

Foundations of evaluating systems change

Explores some of the implications for evaluation and provide some basic principles and emerging tools that are helping us to evaluate systems change endeavours.

What is different about the evaluand?

The system itself:

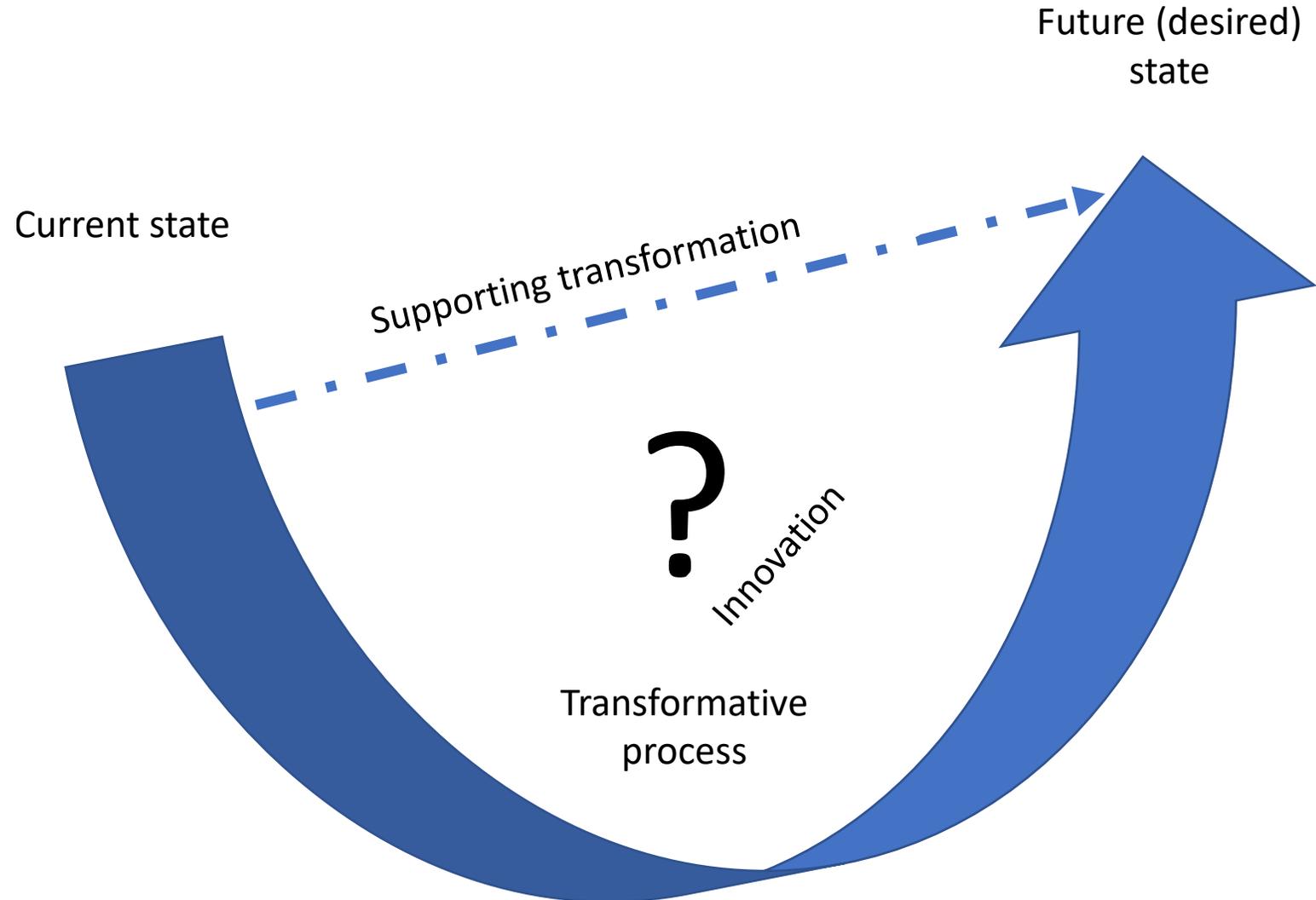
Is dynamic, it has its own rules, rhythm and life

We tend to only know the most obvious aspects of a system

The intervention(s):

Often non-programmatic – for example Collective Impact has programmatic elements but is not a programmatic intervention

Iterative and innovative, we often don't know much when we start – we work things out as we intervene



Brighter Futures Collective Impact Initiative

A **Partnership**, led by a steering group comprising of leaders from State and Local Government, community service organisations, community members, carers and young people.

Addressing a **complex problem** - the vulnerability of children, young people and families in Victoria.

Covers **3 local government areas**: Knox City Council, Maroondah City Council and Yarra Ranges Shire Council

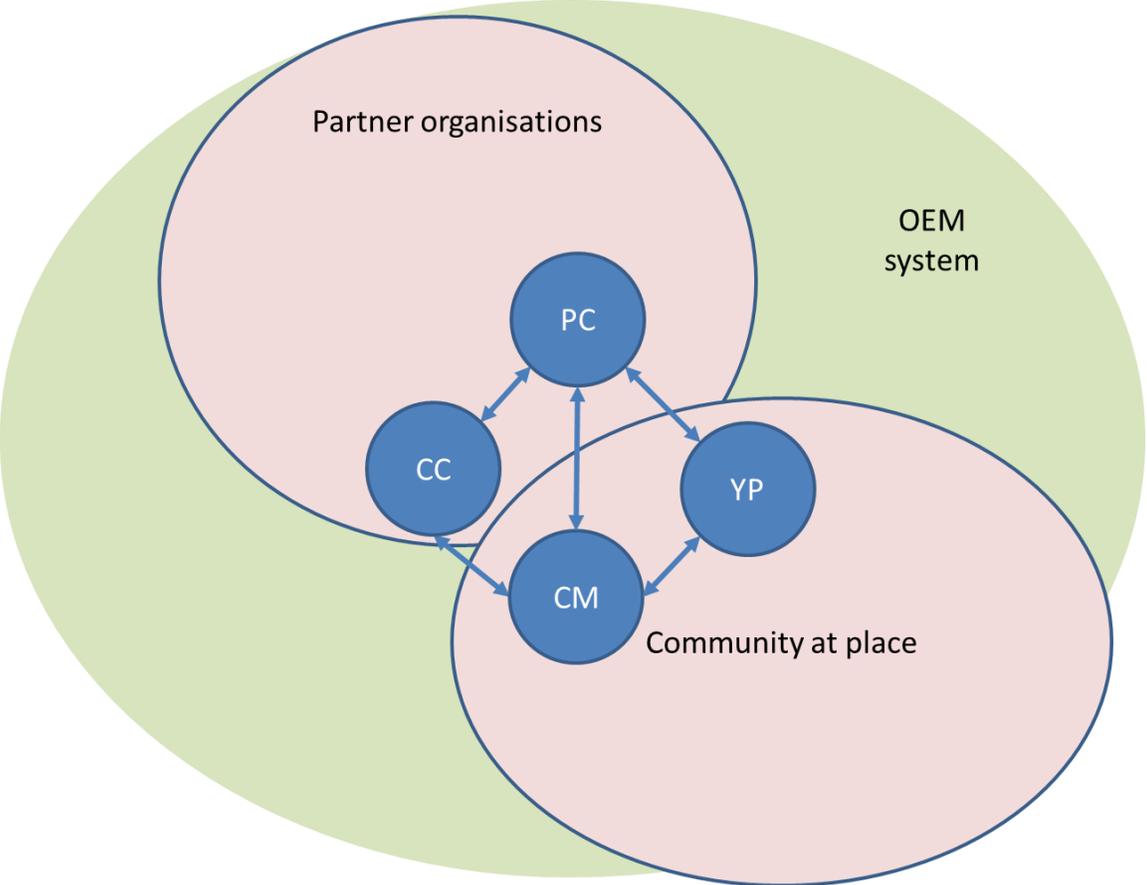
*The **Brighter Futures Transformation Pilot** - Learning for Life through Community Connections – Co-designed*

Aims to support young people aged 15-23 years with an Out-of-Home-Care experience to achieve their unique learning goals relating to education, employment, health and wellbeing and housing by fostering meaningful and sustainable relationships between young people and their local community.

Builds on:

1. Leaving case conference
2. Co-design sprints
3. Youth advisory group
4. Community connection prototype

The policy context

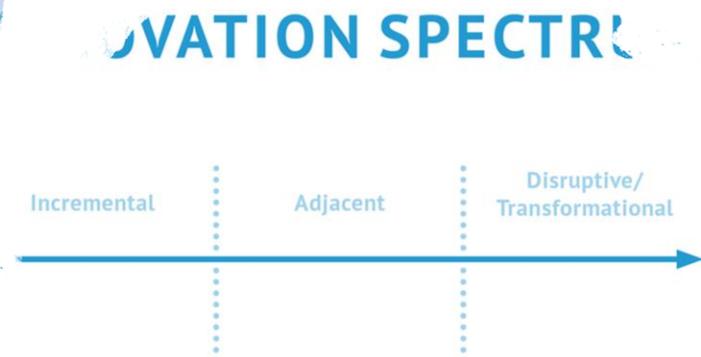
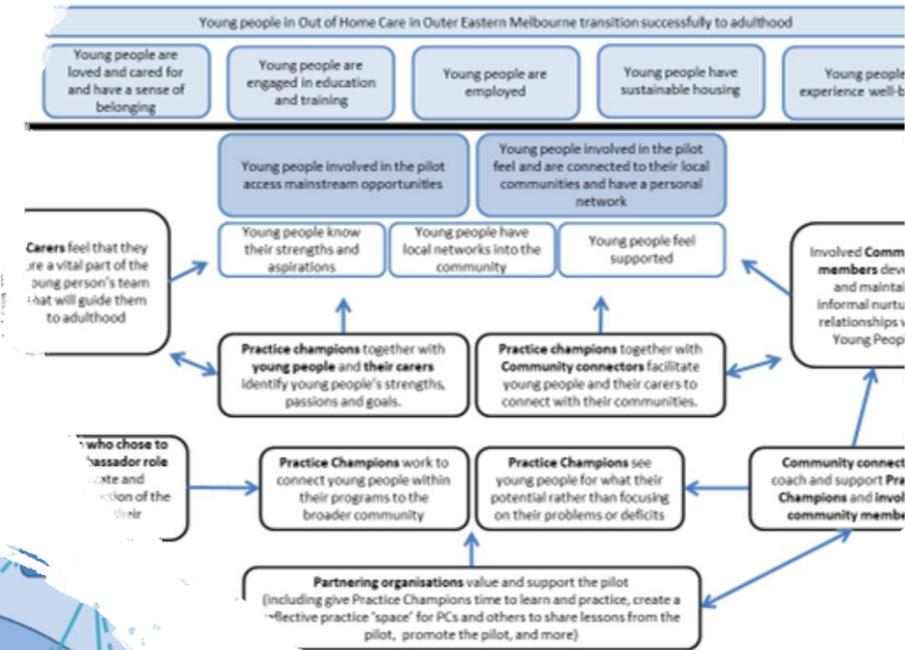
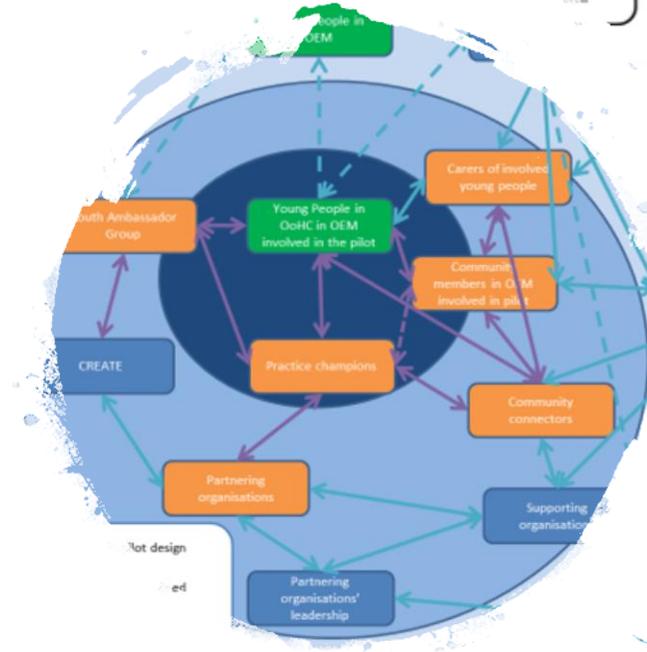
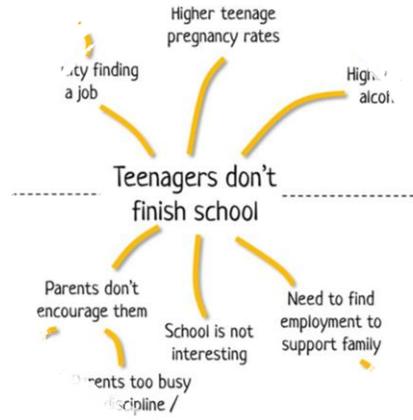


The Brighter Futures Transformation Pilot

Defining the scope

Useful framing tools

- Stakeholder mapping
- Problem tree
- Theory of Change modeling – hold this loosely
- Effectiveness Principles
- Spectrums, for example the innovation or maturity spectrum
- Iceberg model
- Success ranking
- Rubrics
- Participatory Rural Appraisal
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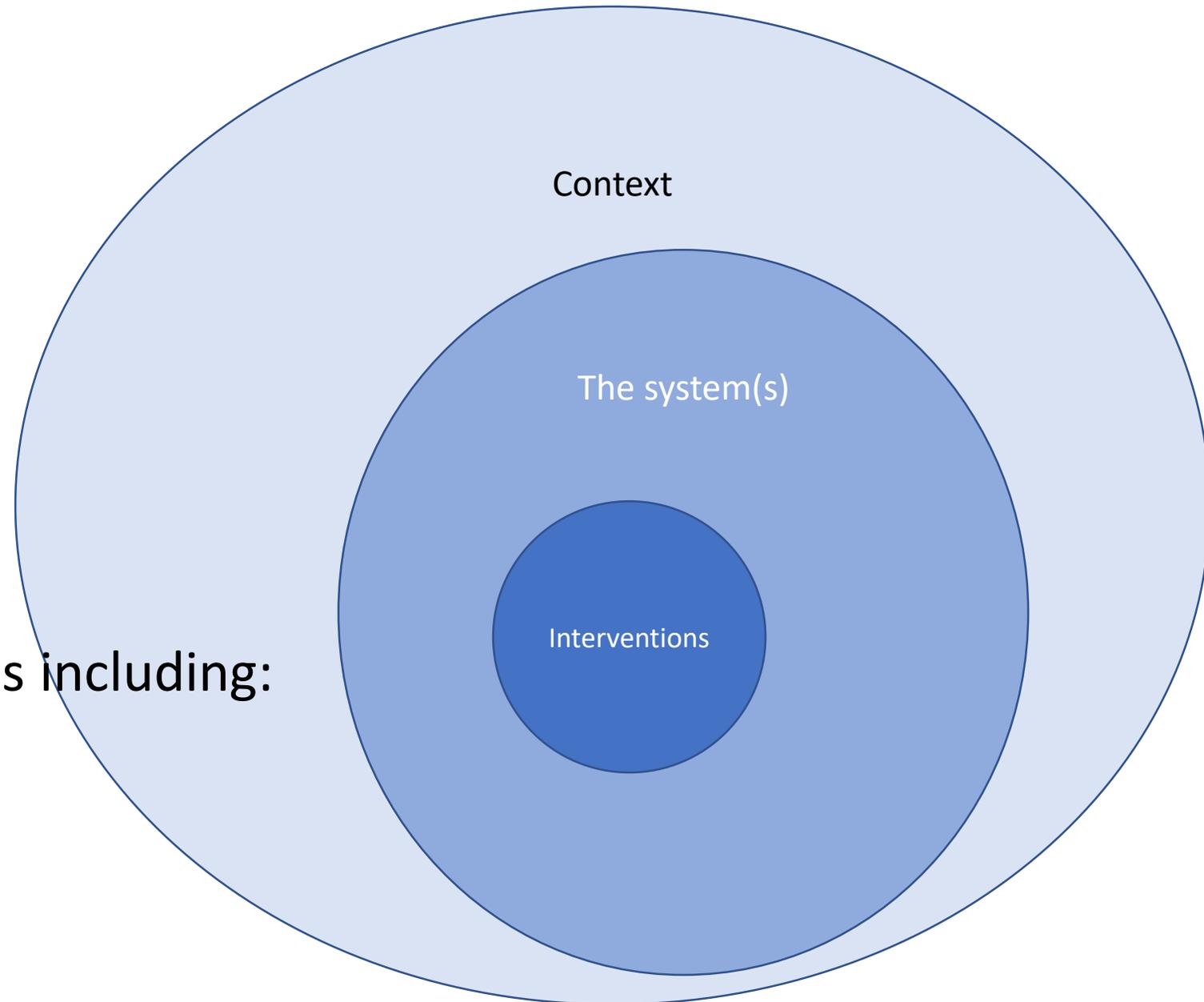


Why do it?

- To learn
- To manage
- To report
- To judge

But also other opportunities including:

- To understand
- To influence
- To impact

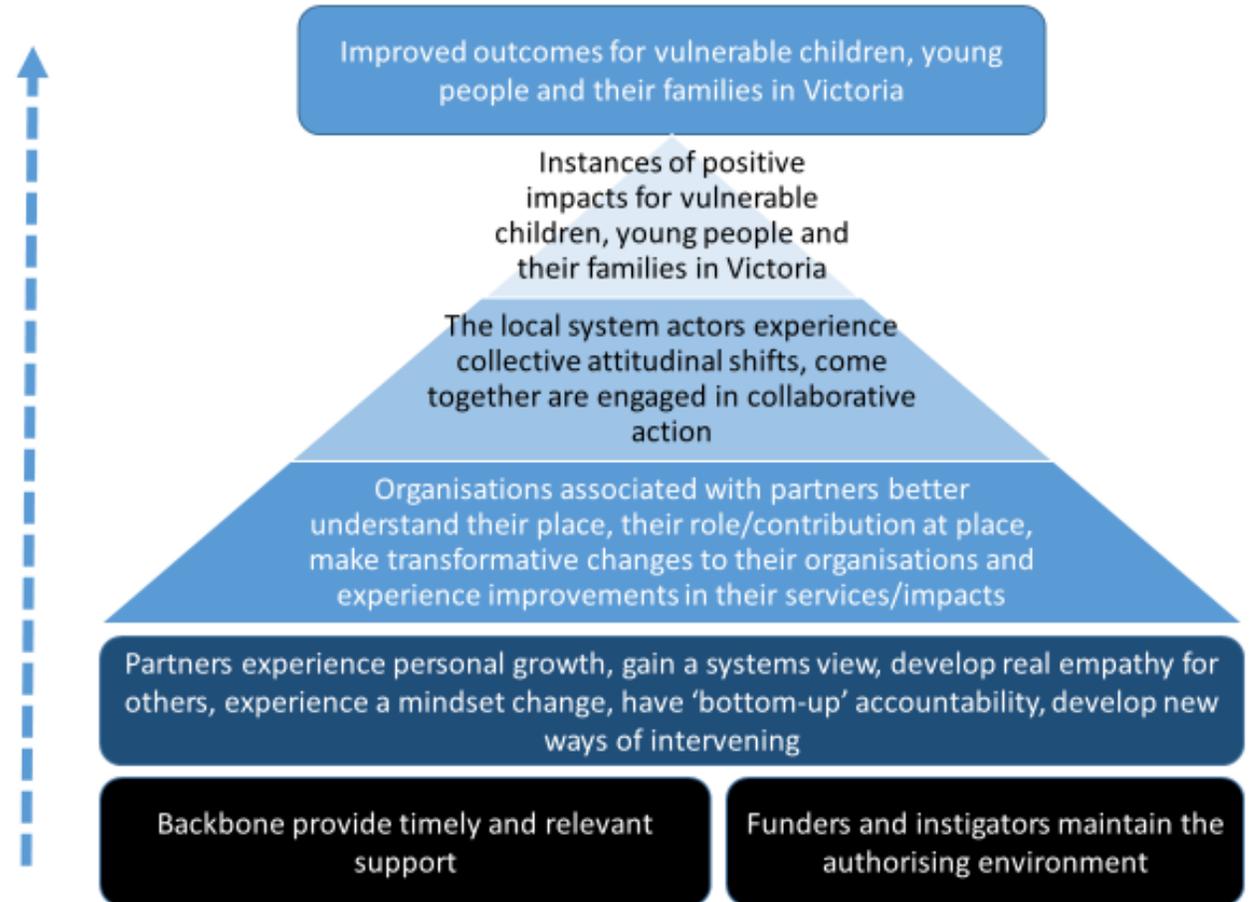


Key evaluation questions

1. How has the Outer Eastern Melbourne Out of Home Care system transformed through the pilot? - **System level impact**
2. How are PCs, partner organisations and young people impacted by the pilot (what changed as a result of the pilot)? What was their journey (how did the change happen)? - **People and org level impact**
3. What is the best design for the project? What is required to deliver the project well? What have been the enablers and barriers to the project (consider all aspects of the project)? - **the model**

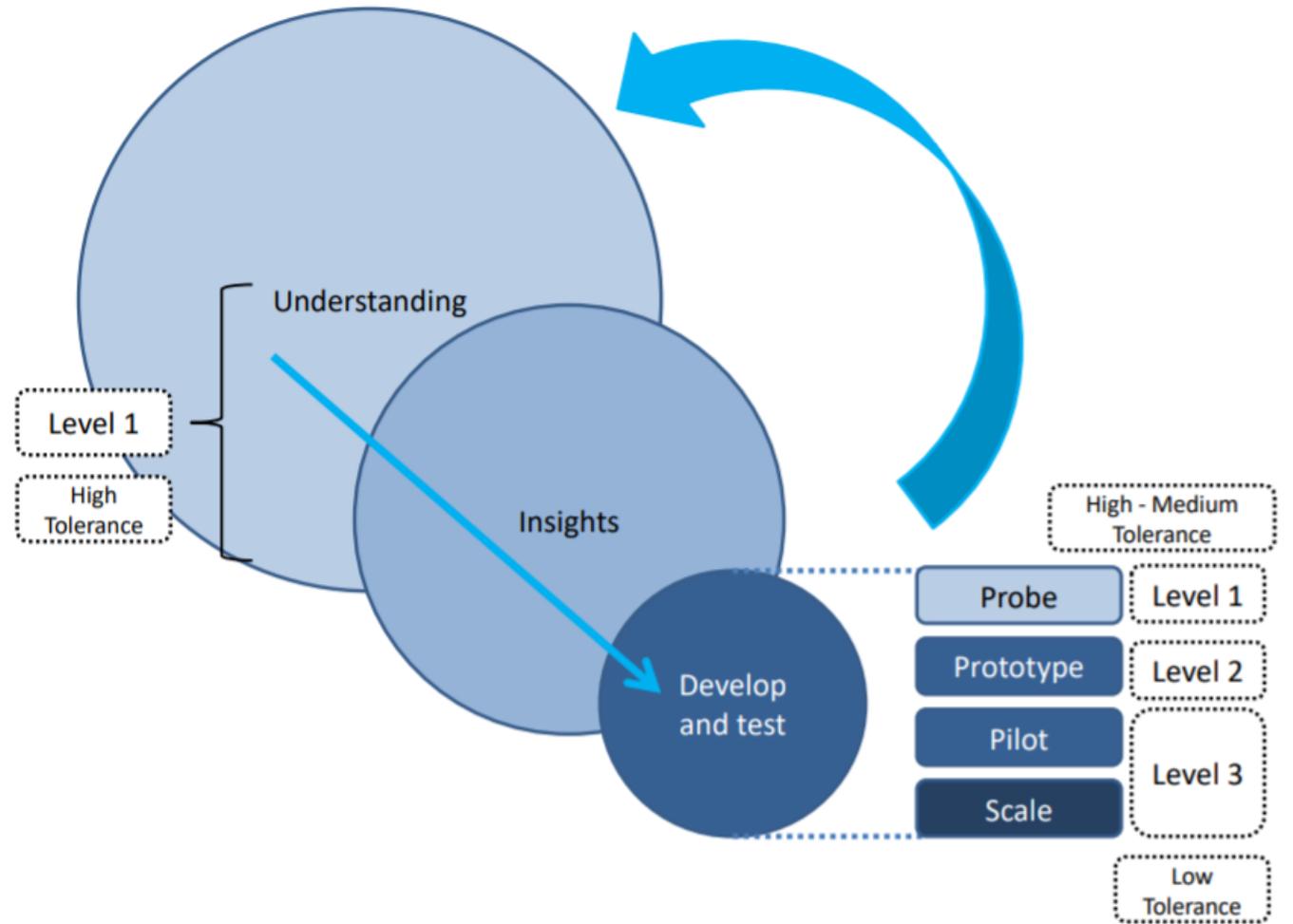
Which evaluation approaches?

On the system and the effort...



Which evaluation approaches?

Through the innovation process...



Methodology

Regular tracking of pilot activities using Trello including:

- Connections to community
- Connection to young people
- Relationship interactions (meetings, focus of these, etc.)

Case studies

BFTP - Practice Champion Case Study

Adelaide - Anchor - December 2018

I've worked at Anchor since March, 2016. We received an email looking for volunteers for the Practice Champion opportunity. I wasn't really sure what it was all about, but as I read, 'This looks really interesting and I want to be a part of it.' Also, I hadn't worked with youth much. I work with adults, primarily, and little kids. And I thought this would be an opportunity for me to work with young people as well, so that was how I got involved in the Brighter Futures Transformation Project.

Since then, I've been thinking about the young people I'd like to work with, identifying the ones I feel have the potential to benefit from the project. At first, I found it difficult to shift my frame of mind because I'm still very risk-averse, focused on the traumas the young people have experienced and all of the other complex issues that are part of these young people's lives. Overtime, I have managed to shift to a positive psychology/advantaged thinking point of view: and am now more likely to think - 'Well, yeah, they've got a lot of that, but at the same time, this kid has amazing leadership skills, this kid is incredibly resilient, we can work with that.'

Going to the Brighter Futures training was incredible and so inspiring. The energy in the room was incredible. I think everyone was just so starved for something like this in our sector. To be able to work in this way with people is something, I think, we all instinctively want to do but it gets beaten out of us in this sector with all its rules and policies. The project has also made me think about my adult clients, and how I tend to see them through a trauma lens because that's how they present. You've got to be able to push through that... We can't pathologise our clients. We can't just put them in a box of, 'they're too damaged' or 'they're too traumatised'. Instead of just holding them in a space, we should be nurturing them to grow. It's easy to forget when you're in a work headspace.

I've been 'let off the leash' so to speak in terms of what I can and can't do with the young person I'm working with. For example, I'm taking the young person I'm working with to a neurologist appointment this afternoon to get him a medical clearance so that he can engage with sporting opportunities in the community. I haven't been able to do this before. So I'm getting really good support to achieve these goals with my client.

I've noticed that a lot of people who are my peers are very interested in the program. I've only been able to have brief conversations with them about it but I would eventually like to, when time permits, to do a half-hour presentation around the program and how it works so they all understand it, and hopefully they can adopt those practices.

I want to see the first engagement happen. I'd really like to see even something really small. I want a bit of action, basically. I want to see, not just the planning, but I want to see this young person at least attending - even if it's an hour - an activity with community. I want to see a bit of spark in that young person as well.

It's really hard to comment because we are in early days working with the young person. But I'm so excited still, I'm so excited to be a part of this. And I love the community of practice because there's so many like-minded, passionate people with a wealth of knowledge I'd love to be able to tap into. And having the young people there was incredible, and I'd love to have more young people have their voice heard in this. When I heard they were going to facilitate a meeting with the kids involved in Brighter Futures, I thought that was fantastic.



Co-designed rubrics

1	2	3	4	5
Struggling to connect	Basic connection	OK	Promising	Match made in heaven
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not like each other - personality clash • ... 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect well 	

Regular reporting to funder and end of pilot external evaluation



Regular reflection activities

Community of Practice

Key team meetings

Descriptive analysis of data



Important not to forget:

- Ethics a challenge sometimes but essential to engage with this
- Equity, an easy step is to consider carefully how well you can disaggregate your results
- Being transparent about the quality of the evidence
- Focus on testing the assumptions to fully explore causality
- Systems change takes time, think about what you need to focus your evaluation effort on first

What does this mean for the evaluator?

We are also part of the system and are equally an agent of change, so we have a responsibility to:

Articulate the shared narrative

Make the assumptions visible

Produce quality information

Maintain 360 degree perspective on the work and system – ethics implications

The primary audience is actually 'the work'

