

Webinar 18**Working with parents who have had their children removed**

7:15 pm to 8:30 pm AEDT
Thursday, 25th February 2021

**Emerging
Minds.**

**National Workforce
Centre for Child
Mental Health**



Emerging Minds and MHPN wishes to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands across Australia upon which our webinar presenters and participants are located.

We wish to pay respect to the Elders past, present and future for the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Indigenous Australia.



Welcome to series three

This is the fourth webinar in the third series on child and infant mental health, presented by Emerging Minds and the Mental Health Professionals' Network.

Upcoming webinars in 2021:

- Overcoming communication challenges to engage children
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

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How to use the platform

To access the interactive features and resources, hover over the colourful icons to the top right of your screen:

-  open the chat box
-  ask the panel a question
-  access resources including the case study, panel biographies and supporting resources
-  open the survey
-  reload the page/webinar room



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Learning outcomes

At the webinar's completion, participants will be able to:

- Outline how practitioners can remain curious to the complexities that have affected the parenting of disadvantaged clients and work in engaging and non-stigmatising ways.
- Discuss how practitioners can build trust with parents that will enable open and honest conversations about how parents might improve their ability to support the social and emotional wellbeing and safety of infants and children who have been removed.
- Identify examples of what practitioners can do to ensure that their own moral judgments don't interfere with their ability to have curious and non-stigmatising conversations with parents of children who have been removed.
- Illustrate examples of how children can still be motivators for change in parents, even where they are not residing with the parent.



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Tonight's panel



Rebecca
Child & Family Partner



Jessica Cocks
Social Worker, NSW



Sara McLean
Psychologist, SA



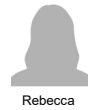
Dr Daniel Moss
EM Workforce Development
Manager, SA



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Child & Family Partner's perspective

Helping Monica



- The best qualities to employ when building rapport are to be **GENUINE and EMPATHETIC**
- As Monica and Chloe's case is intergenerational it may be extra challenging
- Much of Monica's understandings of how the department works and her ideas about parenting will come from her experiences in state care
- The department's expectations of Monica need be made very clear to Monica right from the beginning.
- Monica needs to be encouraged to increase her confidence and parenting skills; she needs help finding suitable parenting courses, for example, Circle of Security and other support groups or coffee mornings, to combat her feelings of isolation.



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Child & Family Partner's perspective

In Monica's eyes



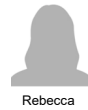
- Monica wants to be a better parent but is fearful of being judged and she is scared of her lack of support, isolation, and lack of transport.
- **LET HER KNOW** her fears are **NORMAL**
- Encourage her to come up with solutions to her problems and help her to build a support network and plan for combating the isolation and lack of transport. Help her explore her options.



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Child & Family Partner's perspective

In Monica's eyes



- **LET HER KNOW** we all struggle with parenting at times
 - Raising children is hard at the best of times, there is no handbook, tell her this is normal and that we all learn on the job. It is not shameful especially when you are making the effort to be better, to change and to learn new ways to cope and parent.
- **LET HER KNOW** no question is a dumb question
- When Monica makes progress don't let it go unrewarded, even if that's only acknowledging her progress, this will help build her confidence.
- Monica needs lots of encouragement to build her identity as a capable parent.



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Child & Family Partner's perspective

Inclusive learning builds confidence



Encouraging Monica to learn is the most important tool she will get

- One way to do this is to tell her you found something out recently that was really interesting to you and you thought it would interest her too. Now that's inclusive! It is also encouraging and will build her confidence. Plus it will reaffirm and strengthen the trust you should be building too!

Learning is a great way to begin a journey of self-discovery and healing for Monica

- We often live what we learn but change can and does happen when we learn something new, as professionals it is your job to impart your knowledge. **Please don't assume she knows the things you know about child development and parenting, a lot of these concepts will be very new to Monica.**



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Social Worker's perspective

What stands out in Monica and Chloe's story?



Jessica Cocks

- "Drift" in care?
- loss, grief and trauma for Chloe and Monica
- Monica's worries about parenting the new baby are normal
- Monica has attended 98% of her weekly visits with Chloe and has been on time for 97% of those visits.



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Social Worker's perspective

key messages from research for Monica and Chloe



Jessica Cocks

"[It] confused me because I did the best I could and it still wasn't enough for them...I had a house now and I was on the waiting list for the psychologist. I engaged with the young parent social worker."

- Monica may not know why Chloe is in care.
- Monica is likely to have more children and to experience recurrent removal
- Supporting Chloe's relationship with Monica is very important
- Monica may have found child protection practice unhelpful, unreliable and distressing
- Fathers and paternal family are often "missing" from child protection practice



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Social Worker's perspective

What am I wondering about?



Jessica Cocks

- What are Monica's worries and wants? What are her dreams?
- Who else is important to Monica and Chloe?
- Do Chloe and Monica want to be together?
- I am curious about the foster carers? Can they help?
- What are Chloe's cultural and linguistic needs?
- What's going on with the Dads?



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Social Worker's perspective

Possible responses to Monica and Chloe.



Jessica Cocks

"I'd like to be able to actually have proper time being able to parent my child, being able to do real time with her. I haven't given her a bath in such a long time. To be able to have a more natural experience, where she can develop an attachment with her mother"

- Respond to Monica as a parent, support and strengthen her identity as a parent.
- Make family time about relationships and parenting skills. For example, Visit coaching
- Help Monica (and Chloe) to prepare for the new baby
- Connect Monica to people with similar situations
- Connect Monica and Chloe to family, cultural and social support
- Solve practical problems and work to address structural barriers



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Psychologist's Perspective

The experience and impact of removal



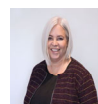
Sara McLean

- Parental functioning, best possible connection, and child socio-emotional wellbeing.
- Removal:
 - Grief, anger, self-blame, confusion, & denial
 - Impact on attributions (meaning making); motivation, behaviour, and parental identity
- Supporting parental identity as a motivator for change (Salveron, 2012, Salveron et al., 2020)
- Potential significance for children's wellbeing and for likelihood of reunification.

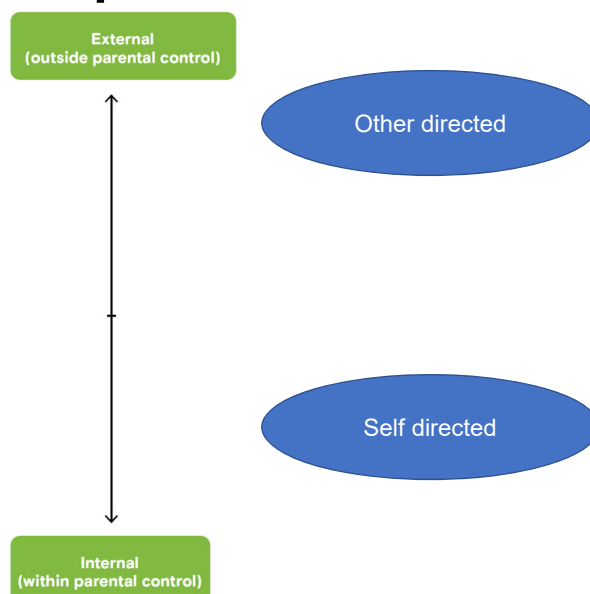


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Psychologist's Perspective



Sara McLean

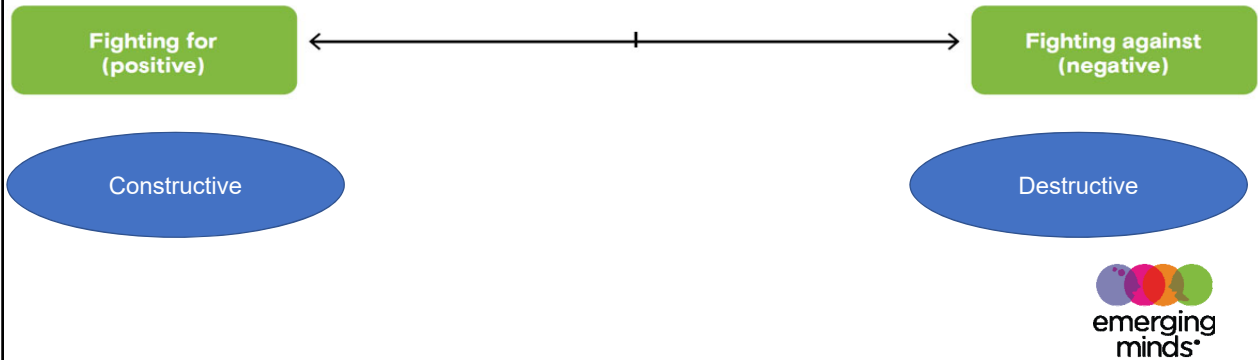


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Psychologist's Perspective



Sara McLean

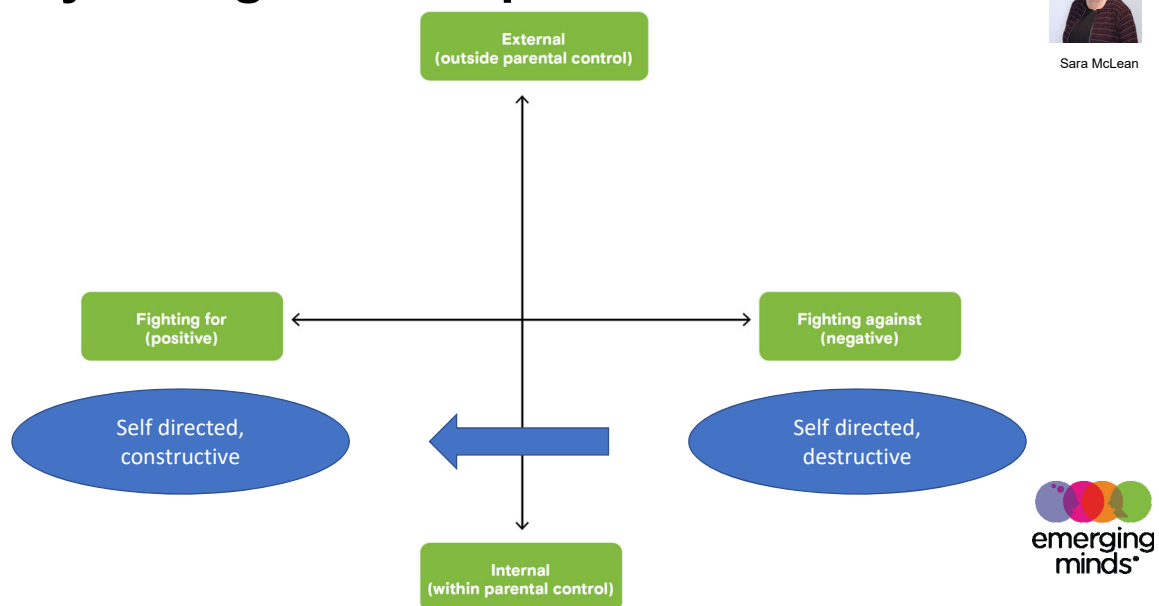


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Psychologist's Perspective



Sara McLean

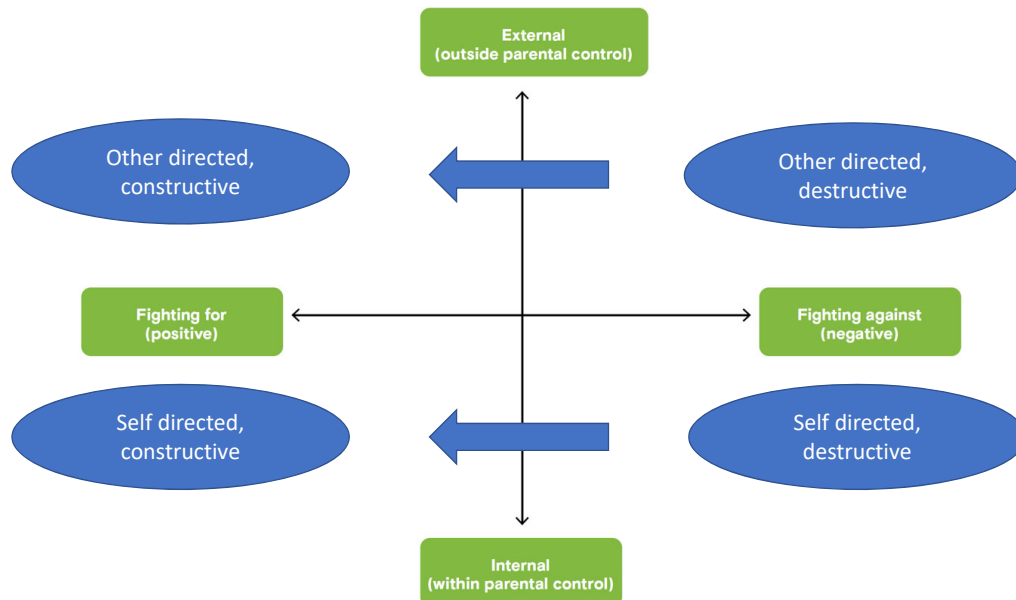


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Psychologist's Perspective



Sara McLean



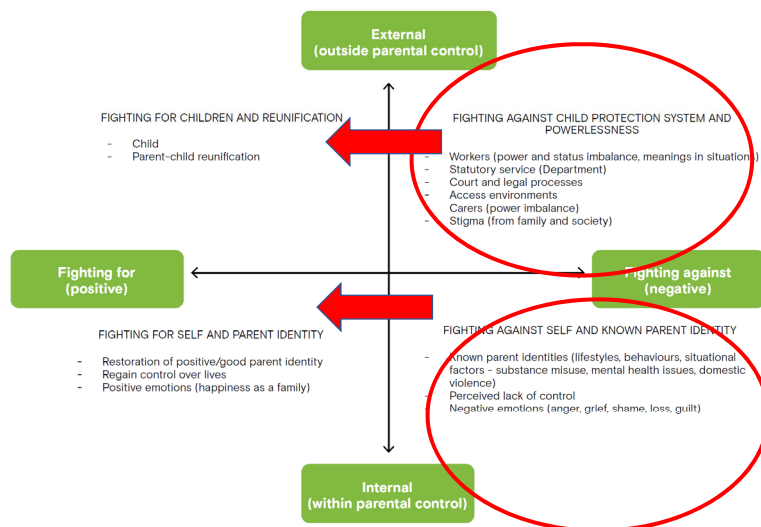
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Psychologist's Perspective

Figure 1. Aspects of parents' 'fight' for their children in out-of-home care



Sara McLean



Adapted from Salveron & Arney (2013).



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Q&A Session



Rebecca
Child & Family Partner



Jessica Cocks
Social Worker, NSW



Sara McLean
Psychologist, SA




Dr Daniel Moss
EM Workforce Development
Manager, SA



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Resources and further reading

Other supporting resources associated with this webinar can be found by clicking on the light blue supporting resources icon. 

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- Statements of Attendance for this webinar will be issued within four - six weeks.
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This webinar was co-produced by MHPN and Emerging Minds for the Emerging Minds: National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health (NWCCMH) project.

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Would you like to continue the discussion with local practitioners?

Or perhaps start discussing issues of local relevance? MHPN Project Officers are available to help you establish and /or join interdisciplinary mental health networks across metropolitan, regional, rural and remote Australia, either face to face or online.

We have 373 networks around the country as well as online networks.

Visit our online map to find out which networks are close to you at mhpn.org.au or contact Jacqui O'Loughlin at networks@mhpn.org.au.



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Thank You

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