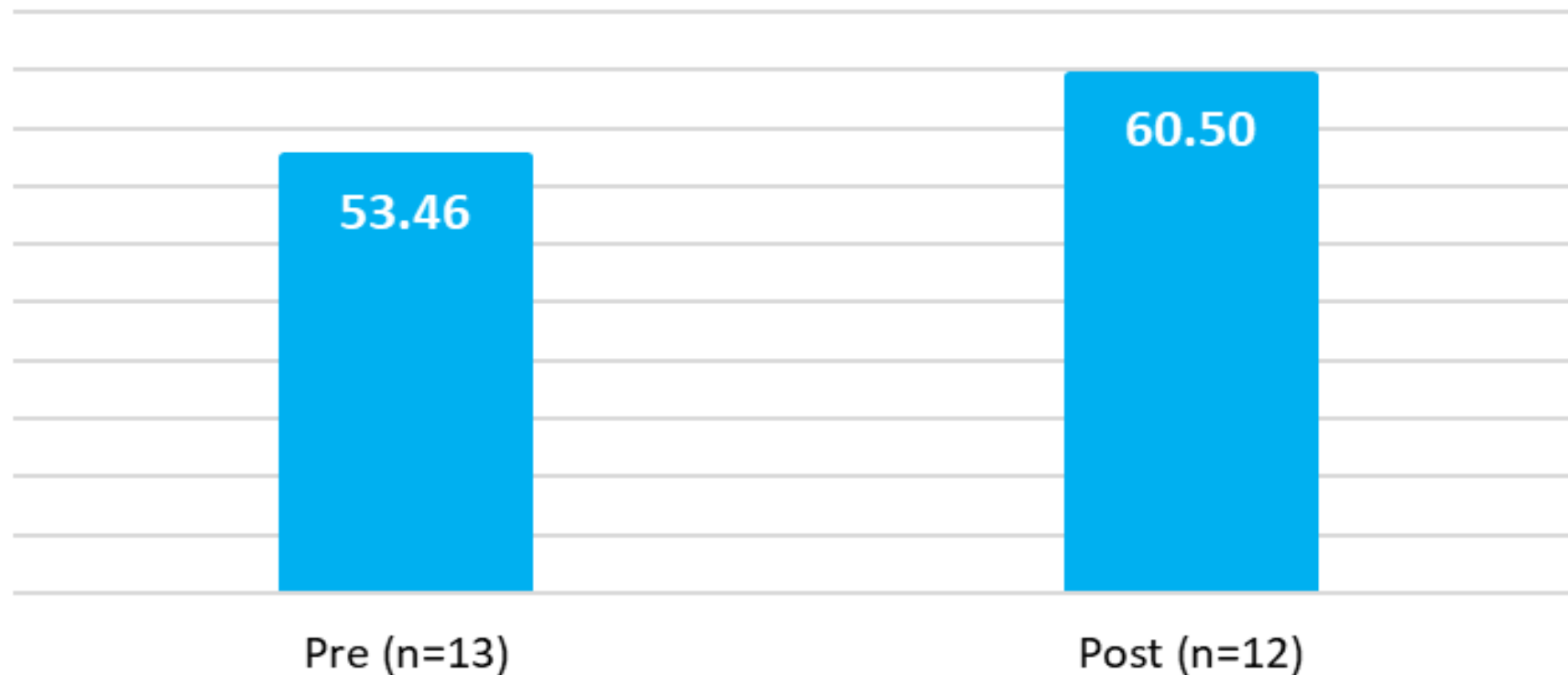
What we found - Impact on practice

Noticing patterns:

- "It was good to have a space to look at patterns that clients were going through and that we were maybe enacting as a team. I think we don't get a lot of room here to talk about that, it's busy. That was helpful."

- "I think that part of CAT, the relational mapping, is identifying the patterns we're not aware of that we play out, I think if we can't identify the patterns that we're caught in they can get in the way of {the consumer's} recovery."

Going deeper - Understanding the patterns and what they mean:

- "So now it might be more let's have a think about why is the client expressing certain things? It might be that they're afraid of discharge because they feel like they're leaving all their supporters and they're really fearful of being all alone again. Their hopes would be maybe to have perfect support, to be perfectly supported all the time?"

Four stories open to and held apart from each other

Present Stories

What is going on?

What can we do to help?

'Making sense' Stories

Hovering and shimmering within and between

'Making better' Stories

What was going on?

What are we healing by reliving?

Past Stories

What we found - Impact on practice

Responding differently and thinking about 'exits':

- "It might be more to think about okay, let's talk to the client about it, 'you know, discharge is hard, I wonder if you might be a bit worried.' You can have different conversations rather than being reactive and being reactive in different ways depending on who the client speaks to."

Self-reflection:

- "It reminded me of when I'm doing something...why am I doing it? It's really helped with that reflection process for me."
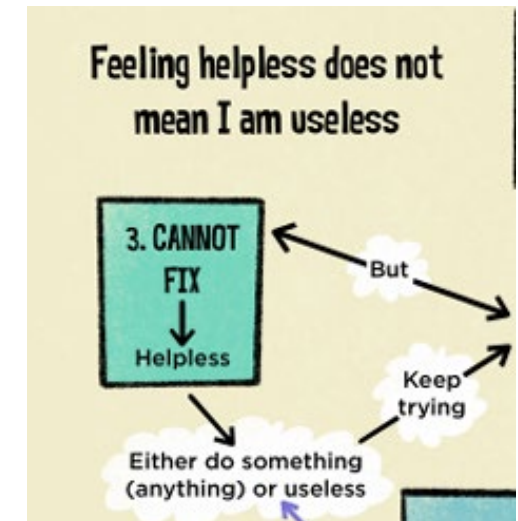
What we found - Team Skills

- "There was some space to reflect around the different team dynamics and space for different viewpoints to be talked about, not like there's one right or one wrong, it's just like what's happening here and where are we positioned?"

- "We talk more as a team as opposed to the Mind workers or not the Mind workers, different workers responding differently, we try and make it more everyone responds in a similarly way."

- "...it was a chance for staff to reflect because I think a lot of the time, we don't get to do that because it's all about the client. So you end up having all this built-up frustration, so it's good to have your {reflective practice} session without seeming self-centered to talk about how you feel."
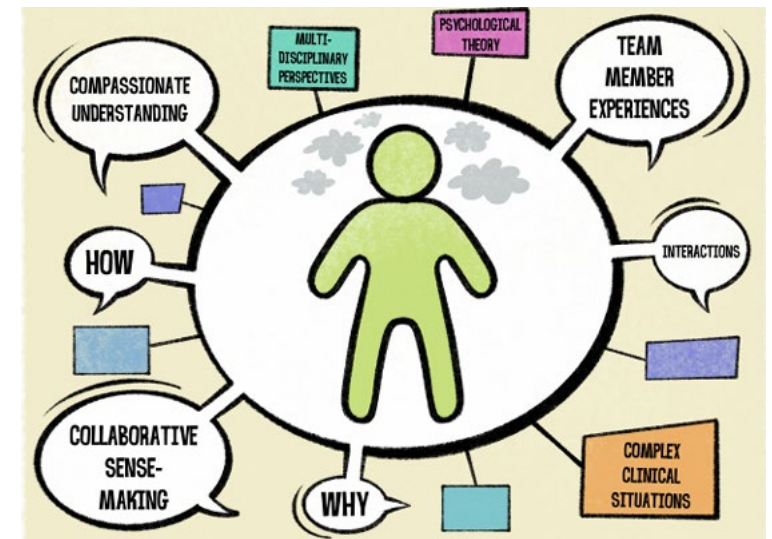
What we found - Implementation Opportunities

Scheduling and continuity:

- "The majority of the team work on shift rosters, not always the same people are on, that made it a bit tricky because you don't necessarily have the same people attending."

- "People learnt something in one group, it might be another three sessions before they got back in {to another group} and the people who came in the week after, they didn't have the benefit of the last week's {group}, they got maybe a bit of a handover but they weren't in there, so they were playing catch up, again and again."

Training and Preparation:

- "I didn't have any background information on how to map, I've since attended the training with {the researcher} which was incredible, but had I had that prior it would have made it make sense."

Deeper embedding:

- "I think it's easy with young people to reinforce the role of their parents and re-enact that. I think we got pulled to do that and if we're not able to map it out we just end up being part of that and a really key precipitating factor to them coming in, something within their family, their patterns of responding can evoke us to respond like a parent would."

Formulating early for referrals that cause anxiety:

- "...having a formulation would be so helpful rather than 'what if, what if' and walking into more of 'what if something does go wrong?' rather than reflect on 'why has that happened?'

What we learnt

- Relational awareness and team cohesion within the team increased after 6 months of sessions. Practitioners reported they were more able to pick up on patterns of interaction throughout the team and with clients. They also felt they had more insights supported the noticing, naming and negotiation of relational patterns of interaction, thinking about how they did things and why, rather than automatically doing things. The sessions were an opportunity for the team to stop, think and come together to reflect on their practice.

- **Conclusion:** The effectiveness of reflective pra
  structured approaches such as relational map
  team culture, practice conference and reduced

- Structured and practical approaches to reflect
  mapping are supportive and effective.

Takeaways

Mapping is a great way for teams to have think relationally and use this in their work

Using mapping in supervision gives structure to the thinking and talking

Navigating complex feelings at work is important for client outcomes and team wellbeing – it is not either client wellbeing vs team wellbeing

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