

FAMILY

BY family

Developed in, with & for families in South Australia



DRAFT

A new way to resource and support families to thrive. Thriving families are safe places for kids and adults to live, love, laugh, learn & connect.



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7	8

- 1 Pop-up event to find families
- 2 Training *sharing families* at camp
- 4 *Sharing family* yarn
- 5 A *seeking family* chooses a sharing family to link-up
- 5 Families meet for the first time at the mall
- 6 Families on a link-up take a trip to the swimming pool
- 7 A link-up continues over the phone
- 8 Measuring change in wrap-up session

Family: Not eligible for the wrong support

Family is our most significant developmental setting, shaping who we are, how we feel, what we do, and the ways in which we interact. Our wellbeing, and that of the community, is tied to how families fare. Family stress impacts our physical & mental health, social relationships, educational performance, employment, and income.

Spending time with families in their homes and neighborhoods, we met many mums, dads, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and kids who wanted family life to be better. Yet there were few outlets for whole families to address the big stressors & everyday challenges, and even fewer opportunities to look ahead and work towards a different family future.

Terry is at his wit's end with his boys' behaviour. Services say his kids aren't bad enough to receive help so he's resorted to calling the police to deal with their outbursts.

Liz, after years of involvement with child protection services, wants to feel less isolated and more connected to the community.

Anna, exhausted from years with a violent partner, wants to build the confidence to go out with her two kids and plan for the future.

Mali and her partner, new migrants to Australia, want to know where to go with their family and new ways to learn with their children at home.

Nancy and Bill, a family of four, have come out the other side of mental health diagnoses & teenage parenthood. Nancy wants to get into the workplace, but doesn't have anything to put on her CV besides 'being a mum.'

Family support services weren't available for these families. Nor would professional service intervention necessarily be the most useful kind of support.

Terry's boys aren't bad enough for crisis services to get involved. Having never seen another way of interacting within a family, Terry is stuck behaving the same way he always has. Liz and Anna have moved out of immediate crisis but are just coping. Their cases have been closed, though with few friends and no supportive family available, another crisis is not far away. Mali's family doesn't need formal social services, but with guidance and encouragement, could soon actively engage and contribute to the community.

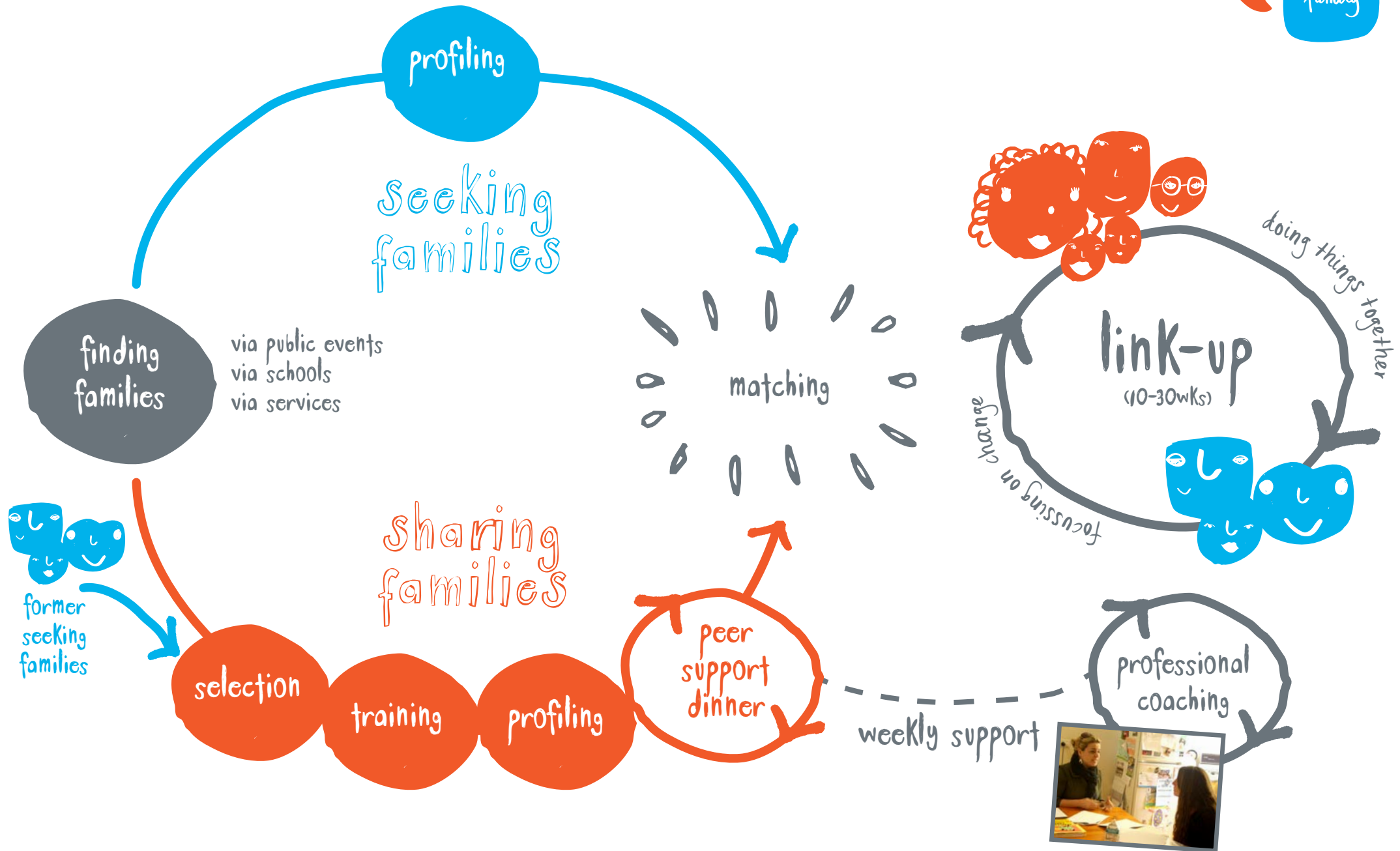
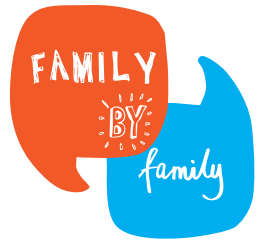
Family by Family offers a different kind of support: support delivered by, with, and between whole families; support that is about showing rather than telling; support focused on building a family's capacity and connections for change.

To do this, Family by Family mobilises a new resource for change: families that have moved through stress & crisis by being open to change; trying new things; looking and planning towards the future; brokering family members to new opportunities; and offering positive feedback & mutual support. We call these thriving behaviours.



Part of the prototype *sharing family* team at training camp

A model co-designed with families



Change co-produced by families

In just over 9 months we've worked with 100 families in South Australia to develop a new kind of family support that excites and attracts families. Together we've co-designed and iterated ways to find, engage, and train *sharing families* - like Nancy and Bill's - who have come through the other side of stress & crisis, and link them up with *seeking families* wanting something to change. We've found language, materials, roles, learning experiences, and interactions that work with whole families, adults and kids included.

By being part of Family by Family, *seeking families* like Terry's and Mali's, have the opportunity and active support to work on the things they want to improve - from kids behaviour to going out more as a family. We work to create and measure four kinds of change: change in family goals, attitudes, behaviors, and social networks.

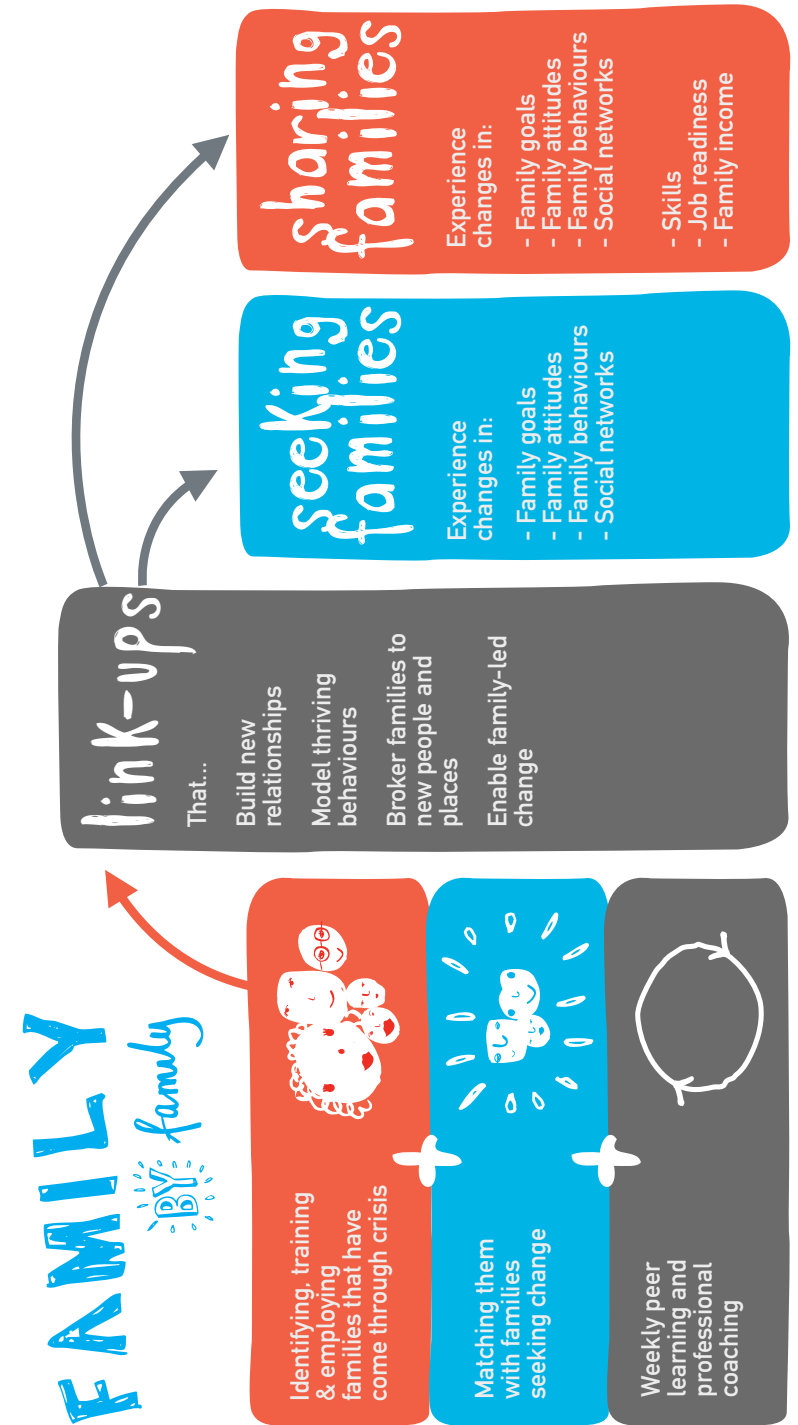
By being part of Family by Family, *sharing families* like Nancy and Bill's have the opportunity and active support to continue to learn, develop, and translate their experiences to other families. We work to create and measure the same four kinds of change in their own families, as well as to increase their skills, job readiness, and family income. The pool of *sharing families* grows as *seeking families* like Terry and Mali's move towards more thriving behaviours.

Thriving is a step beyond resiliency. It's not just about overcoming the bad stuff, but looking ahead to take advantage of the good stuff. Family by Family focuses on building the protective factors that help families turn past challenges into future opportunities: in particular, the relationships, routines, optimism, goal mastery, and family enrichment associated with both resiliency & thriving (Lang, Goulet, & Amsel, 2003). Families work together to problem-solve, plan positive activities, develop supportive connections, and learn new skills in context - all evidence-based strategies for helping adults overcome the trauma of crisis and adopt effective parenting practices (Bromfield, et al, 2010).

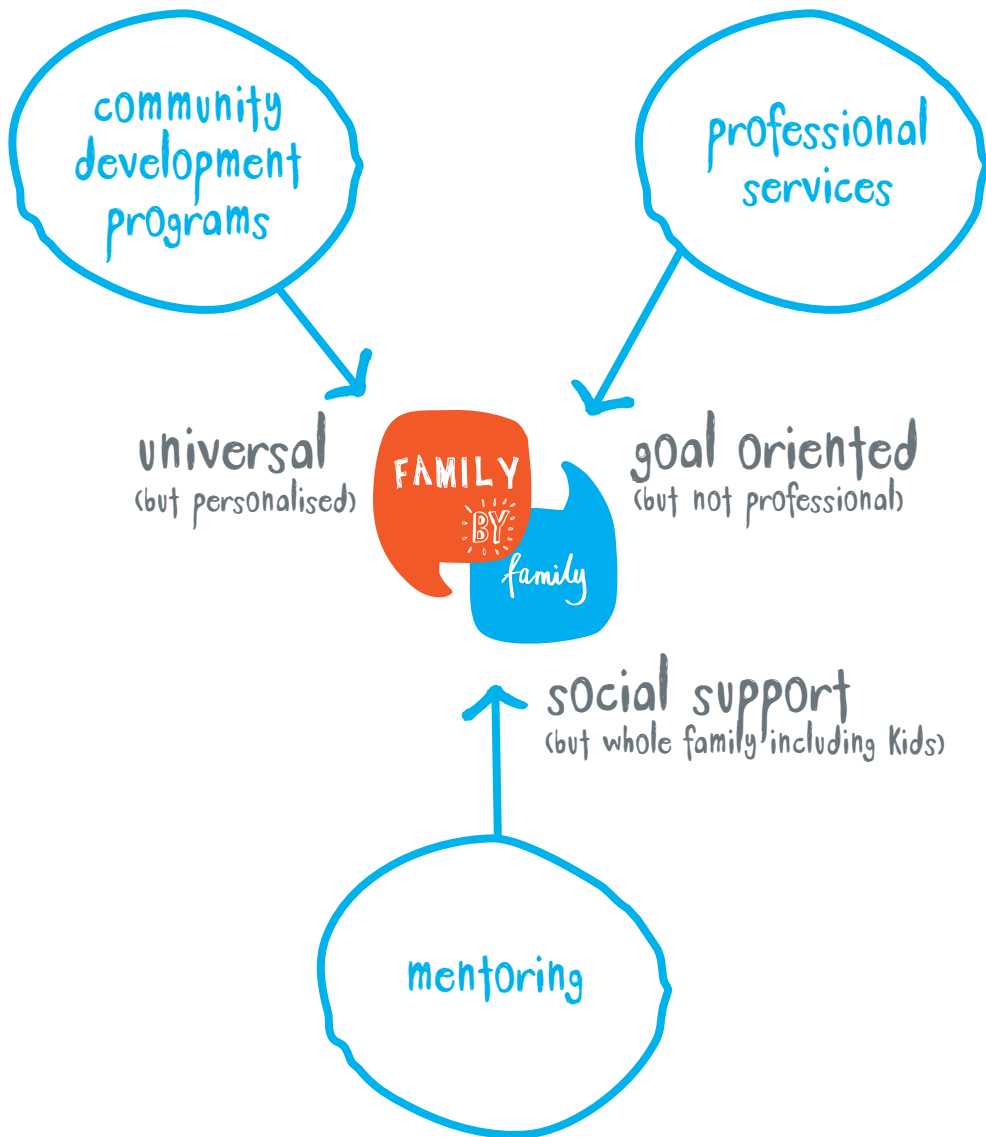
Government services tend to focus on child safety. Our focus on thriving behaviours has the potential to improve child safety alongside broader social outcomes for the family including education, mental health, and community connectedness.



Our theory of change



A new, complementary support space for families



Why something new?

All families experience stress. Not all families have in place the support systems to prevent stress from turning into crisis. The symptoms of family crisis are all too prevalent and costly. One in 4.5 South Australian children are notified to child protection services by their sixteenth birthday. Limited resources prevent action in the majority of cases, and when action does come, it is often too little, too late. Failure to act early has big social consequences: educational disengagement, unemployment, mental illness, and cycles of domestic violence, child abuse & neglect.

Professional services and community development programs play important roles, but by themselves, are insufficient. Professional services tend to respond to crisis events, delivering targeted interventions to eligible parents. Services are largely organized around singular demographic or risk factors, like age of child, mental health diagnosis, drug or alcohol usage, etc. Community development programs, by contrast, tend to convene open events to all residents: activities are social and organic but often do not attract those who could most benefit.

Family by Family occupies a new, complementary space: one that brings the informality and inclusivity of community development together with the intentionality and behavioural change focus of professional services. It does so by starting with families' motivations, stories and strategies – and using professionals as coaches, to facilitate and guide, rather than to directly deliver

interventions. There are no eligibility requirements or risk thresholds; support is social but goal oriented. Indeed, our theory of change is that families need to see and experience thriving in order to set goals and change behaviours, as well as having supportive social networks to sustain those changes.

Growing the family

Although Family by Family started as a prototype with 20 families in one locality, the model has been designed with scale in mind. Over the coming months, with the support of local NGOs, we will grow Family by Family to two locations. Built into Family by Family is an ethos of continuous evaluation and iteration. We'll explore which families Family by Family prompts the most change for, and where Family by Family is not creating change we'll co-design new kinds of interactions and experiences. We'll also explore how Family by Family can interface with and shape professional practice, in particular reunification services. We aspire to see the philosophy and practices of Family by Family influencing services set-up to improve family functioning and child wellbeing.

Family by Family is a unique Australian-developed model powered on the strengths of families in our communities – families who practice thriving behaviours despite their own past struggles and adversities. Family by family, neighbourhood by neighbourhood, we hope to create the conditions in which children and their families can be safe and thrive.

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