

Building Trauma-Transformative Foster Care Through Behavioural Data and Therapeutic Integration

A translational journey from PDR trial learning to the design and implementation of PaTH

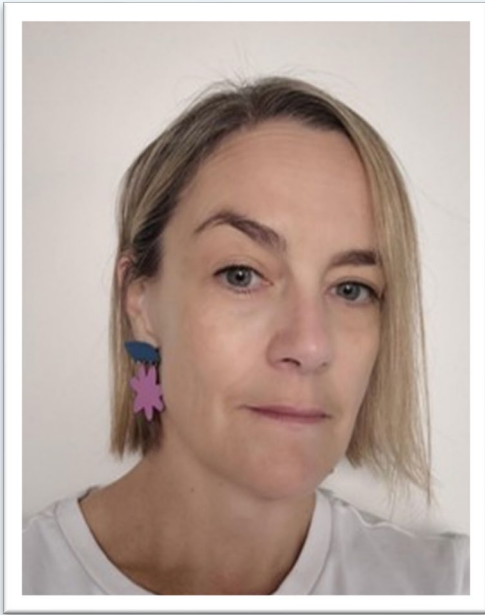




Artwork: Luke and Siena Tieri
Dana Yinya – 'Pathway of Light'

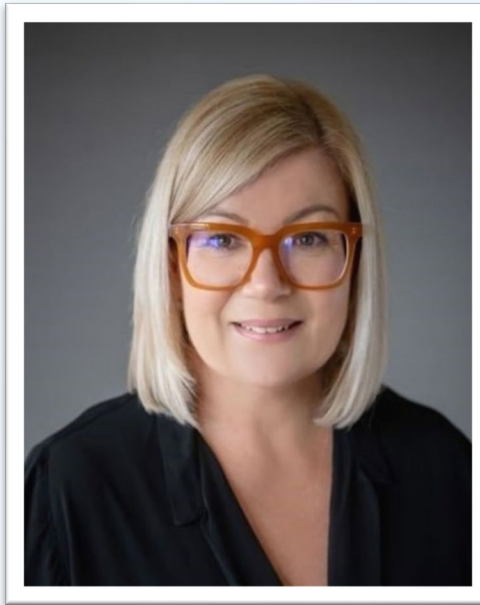
*We acknowledge the traditional custodians on whose land we are meeting on today,
And pay our respect to their Elders past and present.
May the children of today lead us to a brighter tomorrow.*

Hello Nice to meet you!



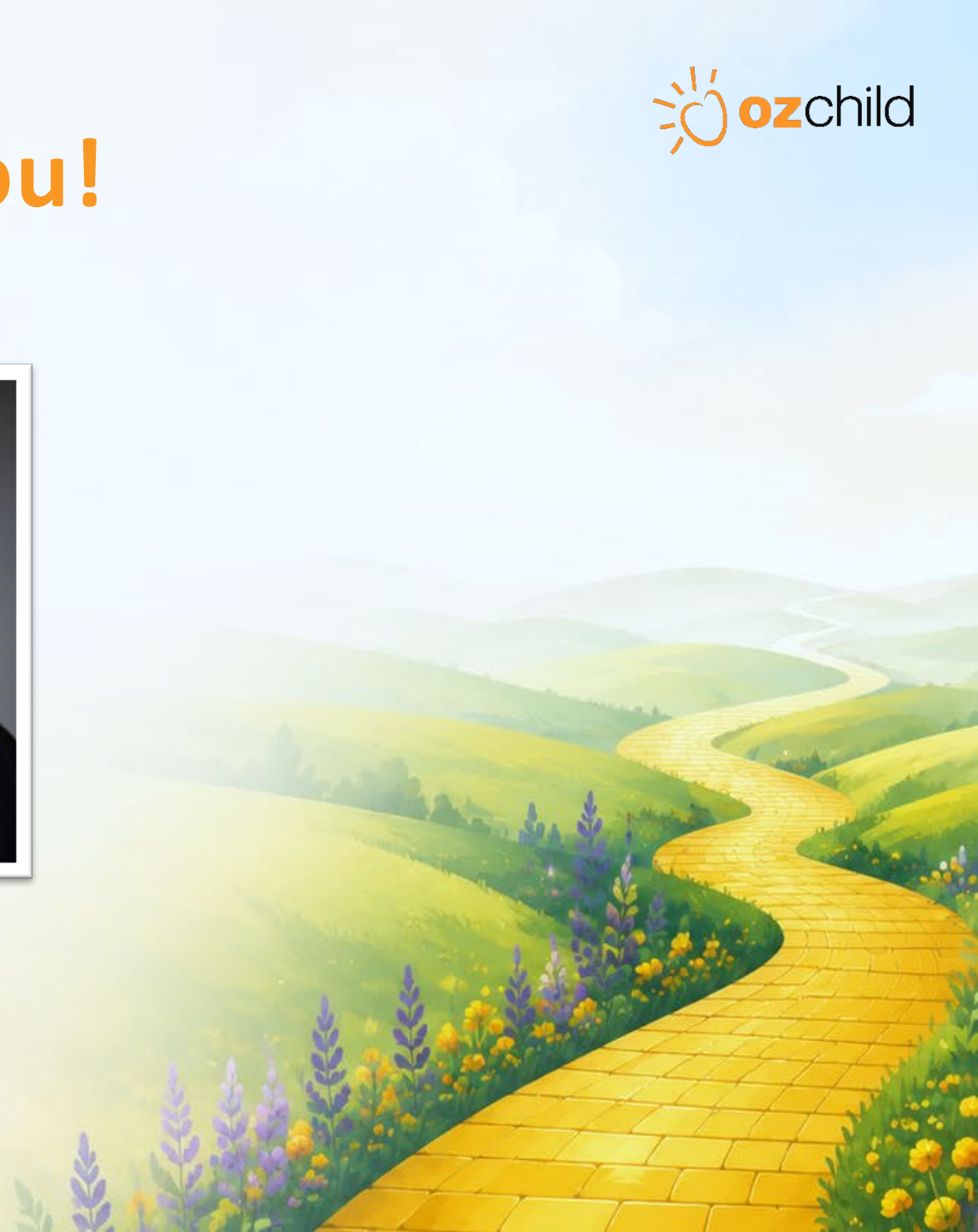
Amy Mackenzie

**Manager Therapeutic
Practice in Care**



Marg Stott

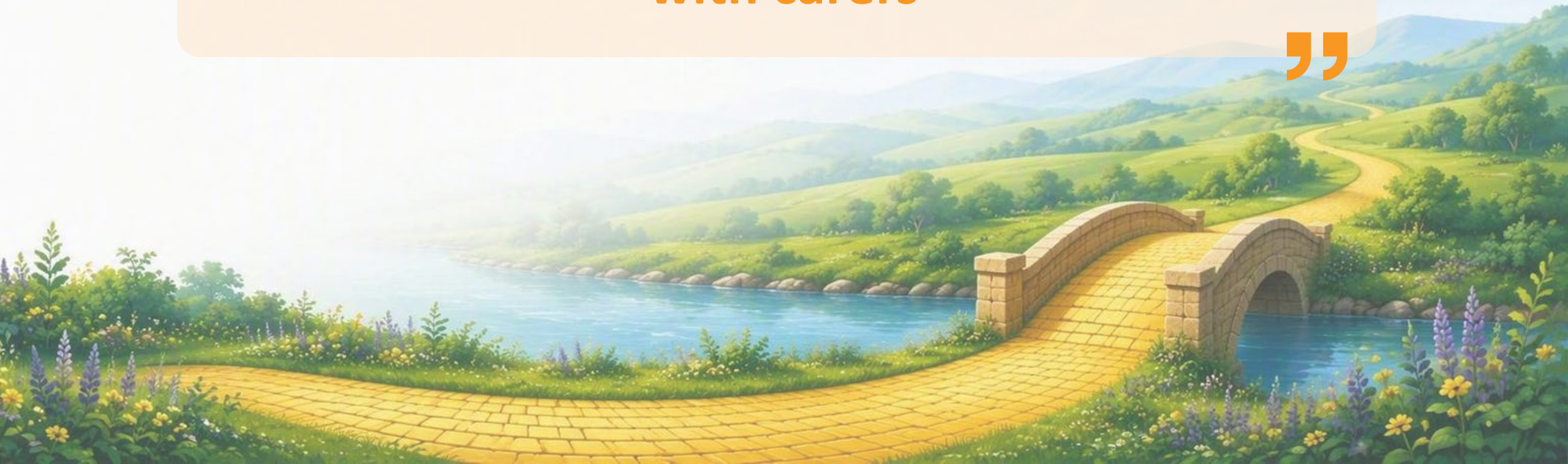
**Manager Practice
& Implementation**



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**Data is most powerful when it is used
relationally, clinically and in partnership
with carers**

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A foster care system under pressure



Why carers are leaving



Trauma, attachment disruption and developmental needs create behaviours that challenge



Rising complexity and instability



Fewer carers able to continue

Significantly declining carer numbers

1007 → 827 active foster carer households
18% decline | June 2021 to June 2025

Increasing placement complexity

Children and young people in care increasingly present with **complex behavioural, developmental and trauma-related needs.**

Carer stress – an early signal

Carer stress is both an **outcome to monitor** and an **early signal that additional support may be needed.**

We need better ways to understand, respond early and support carers to thrive.

Sources: Foster Care Association of Victoria, *2026 Foster Carer Snapshot Report*; Victorian Auditor-General's Office, *Out-of-Home Care Services*, June 2026.

Why we chose the Parent Daily Report (PDR)



We needed a more informed, data-driven way to understand what's happening day to day.



We already had **strong evidence** from Treatment Foster Care Australia. Now we wanted to test it in a different context.



We knew real-time, carer-reported data is an evidence-based approach to guide support and improve outcomes.



We trialled the PDR in general foster care to see if it could help us support carers earlier, more effectively.

A proven tool, in a new setting, to solve a persistent problem.

What is the PDR?

A brief daily tool completed by carers that captures the previous 24 hours.



Captures whether specific behaviours occurred and whether they were stressful for the carer.



Provides real-time, lived-experience data that complements SDQ, HoNOSCA and LAC.



Helps care teams see patterns, triggers, strengths and stress points over time —not just crises.

The PDR Trial: Testing the Approach



Aim:

To test whether structured PDR monitoring could reduce carer stress, reduce challenging behaviours and support placement stability.



Data collected:

Daily PDR for 6 months (behaviour+ stress) + monthly SDQ + OQ-45.2 at baseline & post.



Participants:

13 foster carers in general foster care.



Intervention:

PDR monitoring plus regular proactive support calls, targeted coaching and referrals as needed.

Combining behaviour and stress data with carer and staff feedback to understand outcomes and experience.

Findings: Encouraging trends and carer feedback



Reported behaviours and related stress

Monthly PDR counts: May → November 2024

Behaviours of concern

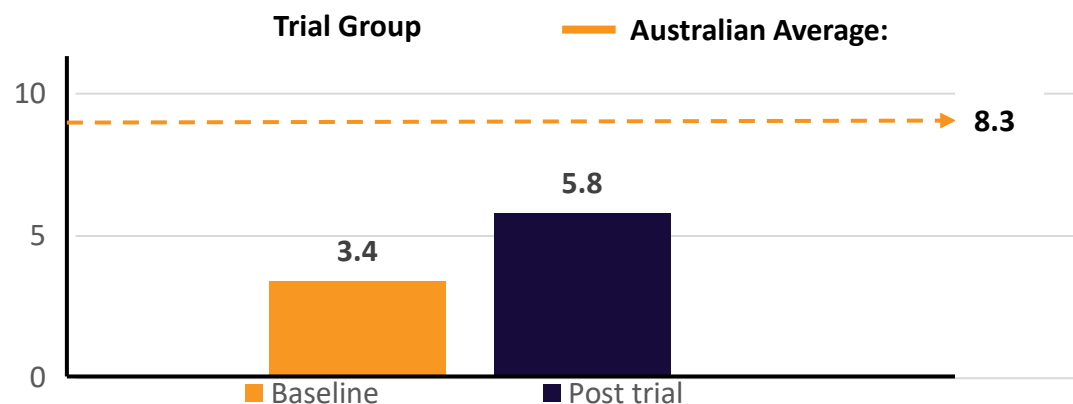
1,111 → 370

Behaviours causing carer stress

314 → 55

Improved prosocial behaviour (SDQ)

%Average prosocial score



Carer experience



100% found
PDR calls helpful



Felt heard, supported
and less alone



More confident and better
equipped to manage

Earlier insights. Targeted support. Better outcomes.

Reading behaviour differently



From Data to Understanding, from Understanding to Healing



The PDR gives us the data.



We turn it into insight.



We use it together with carers to guide support and change.



This learning paved the way for PaTH – our Path to Healing Therapeutic Foster Care model.

Data is most powerful when it is used relationally, clinically and in partnership with carers.



That's the PaTH we're on

From PDR to PaTH



Path To Healing - OzChild's Therapeutic Foster Care



The opportunity that shaped PaTH



PDR trial



Daily visibility of
children's experiences
and carer stress

Professional Care
model



Stronger therapeutic
care, carer capability and
clinical governance



Victorian Foster
Care Reform

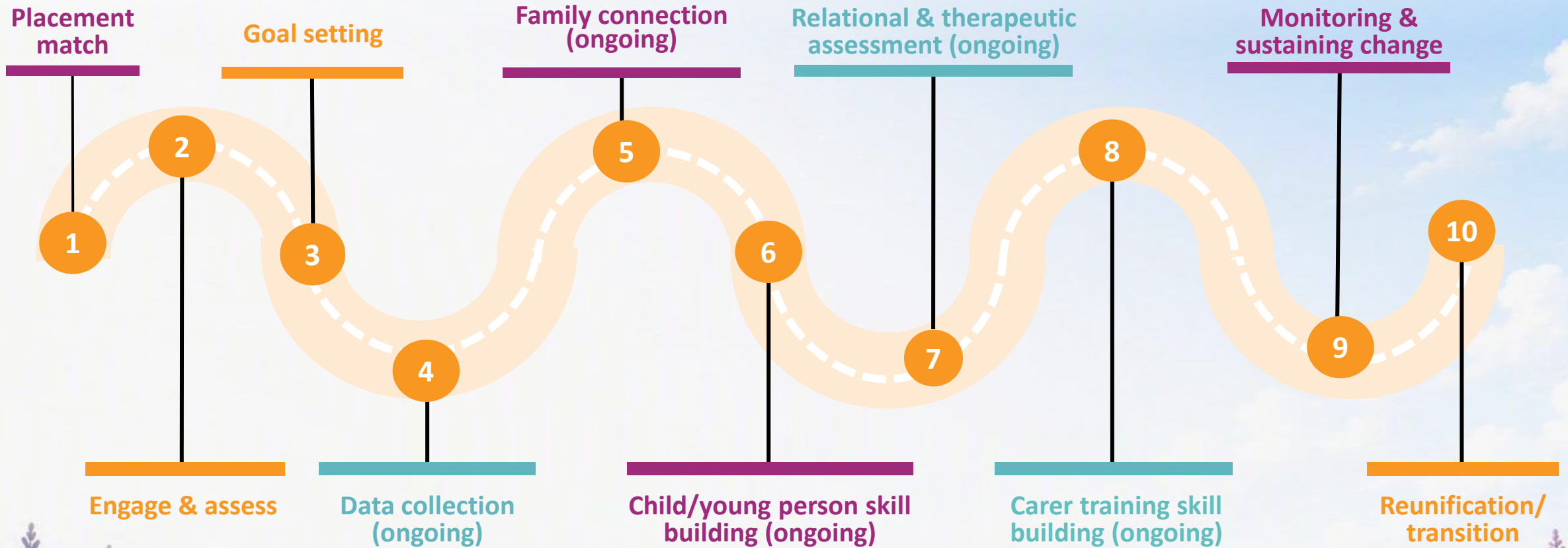


A sector opening for
placement stability and
carer support

PaTH: Path to Healing

Therapeutic foster care grounded in daily caregiving

Path To Healing- Therapeutic Foster Care



THE PaTH CARE JOURNEY

From PDR to therapeutic formation



Trauma-transformative practice: using PDR patterns to actively create the conditions for healing.



CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR

Safety

Connection

Regulation

Healing

Real-time PDR data supports earlier intervention, keeps carers heard and equipped, and protects placement stability.

Case study: what PDR made visible



Aaron, seven, had been living with his carer for 18 months when PDR monitoring began in November. His escalations were patterned, not random or deliberate — and patterns can be planned for.

AVERAGE DAILY PDR SCORE

24.5

at the commencement of monitoring

Daily scores were high and escalations looked random.

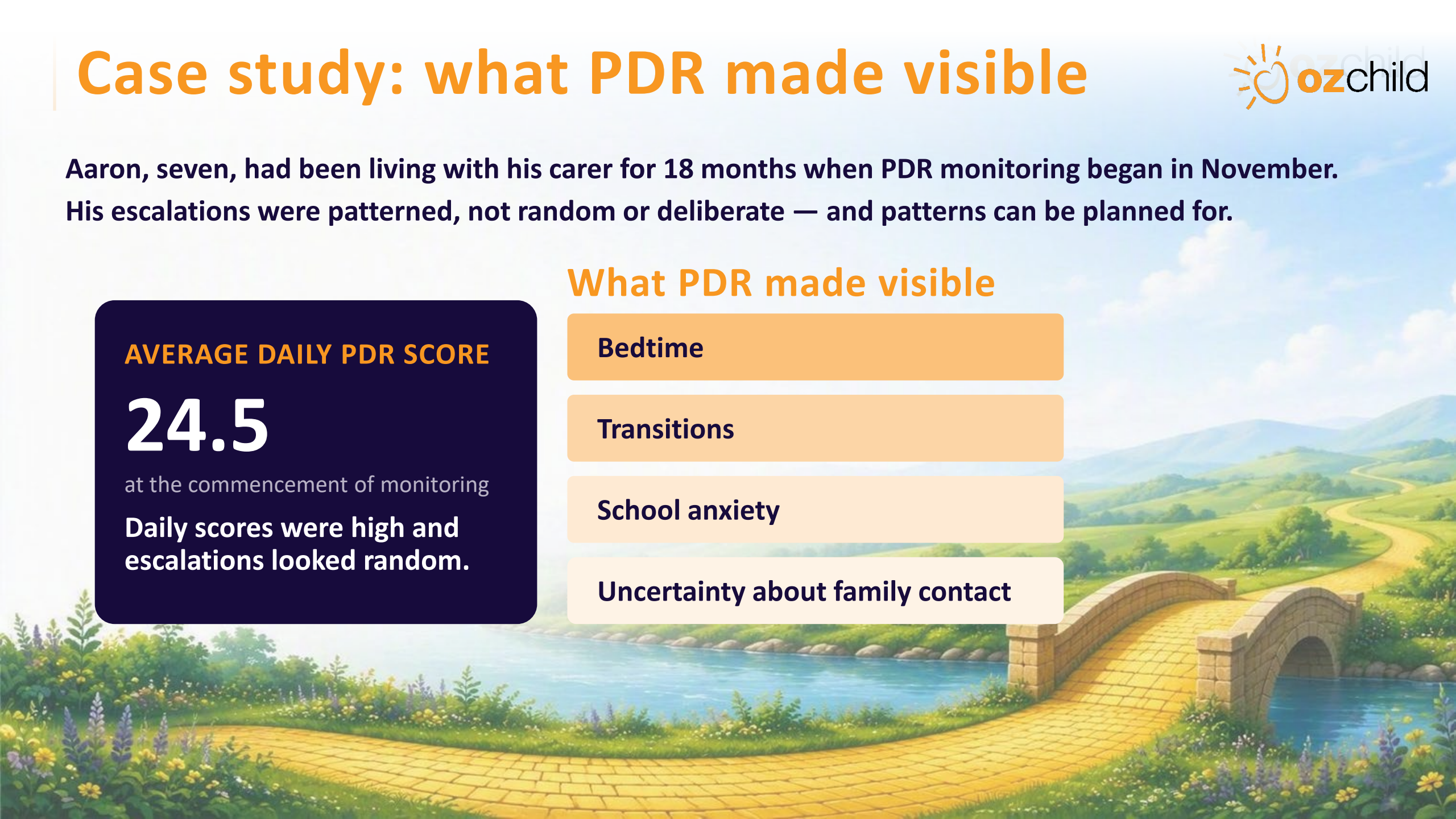
What PDR made visible

Bedtime

Transitions

School anxiety

Uncertainty about family contact



Case study: what changed in practice



Targeted carer coaching and therapeutic planning built directly on those patterns.

AVERAGE DAILY PDR SCORE

24.5 → 14.6

a 41% reduction over nine months

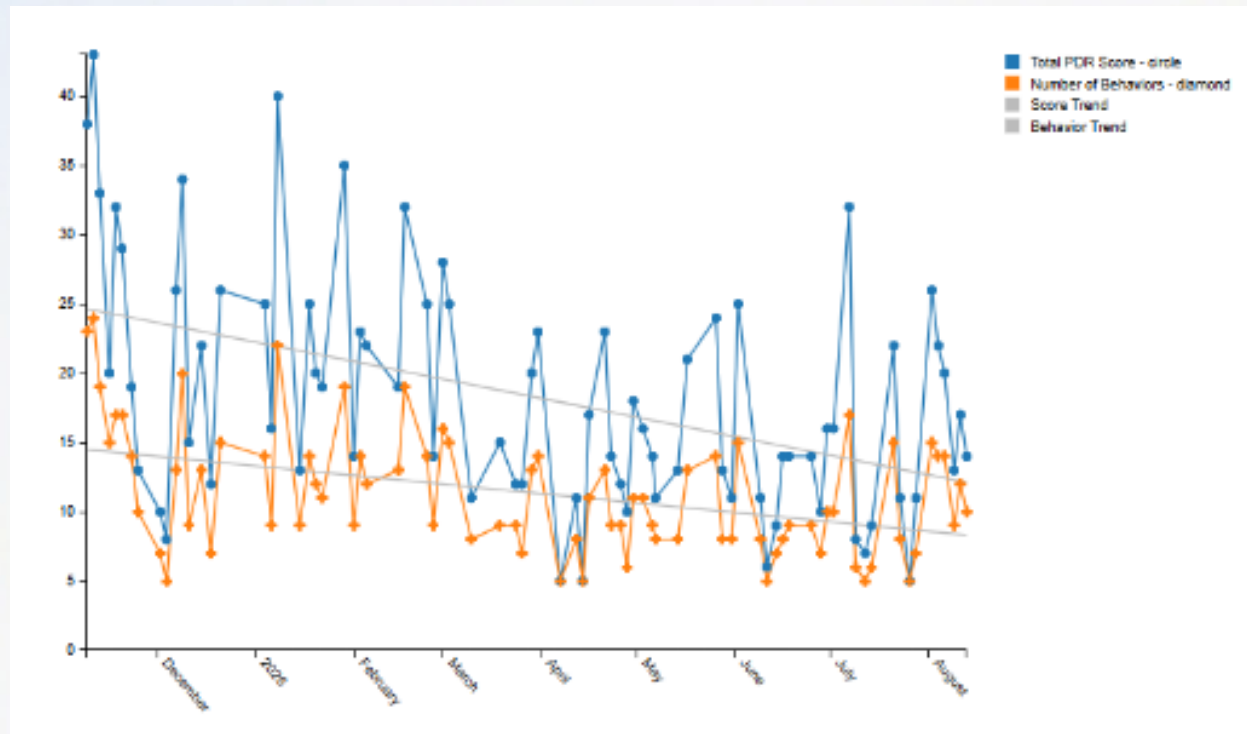
Lower-pressure routines

Planned disengagement

Additional regulation time

Social stories for Aaron

Total PDR score and behaviour counts, November to August



Both trend lines fall over nine months — shorter episodes, faster recovery, more stable placement.

Final takeaway

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**Data is not transformative on its own.
It becomes transformative when it improves
relationships, decisions and timely support.**

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Thank you

