
YOUTH BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAM

Building Safer Communities Report

Institute for Sustainable Industries and
Liveable Cities, Victoria Research,
Victoria University

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Acknowledgement of Country



Victoria University acknowledges, recognises and respects the Ancestors, Elders and families of the Bunurong/Boonwurrung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri/Woiwurrung of the Kulin who are the traditional owners of University land in Victoria, the Gadigal and Guring-gai of the Eora Nation who are the traditional owners of University land in Sydney, and the Yulara/YUgarapul people and Turrbal people living in Meanjin (Brisbane).

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Definitions

ERIC an Emotional Regulation and Impulse Control program, developed by Deakin University as a modular program designed to promote health social and emotional development for adolescents and young adults (ERIC Manual Version, 2018).

‘Family violence’ includes both physical and non-physical (emotional, psychological, verbal, financial and/or sexual) violence towards family members, anyone else who is considered to be a family member such as chosen family members, guardians and foster carers, as well as towards dating or intimate partners (COAG, 2022).

TYJI The Youth Junction Inc.

‘Youth family violence’ is used in this review to denote all types of family violence by young people aged 10-25, including in the home and in intimate or dating relationships.

‘Youth violence in the home’, when used in this review, denotes violence directed at family or chosen family members and can include biological parents, adoptive parents, step-parents and foster carers, siblings, grandparents, extended family members, chosen family members and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship relationships (Fitzgibbon et al., 2022).

‘Youth interpersonal violence’ (IPV) is used in this review to refer to dating or other interpersonal youth violence.

YBCP Youth Behavioural Change Program

There are no Australia-wide definitions or parameters for **‘adolescent family violence’** (Campbell and Wall, 2023) and who is considered a young person changes according to context. In the reference literature, who is considered an adolescent, eligible for study or intervention can vary from 10-18 years-of-age (Department of Human Services 2013) to 15-20 years-of-age (Fitz-Gibbon et al. 2022) to 11-24 years-of-age (Wilks & Wise, 2012). Likewise, some studies consider adolescent to parent violence alone or for adolescent family violence to exclude intimate partner violence. The term “adolescent” is therefore used only when specifically referred to in the reference material.

Executive Summary

Recorded crime statistics do not provide a complete picture of youth family violence, however, its prevalence, and the age of those most at risk of committing it, dictates that it requires specific expertise and skills to address. Between 2022 and 2023, one in five (20%) recorded family violence offenders were aged between 10-24, with the majority (11.4%) aged between 20-24 years (ABS, 2023). However, many incidents of youth family violence go unreported to the police due to factors such as shame, stigma, self-blame, disbelief, and loyalty from their victims (Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2018; Kehoe et al., 2020; Peck et al., 2023). Youth family violence is a complex issue influenced by a variety of factors, including past victimisation, cognitive and behavioural theories, trauma, and individual characteristics such as low self-control and antisocial behaviour patterns. Effective intervention requires a deep understanding of these interrelated factors and the development of targeted, evidence-based strategies to address both the risk factors and the needs of the young people involved. The unique dynamics of youth intimate partner violence also highlight the need for tailored approaches in addressing violence in adolescent and young adult relationships. As a subset of youth family violence, intimate partner violence (IPV) is also prevalent in adolescence and early adult romantic relationships. Indeed, adolescence and early adulthood represent the highest risk periods for experiencing IPV (Johnson et al., 2015).

In response to an identified need for youth family violence programs, the Youth Behaviour Change Project (YBCP) is being run by The Youth Junction Inc. [TYJI] across four local government areas, Brimbank, Melton, Wyndham, and Hume. TYJI were funded to work with 120 young people, aged 17-25, who are using, or at risk of using, violence in the home. The program worked with young people who have been identified through lawyers, courts, police, schools, community agencies.

The challenges of identifying suitable staff in the early stages of the YBCP impacted on the level of participant engagement and progress. The second, and more recent, cohort of 26 young people joined the YBCP under the newly appointed Case Manager who has the appropriate skill set and expertise in youth family violence and behavioural change.

At this stage, June 2024, a total of five young participants have completed the ERIC programme, a comprehensive, evidence-based model to enhance emotion regulation and impulse control. A further 22, have completed their initial ERIC assessment and are working with the Case Manager. Their self-assessment provides evidence of individual growth through an engagement with the YBCP and the ERIC tool.

Of this cohort, 80% have attended at least three sessions with the Case Manager, 73% have built individual pro-social supports and 58% have increased their attendance on the YBCP.

Recommendations at this stage include a further review in the second half of 2024 to capture evidence of the young participants engagement and progress. As a trial program, it would also be beneficial to stay engaged with the young participants who have completed the program to measure the prolonged evidence of behavioural change, emotional regulation and impulse control.

Relevant background and aims

Domestic and family violence in Australia is disturbingly common. Less commonly understood is the prevalence of adolescent or young people's violence against family members who can include parents, sibling or other family members (ANROWS, 2020; Fitzgibbon, Elliott & Maher, 2018). Crime statistics do not provide a complete picture, see Literature Review, but they do confirm that youth family violence is a significant issue. Similarly, intimate Family Violence, a subset of youth family violence is a largely under researched and complex issue. Adolescence and early adulthood are a particularly high-risk period.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence (2015-2016) commented that beyond the personal harm to families there is a significant economic cost at a societal level, for families, government and communities. The Victorian Family Violence Research Agenda, 2021-2024, identified 17–25 year-olds as priority subjects, with an aim to increase understanding of the drivers and types of adolescent family violence, and to identify effective responses (Victorian Government, 2022). What is clear, is that youth family violence is a complex issue, requiring tailored approaches for young people. A detailed review of the current literature and complex nature of youth family violence is explored in the Literature Review developed for this report.

The Youth Junction Inc. (TYJI) works with young people in Melbourne's west as an umbrella organisation for a range of coordinated and integrated services to meet the needs of young people aged 12 to 25 years. In recent years, TYJI has identified that as many as 80% of young people referred to their service have experienced, or used, violence in family contexts. Despite this need, current youth work case management does not have a specialist family violence approach (ANROWS, 2020; Fitzgibbon et al, 2018) and existing programs did not meet the needs of young people:

We were seeing a lot - a theme among a lot of the young people that they were using violence within the home and there was no service to refer them to other than really the Men's Behavioural Change Program, which the feedback from the young people was that probably they didn't get out of it what they probably should have, and that a bit more intensive one-on-one work as well as group work would benefit this group better (Lisa TYJI, Interview 2023).

The Youth Behaviour Change Project (YBCP) aimed to address this need by taking a holistic approach to supporting young people in the catchment areas of Sunshine, Werribee and Broadmeadows Children's Courts in Brimbank, Melton, Wyndham and Hume local government areas. Already experienced in supporting young people with complex needs, TYJI aimed to work with 120 young people, aged 17-25 years, who use or are at risk of using, violence in the home.

TYJI also consulted with key organisations around family violence and youth behavioural change, including but not limited to Western Health, No to Violence, Youthlaw, and Victoria Police and identified support for the young participants from local cultural groups, and the services that make up the Sunshine Visy Cares Hub.

The YBCP ran for two years, across 2022-2024, with young people engaged for up to six months. A dedicated Case Manager, with expertise in family violence and behavioural change principles, ran the program although there were challenges to recruit for this role that will be discussed. A psychological skills program, ERIC (Emotional Regulation and Impulse Control mode), was used in the program to enable a psychosocial assessment for each young person. The young participants engaged in an intensive three-month period working closely with the Case Manager. The aim in the second three months of the program was to empower young people to take a lead in their progress. Evaluation of ERIC was a requirement of the grant funding.

Literature Review

1. Prevalence and Patterns of Youth Family Violence

Youth family violence is an issue of growing recognition and concern. Although it is difficult to measure the exact prevalence of youth family violence in Australia, existing research demonstrates that children and young people do use violence against their family members and intimate partners. Patterns of youth family violence:

1.1 Prevalence of Youth Family Violence

While recorded crime statistics do not provide a complete picture of youth family violence, its prevalence, or who is most likely to commit it, they do confirm that it is a significant issue. Between 2022 and 2023, one in five (20%) recorded family violence offenders were aged between 10-24, with the majority (11.4%) aged between 20-24 (ABS, 2023). However, many incidents of youth family violence go unreported to the police due to factors such as shame, stigma, self-blame, disbelief, and loyalty from their victims (Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2018; Kehoe et al., 2020; Peck et al., 2023).

As a subset of youth family violence, intimate partner violence (IPV) is prevalent in adolescent and early adult romantic relationships. Indeed, adolescence and early adulthood represent the highest risk periods for experiencing IPV across a person's life span (Johnson et al., 2015). Such interpersonal violence can have profound and lasting impacts on the behaviour, health, and psychological well-being of adolescents and young people (Ackard, Eisenberg & Neumark-Sztainer, 2007)

For a more detailed picture, Australian studies provide further insights into the prevalence of youth family violence:

- A study of over 5000 Australian young people aged 16-20, one in five participants reported using violence in the home in the form of verbal abuse (15%), physical violence (10%), or emotional/psychological abuse (5%) against a family member. Of those who used violence, 45% said it was frequent, occurring at least monthly (Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2022).

- A study of university students aged 18-25 found that one in seven had abused their parents in the past 12 months (Simmons et al., 2022).
- A representative survey of Australian young people aged 18-19 found that approximately 29% had experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months, with 25% reporting emotional abuse, 12% physical abuse, and 8% sexual abuse (O'Donnell et al., 2023).
- A representative survey of 3,500 Australian men found that among young adult men aged 18-30, 25% had used physical violence and 20% had used sexual violence against an intimate partner (The Men's Project, 2024).

1.2 Patterns of Youth Family Violence

Young people who use violence in the home often do so as part of a pattern of other general forms of anti-social, deviant, or violent behaviour (Farrington and Ttof, 2021; Moulds et al., 2019; Verbruggen et al., 2022). A study of over 5000 young people aged 10-24 reported to Victoria Police in 2019 for using family violence found that those engaging in generalist violence (as opposed to family-only violence) were at higher risk for more severe acts of violence, violence in multiple relationships, and a higher rate of recidivism (Sheed et al., 2022).

Patterns of youth family violence also seem to differ to adult family violence. Fitz-Gibbon et al.'s (2022) study indicates that many young people either begin with physical violence or experience simultaneous onset of physical and non-physical abuse, challenging the traditional "escalation model" which posits that non-physical abuse precedes physical violence. This suggests that in some contexts, youth violence may be driven by impulse or retaliation towards other family members (Routt & Anderson, 2011; Williams et al., 2017).

1.3 Gender identity and youth family violence

Violence by adolescents is not considered to be as gendered in nature as adult family violence, where adult men are more overwhelmingly the primary aggressors (AIHW, 2021; Campbell, 2022). Research suggests that between two-thirds and three-quarters of adolescents who use violence against their parents are young men (Condry & Miles, 2014; McKenna et al., 2010; Moulds et al., 2019; State of Victoria, 2014-2016). However, a study by Fitz-Gibbon et al. (2022) found that young women and girls were just as likely as young men and boys to report using violence in the home. This discrepancy may be due to higher self-reporting rates by young women and minimisation of violent behaviour by young men.

There is also gendered nature to the victimisation patterns in youth violence in the home. Parents who are women, particularly single mothers, more likely to be abused by a child, often making them victims of both their partner and their child (Boxall & Sabol, 2021; Fitz-Gibbon, Elliot & Maher, 2018; Simmons et al., 2018;). Furthermore, young men are more likely to be represented in official statistics and the criminal legal system because parents are more likely to call the police for young male offenders due to a higher perceived risk of harm (Miles & Condry, 2016). Research suggests also that young women and girls who use violence in the home desist more readily than young men and boys (Moulds et al., 2019).

Beyond the gender binary, there is a significant gap in research about the experience of and use of violence in the home by transgender and gender-diverse young people. More studies are needed to understand the unique challenges and experiences of these groups in the context of youth family violence.

2. Understanding Youth Family Violence

Youth family violence is a complex issue influenced by a variety of factors, including past victimisation, cognitive and behavioural theories, trauma, and individual characteristics such as low self-control and antisocial behaviour patterns. Effective intervention requires a deep understanding of these interrelated factors and the development of targeted, evidence-based strategies to address both the risk factors and the needs of the young people involved. The unique dynamics of youth intimate partner violence also highlight the need for tailored approaches in addressing violence in adolescent and young adult relationships.

2.1 Intergenerational transmission of violence

Youth family violence results from a complex interplay of risk and protective factors across various levels of a young person's socio-ecology (Hong et al., 2012). A predominant finding in the literature is that youth violence in the home is closely linked to the young person's own experiences of family violence (Campbell et al., 2020). Numerous international studies have shown that a high percentage of young people who assault their parents and/or partners have themselves been victimised, either directly or vicariously (Beckmann, 2019; Contreras & Cano-Lozano, 2016; Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2022; Holt, 2015; Ibabe et al., 2013; Kennedy et al., 2010; Routt & Anderson, 2011; Verbruggen et al., 2022). Demonstrating this link, Fitz-Gibbon and colleagues' (2022) study of 5000 Australian youth aged 16–20 found a strong correlation between childhood abuse and later use of violence, with 89% of young people who had used violence in the home reporting that they were victims of child abuse. These individuals were more likely to use violence frequently and against more family members compared to those who had not experienced child abuse.

2.2 Cognitive and Behavioural Frameworks

Intergenerational transmission of violent behaviour is explained through multiple cognitive theories (Meyer, Reeves, & Fitz-Gibbon, 2021), including the 'social learning theory' which suggests that young people replicate behaviours exhibited by intimate role models, such as parents (Bandura, 1986; Margolin & Baucom, 2014; Contreras & Cano, 2016). Cognitive-behavioural theories, attachment theories, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), parenting style, and trauma theories are other frameworks used to understand this specific phenomenon (Izaguirre & Calvete, 2017; Nowakowski-Sims, 2019; Nowakowski-Sims & Rowe, 2017; Pagani et al., 2004; Peek et al., 1985; Suárez-Relinque et al., 2019;). Consideration of the potential victim-survivor status of young people is reflected in the Victorian Family Violence Multi Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM), which acknowledges that adolescent violence against a parent or carer may stem from trauma, affecting the individual's ability to manage emotions, self-soothe, and regulate their response to conflict (Family Safety Victoria, 2019, p. 95).

2.3 Risk and Protective Factors

Individual risk factors for youth family violence are similar to other youth offending behaviours, include a lack of social bonding, social learning issues, and high levels of environmental strain (Sheed et al., 2022). Low self-control has been identified as a significant factor in youth to parent family violence (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; McCloud, 2021), and particularly in early adolescence (Willems et al., 2018). Other correlates include early-onset and diverse patterns of antisocial behaviour, mental health issues, substance use problems, a history of victimisation, academic difficulties, and unemployment (Sheed et al., 2022). They are, however, more frequently observed in young people who engage in both family violence and other types of offending behaviour compared to those who only commit offences outside the family context (Ibabe & Jaureguizar, 2010; Kennedy et al., 2010). Supporting evidence for this research can be found in the Victorian Adolescent Family Violence (AFVP) case management program evaluation, which found high rates of mental health issues, substance use, disabilities, and previous exposure to family violence among participants who had been referred to the program (Boxall et al., 2020).

The risk and protective factors for youth intimate partner violence differ from those for youth violence in the home. Notably, peer use of violence, and beliefs about gender roles and masculinity are strong risk factor for young men who using violence in dating relationships (Bandyopadhyay et al., 2014; O'Keefe, 2005). Other identified factors, some of which are similar to those for youth violence in the home, include poor emotional regulation, psychological stress, controlling behaviours, substance abuse, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), high-risk sexual behaviour, lack of physical activity, unemployment, and low levels of education (Kidman & Kohler, 2020; Malhi et al., 2020; Stöckl et al., 2014; Tiruye et al., 2020).

3. Responding to Youth Family Violence

Youth family violence required tailored responses that differ from those used for adult family violence due to the developmental stage and potential victim-survivor status of the young individuals involved. Best practices emphasize a multi-agency, whole-of-system, and whole-of-family approach, addressing not only the violent behaviours but also the underlying issues. Trauma-informed and flexible program delivery is crucial, ensuring interventions are adapted to the specific needs and contexts of the participants. Furthermore, distinct strategies are required for addressing youth intimate partner violence, focusing on changing beliefs and promoting equitable gender attitudes, but also behaviour while preventing backlash. Overall, effective responses must consider the complex and varied needs of young people to mitigate youth family violence and its broader impacts.

3.1 A multi-agency and whole-of-family response

Youth family violence is recognized as a distinct and separate form of family violence, necessitating different responses compared to adult family violence (State of Victoria, 2014-2016). This distinction is due to the vulnerable age of some of the young people involved and the potential that they may also be victim-survivors of family violence themselves (Family Safety Victoria, 2018)

Given the complex causes of family violence by adolescents, including their developmental stage, co-occurring concerns like mental health issues, substance misuse and school disengagement, and the need for supportive adult relationships, a multi-agency, whole-of-system, specialized, and whole-of-family response is increasingly recognised as best practice (Campbell et al., 2020; Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2022). This approach aligns with the findings of the Royal Commission into Family Violence (State of Victoria, 2014-2016).

The literature consistently supports the need for a whole-of-family response to adolescent violence in the home. Addressing the full range of violence occurring in the home is crucial to prevent young people from falling through the cracks, ensuring adequate safety planning, and generating effective strategies for the wider family structure (Campbell, 2022). This holistic approach is echoed in the broader youth violence prevention literature (Matjasko et al., 2012), which emphasises the need to consider the safety and developmental needs of young people alongside their violent behaviour (Howard, 2015).

Several whole-of-family programs and interventions have been developed in Victoria to address youth family violence:

- **Breaking the Cycle (Anglicare Victoria):** This program combines group and family therapy to address underlying issues driving adolescent violence. It emphasises understanding the young person's behaviour and equipping parents and carers with skills to manage and reduce violence. The group sessions typically run for eight weeks, providing continuous support and strategies for both parents and adolescents (Anglicare Victoria, 2023).
- **Adolescent Family Violence Program (Victoria):** This intensive case management program involves the entire family in the therapeutic process. It aims to improve family relationships, stability in young people's accommodation, and school engagement. The program also highlights the importance of supporting parents to rebuild relationships and improve communication within the family (Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, 2019).
- **RESTORE Program:** This program offers family group conferencing for families with young people using violence in the home, in partnership with Jesuit Social Services and the Melbourne Children's Court (Children's Court of Victoria).

3.2 Trauma-Informed, Tailored and Flexible Delivery

It is important that programs that work with young people are trauma-informed, informed by research into family violence, and view young people as potential victims themselves (Fitz-Gibbon et al. 2022). The MARAM practice guides advise against labelling adolescents as 'violent' or 'perpetrators' to prevent them from internalizing these labels and to recognize their behaviour as part of a trauma response (Family Safety Victoria, 2019).

Working with adolescent family violence needs to be a 'both/and' approach. This means the adolescent may be living in a family context where parenting is abusive, they may have experienced family violence, or they may be dealing with complex and distressing life events and issues (Family Safety Victoria, 2019, p. 96).

Responses should also be tailored to consider the young person's age, developmental status, attachment history, strengths, protective factors, care situation, and overall context, including any experiences of family violence (MARAM Practice Guides Foundational Knowledge Guide).

Likewise, a tailored response is needed for young adults aged 18 to 25 who should be "considered with a developmental lens and to ensure any therapeutic needs relevant to their age and developmental stage are met." (Family Safety Victoria, 2019)

Long-term interventions, spanning six to twelve months, are recommended to address the complex needs of these individuals (Campbell et al., 2020). Flexibility in program delivery is essential due to the nature of the cohort; youth and practitioners have emphasised the need for multi-modal programs that allow participants to engage in various formats (e.g., web-based, one-on-one, group work) and to move in and out of conversations without penalty (Corrie et al., 2021).

3.3 Youth IPV – A Distinct Response

Youth intimate partner violence (IPV) requires distinct responses from youth family violence.

Changing beliefs about dating violence and promoting equitable gender attitudes are significant steps towards reducing perpetration behaviours among adolescents (Foshee et al., 2001; Miller et al., 2020; Mumford et al., 2020; McNaughton Reyes et al., 2016; Taylor et al., 2015). A 2020 systematic review and meta-analysis found that teen dating violence prevention programs are effective in improving participants' knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs (Lee & Wong, 2020). Programs focusing on gender roles and stereotypes had a larger positive impact on attitudes and beliefs but a smaller impact on violent perpetration, suggesting that backlash or negative reactions are possible. This highlights the need for evidence-informed and trauma-informed interventions (Fitz-Gibbon, 2022; Kelley et al., 2015).

As discussed above, the less gendered nature of youth family violence (Campbell, 2022, p. 47; AIHW 2021) suggests that gender-based approaches are not as appropriate with younger adolescents than older ones or those using violence in non-familial interpersonal relationships. This raises questions about the appropriateness of a one-size-fits-all gender-based training with young people who have used family violence.

4. ERIC - Emotional Regulation and Impulse Control

ERIC (Emotional Regulation and Impulse Control) represents a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to enhancing emotion regulation and impulse control among young people. Its adaptability, extensive evaluation, and demonstrated effectiveness make it a valuable tool to accompany treatment in various therapeutic settings.

ERIC is a skills program designed for use with late adolescents and young adults, approximately ages 16-25. Developed by researchers at Deakin University in partnership with Victoria's Youth Support and Advocacy Service (YSAS) and Hunter New England Local Health District in NSW, its key aim is to help young people regulate emotions and control impulsive behaviours, such as substance abuse (Hall & Simpson, 2018).

ERIC is intended for use with young people who have literacy levels at the middle-to-late high school standard but can be adapted for specific participants. The program is versatile and can be delivered independently or combined with other interventions to address complex issues, such as co-existing anxiety and disturbed eating patterns. It is designed for delivery by any adult with a trust-based therapeutic relationship with young people, including case workers, psychologists, and practitioners from justice, alcohol and other drug (AOD) services, health and education settings,

ERIC is based on evidence-informed psychological treatments for mood, anxiety, substance use, eating, and borderline personality disorders. It has been trialled with vulnerable young people in various settings, including youth justice, youth mental health support, and community group programs (Hall & Simpson, 2018). The program uses a competency-based model delivered across eight modules, underpinned by acceptance-based cognitive and behavioural theories. The modules can be delivered in any order, enhancing flexibility and overcoming implementation barriers (Hall et al., 2021).

4.1 Key Domains of ERIC

The ERIC model focuses on eight key domains. Each domain is linked to specific outcomes, contributing to overall emotional and behavioural regulation.

- Reducing Vulnerability: Targets the use of unhelpful emotion regulation strategies.
- Emotional Literacy: Enhances emotional clarity – the ability to identify and name emotions.
- Flexible Thinking: Develops strategies for perspective-taking, reducing the intensity of emotions.
- Allowing: Emphasizes non-judgmental thinking and acceptance in emotion regulation.
- Micro Mindfulness: Cultivates habits to remain present in each moment.
- Tolerating Discomfort: Encourages strategies to endure difficult situations without exacerbating them.
- Decision Making: Integrates values-based decision making and problem-solving to reduce impulsive behaviours.
- Identity and Values: Focuses on connecting with personal values, identifying strengths, and increasing motivation for positive change.

Figure 1: List of ERIC outcomes for Emotional Regulation and Impulse Control

EMOTIONAL REGULATION				IMPULSE CONTROL			
REDUCING VULNERABILITY	EMOTIONAL LITERACY	FLEXIBLE THINKING	ALLOWING	MICRO MINDFULNESS	TOLERATING DISCOMFORT	DECISION MAKING	IDENTITY & VALUES
To reduce rumination and suppression	To identify emotions and recognise their purpose	To be able to look at a situation from another person's perspective	To accept yourself and others	To tune in to your mind and body	To sit with uncomfortable thoughts, feelings and body signals	To remain focused on goals despite strong emotions	To know your personal values, goals and strengths
To face up to avoidance	To identify how emotions impact thoughts, behaviours and body signals	To be aware of bias when interpreting a situation	To observe your thoughts and emotions without trying to change them	To remain present in each moment	To resist an urge to engage in unhelpful behaviours	To implement a considered plan to solve a problem	To be aware of what motivates you
To practice good self-care habits	To recognise the difference between helpful and unhelpful responses to emotions	To accept other people's point of view as valid	To be kind and compassionate to ourselves	To focus your attention	To use distraction and self-comfort strategies to get through difficult situations	To make decisions that are in line with how you want to feel	To know who you are and how you want to live your life

4.2 Evidence base for ERIC

ERIC has been evaluated for use with vulnerable young people aged between 18 and 25 years, who are seeking help and receiving treatment in alcohol and other drug (AOD), community health, justice and primary mental health care settings. One multi-site pilot study showed significant improvements in emotion dysregulation, experiential avoidance, depression, anxiety, and stress (Hall et al., 2021). ERIC has been shown to lead to significant and sustained improvements in emotion regulation and anxiety in young people in residential drug rehabilitation (Sloan et al., 2018). ERIC has also been trialled in other settings, such as with young women affected by sexual exploitation and proposed for use with young people at risk of homelessness, demonstrating its adaptability and broad applicability (Laird et al., 2022; Waterworth, 2022)

Adaptability to Youth Family Violence Interventions

ERIC is trauma-informed and has been trialled with young people with lived experience of family violence, but it has not hitherto been used with young people who are using violence in the home or in interpersonal relationships. Although it is suitable for young people 16+, ERIC has been evaluated primarily with young people aged 18-25. This means that there is a gap in the literature with regards to its application in the specific context of youth family violence prevention and there are some questions as to its effectiveness or suitability for younger cohorts.

Methodology and Procedures

Data Collection

The aim of this research was to evaluate the success and impact of the YBCP and investigate its goal to empower young people who use violence, or are at risk of, to identify their triggers, patterns of behaviour and biopsychosocial needs, historical context and motivators. The overall aim was to decrease the incidence and use of violence in homes for the 120 young people who participated. There were three data sets that were assessed and measured, including demographics and engagement statistics:

- The number of young participants who attended at least three sessions with the Case Manager.
- The number and types of pro-social support each young person engaged with.
- The number of young people who remained engaged across the full six months of the program.
- The number of young people who engaged with employment or education as a direct result of their engagement in the program.
- The number of young people who increased their attendance/participation across the program.
- The number of participants for whom risk and protective factors were identified.
- The number of participants in need of support to relevant services and the types of services (Further outputs and specific indicators are included on Appendix A).

The ERIC self-assessments, completed by the young participants with the Case Manager, were intended to be collected at intake, 3 months, on exit and, if communication was retained, 3 months post-exit. This information was deidentified and provided to the VU Research team on Excel Spreadsheets. Participants progress was tracked across the YBCP and ERIC tool. The participant group were aged 17 – 25-year-olds, although a number of 12-16-year-olds were included in 2024 in response to a need identified by community partners. Consent to participate was obtained from all participants aged 17 by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee ethics application HRE22-150. Waiver of parental consent was approved for the 17-year-old participants but the younger cohort, included in 2024, presented ethical challenges that were not able to be addressed in a timely manner.

Interviews were conducted with the Case Manager and Managers of TYJI at two time points, November 2023 and April 2024. The interviews provided evidence of the challenges, barriers, and opportunities of the YBCP and focused on:

- How has the project improved Youth Junction Inc.'s ability to provide appropriate support to participants.
- How the principles of cultural safety and inclusion have been considered/included in the design and delivery of the YBCP.
- How the project has strengthened the community's ability to understand and address crime and community safety issues, particularly in the area of family violence.
- How awareness of local supports and services has increased for participants in the YBCP.

Results

Intake November 2022 – June 2023

In the initial stages of the YBCP the Case Worker did not have the necessary skills to use the ERIC model with young participants. As a result, the data for this cohort, number = 42, does not include ERIC assessments or progress.

Table 1: Demographics of young participants November 2022 – June 2023

Number of	Intake from November 2022 to June 2023 (n=42)
Young participants who identify as	Male = 37; Female = 5
Participant's age	17 – 18 years = 8 19 – 20 years = 10 21 – 22 years = 7 23 – 24 years = 9 25+ years = 8
Cultural heritage	Australian = 19 Pasifika = 4 African = 5 European = 2 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander = 1 Other or not disclosed = 11
Location	Brimbank LGA = 7 Melton LGA = 9 Wyndham LGA = 6 Hume LGA = 9 Other LGA's = 11
Number of contacts with the youth worker for each client	1 – 5 contacts = 14 young people 6 – 10 contacts = 9 young people 11 – 19 contacts = 5 young people 21 – 29 contacts = 5 young people 30 – 39 contacts = 4 young people 40+ contacts = 5 young people

Intake – 2024

The later cohort, number = 26, who worked with the Case Manager and ERIC model in 2024, show the outcomes of their engagement in Table 2.

Table 2: ERIC journey, participants enrolled in 2024.

Number of	2024 intake (n=26)	Percentage
Young participants who started the ERIC journey	26	100%
Young participants who attended at least three sessions with the Youth Worker	21	80%
Young participants who remained engaged with the ERIC journey at three months	15	58%
Types of pro-social support each young person engaged with	Family and friends = 13 Other agencies = 5 CCO ¹ agent and workers = 1	73%
Young people who remain engaged across the full six months of the program ²	5	19%
Young people who engaged with employment or education as a direct result of their engagement	5	19%
Young people who increased their attendance/participation across the program	15	58%
Young participants for whom risk and protective factors have been identified	Homelessness and violence = 1 AOD = 3	15%
Young participants in need of support to relevant services and the types of services	Mental health = 7 Employment and education = 3 CCO = 1 AOD = 4	58%
Young participants who completed their ERIC journey	5	19%
Young participants engaged 3 months post ERIC	0	0

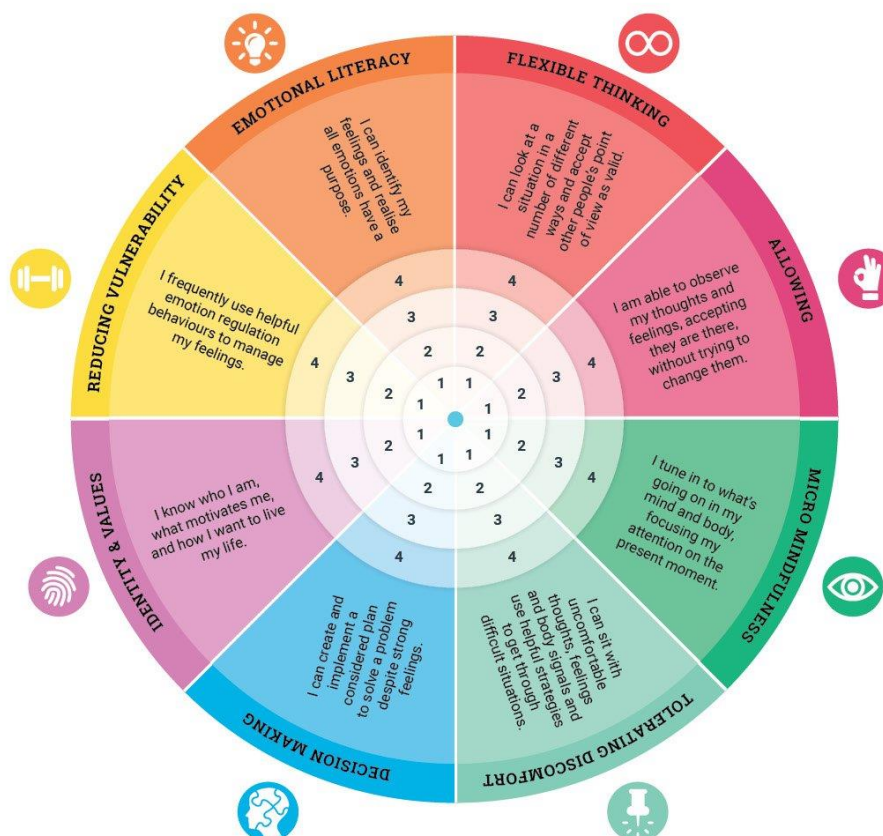
¹ Community Correction Order

² A number of participants remain engaged in the program but have not yet progressed to 3 or 6 months, these will be monitored by Youth Junction Inc.

Figure 2: My ERIC Targets – a tool to identify emotional regulation and impulse control.

My ERIC Targets

My ERIC Targets is a tool for workers and young people to identify areas of emotion regulation and impulse control to focus on during treatment.



Circle the number that represents the level of the young person's functioning in each domain:

1. Awareness is low, skills are not, or rarely, displayed.
2. Awareness is developing, basic skills are displayed but not consistently.
3. Awareness is adequate, skills are displayed consistently.
4. Understanding and skills are integrated in life and consistently displayed.

Where to start? Target the domains with 1's and 2's circled.

ERIC Analysis - 2024 intake

My ERIC Targets is a clinical tool that is designed to identify skill vulnerabilities and strengths and to identify the domains of focus and starting points for participants. The level of each target enables the youth worker and young participants to identify and target areas of emotion regulation and impulse control that informs their treatment and measures progress. The lower the score, in each of the impulse control and emotional regulation domains, indicates that the young participant could benefit from learning skills in this domain.

In Table 3, we can see that 55% of young participants (n=26) started their ERIC journey on a score between 1-3, indicating they would benefit from support around micro-mindfulness. The overall aim of this domain is to build a young person's capacity to be present in the moment and not just operating on automatic pilot.

Impulse Control Skills

Table 3: ERIC Assessment Pre-journey 2024 – Impulse control – mindfulness

Micro-mindfulness	2024 intake (n=26)
1. I am not present in situations and cannot tune into self	
2. I am beginning to see that I need to try to be present in moments & tune into self	15%
3. I am learning to tune into my mind, body & am learning to focus my attention on the present	30%
4. I am starting to tune in my mind, body & am trying to focus my attention on the present moment	10%
5. I frequently tune in my mind, body & can sometimes focus my attention on the present moment	15%
6. I tune in what's going on in my mind, body & can focus my attention on the present moment	15%
7. No response at this stage	15%

The remaining three Impulse Control domains, Tolerating Discomfort, Decision Making and Identity Values revealed similar results, see Table 4. The young participants scored primarily in the lower levels of each domain, e.g. scores 1 to 3. Young participants indicated a lower level of distress tolerance, 38 per cent. In the Tolerating Discomfort domain, 36 per cent of the young participants indicated a need to better values-based decision making and problem solving. The final domain, Identity and Values, indicated participants reported a stronger sense of identity (autonomy), sense of agency (competency) and relatedness and belonging, with 56 percent scoring at the upper end of this Domain.

Table 4: ERIC Assessment Pre-journey 2024 – Impulse Control Domains– Tolerating discomfort; Decision making; Identity and Values

Tolerating Discomfort	1 = 0% 2 = 19% 3 = 19% 4 = 26%	5 = 15% 6 = 7% No response = 15%
Decision Making	1 = 11% 2 = 11% 3 = 14% 4 = 19%	5 = 19% 6 = 11% No response = 15%
Identity and Values	1 = 6% 2 = 4% 3 = 19% 4 = 22%	5 = 19% 6 = 15% No response = 15%

Emotional Regulation - Skills

Similar results were captured under Emotional Regulation with 56 per cent of the young participants scoring 1-3 in the Reducing Vulnerability domain. This indicates the young people would benefit for increased levels of self-care and being kind to oneself, see Table 5.

Moving through the scores for this domain would see young people learning skills that enable the ability to be kind to themselves and identify habits that would enable them to be kind and calm, and to show compassion.

But I think ERIC, it's an amazing tool and it's going to be really, really useful to attack the root because what we're doing again is like checking what's happening and why are we doing this. And then it's really good as well that sometimes before using the big emotional regulation, once we do the group sessions where we explain the family roles, the gender roles, the norms, wherever, wherever, wherever, and then they realise. And then when we go to the big emotional regulation, individual worksheets, they are like, oh, like this, this, this, this, this. And it's amazing as well (Youth Worker, TYJI, May 2024).

Table 5: ERIC Assessment Pre-journey 2024 – Emotional Regulation – Reducing Vulnerability

Reducing Vulnerability	2024 intake (n=26)
1. I do not do any self-care habits, I am never kind to self	
2. I am often not kind to self or show self-compassion. I am exploring strategies to help.	22%
3. I am learning strategies and habits to self-care and support feelings and to be kind to self.	19%
4. I am starting to be kind to self and to use strategies and habits to support self and feelings.	15%
5. I am frequently kind to self and use strategies and habits to support self and feelings.	10%
6. I practical self-care habits, can calm self and show compassion to self.	19%
7. No response at this stage.	15%

Stronger skills were reported under the Flexible Thinking Domain, with 61 per cent of the young participants scoring from 4 – 6. This result indicates that the young participants reported being able to view situations in a variety of ways, and capable of accepting the viewpoint of others.

Table 6: ERIC Assessment Pre-journey - Emotional Regulation Domains – Emotional Literacy, Flexible Thinking, Allowing

Emotional Literacy	1 = 0% 2 = 11% 3 = 26% 4 = 23%	5 = 6% 6 = 19% No response = 15%
Flexible Thinking	1 = 0% 2 = 3% 3 = 21% 4 = 25%	5 = 18% 6 = 18% No response = 15%
Allowing	1 = 3% 2 = 7% 3 = 40% 4 = 14%	5 = 6% 6 = 15% No response = 15%

ERIC progression

At the time of reporting in June 2024, five young participants had completed their ERIC Journey. The graph and scores for young person LF, demonstrate their journey from pre-client to post-client. As can be seen in Figure 3, LF has improved in all 8 Domains across their six months on the program. LF has shown improvement in all Domains, as can be seen in Table 7, including those, for example Tolerating Discomfort and Decision Making, that were already well developed prior to engaging and working with the youth worker.

Figure 3: LF ERIC progress from pre-client to post-client

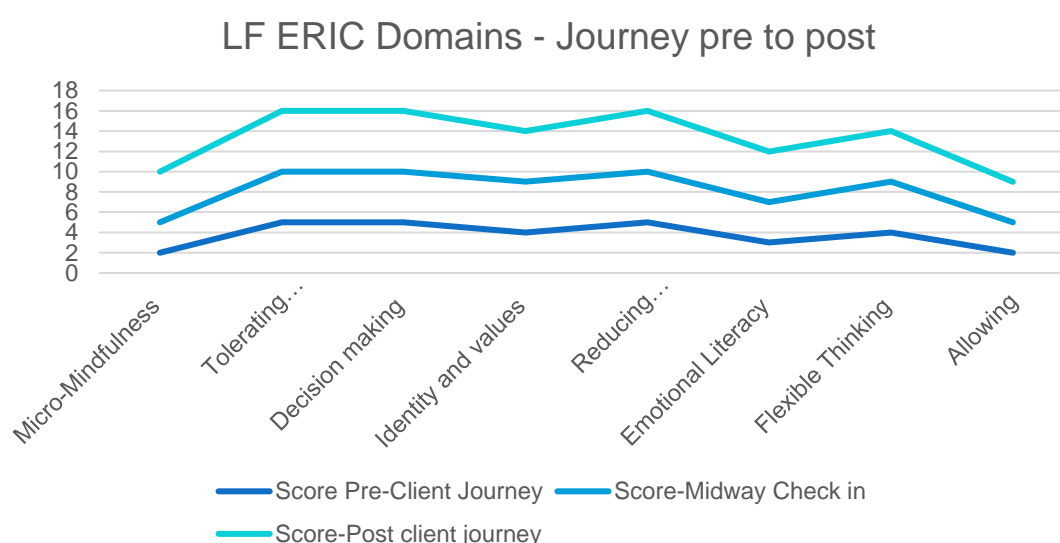


Table 7: LF's ERIC score progression from pre-journey to post-journey

	Score Pre-Client Journey	Score-Midway Check in	Score-Post client journey
Micro-Mindfulness	2	3	5
Tolerating discomfort	5	5	6
Decision making	5	5	6
Identity and values	4	5	5
Reducing Vulnerability	5	5	6
Emotional Literacy	3	4	5
Flexible Thinking	4	5	5
Allowing	2	3	4

The ERIC program is not designed to be linear or uniform, offering the user considerable flexibility in terms of delivery and focus (ERIC, 2018). The flexibility of ERIC ensures that each young person experienced their own journey across the YBCP.

In contrast to LF above, we see in Figure 4 that PB has improved from pre-client to their Midway Check in of the Domains but not Tolerating Discomfort, Reducing Vulnerability and Flexible Thinking where their scores were less than pre-journey scores. By the end of their

journey though, PB had achieved significant improvement across all Domains. Some, like Reducing Vulnerability, improved from a score of 0 at the mid-point to 4 at the end of their journey.

Figure 4: PB ERIC progress from pre-client to post-client

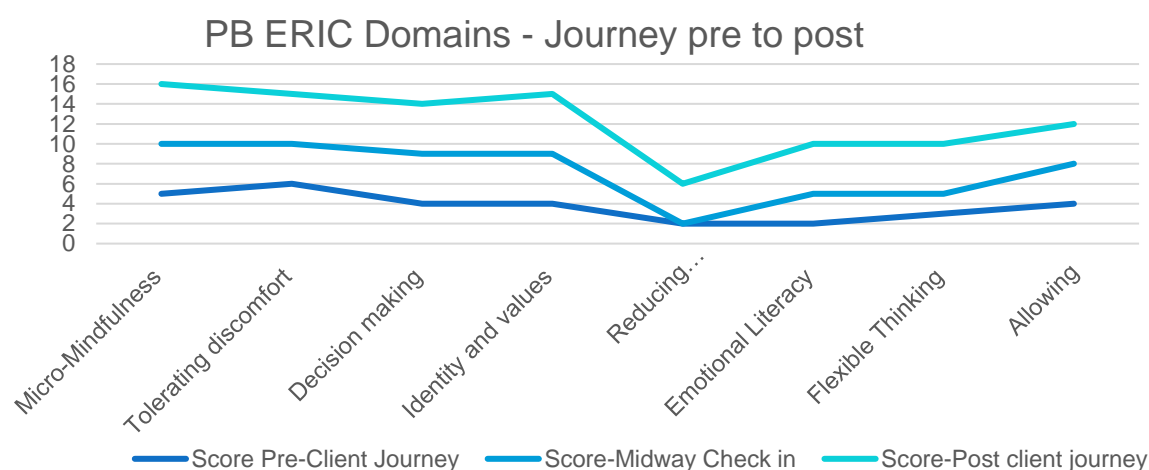


Table 8: PB's ERIC score progression from pre-journey to post-journey

	Score Pre-Client Journey	Score-Midway Check in	Score-Post client journey
Micro-Mindfulness	5	5	6
Tolerating discomfort	6	4	5
Decision making	4	5	5
Identity and values	4	5	6
Reducing Vulnerability	2	0	4
Emotional Literacy	2	3	5
Flexible Thinking	3	2	5
Allowing	4	4	4

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with the YBCP staff and Management at TYJI. These were conducted at two time points and were designed to investigate the following questions:

- How has the project improved Youth Junction Inc.'s ability to provide appropriate support to participants.
- How the principles of cultural safety and inclusion have been considered/included in the design and delivery of the YBCP.
- How the project has strengthened the community's ability to understand and address crime and community safety issues, particularly in the area of family violence.
- How participant awareness of local supports and services has increased in the YBCP.

Evidence of how these have been achieved or not, is outlined here. Consideration of how this evidence responds to these questions around the YBCP is outlined in the Discussion, see p. 32.

Initial challenges

The YBCP faced considerable initial challenges recruiting a youth worker with the approximate skills and training in family violence. While TYJI worked with youth workers to enhance their capability in the area of family violence, the process took considerable time and did not identify a suitable Case Manager until the second year of the program.

Many youth workers are not trained in family violence, so they don't know what to do. There's sympathy to the young person that they're working with, and they want to support but they'll support in whatever way possible and if they haven't been trained in family violence, they can't provide a therapeutic response (Lisa, YBCP Manager).

In such a complex area of family violence, ensuring the youth worker had not only the skills but an understanding of the developmental stage and other issues facing the young participants, including mental health, substance abuse, school disengagement and supportive adult relationships it was essential to recruit the right person.

The role itself especially with what's going on at the moment with family and intimate partner violence you really need someone who has an understanding of how to approach perpetrators how to work with victims how to work with a group of perpetrators to ensure the balance isn't thrown off (Lucia TYJI, Interview 2024).

It was acknowledged, on reflection, that the initial staff member lacked the correct skills set or expertise in family violence and behavioural change, which resulted in inadequate assessments and interventions. This also impacted on the incomplete data set for young people across 2022-2023. Engaged with ERIC did not occur in the first year of the program.

Acknowledging this as a significant shortcoming, TYJI re-evaluated their staffing needs and appointed a Case Manager and Manager with the appropriate skill set and expertise in

family violence. At the same time, the TYJI recognised the need to review their assessment frameworks and other documentation as well as the group sessions:

Once we found someone, we did see a lot of work needed to be done within YBCP, and that was developing some frameworks around assessment, developing some client journey documentation, and developing the group sessions because they weren't developed as yet (Lucia YBCP, Interview 2024).

Engaging young people

Engaging young people in behavioural change programs is challenging due to various factors, including their personal circumstances, external influences, and the voluntary nature of these programs. Ensuring sustained engagement requires flexibility and a deep understanding of the young person's needs. The difficulties in maintaining consistent engagement among participants and adaptive strategies are employed to address these.

Sometimes they'll realise what their behaviour is, but sometimes they'll go back down and external factors are playing a big part in that. So, they are engaged, but whether - the rate of whether they're taking on the material is different in some depending on what external factors are happening (Nancy TYJI, Interview 2023).

There is also a constant need to ensure the young participants remain engaged throughout the program.

Impact of family violence on youth behaviour

Family violence significantly impacts the behaviour of the young participants and often led them to perpetrate violence themselves. Understanding and addressing these underlying issues is critical for effective intervention.

A lot of the times one of the things they disclose once they're onboard in some of the other programs they've either had family violence happen to them or they've used it and probably there's more of the young people who've used violence usually because they've experienced it at some stage (Nancy TYJI, Interview 2023).

We're seeing that a lot of them are victim/survivors themselves or had some form that's high across the board. We're seeing that they haven't really had that healthy relationship in their life or understand what a healthy relationship could be or should be (Lisa TJYI, Interview 2023).

Flexibility

Flexibility in program delivery that includes young participants, and their personal circumstances is essential for the effectiveness of programs such as the YBCP. The program was designed with flexibility to ensure the needs of young participants were

accommodated. The ERIC program has also been designed with adaptability and flexibility. Importantly, the young person was at the centre of any decision making:

So initially we designed it that three months would be intensive one-on-one and then three months group work, but that will be a flowing kind of thing depending on the young person and where the young person is at. It may be that no, that the young person doesn't do the group work because they're not at the stage to be able to do it, or it may be that they do five months of intensive one-on-one and just a couple of group works just to finalise the program. So, it will depend on where the young person's at and where we feel would best suit their needs (Lisa TYJI, Interview 2023).

Setting up the program also required adaptation of the ERIC model for the young participants engaged in the YBCP. This included an acknowledgment that the first youth worker employed did not have the correct skill set. Flexibility was also required to modify the language and tools used to ensure there were age appropriate and understandable for the young participants:

It's using them and adapting them slightly to ensure the young people we're dealing with understand them number one because we could have given them a worksheet and they wouldn't understand what to do (Lucia TJYI, Interview 2024).

The mode of delivery was also flexible to accommodate the diverse schedules and personal circumstances of the young participants. This included outreach, online appointments, work schedules and family commitments:

Some of the people work full-time. Some of the people are married and have kids so it's not always easy to get to a 9-5 appointment when they're around (Briony TYJI, Interview 2023).

However, once an experienced worker was recruited the appropriate tools were redeveloped for the young participants:

Skilled staff

The complex nature of youth family violence and the needs of the participants determines that employing a youth worker with skills, expertise and experience is essential to the effective delivery and management of the YBCP. This took a little time for TYJI but once recruited the skilled youth worker had an instant impact.

We were lucky to find [our youth worker] and that she had the prior experience in family violence and various other things [overseas] and she took that and ran with it. So, we were able to look at the ERIC tools that we had a subscription for and redevelop them for the clientele we were needing to deliver the program to (Lucia TYJI, Interview 2024).

The delay also impacted on the introduction of ERIC to the young participants. In this instance, those who joined the YBCP in 2022-2023 did not use the model, resulting in a gap in their progress and the collection of data that would have enabled a fully assessment of the impact of the YBCP.

For those who engaged in 2024, there was evidence of engagement in the emotional regulation and impulse control which is crucial for behavioural change.

[Case Manager] offers outreach and online appointment eventually, after she's built that connection and has a bit of rapport and has gone through the first initial assessment (Briony YBCP, Interview 2023).

Participant engagement and retention

Maintaining consistent engagement and retention of participants in the program has been a persistent challenge. Various factors, such as personal circumstances, external influences, and the voluntary nature of the program, affected participants' commitment and progress. Flexibility in scheduling and delivery methods was essential to address these challenges and to develop retention strategies and influence retention rates. Outreach programs, online engagement have all been trialled, alongside delivery that aims to accommodate the life commitments of the young participants:

Engagement is really up and down and that's across all of our programs. We've been wracking our brains in regard to how we keep clients truly engaged in any program (Lucia YBCP, Interview 2024).

The level of support outside the program that sits around these young people. This could be family, partner, school, prison or other social support structures. This is considered on an individual basis, and some have great support and for others it is almost non-existent. For one young person, in prison:

He is really well supported as well by his family and by prison, because it's like, they make every super easy so I can go and visit him and then the family has a lot of communication with me or the lawyers and for everything that they need to do. On the other hand, ... I feel like maybe 60 per cent of the young people that are outside [prison] their support system is not as good (Maggie YBCP, Interview 2023).

Feedback and continuous improvement

The young participants played an important role in providing continuous feedback to staff to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of the ERIC model. Regular assessments and participant feedback was pivotal to refining the ERIC model meeting the needs of the participants.

With the evaluation she again has taken quite a lot of advice from the ERIC tools regarding the evaluation just changing the language again to make it more appropriate (Lucia YBCP, Interview 2024).

Age-specific adjustments

In response to an identified need, adjustments were made to the ERIC model to cater specifically to younger age groups, from 12 – 17-year-olds. This involved tailoring the content and approach to be developmentally appropriate and engaging for younger participants.

Towards the end of last year, we noticed that a number of referrals were coming in for the younger cohort, so we were taking on 17 to 25 but we were getting some referrals in from secondary schools and DFFH for that 12 to 16 cohort (Lucia YBCP, Interview 2024).

We did receive approval for that in January this year and have been working with the younger cohort. Again, it was redeveloping the tools we already have to look at those younger cohorts and make the information and the process age related (Lucia YBCP, Interview 2024).

Engaging this age groups appears to have been successful, although a full assessment would only be possible when they have engaged with the:

Yeah, for the ones that I have experienced right now, the 12 to 16s are really, really good at engaging. They love to come and chat with someone. You can see that it's what I was talking before about we don't like what we have at home, but when someone from the outside listen to us or give us advice, we like that more (Maggie YJ, Interview 2024).

Cultural sensitivity

The program incorporated culturally sensitive approaches to ensure inclusivity and relevance for participants from diverse backgrounds. This involved recognising and addressing cultural differences in the perception and management of family violence and behavioural issues.

I think across all our programs the team is very aware. I have to call out culture at times because what is acceptable in a certain culture or what they've deemed what a young person deems acceptable in their culture is not kind of deemed okay in our society (Lisa YBCP, Interview 2023).

Group sessions

Group sessions are a key component of the YBCP, with the young participants being allocated to groups according to their needs and the alignment with others with similar needs. The YBCP youth worker employed in the later stages of the project. She had designed the sessions and run them in her home country prior to joining TYJI. The group sessions focus:

More on gender equality and respectful relationships, and as well they are focussed on the myths of romantic love and how society tells us that this is how we do a relationship and that's why we tend to behave in the way that we behave in relationships (Maggie YBCP, Interview 2023).

The group sessions cover social norms, gender norms, sex norms, and explore family, romantic relationships and challenge the young participants to think about when they think about these:

Before using the big emotional regulation, once we do the group sessions where we explain the family roles, the gender roles, the norms, wherever, wherever, wherever, and then they realise. And then when we go to the big emotional regulation, individual worksheets, they are like, oh, like this, this, this, this, this. And it's amazing as well (Maggie YBCP, Interview 2024).

We can see the shift in understanding relationships, gender equality and romantic love for the young participants in Tables 9 and 10 below.

Table 9: Intimate relationship group pre and post session evaluation

	Pre-group session participant evaluation	Post session participant evaluation
There is someone, somewhere in the world, predestined for each person (the other half)	True = 7 Don't know = 3 False = 1	True = 4 Don't know = 2 False = 5
The passion we feel at the beginning of a relationship should last forever	True = 5 Don't know = 2 False = 4	True = 2 Don't know = 1 False = 8
Love is blind	True = 2 Don't know = 4 False = 5	True = 7 Don't know = 3 False = 1
Marriage is love's grave	True = 0 Don't know = 5 False = 6	True = 1 Don't know = 1 False = 9

You can be happy without being in a romantic relationship	True = 9 Don't know = 1 False = 1	True = 11
Split up or getting a divorce means you failed	True = 1 Don't know = 2 False = 8	True = 0 Don't know = 1 False = 10
Jealousy is a proof of love	True = 4 Don't know = 3 False = 4	True = 1 Don't know = 0 False = 10
You can love someone you mistreat	True = 3 Don't know = 2 False = 6	True = 2 Don't know = 1 False = 8
You can be loved by someone that mistreats you	True = 4 Don't know = 3 False = 4	True = 2 Don't know = 2 False = 7
True love beats everything	True = 6 Don't know = 2 False = 3	True = 2 Don't know = 0 False = 9

Table 10: Family relationships group

	Pre-group session participant evaluation	Post session participant evaluation
Women should be the ones cooking and taking care of the household	True = 1 Don't know = 1	False = 2
To be a family you must have kids	True = 1 False = 1	False = 2
Family is by blood or marriage	True = 1 False = 1	False = 2
Men are the breadwinners in the family	True = 2	False = 2
You need to get married to be a good family	True = 1 False = 1	False = 2

Families are made by a dad, a mom and children	True = 1 Don't know = 1	False = 2
Single parents are not successful family models	False = 2	True = 1 False = 1
You cannot start a family with someone that doesn't have the same religious beliefs as you	False = 2	True = 1 False = 1
Divorced parents are not as good as married ones	False = 2	False = 2
Having a family is being successful in life	True = 1 Don't know = 1	True = 1 False = 1

Discussion

The research and evaluation of the YBCP was undertaken across 2022-2024. The aim was to consider the outputs for participants against pre-determined measurements, see Methodology and Procedures on p. 16 and Appendix A.

In addition, the research sought to investigate the challenges, barriers and opportunities, of the YBCP and focus on:

- How has the project improved Youth Junction Inc.'s ability to provide appropriate support to participants.
- How the principles of cultural safety and inclusion have been considered/included in the design and delivery of the YBCP.
- How the project has strengthened the community's ability to understand and address crime and community safety issues, particularly in the area of family violence.
- How participants' awareness of local supports and services has increased in the YBCP.

With minimal data and the majority of young participants in the first three months of engagement it is difficult to respond to these questions specifically, but the following is a overview of the project as at June 2024.

The challenges of identifying suitable staff in the early stages of the YBCP impacted on the level of participant engagement and progress. This resulted in two cohorts, those who joined in 2022 and 2023 who engaged with the original Case Manager but not the ERIC model. As a result, there is no data around their levels of engagement and outcomes from the YBCP.

The second, and more recent, cohort of 26 young people joined the YBCP under the newly appointed Case Manager who has the appropriate skill set and expertise in youth family violence and behavioural change.

At this stage, June 2024, a total of five young participants have completed the ERIC programme. A further 21 have completed their initial ERIC assessment and are working with the Case Manager. Their self-assessment show growth across the YBCP.

Of the 26 participants in the 2024 cohort, the following measurements have been achieved:

Table 11: Measurement of successful engagement – 2024 cohort

Measurement (n=26)	Targets	Achieved
Attend at least three peer worker sessions	80%	80%
Build individual pro-social supports	80%	73%
Engaged with employment or education		19%
Increased attendance		58%

Of the 26 young participants in the 2024 cohort, thirteen have engaged in group sessions with the Case Manager. The smaller group sessions bring together 2 – 6 participants that have been specifically designed by the YBCP Case Manager.

Additional changes to the program have been implemented in January 2024 in response to an identified need. Participants aged 12-16, identified through secondary schools and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing are now engaging with the YBCP. This has required a redevelopment of tools and the process on the YBCP.

The inclusion of a detailed literature review in this report outlines the complex nature of youth family violence and the developmental stage of these young people. Ensuring they don't fall through the cracks and taking a holistic approach to their needs is essential.

Overall, there is clearly a need for the YBCP with community partners of the TYJI and referring organisations that include local courts, police, schools and community agencies, referring young people for this program. It is also clear, that youth family violence and intimate partner violence of these young cohorts requires expertise that must be developed through training and earlier work experience.

Assessing the longer-term impact of the YBCP on this cohort will go some way to ensuring we are better equipped with the appropriate skill set to respond.

Recommendations

- Training youth workers in the complexity of youth family violence, and intimate partner violence is essential as they seem to differ to adult family violence.
- A further review when all participants have completed their 6 months would provide greater insight and evidence of the effectiveness of the YBCP and ERIC approach.
- Ensuring programs such as YBCP are captured and contribute to emerging knowledge to ensure the challenges, benefits and opportunities of responding to the needs of young people in the 17-24 age bracket inform future practice and research.
- If possible, within TYJI, to track participants over a period of time to measure longer term behavioural change, impact and behavioural change.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Measurements

Full list of measures of success measurements for YBCP:

Outputs for participants:

80% of participants empowered to each:

- Attend at least 3 peer worker sessions
- Build individual pro-social supports
- Complete support provided from Youth Worker

Outputs for program:

First 3-6 month

- 80% reduce family violence behaviours
- 60% more resilient
- 90% end their abuse
- 60% improve mental health
- 60% improve housing stability
- 60% engage in education or sustained work and other pro-social behaviours
- 60% improve emotional regulation and coping strategies

- 90% report program satisfaction

3 months post completion of program

- 90% have not been involved in further family violence since completion
- 80% involved in community more
- 80% improvement in mental health
- 90% of those who engaged in education or sustained work, continue to do so
- 80% use emotional regulation and coping strategies gained on program
- 95% of those who complete program report program satisfaction, and can outline something that they learnt from the program.

Appendix B – Evaluation questions

This document sets out a range of measures you may be asked to report on at the completion of your project as part of your project evaluation.

Why they are important.

These measures help determine the success of the Building Safer Communities program in meeting its objectives. The information you provide helps us to demonstrate the value of investing in crime prevention grants. The measures can also help you to reflect on the success of your project and will assist with your final evaluation report.

How you should use this checklist

We will soon meet with you to discuss which of these measures are relevant to your project. At the end of that meeting we will agree on a set of measures you will be required to include in your evaluation plan and report. Think about which measures are relevant to your project and how you might collect the information before that meeting. Your evaluation plan and report must contain the agreed measures but there may be other aspects of your project you want to evaluate that you can also include in your evaluation reporting to us.

You can access an [Evaluation Toolkit](#) on the crime prevention website for further information and support on how to evaluate your project.

REPORTING MEASURES FOR YOUR PROJECT

	Reporting on partnerships
<input type="checkbox"/>	1a) Number of community partner organisations involved in your project 1b) Number of new partnerships developed
<input type="checkbox"/>	2) Analysis of partnership health using the VicHealth Partnership Analysis Checklist (mid and end reporting)
<input type="checkbox"/>	3a) Number of meetings completed in accordance with project plan 3b) Number of working groups/committee meetings attended by a representative from all partners
	Reporting on safety and / or perceptions of safety
<input type="checkbox"/>	4) Increase in use of relevant public spaces (see evaluation toolkit for measures)

<input type="checkbox"/>	5) Change in number of relevant offences in areas targeted by your project
<input type="checkbox"/>	6) Change in perceptions of safety for participants in your project or users of the space
<input type="checkbox"/>	7) Change in reported antisocial behaviour in location/s targeted by crime prevention initiative

<input type="checkbox"/>	Reporting on participant engagement and support
<input type="checkbox"/>	8) Number of people engaged with (participating in) the program
	9a) Number of people supported through the program towards employment or education
<input type="checkbox"/>	9b) Number who participated in (engaged with) employment or education through the project
	9c) Number who maintained engagement for six months or more
<input type="checkbox"/>	10) Number of participants who have increased their attendance/participation over the course of the program
<input type="checkbox"/>	11) Number of participants for whom risk and protective factors have been identified
<input type="checkbox"/>	12) Self-reported improvement in protective factors or reduction in risk factors of participants
<input type="checkbox"/>	13) Number of targeted participants in need of support connected to relevant services
<input type="checkbox"/>	14) How the project has improved your ability to provide appropriate support to participants
	Reporting on community benefits
<input type="checkbox"/>	15) Number of locals involved in crime prevention projects reporting increased connection to community
<input type="checkbox"/>	16) How principles of cultural safety and inclusion have been considered in the design and delivery of your project
<input type="checkbox"/>	17) How your project has strengthened the community's ability to understand and address crime & community safety issues
<input type="checkbox"/>	18) How awareness of local supports and services has increased for participants in your project
<input type="checkbox"/>	19) What information resources your project has developed to share learnings and contribute to the evidence base of effective crime prevention practice