

Looking back, moving forward: Living as a child of a parent with a mental illness

Forum #4

Thursday, 28 November, 2024

**Emerging
Minds.**

National
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Centre for Child
Mental Health





Acknowledgement of Country

We recognise the land on which we meet today and pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Peoples, their ancestors, the elders past, present and future from the different First Nations across this Country.

We acknowledge the importance of connection to land, culture, spirituality, ancestry, family and community for the wellbeing of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

Outline/Housekeeping

- Interactive session with Jess/Mentimeter.
- Slides, Menti results and relevant resources after the session.
- Recording.
- Self-care.



Introductions

Julie Ngwabi

Senior Child Mental Health Advisor – Health

Travis Gibson

Engagement Officer – Health

Today's presenters

Jess

Child and Family Partner



Lydia Trowse

Child and Family Partnerships Advisor



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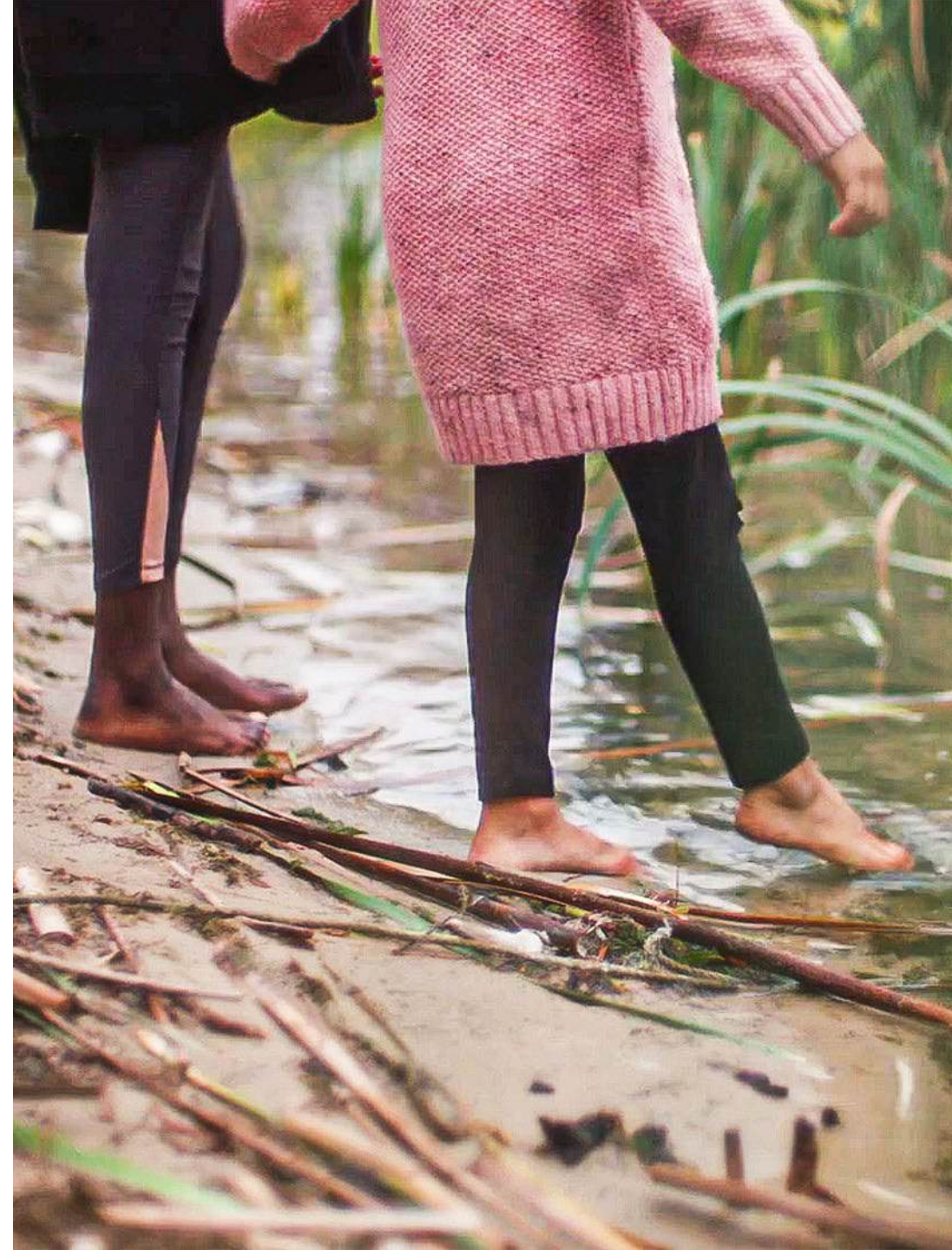
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Lived experience recognition

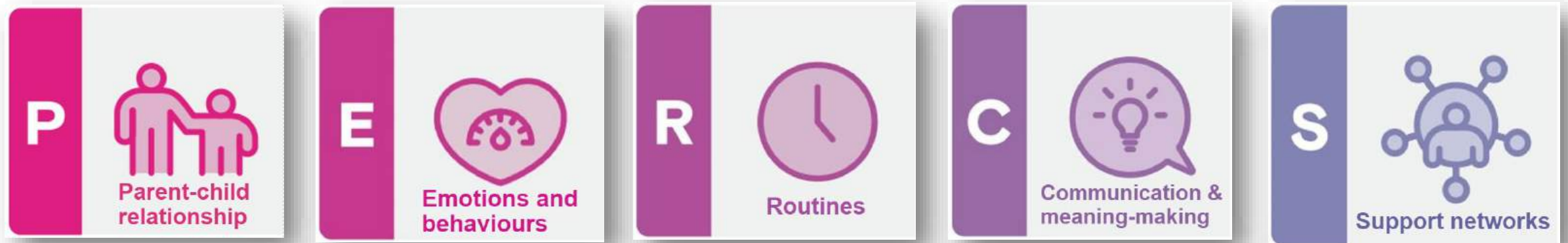
We invite one another to recognise the children, young people and adults within families and diverse communities with many and varied lived experiences who have come before us. We appreciate the experiences of people whose pain, trauma and heartache, including harmful systemic practices, require recognition and compassion. We recognise the strengths and know-how that children and families have drawn on to navigate difficult times. And we respect the skills people have developed to contribute their lived experience. We are committed to deeply listening and responding with integrity to their voices and expertise.

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What supports child mental health?



“One of the most influential protective factors in a child’s life is having a safe, caring and supportive relationship with someone they trust.”

- National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2015

Jess' story

Reflection

- Why did you remain invisible to services for so long?
- Would you mind sharing some of the little things that your mum did to nurture your relationship?
- How did you learn about your emotions if your mum wasn't able to support you to understand that?
- Can you tell me about how important routines were for you as a child, and how were these created in your family?
- How did you make sense of what you were seeing, hearing and feeling as a child?
- What support networks were helpful for you, and what is a practitioner's role in doing this?

After hearing Jess' story, list some things you feel you're currently doing well to support children of parents with a mental illness?

Making kids feel heard and giving child appropriate explanations of things

listening and giving young people as much voice as possible

Keeping the child in mind

Involving the children and hearing the children's voice to support the family.

Recognising that children are in the home and need support.

Helping Staff to identify signs a child may need help

Tailoring resources for the families and that of the individuals. Furthering training open dialogue and cultural yarning. Continuing to bring my cultural lens to the space

Providing referrals to services to help families like this ongoing

After hearing Jess' story, list some things you feel you're currently doing well to support children of parents with a mental illness?

Exploring important support people in the young persons life

consistently asking questions about the childrens care arrangements and needs

Cultural care plans and family goal setting

Identifying parents status

Educating children on their parents mental illness

Individual support/counselling
Attending school meetings/stakeholder meetings
Care/safety planning
Psychoeducation re mental health

Being present EVERY time
Asking genuinely about their child
Presenting in adult mental health

Assisting staff & flattens to learn how to have conversations about their kids and about their mental health. -room to go though!! (FaPMI)

After hearing Jess' story, list some things you feel you're currently doing well to support children of parents with a mental illness?

Referring children to local services who can support them ie COPMI

one on one sessions, peer groups, working in partnership with other services/schools, resources, brokerage etc

Firstly, Thank you so much for sharing your powerful story Jess! We consistently try to help the adult mh clinicians to keep the family and children in mind

Taking a whole of family approach. Engaging consumer as parent Seeing children Including children in meetings

Always asking to speak or know about the children and their supports other than parents

Working with parents to support how to maintain connection with their young people in periods of wellness and when unwell

Parenting support, further eyes on the family as a whole

Helping parents think about how their children might be experiencing their MH, and what they may need too.

After hearing Jess' story, list some things you feel you're currently doing well to support children of parents with a mental illness?

Conversations with parent /y

Providing Wellbeing support at school

Normalising experience

Encouraging families to link with services like satellite foundation, kookaburra kids and little dreamers

Supporting parents to talk about parenting and their children

Developing family and child care plans when parents are well. for plans when a parent gets unwell

Helping parents to help their kids make sense of what's going on

Looking at physical health alongside social and emotional wellbeing. Encouraging 715 for mob and close the gap

After hearing Jess' story, list some things you feel you're currently doing well to support children of parents with a mental illness?

Asking kids what their worries are

Encouraging parents to have age appropriate conversation to mitigate risk of young person making assumptions!

informing teachers and schools on how to recognise young carers and what supports are available to them

Identifying children and their roles at home is standard work/assessment now so kids aren't missed in care planning and referral services

connecting young carers to peers with similar experiences

Helping young person to keep engaging in activities they enjoy - encouraging parents to support this!

tailoring supports to the specific needs of the child and parent

Sharing one's own space with what is being brought to the table. Being able to discuss my mum being stolen generation and how that complexity sits within families and within mob

After hearing Jess' story, list some things you feel you're currently doing well to support children of parents with a mental illness?

Scaffolding and practicing conversations with parents about how to talk about their mental illness

Not assuming supports or other adults are available-ask the child/YP what they need

After hearing Jess' story, list some things you feel you could do differently to support children of parents with a mental illness?

Adult mental health teams to become more child aware

more pressure on services to do screenings and investigations into family structures at the first point of contact

Advocacy with DCJ

Ask who visits the home

PERCS!

More accessible, well funded support networks and making support networks more socially a normal part of child raising

Ask more about who is coming into the home, enquire more about informal supports

Checking the daily routine as Jess said.. to be able to see who is there for them and supporting them.

After hearing Jess' story, list some things you feel you could do differently to support children of parents with a mental illness?

Having clearer pathways and less wait times would be awesome. So many services are unsure even within LHD are unsure they have teams that cover these spaces - greater education for all staff

encourage all clinicians to be checking in with children if there is opportunity

Ask about routines

a PERCs guide to every clinician!

Encouraging adult focussed services to consider the child... i.e Adult consumers do they have young people in their life whom they are considered to have a parenting/ caring role

Record information about families in documentation

I liked the questions that were suggested

Advocate for all services to be both child aware and parent sensitive

After hearing Jess' story, list some things you feel you could do differently to support children of parents with a mental illness?

STRENGTH BASED
APPROACHES to working
with families

Supporting people to initiate
conversations about the
wellbeing of family members

I feel like the person
prescribing Jess's mums
medications was negligent

Push to do ace questionnaires
for not just the children within the
family but for the parents to
better understand their own
childhood risk and how these
continue to cycle back

While I work and deliver COPMI
services in a child related service,
the importance of advocating
for child (and family centred)
practice in adult services are
really important.

recognising that children will
want to care for their loved ones
and not diminishing that role but
rather supporting them in that
space

Sharing skills and giving kids
additional tools they feel they
need within their homes. And high
lighting the strengths held within
the family unit

Talking to colleagues

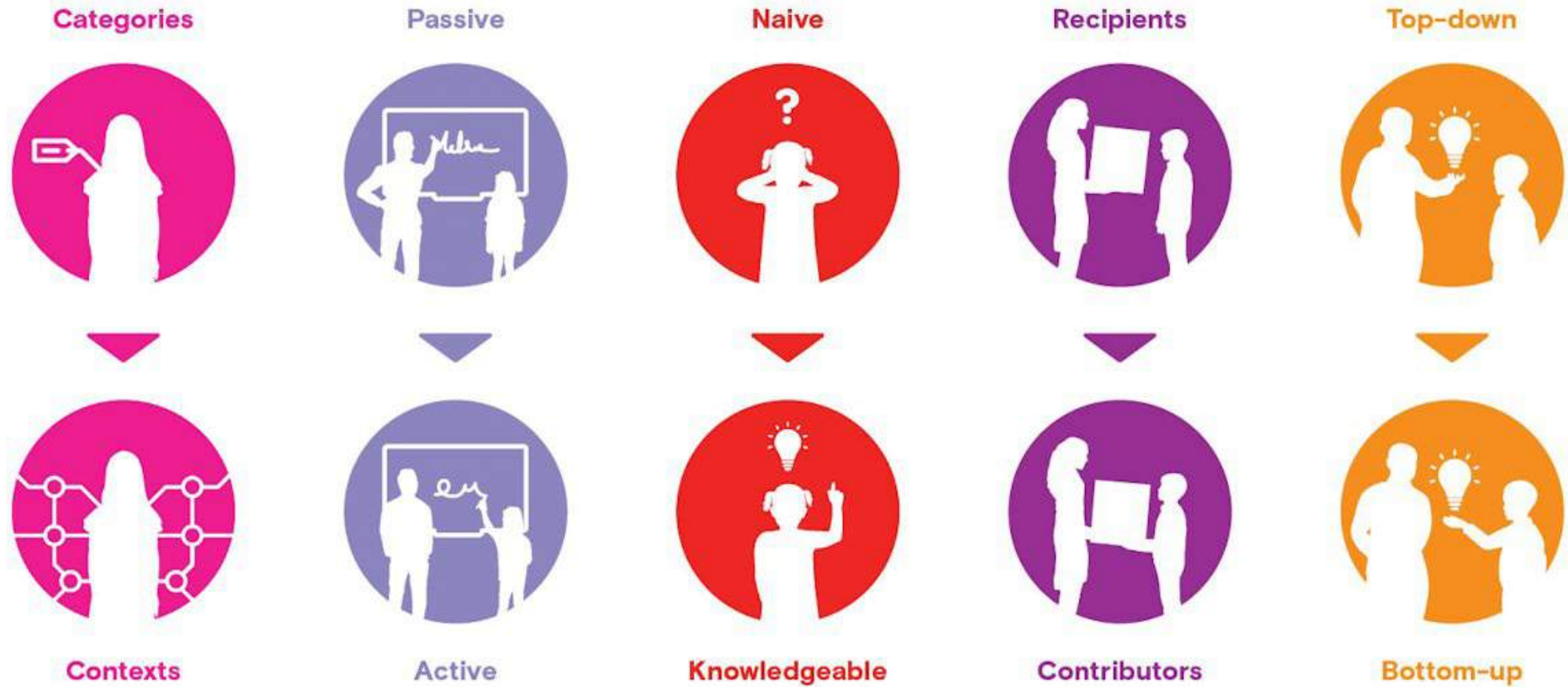
After hearing Jess' story, list some things you feel you could do differently to support children of parents with a mental illness?

approach families from a place of curiosity rather than judgement and "risk management"

Knowing each family each person has a story and one needs to read the whole story and not just the back cover .

The 5 practice shifts for engaging children

Engaging children in your practice



Resilience factors for children where a parent has a mental illness

The child...

- understands parent's mental illness.
- can communicate with parent about their mental illness.
- does not blame themselves and knows they are not responsible for parent's mental illness.
- has access to other trusted adults.
- participates in a range of activities outside of the home.
- has close friends.
- pursues their own interests.
- has a sense of hope about the future.

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Tell us what you think!



Your feedback will help to guide and improve future learning activities around partnering with lived experience.



Supporting Emerging Minds resources

Looking after yourself: Self-care template

- identify your own personal signs of stress
- plan strategies to manage stress and emotions.
- may be useful for your practice.



PERCS Conversation Guide

- Supporting conversations about the impact of adversity on parenting and children's mental health.
- Flexible to work context and family circumstances.
- Multiple versions.



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PERCS Conversation Guide summary

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PERCS Domains

The PERCS Conversation Guide is a psychosocial discussion tool for professionals working with parents. It supports collaborative, respectful conversations around the impact of parental and family adversities, such as mental and physical health issues, substance use issues, and family and domestic violence on children's daily lives. The guide provides example questions to help you explore five important domains in a child's life. It is designed to help you to recognise parents' strengths and hopes for their family, and opportunities to support and improve children's mental and physical health, resilience and wellbeing.

There are four broad stages to the guide:

1 What is the entry point?

Look for opportunities, or 'entry points' to engage the parent in conversations about their child. Potential entry points include:

- The parent presents with an issue or circumstances that might impact on the child.
- The parent expresses concerns about the child's behaviour or circumstances.
- The professional explores the child's mental health and wellbeing through:
 - open enquiry
 - concerns around parental, family, or social adversity.

2 What are you curious about?

Consider the five PERCS domains:

- P** Parent-child relationships
- E** Emotions and behaviours
- R** Routines
- C** Communication and meaning-making
- S** Support networks

This guide contains example questions to assist professionals in their conversations with parents.

3 Conversation with the parent

Conduct a collaborative and respectful conversation with the parent to arrive at shared understandings and decisions, using the six principles of parent engagement:

- Child-aware and parent-sensitive
- Curiosity
- Collaboration
- Strengths and hopes
- Context
- Respect

These principles will support the development of the trusting therapeutic relationship.

4 Provide support

Provide support to parents to lessen the impacts of adversity on their children:

- Use a strengths-based approach to support a positive parent-child relationship and improved social and emotional wellbeing for children.
- Provide resources to parents regarding child development and parenting practices.
- Practice integrated care and make warm referrals to other community supports or specialist services.
- Continue to work with the parent around their initial presenting issue.

This guide provides a pathway and example questions for exploring the five domains of a child's life.

Domain	Professional's role	Example question
P Parent-child relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify if/how parents feel/stay connected to their child in the face of challenges. - Promote parents' confidence and a positive parent-child relationship (warmth, acceptance, stability). 	<p>ASK Example question</p> <p>What's it like being a parent to (child's name)?</p>
E Emotions and behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Help parents to understand and be responsive to their child's emotions and behaviours. - Help to develop a shared language around emotions. 	<p>ASK Example question</p> <p>Has your child or family lived through a traumatic event or period of time?</p>
R Routines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage parents to create routine and predictability in their children's lives. 	<p>ASK Example question</p> <p>Are you able to make time to read or play games with (child's name)?</p>
C Communication and meaning-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support parents in understanding the impact of adult issues on their child. - Guide parents in helping their children make sense of their issues through questions and conversation. 	<p>ASK Example question</p> <p>Is (child's name) able to share their thoughts and feelings with you?</p>
S Support networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Help parents to identify and develop a consistent, positive support network for their child outside of their immediate family. 	<p>ASK Example question</p> <p>Who do you think would notice if (child's name) was struggling?</p>

In focus: Children's rights

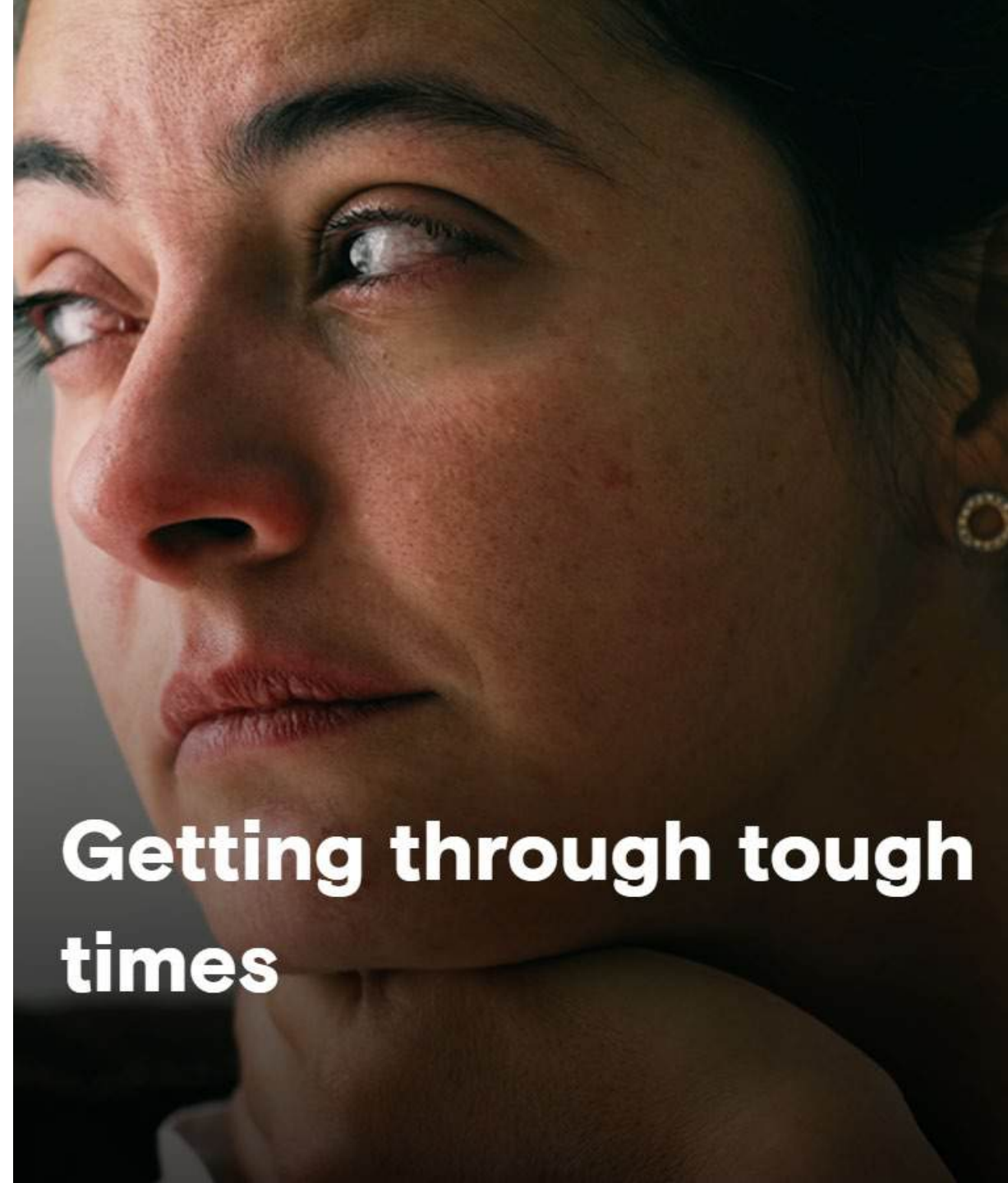
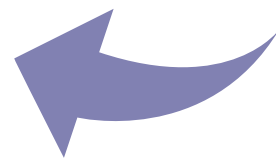
This short resource covers:

- Children's agency and involvement in decision-making.
- Recruiting allies.
- **The five practice shifts.**



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emergingminds.com.au/families



**Getting through tough
times**

Closing remarks

Please let us know if you have any questions or comments on the presentation.

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