



**Positive Futures
Research Collaboration**

Anglicare Australia Conference

Courage in kindness: driving change in work and
community

16th – 19th September 2018



University of
South Australia



Australian context

Since the 1970s

When we got our rights and freedoms back as Australian, there was this large-scale movement to towns and cities. But for a substantial portion of Aboriginal people who were part of migration, they often had:

- Very limited education
- Very limited skills
- Stolen wages – economically excluded
- No social capital





Economic exclusion

Inequities in wealth and income are one of the biggest social, economic and political challenges facing Aboriginal people.

In a society where material rewards are used as the yardstick of success and failure, it is hard for those who fall behind to flourish.

Inequities in people's material resources:

- They have very little control over the conditions that affect their lives; and
- The amount of political voice they can express;
- People at the bottom of the social hierarchy tend to have worse health than those in the middle, who in turn have poorer health than those at the top.





The cycle of poverty

The cycle of poverty which is a phenomenon where poor families become trapped in poverty.

Many disadvantages collectively work in a circular process making it virtually impossible for individual to break the cycle. Poor people do not have the resources to get out of poverty, which disadvantages them, thus increasing their poverty.

Poverty holds a seemingly unbreakable grip on families, neighbourhoods, cities, and entire countries. It stretches from one generation to the next, trapping individuals in a socioeconomic pit that is nearly impossible to ascend.





Survival on a daily basis

As a way of surviving this cycle of poverty, we start seeing more social problems

- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Smoking
- Domestic Violence
- Criminal activities





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The Big Problem is....

It is these negative elements that we now focus on – strategies are developed around these issues in an attempt to improve the health outcomes of Aboriginal people



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Safe sex campaign

Since the mid 1980s

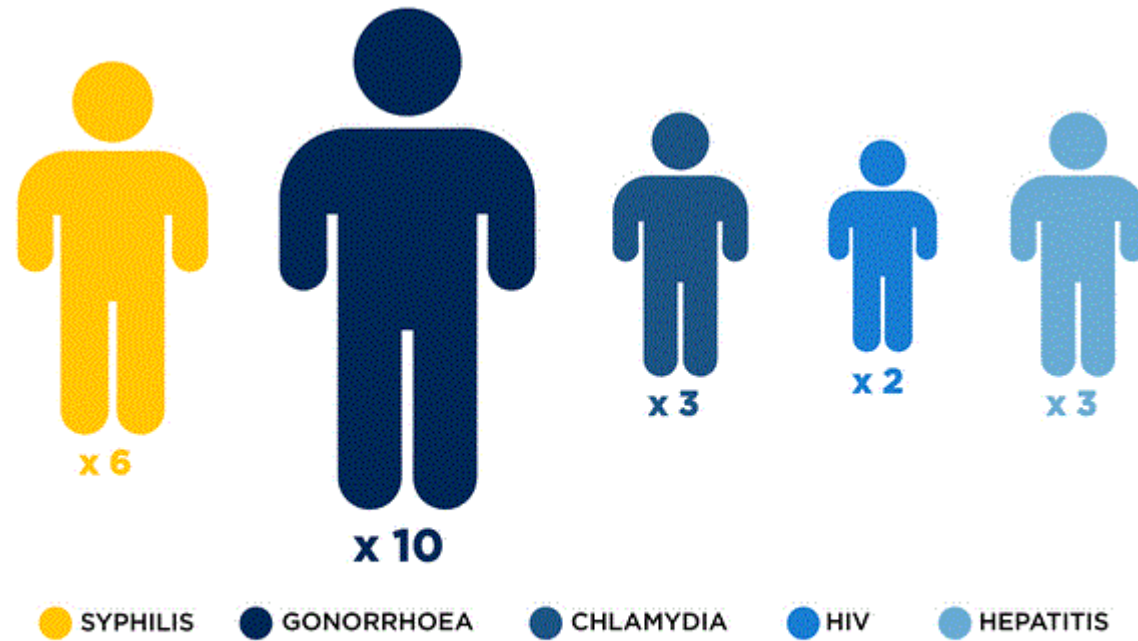
- Condoman - 'Be game not shame'
- Snake condoms

STI's Vs Teenage pregnancies





STI's



Source: <https://www.sahmri.org/infection-and-immunity-theme/news-128/>





Teenage Pregnancies

Young girls often have their own history of child protection

Drop-out of school

Unemployed

Children being removed by Child Protection

- Having babies earlier than the broader population and having more

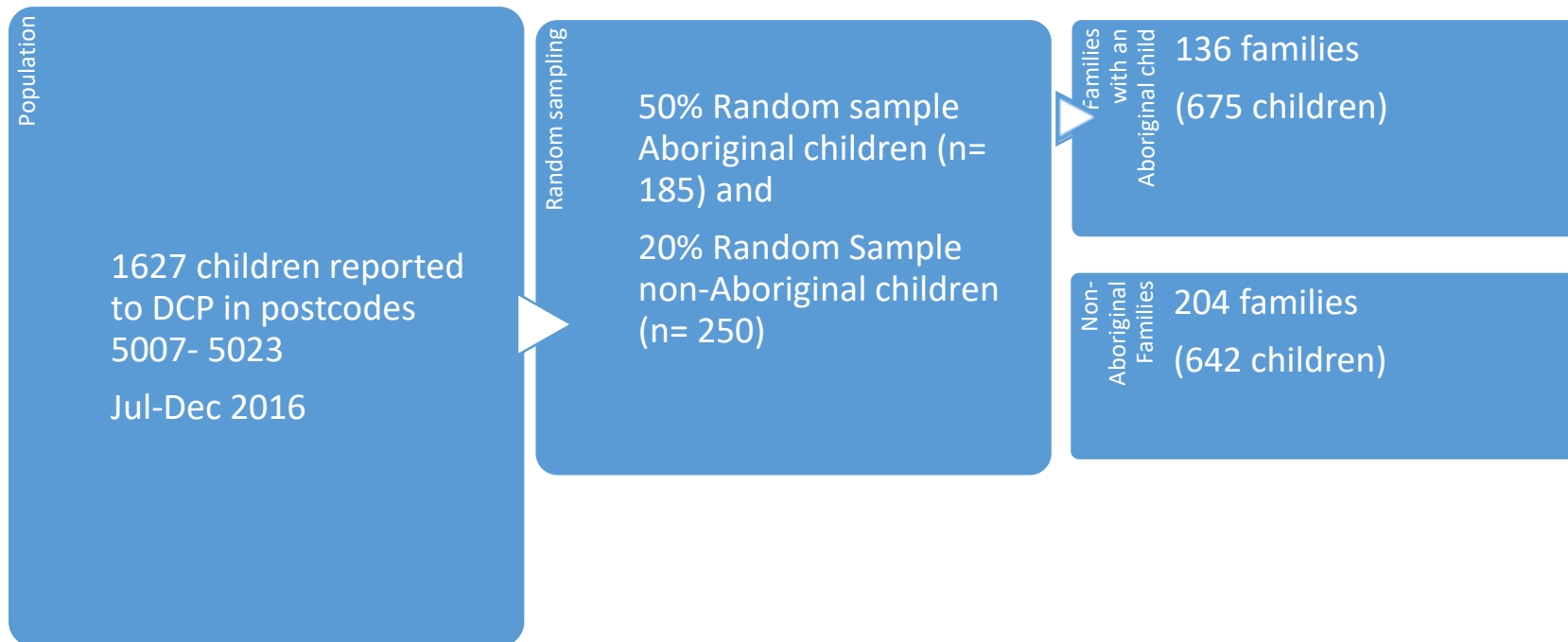
Reinforcing the cycle of poverty





Child Protection Systems Royal Commission

Early Intervention Research Directorate (EIRD) - **Case File Review # 3**





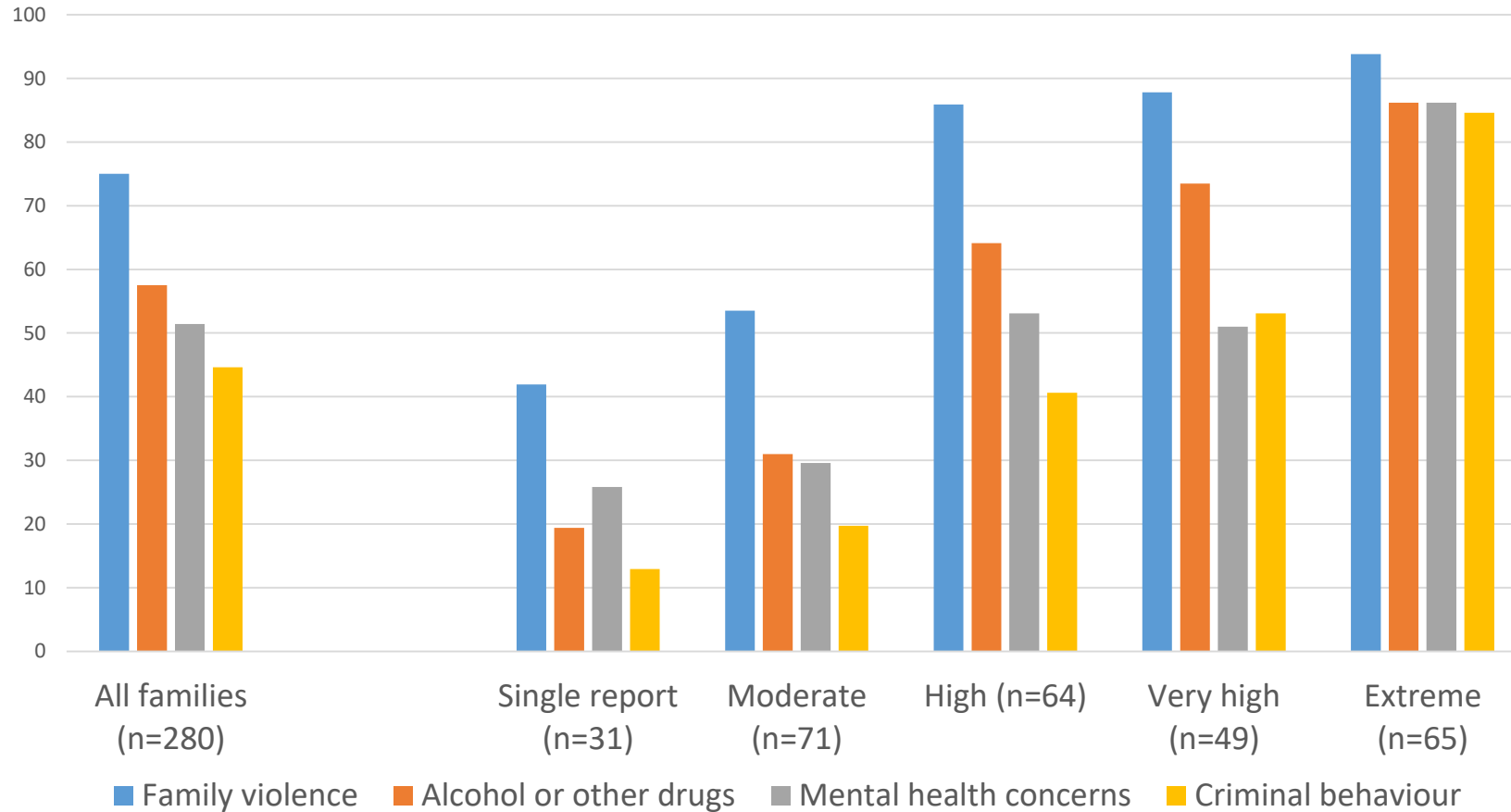
Findings

- 30% Aboriginal children involved in child protection
- 1 in 4 non-Aboriginal children contact with authorities before they are 10 years old
- 1 in 2 for Aboriginal children contact with authorities before they are 10 years old
- 8 out of 10 Aboriginal children will have contact with child protection by their 10th birthday
- 77% Aboriginal parents under 20 years old
- Families with an Aboriginal child had an average of 8.5 children as compared with 4.5 children for non-Aboriginal families.





Domestic violence





Re-partnering

A similar pattern was observed for multiple re-partnering (defined as 3 or more significant relationships).

While there was a significant difference between families with an Aboriginal child and non-Aboriginal children in the proportion of families who had experienced multiple re-partnering, these differences were only apparent for families in which the oldest child was aged 10 or older.





Actions

Strengthen Aboriginal families

- a) Invest more energy and resources into 1st time Aboriginal mums
- b) Invest more energy and resources into Aboriginal fatherhood





Strengthening families

Broadly speaking, family functioning is an important aspect of the family environment that influences the physical, social and emotional wellbeing of children. Alternatively put, what actually happens within the family and how it functions can be a key protective factor in building children's resilience and reducing their current and future risks associated with adversity and disadvantage.

Stimulating and nurturing environments enable children to learn and thrive.

Conversely, dysfunctional family environments can be very harmful to many aspects of children's development and their positive transition to adulthood.

Source: Walker, Roz and Shepherd, Carrington. Strengthening Aboriginal family functioning: What works and why? *Australian Family Relationship Clearinghouse*, 7, pp1-11.





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