

## Bicultural Practice In The Northern Territory Children And Families Sector

*practitioners' reflections of working two-ways*

*"I think I like two-way because it's not only two ways as in, let's say white way and Aboriginal way but it's also the way as in, back and forth way."*

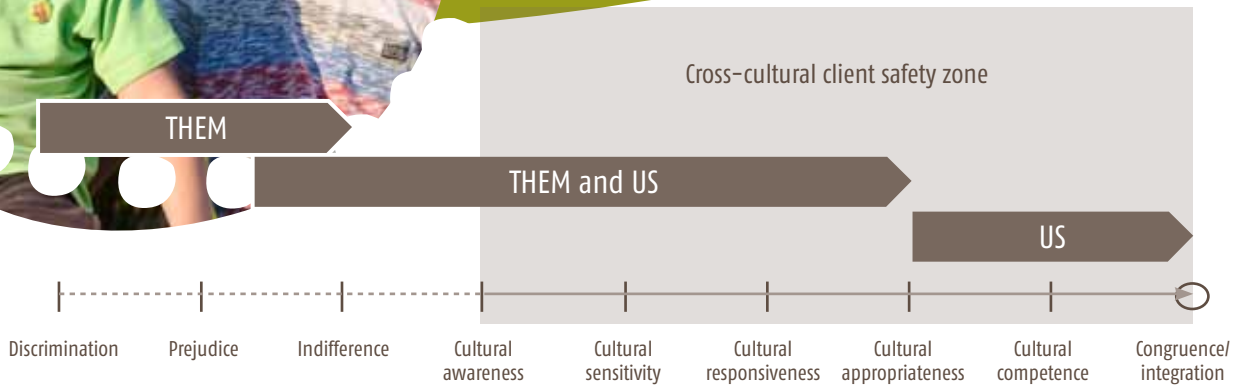
(Practitioner)

*what is this research project about?*

By asking practitioners, this qualitative research project aimed to better understand the key elements of promising bicultural practice in the Northern Territory (NT) children and families sector. Findings were used to inform the development of a two-way practice framework that can be used by a range of government and non-government organisations.

*why is this research project important?*

Parental substance misuse, mental health problems and domestic violence are described as "key risk factors" for child abuse and neglect that often occur together as part of a complex set of social and family issues<sup>1</sup>. In the Northern Territory (NT) Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal practitioners are working together to support families experiencing these multi-faceted issues. Developing effective working partnerships involves understanding the process of developing cultural competence as a 'two-way street'<sup>2</sup>.

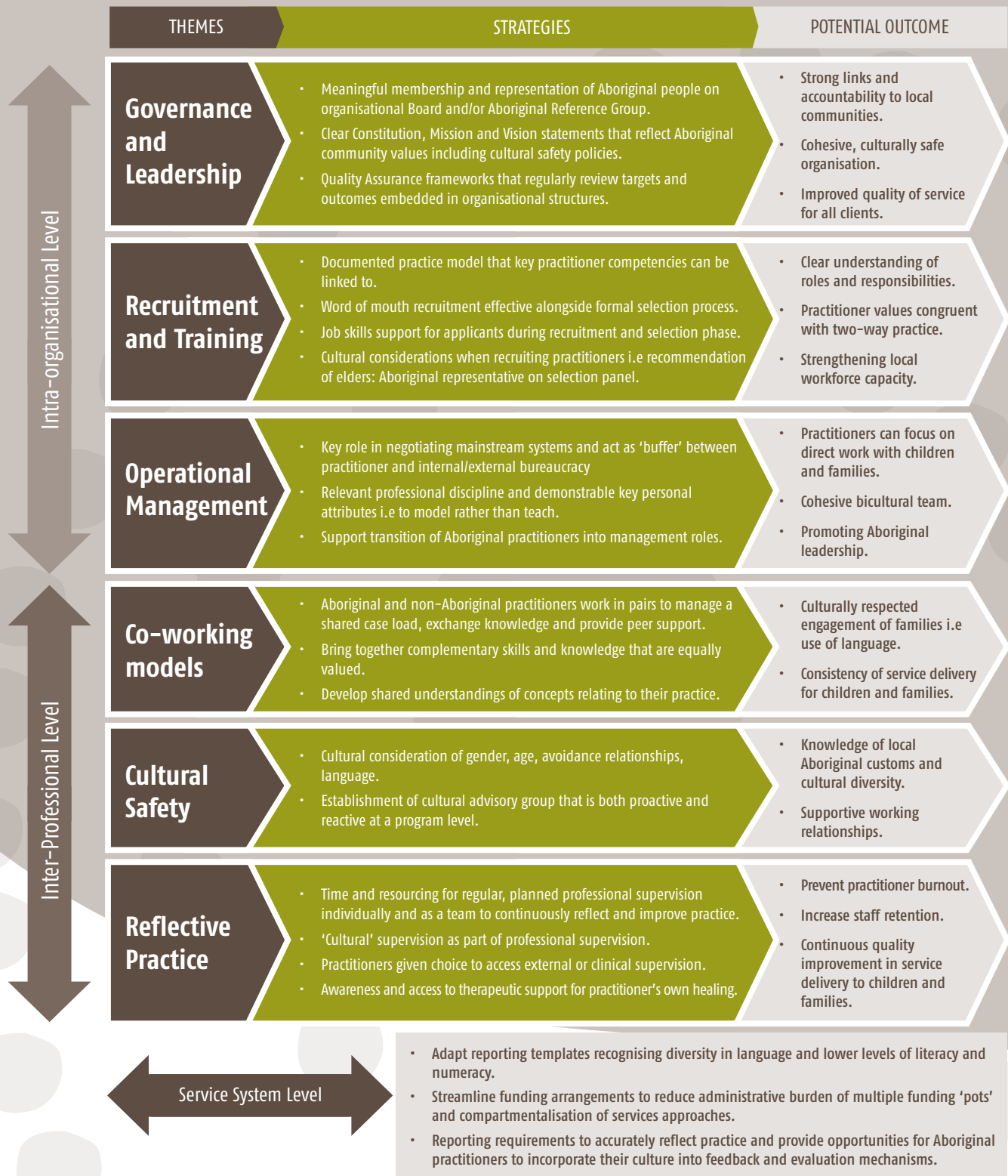


*Model of cross-cultural safety<sup>3</sup>*

*who is involved?*

This collaborative project was conducted as a partnership between the Centre for Child Development and Education (CCDE) at Menzies School of Health Research and SAFT (meaning Strong Aboriginal Families, Together), the NT peak body for children, youth and families.

Organisations (six Aboriginal and three mainstream organisations) delivering services in remote, regional and urban settings across both the Top End and Central Australia were profiled. In total, 74 participants, including chief executive officers, human resource managers, operational managers and frontline practitioners were interviewed. Approximately half (48%) of these participants were Aboriginal.



where can you get more information?

McGuinness, K, & Leckning, B (2013) *Bicultural Practice in the Northern Territory Children and Families Sector: Practitioners' reflections of working two-ways*. Menzies School of Health Research, Centre for Child Development and Education and Strong Aboriginal Families, Together (SAFT), Darwin, Northern Territory.

A full copy of the report can be downloaded from the following websites:  
 CCDE: <http://ccde.menzies.edu.au/> SAFT: <http://www.saft.org.au/>

<sup>1</sup> Bromfield, L., A. Lamont, et al. (2010). Issues for the safety and wellbeing of children in families with multiple and complex problems: The co-occurrence of domestic violence, parental substance misuse, and mental health problems. *NPC Issues No. 33*, 2010, Australian Institute of Family Studies. December 2010.

<sup>2</sup> LaFromboise T, Hardin I, Coleman K, Gerton J. Psychological Impact of Biculturalism: Evidence and Theory *Psychological Bulletin* 1993;114(5):395-412.

<sup>3</sup> Walker, R., H. Cromarty, L. Kelly and N. St Pierre-Hansen (2009) 'Achieving cultural safety in Aboriginal health services: implementation of a cross-cultural safety model in a hospital setting', *Diversity in Health & Care* 6(1): 11-22.

<sup>4</sup> Scott, D (2010) Working within and between organisations. In: Arney F, Scott D, editors Working with Vulnerable Families: A Partnership Approach. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2010:71-94.



The Centre for Child Development and Education



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