Building the evidence to strengthen program delivery and impact: Lessons from MyTime

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MyTime
Supporting parents of children with disabilities

Acknowledgement of Country

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What is MyTime

A national program (**developed by the Parenting Research Centre**) of peer support groups for parents and family carers of children with a disability, developmental delay or chronic medical condition.

MyTime aims to:

- empower parents
- increase their general wellbeing
- increase their confidence and success in their parenting role
- help children and young people to thrive.

Established in 2007

Funded by DSS

8 delivery partners

180+ groups nationally

MyTime

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MyTime – key components

A MyTime group:

- is open, inclusive and free of charge
- has trained group facilitators
- has trained play leaders
- is based on a model of support that is strengths-based, flexible and responsive to member needs

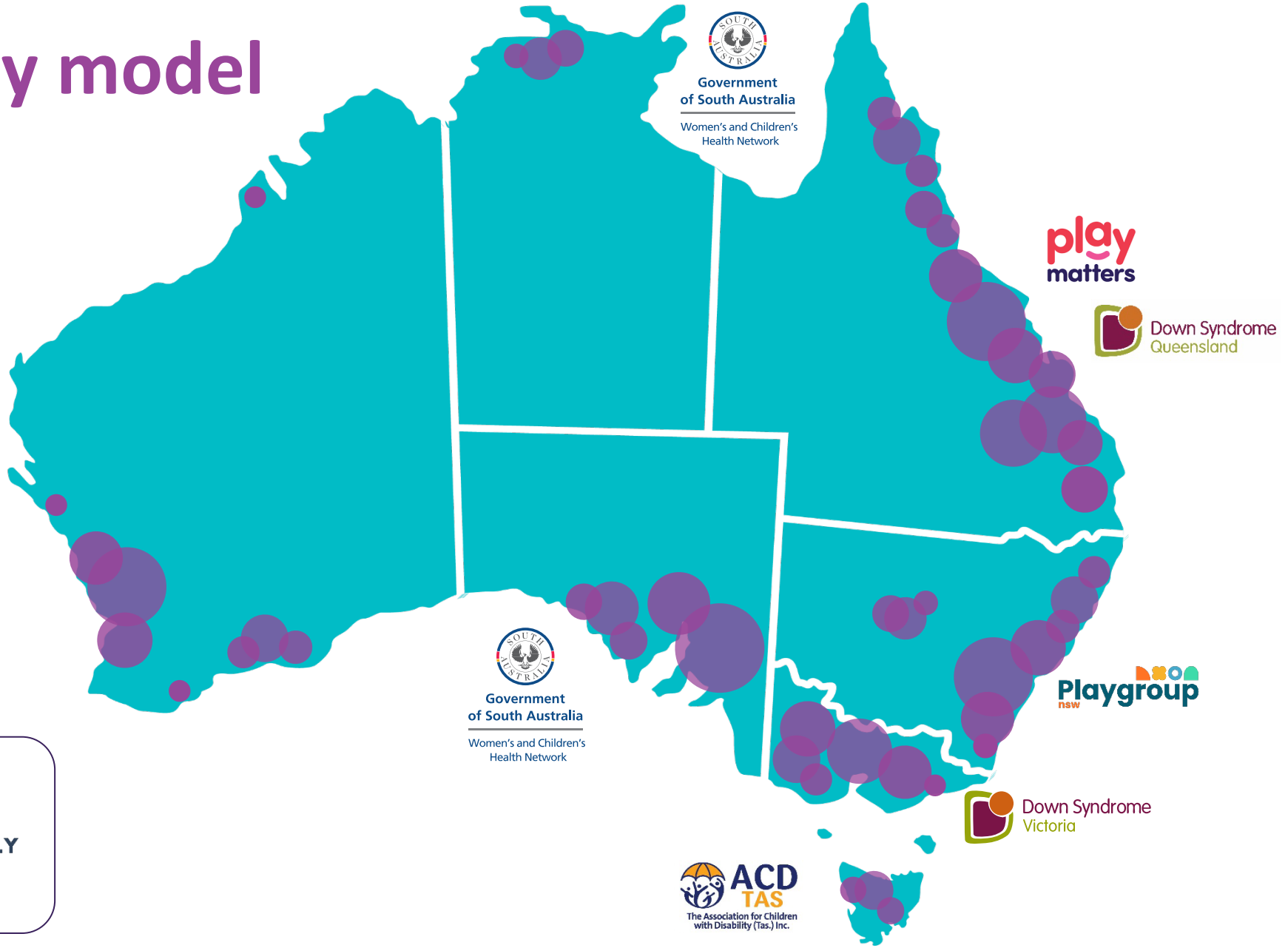
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MyTime is a place to…

- Connect with other people who ‘get’ it
- Feel understood
- Share ideas and experiences
- Access quality information and resources
- Unwind and take care of yourself.

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Delivery model



Virtual MyTime

CHILD + FAMILY DISABILITY ALLIANCE

PRC national coordination



Delivery partners

8 delivery partners providing national geographic reach and local expertise.



Sub-contractors

A network of more than **50 subcontractors** supporting program delivery in local communities.



Facilitators

A team of **180 experienced facilitators** delivering the program.



Members per annum

More than **3,000 members** accessing support each year.

The challenge

How do we collect data about MyTime that is meaningful for members and practitioners and robust enough to inform program improvement and reporting?

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The context

	FROM		TO
FORMAT	Paper-based surveys	→	Online surveys
OWNERSHIP	PRC driven	→	Responsibility of delivery partner
TIMING	Annual surveys	→	Member survey + follow-up

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Consultation

We worked with Portable to explore our data collection process for members and facilitators.



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What did we learn?

Member Barriers

- **Acceptability of questions**
- **Comfort with data collection process**

Facilitator Barriers

- **Confidence in data collection process**
- **Tech literacy**

Acceptable measures

Member check-in survey

First name _____ Last name _____

MyTime Group _____ Date _____

MyTime aims to impact parents' sense of support.

How strongly do you agree with the following statements:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Mixed feelings	Agree	Strongly agree
If I was having problems in my life, there is someone I trust who I could turn to for advice	1	2	3	4	5
I know about and have access to information and support services to help me to meet my child's needs	1	2	3	4	5

MyTime aims to support parenting confidence and self-care.

How strongly do you agree with the following statements:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Mixed feelings	Agree	Strongly agree
I regularly do things for myself that help me relax and re-energise	1	2	3	4	5
I forgive myself when I make mistakes as a parent	1	2	3	4	5
I have confidence in myself as a parent	1	2	3	4	5

MyTime aims to impact parents' sense of hope for the future.

Please choose a response that most closely reflects how you have felt over the past month:	Not true at all	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	True most of the time
I have a positive outlook on life	0	1	2	3	4
I can see positive things in difficult situations	0	1	2	3	4
I can recall happy/joyful times	0	1	2	3	4
I have inner strength	0	1	2	3	4
I have a sense of direction in life	0	1	2	3	4
I believe that each day has potential	0	1	2	3	4
My life has value and worth	0	1	2	3	4

MyTime aims to support community connections.

On a scale from 0 to 10, how satisfied are you with ...	No satisfaction at all										Completely satisfied
...feeling part of your community?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

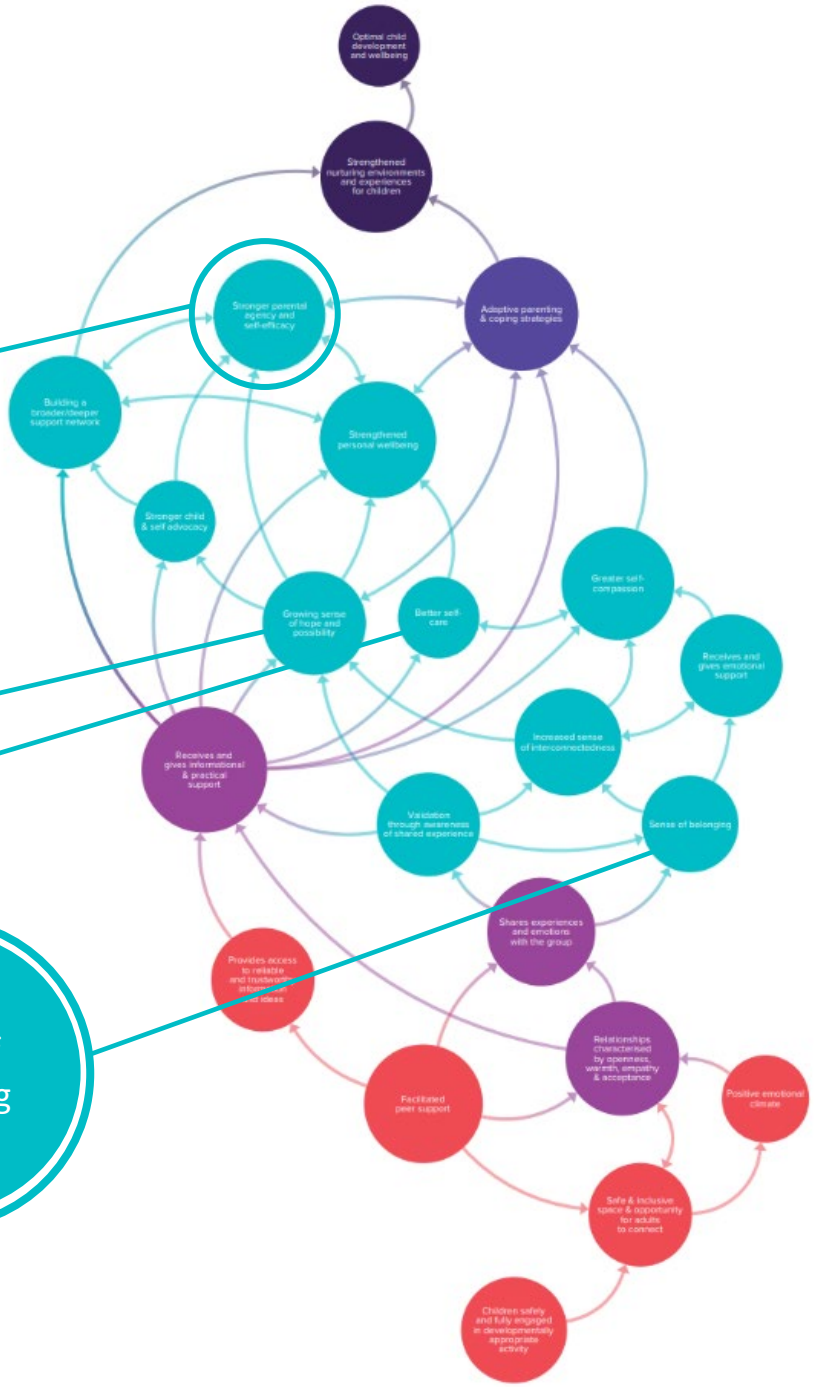
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Stronger parental agency and self-efficacy

Growing sense of hope and possibility

Better self care

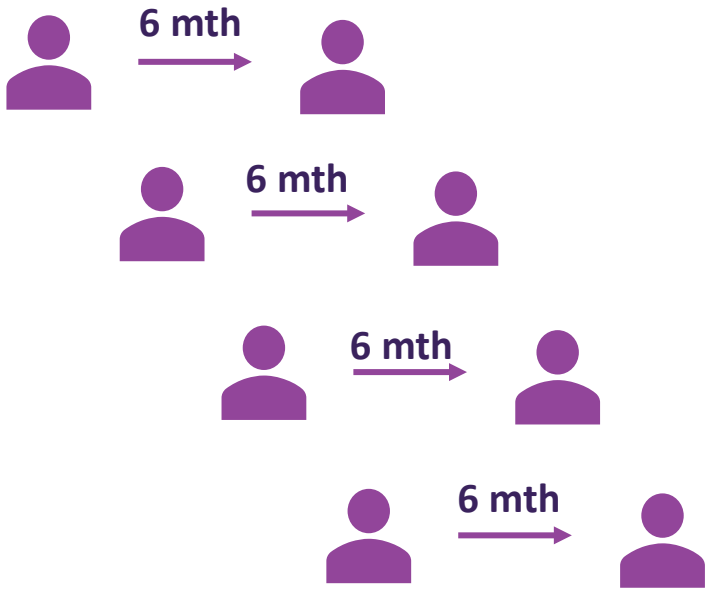
Sense of belonging



Data collection points

BEFORE

Each member followed up 6 months later



NOW

Rolling registration + two follow-up windows

ONGOING REGISTRATION + NEW MEMBER SURVEY



New members join throughout the year

FOLLOW-UP WINDOWS



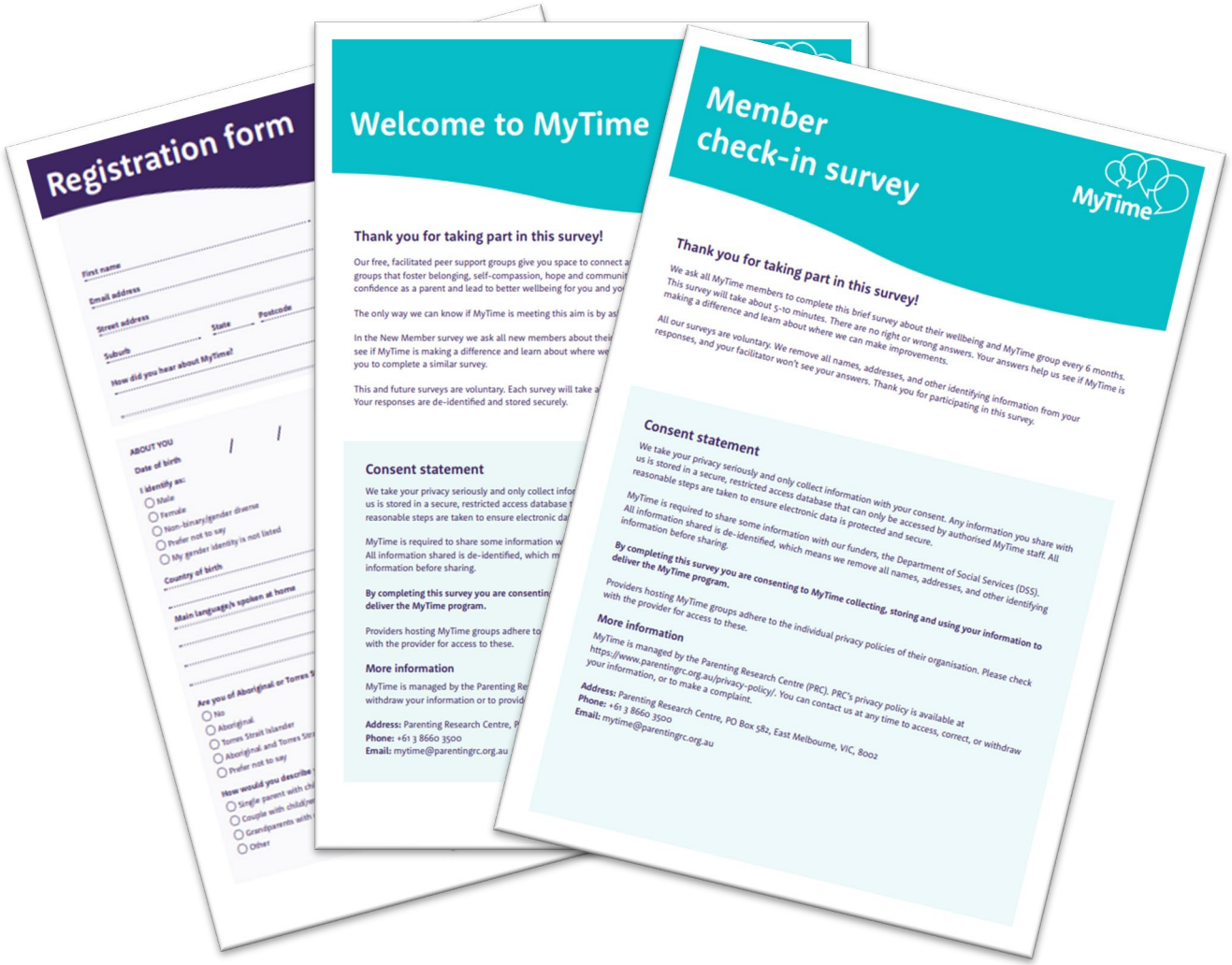
May



Nov

From rolling individual follow-ups to coordinated survey windows

Data collection methods





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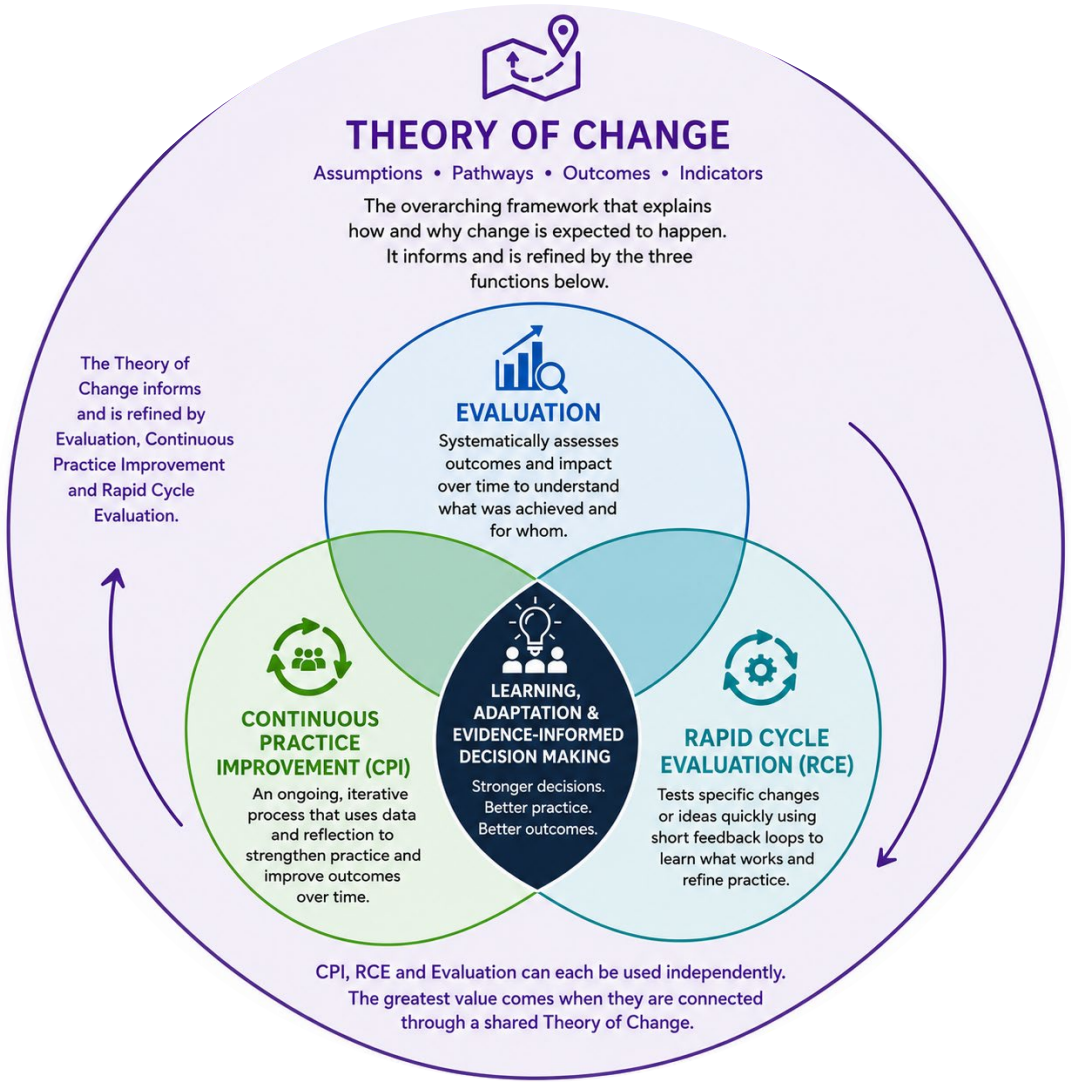
Practice supports



- Communities of Practice
- Guiding principles
- Theory of change
- Facilitator guides

Measuring impact

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The Theory of Change

- visual roadmap

Evaluation

- structured process to assess value or quality

CPI

- flexible approach to continuously collecting and reviewing data to improve practice & outcomes

RCE

- test changes



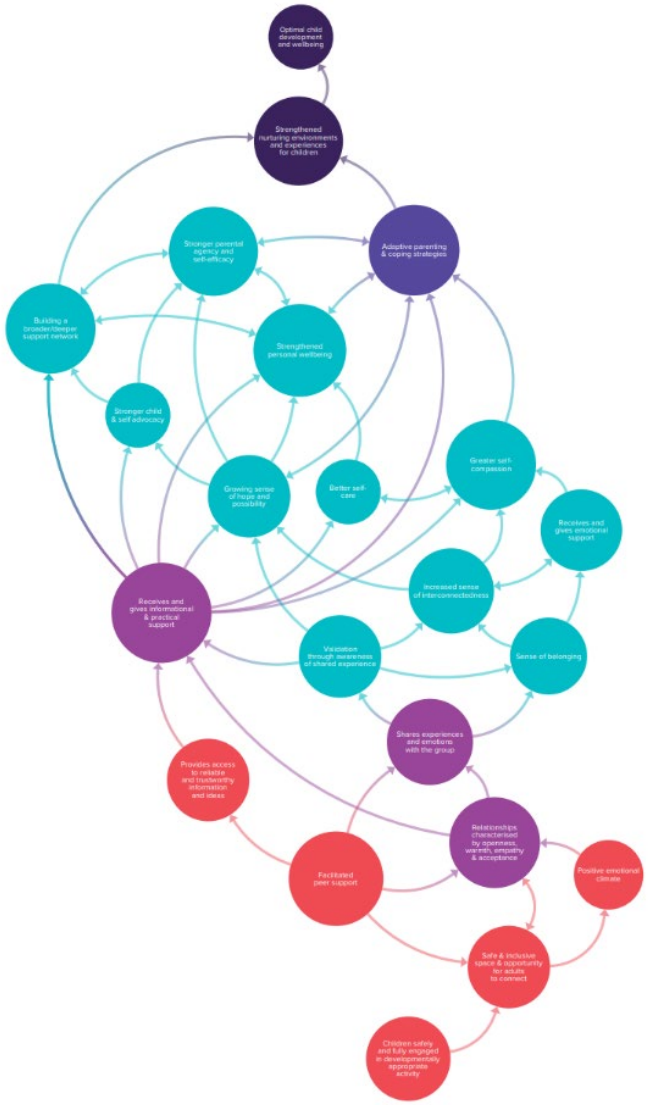
Theory of change

Implementation outcomes
e.g. safe & inclusive space

Engagement outcomes
e.g. sharing experiences & emotions

Mediating outcomes
e.g. sense of belonging, community & hope

Intended outcomes
e.g. improved parenting & coping; optimal child development & wellbeing



Why CPI for MyTime?

- Maximise use of the data collected
- Reduce burden on members & practitioners
- Create feedback loops
- Empower practitioners to use data (practice & outcomes)
- Foster collaboration & learning across delivery partners
- Support change (improvement)
- Better understand and demonstrate impact

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What we don’t use data for?

- Blame individuals (flawed processes not bad workers)
- Prove perfection (practice is not flawless)
- Hide issues (cherry pick)
- Collection without action (collect only what’s needed)
- Compliance/punitive measures (destroys trust to report errors)
- Rush decision-making (see trends, test theories)
- No stories without data, no data without stories (a story without data is just an opinion, data without a story is just noise)

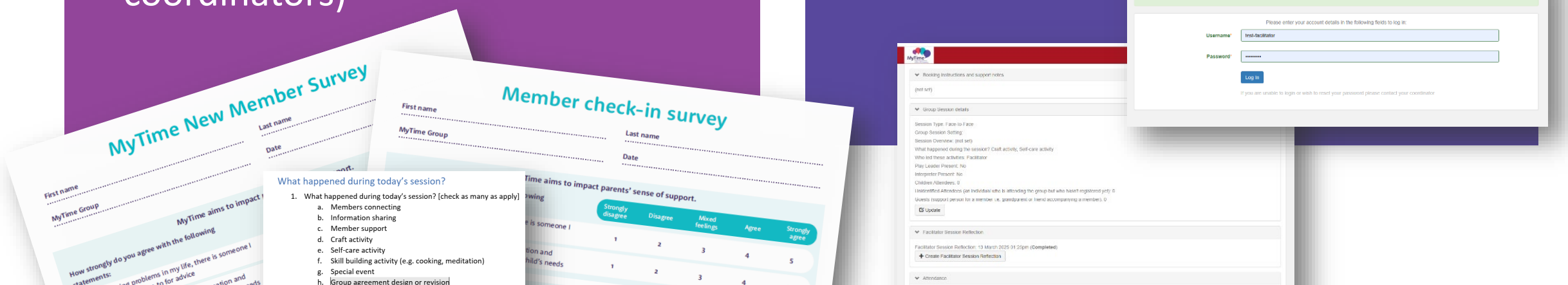
MyTime data sources

Members

- Registration
- New member surveys
- Check-in surveys
- Photovoice stories
- CoP (via facilitators)
- Delivery partner meetings (via coordinators)

Facilitators

- Group attendance
- Group activities
- Reflection surveys
- CoP
- Delivery partner meetings (via coordinators)



MyTime Impact

Members - connect, support, share

↓

Sense of belonging

↓

Better self-care & self-compassion

↓

Growing sense of hope

↓

Stronger parental confidence (self-efficacy)

↓

Stronger sense of community (wellbeing)

↓

Improved coping & adaptive parenting (not formally measured)

Source: surveys 2024-2025 - MyTime members with ≥ 2 surveys (n=604)

"MyTime is like a warm group hug...I feel loved, understood and respected from this group. The group supports my overall wellbeing and is a coping mechanism for me."

"It's my safe space to recharge, share ideas and remind myself that I'm doing the best that I can. MyTime has helped me feel stronger, more positive, and better equipped to support my child."

"I feel recharged after each session. Taking that small amount of time for myself has improved not only my mood but also how I support my family."

"I was very isolated and not confident in making the right choices. I now see hope in the future. I have been attending the MyTime group for the last 13 years and I'm always learning something new from other members."

Source: photovoice 2025 MyTime member quotes (n=25)

Communicating our impact

503
Members completed the May 2024 survey

643
Members completed the May 2024 survey

Comparing data between surveys is useful for a better understanding of the program.

It helps us see the journey our members are on, how the program is being implemented and helps us show our funders where the value sits in the program.

These surveys have been shaped by you, and shows you where you are making a difference!

28%
more members filled in the November survey!

What members told us in November

77% of members said they know about and have access to information and support services

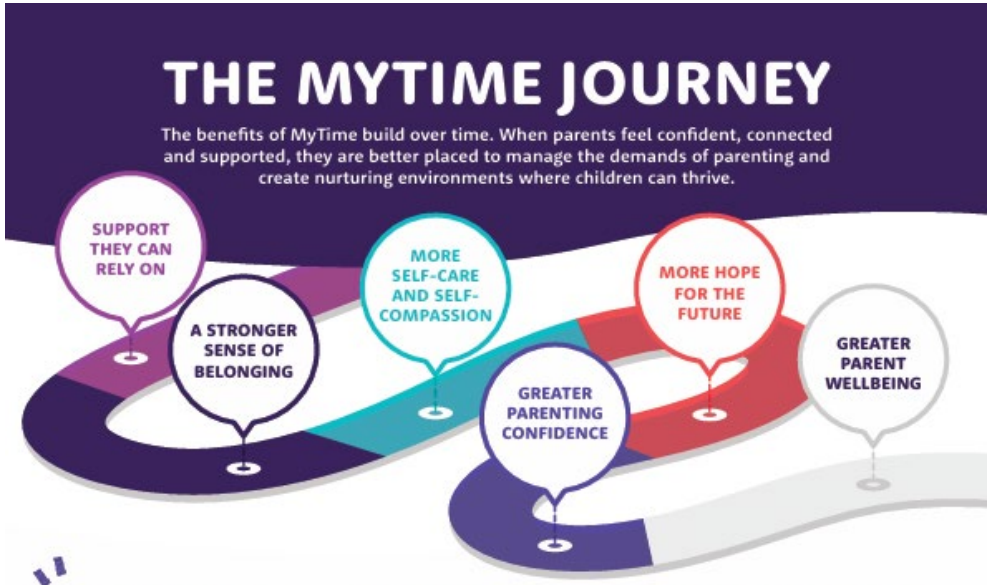
63% of members said they had a sense of community connectedness

We know these things can support parents' wellbeing, so it's encouraging that most MyTime members feel this way.

23% of members said they don't regularly do things to relax and re-energise

15% of members don't forgive themselves when they make mistakes as a parent

These results tell us that many of our members struggle with self-compassion.



Feeling supported and understood

Early in their MyTime journey, parents report feeling a stronger sense of belonging, feeling understood, and becoming more confident in knowing where to find information, services and support for their child and family.

Building self-care and self-compassion

Over time, participation in MyTime supports parents to develop a stronger sense of self-care and self-compassion. Parents are more likely to take time to relax, re-energise and be kind to themselves when things are difficult.

Growing confidence and connection

With ongoing participation, parents feel more positive and optimistic, with long-term gains in parenting confidence, wellbeing and connection to community.

Understanding MyTime through member's voices

Capturing the impact

MyTime is more than a group. It is a trusted peer-support community that strengthens parents, families and children over time.

Member surveys

We listened to our community through repeated (2024/2025) surveys to track progress and identify meaningful trends.

Photovoice methodology

We captured the unique perspectives of members who used photography to describe their MyTime experience.

94% feel listened to and understood

94% say the information and support help them care for their child

92% are satisfied with the support they receive

"MyTime is like a warm group hug...I feel loved, understood and respected from this group. The group supports my overall wellbeing and is a coping mechanism for me."
MyTime member

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MyTime data dashboard



Number of Members
21857

Gender		
FEMALE	MALE	INTERSEX
19174	2138	22

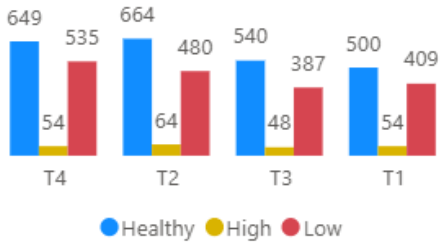
Parent Disability	
True	False
781	21076

Culture		
CALD	First Nations	Neither
3425	1321	17111

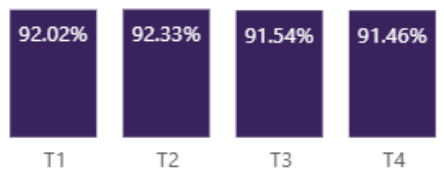
Length in Program		
Months	A Year	Years
5970	1844	2575

Implementation

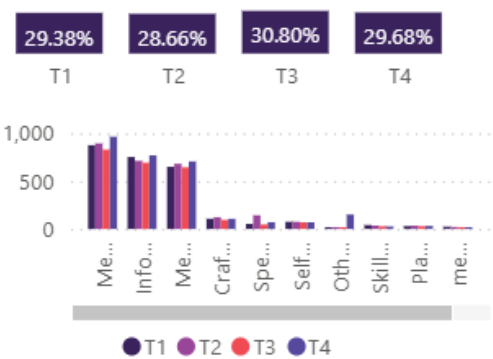
Group health



% facilitators feeling confident

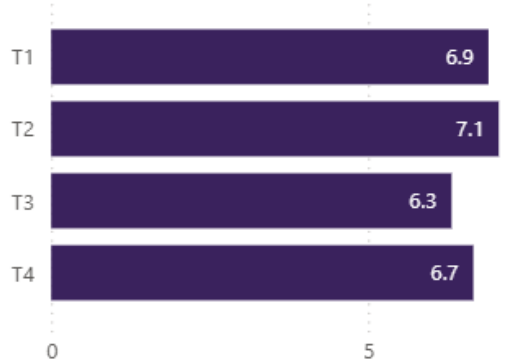


% groups experiencing issues

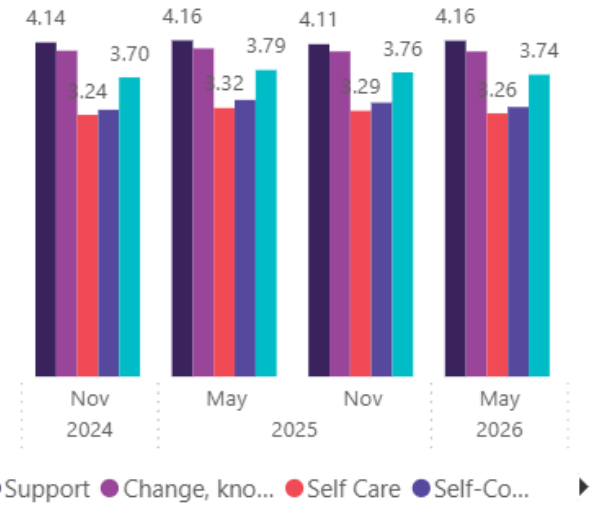


Engagement

Average number of sessions attended



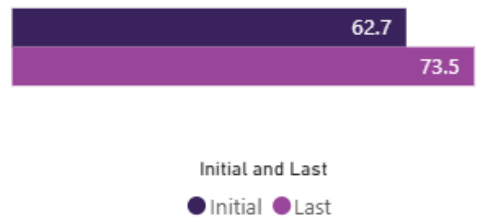
Average goal score by check in



Mediating

Change in sense of community



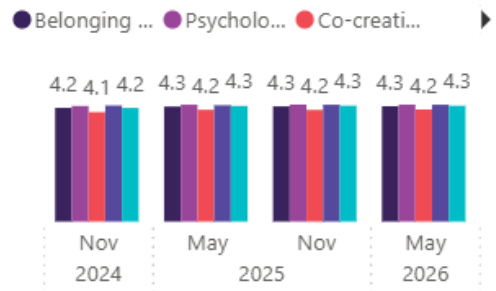


Change in Hope





Change in Belonging





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Parenting Research Centre

Thank you to all the MyTime delivery partners, facilitators and members for their support

Funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.
Visit www.dss.gov.au for more information.