

THIRD EDITION

Working with Families Experiencing Vulnerability

A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

Vulnerability is not a fixed state; people and families can move in and out of experiencing vulnerability throughout their lives. All families are at risk of experiencing vulnerability at some point, which means that social workers and other professionals must be equipped with the skills to effectively provide them with support.

Working with Families Experiencing Vulnerability: A Partnership Approach provides a comprehensive, evidence-based guide to family-centred practice for the social work, human services, health and education professions. The book explores how practitioners can support families as they navigate periods of vulnerability, introducing readers to key theories, frameworks, policies, practices and specialist topics.

This edition has been comprehensively revised and features new chapters on working with families affected by natural disasters, families experiencing poverty, Māori families, LGBTQIA+ families and families where a parent has an intellectual disability. Emphasis is placed on promoting a rights-based, relational approach to working with children and young people, who are most at risk of experiencing vulnerability. Each chapter includes case studies, reflective questions that challenge students to consider their own misconceptions of vulnerability, and activities that provide a platform for students to interact with current resources and theories.

Written by an expert team with professional, research and academic experience, *Working with Families Experiencing Vulnerability* is an essential resource for both students and practitioners working with families.

Susan Heward-Belle is Associate Professor of Social Work at the University of Sydney. Her teaching and sustained program of original research focuses on driving change to create socially just gender transformative strategies to prevent and address domestic and family violence.

Menka Tsantefski is an Associate Professor of Social Work and Community Welfare at Southern Cross University. Her work has been at the forefront of service delivery to children and families affected by problematic parental substance use and has increased collaboration between sectors.

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Edited by Susan Heward-Belle , Menka Tsantefski
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Edited by
**Susan Heward-Belle and
Menka Tsantefski**



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This book is lovingly dedicated to my mum, Hans,
Tom and Sarah – SHB

For my family, with love, and in memory of Alex
Kaplan (26/3/1948–11/11/2020), loyal friend – MT

FOREWORD

In the late 1970s, as a young social worker in training, I worked with a little boy named Johnnie. He was about six years old, and he had been removed from the care of his mother, Frankie, and placed in foster care. Frankie lived in a derelict house in one of Wellington's industrial suburbs. I remember she had barely any furniture. Just an old couch, a few cushions on the floor, and a television in the corner of the lounge. Empty bottles that had once contained hard liquor were scattered everywhere. During one of her many alcoholic binges she had lost a leg in an accident too horrific to relate. Johnnie had been placed with foster parents. They were fine people, relatively well-off, with two older children of their own. They lived in an affluent part of town in a big house with a lovely garden that had a small swimming pool. And they were deeply committed to looking after Johnnie. One morning, the police called his foster mother. They had found Johnnie walking along the railway track that would have eventually led him back to Frankie. It was one of many journeys he made. I had also picked him up when the school rang me to say he was missing again. I found him lying on Frankie's floor with his arms around her. In a drunken stupor, she was barely conscious. The thing I remember most vividly was his heart-wrenching sobbing as I tried to coax him away. Working with Johnnie, his mum and his foster parents had a profound impact on me. I don't know what happened to him as I moved on in my training, but I do know that in Johnnie's case not even a loving and positive foster placement could compare with the enduring bond that Johnnie had with Frankie.

A lot has changed since the 1970s, and while practitioners continue to respond to vulnerable children and families, they do so in much more complex environments. This new edition of *Working with Families Experiencing Vulnerability: A Partnership Approach* grapples with these complexities, bringing together recent, evidence-based approaches to practice with children, young people and families. Violence and abuse, substance misuse, health and mental health concerns, poverty, inequities, and racism continue to afflict the lives of vulnerable children and families. But, perhaps inevitably, these issues are further compounded by time and place. These complex topics are addressed, in particular, in new Chapters 4, 6, 15, and 16, and through the significant revisions in Chapters 8 and 9, to provide a contemporary view of structural and social contexts, research and practice approaches that support families experiencing such circumstances of vulnerability. Child and family welfare practices evolve in response to these contemporary challenges and concerns, and much has been done to develop

services that are informed by evidence and cognisant of risk. The multifarious issues that confront vulnerable children and families are importantly explored in this book, along with innovative practices that add richness to the professional systems landscape. The practice challenges are also explored and articulated. While family adversity has clearly become more complex in modern times, it is equally clear that the service sectors have also become more complex. Professional services systems, compromised by growing demand and funding constraints, are often found to be fragmented, struggling to meet the diversity of need experienced by many families. These diverse practice contexts are explored in detail in several new chapters, which expand the focus of the previous edition to cover emerging approaches in relation to attachment theory, transitions through adolescence, parenting in a new land, supporting families affected by disasters, pregnancy and transitions to parenthood, parenting with intellectual disability, and supporting people of diverse genders and sexualities. Navigating and negotiating these systems can be both isolating and alienating. Within this context, it becomes essential that practitioners develop an in-depth understanding of the multiple services that families seek, or are required to engage with. The challenge for the practitioner is then to work toward better service system integration, to eliminate identified barriers to engagement, and to connect families to services that better meet their needs. These ideas are importantly explored in Chapter 3, which considers the challenges and opportunities of working between organisational boundaries.

But the age-old question of responsiveness to need also raises further questions about the nature of the service mix that is available to vulnerable children and families. As systems have evolved, service delivery has generally focused on the development of professional services within and across government and non-government sectors. Well-developed referral mechanisms in Western systems then funnel families toward these formalised professional support options. There are nevertheless consequences to what has become a privileging of professional responses in which informal networks of support are frequently neglected. This serves to underplay the important role that informal support options can play in finding solutions to complex family problems. Some approaches to utilising informal networks to build connections and strengthen resilience are discussed in new Chapter 12. It is worth stating that strengths-based and relationship-oriented interventions (discussed in the new Chapter 2) are not confined to the purview of professional systems. Indeed, it has been suggested that rather than being a means to an end, more formalised professional programs might be conceived as ‘*entry points* for engaging families in community activities so that they can become active participants, develop social connections, identify supports, and give back to their communities’ (McLeigh, 2013, p. 20). There is a rich vein of potential for professional systems to build

capacity through the nurturing of natural, place-based helping systems within community webs of reciprocity. The ability to achieve this depends upon a willingness to embrace different ways of working, being prepared to take part in collaborative community service building, and being open to imagining professional roles within a community web of safety and reciprocity. This importance of engaging with children and families as active participants within broader social networks and communities is explored in new Chapters 12, 15, and 16, which discuss relational and family-led decision-making approaches that are inclusive of cultural knowledge and practices.

Over the decades, many reviews and systemic reforms have been undertaken in child and family welfare that have juggled government and non-government service delivery to families. New frameworks have been developed along with system models that attempt to create closer collaboration between sectors. While there may have been some references made to the potential of informal community responses, they tend not to be reflected in the final modelling of the system. This is curious but not really surprising. It requires a fundamental shift in the way we think about service delivery that can be difficult to conceptualise in a well-established, professionally-driven system. In a recent research project that reviewed systems of child protection in South Asia, Professor Ilan Katz and I analysed country responses that have prioritised informal community responses (Connolly & Katz, 2019). While this response was often born of necessity, it has resulted in unique interventions in response to the particular needs of women and children. In areas of Bhutan, for example, concerns relating to violence and abuse are reported to the police, who then engage the assistance of a volunteer workforce that are essentially the first responders to families. Volunteers are often in full-time employment, perhaps working as an industry engineer or a school teacher. When called upon, they work together in pairs to help families in their local communities to resolve issues of family violence, child abuse and neglect, or youth offending issues. This is sanctioned by their employers and is considered a collective civic duty. While they often lacked training and support, these 'natural' helpers use their life experience and skills to help families work through conflict, calling on the police when issues of safety arise. I have often reflected on the work undertaken by those volunteers, and their deep commitment to supporting vulnerable children and families. While Western systems have long since relied upon professional support responses, it does seem to me that there are some lessons that might be learnt from countries like Bhutan where webs of community reciprocity underpin service responses. And I sometimes wonder if things might have been different for little Johnnie and his mum Frankie if these kinds of grass-roots and enduring informal systems of support had been available to them. This new edition contributes to this body of work, and contemporary discourses about intervention, by looking beyond traditional

responses and established theories, frameworks, and policies to propose model approaches for students entering the social work, health, and education professions, which challenge drivers of inequality and support families and communities to build on their strengths.

Professor Marie Connolly
The University of Melbourne
October 2022

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CONTENTS

Foreword by Marie Connolly	vii
About the authors	xix
Acknowledgements	xxx
Introduction	1
<i>Susan Heward-Belle and Menka Tsantefski</i>	
Chapter 1 The context for practice with children, young people, and their families	7
<i>Menka Tsantefski and Susan Heward-Belle</i>	
Introduction	8
Child maltreatment: a definition	8
The ecological systems model of development: a framework for practice	9
Risk and protective factors for child maltreatment	11
Microsystem risk and protective factors	11
Mesosystem risk and protective factors	12
Exosystem risk and protective factors	13
Macrosystem risk and protective factors	13
The role of critical theory in relation to child maltreatment and professional responses	14
The public health approach	16
The context for practice with children and families in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand	17
Contemporary policy directions: Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand	18
Social support, social networks, and social capital for children and families	19
Relationship-based, trauma-informed approaches to practice with children and families	22
An ecological approach to trauma-informed care in child and family practice	23
Conclusion	24
Short-answer questions	25
References	25
Chapter 2 Person-centred, relationship-based practice	27
<i>Susan Heward-Belle, Brigid Lang-Norris, Pam O'Connor, Lauren Redmile, and Susan Brown</i>	
Introduction	28
<i>Flipping the Experts</i> project	28
Person-centred, relationship-based practice	28
CHANGE	30
Common Humanity	30
Attend	31
Navigate	31
Generosity	31
Empower	32

Intersectionality as a frame for person-centred, relational practice	33
Honouring strengths and resistance	35
The practice context: barriers to person-centred, relationship-based practice	38
What enables person-centred, relationship-based practice?	39
Promoting critically reflective services	41
Conclusion	43
Short-answer questions	43
References	43
Chapter 3 Working within and between organisational boundaries	45
<i>Dorothy Scott</i>	
Introduction	46
Contemporary policy context	46
Factors shaping practitioner roles	48
Broadening practitioner roles	50
Working across organisational boundaries	51
Managing inter-agency conflict	53
Inter-organisational level of analysis	53
Intra-organisational level of analysis	55
Inter-professional level of analysis	56
Interpersonal level of analysis	57
Intrapersonal level of analysis	57
Conclusion	59
Short-answer questions	59
References	60
Chapter 4 Poverty and its impacts on children and families	61
<i>Peter Matthewson, Paul Harris, and Menka Tsantefski</i>	
Introduction	62
Poverty as a multidimensional issue	62
Child poverty: its measurement and multiple impacts on children and families	63
Welfare and service responses to children and families living in poverty	65
The intersection of poverty with other social inclusion/exclusion issues	68
The policy response and good practice approaches	69
Human rights-based approaches	70
Life-course approaches	71
Place-based approaches	71
The contribution of social work to poverty-aware practice	72
Northern Ireland's Anti-Poverty Practice Framework	74
Poverty-aware practice	74
Pathways out of poverty: generating hope	75
The challenge for social workers	76
Conclusion	76
Short-answer questions	77
References	77

Chapter 5 Attachment theory	79
<i>Amy Conley Wright and Peiling Kong</i>	
Introduction	80
Attachment theory: origins and application	80
Secure attachment	82
Insecure attachment	82
Disorganised attachment	83
Cultural lens on attachment theory	85
Application in child protection and out-of-home care	86
Removal from parents	87
Changes in placement	87
Practice models	89
Limitations and misapplications in child protection practice	91
Misconception #1: Assumption that children can form only one attachment at a time	91
Misconception #2: Belief that disorganised attachment is an indicator of abuse	93
Misconception #3: Misuse of language and attachment theory to mischaracterise children's attachments	94
Conclusion	96
Short-answer questions	96
References	96
Chapter 6 Engaging with fathers for the care and safety of families	99
<i>Susan Heward-Belle and Patrick O'Leary</i>	
Introduction	100
Why is it important to work with fathers?	100
Domestically violent fathers are unsafe fathers	101
Creating safety and care for children to create a basis for responsible and proactive fathering	102
Being aware of the influence of intersecting factors including toxic masculinity and past trauma	104
Understanding key areas of practice, policy, and research	106
Reflecting on barriers and facilitating the visibility of fathers in work with vulnerable families	107
Facilitating visibility for men transitioning into fatherhood	109
Existing service, policy, and educational gaps in engaging fathers	110
Building organisational capacity to recognise, engage, and work with fathers in mainstream and specialist services	111
Conclusion	114
Short-answer questions	114
References	114
Chapter 7 Parenting in a new land	116
<i>Asukulu Bulimwengu and Pooja Sawrikar</i>	
Introduction	117
Language	117
Terminology: who are we talking about?	117
Parenting transitions across culture and the law	119
Collectivism	119

Acculturation	121
Community and formal support	123
Child protection	124
Intersectionality	127
Racism	127
Gender	128
Religion	129
Interpreters and cultural competency	130
Conclusion	132
Short-answer questions	132
References	132
Chapter 8 Working with parents with problematic substance use and mental health issues	135
<i>Sharon Dawe, Paul Harnett, and Elizabeth Eggins</i>	
Introduction	136
Impact of substance use and mental health problems on outcomes for children	136
An overview of interventions that help families with parental substance misuse and mental health problems	137
The Parents under Pressure program: an exemplar program	139
The PuP Integrated Theoretical Framework: a model to guide clinical practice	142
Assessment based on the Integrated Theoretical Framework	142
The importance of setting collaborative goals	148
Conclusion	150
Short-answer questions	150
References	151
Chapter 9 Children in the midst of family violence	153
<i>Larissa Fogden, Cathy Humphreys, and Menka Tsantefski</i>	
Introduction	154
Understanding the knowledge base for effective intervention	154
DFV as a highly prevalent, gendered issue	155
Children's experiences of DFV	156
Fathers who use violence	158
Parenting at the intersections of DFV, alcohol, and other drug use and mental health	159
Addressing diversity	160
Practice response models	161
An all-of-family framework for responding to DFV	162
Skills required for effective assessment of and response to DFV for children and families	163
Understanding the policy and legal frameworks for working with children and families	166
Conclusion	169
Short-answer questions	169
References	169

Chapter 10	Supporting children and families affected by disasters	172
	<i>Elizabeth A. Newnham, Enrique Mergelsberg, Lauren Kosta, Katitza Marinkovic Chavez, Jonathan Bullen, Jane Nursey, and Lisa Gibbs</i>	
	Introduction	173
	Changes in the disasters landscape	173
	Working in disaster-affected communities	173
	Ethics and trauma-informed care in disaster settings	176
	Mental health and developmental implications of disasters	178
	Family dynamics in disaster areas	180
	The role of schools in disaster-affected areas	185
	Community connectedness in disasters	186
	Conclusion	188
	Short-answer questions	188
	References	188
Chapter 11	Working with families in pregnancy	191
	<i>Jo Spangaro</i>	
	Introduction	192
	Pregnancy as transition, opportunity, and challenges	192
	Addressing childhood abuse and other unresolved past issues	193
	Intimate partner violence in pregnancy	195
	Engaging fathers: possibilities and limitations	201
	Responding to loss in pregnancy/childbirth	203
	Conclusion	204
	Short-answer questions	204
	References	205
Chapter 12	Working with children: a rights-based, relational approach to practice	208
	<i>Menka Tsantefski and Mary Jo McVeigh</i>	
	Introduction	209
	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as a framework for practice	209
	Children's vulnerabilities and evolving capacities: the UNCRC's position and response	209
	The four General Principles in the UNCRC	210
	Survival and development rights	211
	Protection rights	212
	Provision rights	212
	Participation rights	212
	Responding to children's rights through family support and child protection responses	213
	Family sensitive and child-inclusive practices	216
	Working with children to create spaces where good things may happen	217
	Responding to children's needs when parents access adult-focused services	219
	Connecting children with others	220
	Bridging formal and informal networks: practice strategies	221

Advocating for children by drawing upon the UNCRC	224
Conclusion	225
Short-answer questions	225
References	225
Chapter 13 Understanding young people	227
<i>Jioji Ravulo</i>	
Introduction	228
Journeying with self	228
Socioeconomic status	229
Gender	229
Sexuality	229
Religion	230
Ability	230
Indigeneity	230
Language	231
Citizenship	231
Locality	231
Ethnicity	231
Why do these factors matter?	232
Journeying with family and friends	233
Journeying with social systems	235
Education systems	235
Legal systems	236
Welfare systems	237
Health systems	238
Journeying with professionals	240
Putting this into practice	241
Putting this into policy	243
Putting this into research	243
Conclusion	243
Short-answer questions	244
References	244
Chapter 14 Parenting with intellectual disability	246
<i>Susan Collings and Margaret Spencer</i>	
Introduction	247
Who are parents with intellectual disability?	247
The right to be a family	248
Eugenics, newgenics, and parenting with intellectual disability	250
The social determinants of parenting with intellectual disability	252
Child protection and parenting with intellectual disability	254
Growing up with a parent with intellectual disability	255
Engaging parents with intellectual disability in support planning	258
Arranging support with parents with intellectual disability	260
Coordinating support	261

Conclusion	263
Short-answer questions	264
References	264
Chapter 15 Family-led decision-making approaches with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families	267
<i>Lynette Riley, Sarah Ciftci, and Irene Wardle</i>	
Introduction	268
Aboriginal Kinship	268
Moieties	270
Totems	270
Skin Names	271
Affiliations	271
Colonising Aboriginal Kinship and the Stolen Generations	272
Indigenous people fight the impact of past policies and practices	274
The ongoing and intergenerational effects of colonisation	276
Recognising Indigenous rights in contemporary child protection systems	278
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle	278
Principles of self-determination and participation	279
Family decision-making models	281
Stages of the model	284
Conclusion	287
Short-answer questions	288
References	288
Chapter 16 Working with Māori whānau (families)	290
<i>Sharyn Roberts</i>	
Introduction	291
Māori whānau	291
Te ao Māori: the Māori worldview	292
The traditional Māori whānau	294
The colonised Māori whānau	296
Māori whānau revitalisation	299
Towards a transformed Māori whānau	303
Conclusion	306
Glossary of Māori words	306
Short-answer questions	308
References	308
Chapter 17 Supporting people of diverse genders and sexualities	310
<i>Peter Matthewson and Ives Rose</i>	
Introduction	311
Understanding sexual and gender diversity	312
Issues facing rainbow people and their families	313

Culture, gender, and sexuality	314
Issues for transgender and gender nonbinary young people and their families	317
Rainbow parenting	318
Domestic violence in rainbow communities	320
Young people from conservative religious backgrounds	321
Working with rainbow young people, and their families and whānau	324
Working with issues of sexuality and gender in statutory care and protection services	325
Conclusion	326
Short-answer questions	327
References	327
Chapter 18 Working with kinship care families	329
<i>Ann MacRae and Dave Vicary</i>	
Introduction	330
Kinship care in Australia	330
Needs of kinship care families	331
Financial support	331
Access to services	332
Relationship support	332
Respite care	332
Advocacy	333
Legal support	333
Information	333
Assessment	334
Behaviour management/parenting skills	334
Family violence in kinship care	335
Trauma-informed care for kinship care families	339
Summarising the research and practice	342
Practice recommendations for kinship care	342
Conclusion	343
Short-answer questions	343
References	344
Index	347

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Editors

Susan Heward-Belle is an Associate Professor of Social Work at the University of Sydney. Her teaching and sustained program of original research focuses on driving change to create socially just gender transformative strategies to prevent and address domestic and family violence. Her cutting-edge research, particularly with men who perpetrate violence against women and children, aims to counter dominant paradigms that offer gender biased responses, particularly by institutions of the state such as statutory child protection services, police, and the courts. She contributes to knowledge, which informs public policy and professional practices, that ultimately prevent interpersonal violence. Moreover, her research focuses on developing and promoting dignity-based policy and practice.

Menka Tsantefski is an academic in the School of Social Work and Community Welfare, Faculty of Health, Southern Cross University, and a researcher in the Faculty's Centre for Children and Young People. Menka's research has examined the transition to motherhood among women with histories of problematic substance use, the experiences of children affected by parental substance use, and all-of-family approaches at the intersection of alcohol and other drugs, mental health, domestic/family violence and child protection concerns. Her work, which is cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary, has been at the forefront of service delivery. She has built evidence for interventions, designed and implemented projects for children, led developments in child-aware practice in adult services, increased collaboration between service sectors, and influenced policy and practice at the national level.

Contributors

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Sarah Ciftci is a research associate at the Research Centre for Children and Families, University of Sydney. She holds a Bachelor of Socio-Legal Studies (Hons) and is completing her PhD on Aboriginal decision-making models in the child protection context. Sarah has extensive experience conducting qualitative and evaluative research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and has a keen interest in Indigenous rights, justice, and decolonisation.

Susan Collings is a research fellow at the Research Centre for Children and Families, the University of Sydney. She is Program Lead for Disability and Child Protection and an affiliate of the Centre for Disability Research and Policy. Susan's research draws on ecological and intersectional theories to understand the experiences and support needs of families living with vulnerabilities. Susan uses participatory and arts-based methods to ensure the voices of children, young people, and families with lived experience of the child protection system drive policy and practice improvements. She is an executive member of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disability's (IASSIDD) Parenting Special Interest Research Group and is internationally recognised for her research on parents with intellectual disability and their children.

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Sharon Dawe is a professor in Clinical Psychology at Griffith University. She has been working as a researcher and clinician in the field of substance misuse and mental health for over twenty years, beginning her clinical career at Odyssey House, Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. She then moved to the United Kingdom, where she worked at the Maudsley Hospital, London, as a clinical psychologist in the drug dependence unit. Her PhD, completed at the Institute of Psychiatry, University of London, investigated the neural mechanisms involved in drug reward. Her current work focuses on reducing child maltreatment in high-risk families with parental substance misuse and mental illness. She has developed the Parents under Pressure (PuP) program in collaboration with Paul Harnett at the University of Queensland. She holds an adjunct position with the Australian Centre for Child Protection.

Elizabeth Eggers is a clinical psychologist and research fellow in the School of Applied Psychology, Griffith University. She has expertise in systematic reviews and meta-analyses serving as an editor of the Campbell Collaboration (Crime and Justice Coordinating Group). Elizabeth's research focuses on vulnerable families and children, assessment of neurodevelopmental disorders including foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and differential diagnosis of developmental trauma.

Larissa Fogden is an associate lecturer and researcher in the Department of Social Work at the University of Melbourne. Her research is focused on the experiences of children and young people living with domestic and family violence. Larissa is also a qualified social worker and has worked in specialist family violence services in crisis, refuge, and justice settings supporting infants, children, and young people.

Lisa Gibbs is Director of the Child and Community Wellbeing Unit in the Centre for Health Equity, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health at the University of Melbourne. She is also Lead of Community Resilience in the Centre for Disaster Management and Public Safety. She leads public health research relating to two main fields: disaster recovery and community resilience (including leadership of the Beyond Bushfires study), and child health and wellbeing. These two fields intersect through her

research on child resilience. She works in partnership with key stakeholders to ensure the relevance of her research, translating into direct policy and practice outcomes.

Paul Harnett is a clinical psychologist and associate professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Griffith University. He has worked clinically and conducted research in the area of child protection since 1987. Over the past twenty years, he has developed an assessment process for assessing parental capacity to change and co-developed the Parents under Pressure (PuP) program – a program specifically designed for families with complex needs. He has expertise in the evaluation of program implementation and effectiveness.

Paul Harris is a registered psychologist who has previously worked with child and adolescents and young people at risk of suicide and self-harm in the public sector and private practice. He held positions in service provision and health policy in mental health, population health, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health including management roles in community health and health service planning with Queensland Health. He also worked as the regional manager for a not-for-profit organisation in South-East Queensland overseeing a range of integrated early years services and community-based mental health support services. In 2014, he was awarded the Health Services Research Association of Australia and New Zealand's PhD Student Prize. Paul's research interests include the public's health care preferences; the social determinants of health; the evaluation of emerging service models; child and youth wellbeing; digital storytelling and inclusive practices with people with disabilities; and building capacity for research and innovation in undergraduate curriculum and assessment development. He is currently employed as a senior lecturer within the School of Human Service and Social Work at Griffith University.

Cathy Humphreys is Professor of Social Work at University of Melbourne. She is co-chair of the Melbourne research Alliance to End Violence Against Women and Their Children (MAEVe) and a chief investigator on the Safer Families NHMRC Centre for Research Excellence. She specialises in applied research with the majority of projects in the past ten years working with co-design and participatory action research through facilitating multi-stakeholder workshops and Communities of Practice. This approach reflects a profound interest in knowledge translation to ensure the support of practice and research through research. Her research focuses on domestic and family violence (DFV) and child abuse. She has a long-term interest in ensuring that the voices and experiences of children are visible and acknowledgement that they are also primary victims of DFV. Recent projects have also focused on the development of DFV risk assessment which recognises both its usefulness and its limitations. Professor Humphreys is a

well-published author of more than 125 journal articles. She worked at the University of Warwick for twelve years leading a domestic violence and child abuse research centre before returning to Australia in 2006. For fifteen years, she worked as a social worker.

Peiling Kong is a clinical psychologist and a PhD candidate at the Sydney Law School, University of Sydney. Her PhD research is investigating how authorised clinicians and independent adoption assessors promote meaningful child participation in care and adoption matters in New South Wales, Australia. Pei is a research assistant at the Research Centre for Children and Families within the University of Sydney and is involved in a number of socio-legal research projects in the area of expert evidence, child protection, adoption, and legislative reform. Her clinical psychology experience includes assisting a court appointed expert in conducting assessments in family, criminal, child protection, and adoption matters over the last eight years. She is a practicing clinical psychologist with special interests in working with survivors of sexual and domestic violence. Pei's research interests include therapeutic jurisprudence and promoting children's rights within family law, care, and adoptions matters through social justice frameworks.

Lauren Kosta is a lecturer and researcher in the Department of Social Work at the University of Melbourne. She teaches in the areas of human development and adaptation across the lifespan, including responses to trauma, loss, and grief. Lauren's research interests relate to supporting individual and family recovery and resilience, particularly in the contexts of paediatric illness and parenting experiences post-disaster.

Brigid Lang-Norris believes education is a powerful tool because with knowledge comes the power to shape one's own destiny. She has 16 years professional experience in the domestic and family violence sector, as a women and children's advocate, a women's domestic violence support group facilitator, Women's Community Family Dispute Resolution support worker and with a Women's Health Service and Community Legal Centre. She has provided training to many government and non-government organisations, including NSW Police. Since early 2006, Brigid has been invited to speak at numerous public speaking engagements including Sydney University, NSW Health, Community Open Days, CLEs, Sydney radio, Violence Against Women Awards, NSW Police Academy, Goulburn. Throughout the years she has also been invited to sit on Domestic Violence steering and liaison committees and a recent research group (Flipping the Experts). In 2021, she received an award from ANZSWEER for her work. Brigid's drive to advocate for the vulnerable is further reflected in her personal life – her passion for rescue dogs and her film company (Savage Dog Films).

Ann MacRae is the Senior Researcher at Bapcare. Ann has a Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology) and Master of Family Studies. Ann has experience working in the child protection, housing and homelessness, and family services sectors in Hobart, Tasmania. At BapCare, she undertakes research in various human services fields including family and community services, out-of-home care, aged care and affordable housing. Additionally, Ann has been part of the implementation team for outcomes measurement at Bapcare. Ann has an interest in developmental trauma and attachment and has a passion for trauma-informed practice. Ann has a specialist certificate in Implementation Science and hopes to apply this knowledge to the implementation of evidence-based, trauma-informed approaches to human services delivery.

Katitza Marinkovic Chavez is a child psychologist and research fellow in the Child and Community Wellbeing Unit in the Centre for Health Equity, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health at the University of Melbourne. Her research expertise relates to use of child participatory research approaches in the context of disasters, maximising impact through multi-national collaborations.

Peter Matthewson is a senior lecturer in the Department of Social Practice at Unitec Institute of Technology, Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. He has previous social work practice experience in a range of statutory, mental health, and non-government organisations. He is currently pursuing doctoral study at Massey University. He has served on the board of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers, and maintains active engagement with international community and social justice organisations and issues. He is engaged with rainbow community organisations in Aotearoa and Uganda.

Mary Jo McVeigh is the founder and CEO of Cara House and CaraCare. She is a proud Belfast Irish woman, radical social worker and activist, and dedicated family member and friend. Mary Jo completed her Honours degree in social science in 1983 and a Master's degree in social work in 1986. Mary Jo is currently a PhD student at the University of Sydney. Mary Jo is a trained trauma therapist and an accredited mental health social worker with a passion for exploring and studying comprehensive bodies of knowledge bringing this emphasis for diversity of wisdom to her work. Mary Jo is acknowledged in her field as an expert in child protection, trauma therapy, leadership coaching, and professional self-care. Mary Jo has presented at national and international conferences and is a published author of several books and articles in professional journals. She was a finalist for NSW Woman of the Year award for her work in service to children, young people, and their families. In 2019 she received the Australian Allied Health Social Worker of the Year award.

Enrique Mergelsberg is a research fellow at Curtin University where she collaborates on projects with the Asia Pacific Disaster Mental Health Network and investigates community

interventions improving mental health following climate disasters. Her interests range within the intervention development, translation, and evaluation area to improve health and wellbeing in the community. She is also a research fellow (biostatistician) at the University of Western Australia where she is involved in investigating longitudinal mental health trajectories in healthcare workers in Western Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic and in evaluating the benefits of computerised cognitive training on cognition & functioning in people with early psychosis managed by public mental health services. Enrique is the co-founder of HealthRedesigned, a company that improves intervention development, translation, and evaluation in the community setting.

Elizabeth A. Newnham is a senior research fellow in the School of Population Health at Curtin University, and an FXB fellow at Harvard University. After completing her Master of Psychology (Clinical) and PhD at the University of Western Australia, Elizabeth undertook postdoctoral fellowships at Harvard University and the University of Oxford. Her central research focus is child and adolescent mental health in adverse environments, including settings affected by disaster, climate change, and war. Elizabeth leads the Asia Pacific Disaster Mental Health Network, and is an invited member of the World Health Organization's Thematic Platform on Health Emergency and Disaster Risk Management (Health-EDRM) Research Network.

Jane Nursey currently holds the position of Director, Clinical Services, Phoenix Australia: Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health. She is a registered Clinical Neuropsychologist with thirty years' experience in the field of posttraumatic mental health, working in the public hospital, university and not-for-profit sectors as a Senior Clinician, Manager and Director of programs. Her key areas of expertise lie in the development, implementation and evaluation of hospital, school and community-based mental health and trauma recovery programs; providing policy and service development advice to government and industry on the assessment, management and treatment of trauma related mental health problems across the lifespan.

Pam O'Connor studied Community Services, Mentoring, Diploma of Counselling Management and is currently undertaking a Diploma of Mental Health. She was an instrumental member of a University of Sydney project called 'Flipping the Experts' that developed educational strategies to help professionals understand the impact of domestic violence on women and children. Her involvement in the *Flipping the Experts* project, has subsequently led to Chapter 2 in this publication. She will always be grateful for the opportunity and the reward of working with women to help women throughout life.

Patrick O'Leary is an internationally recognised researcher with significant expertise in domestic violence/gender-based violence, child protection, long-term impact of child

sexual abuse (especially for men), social work, and socially excluded young people. He has conducted a number of complex research projects in Australia, USA, UK, China, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Albania, Sudan, Nepal, and Lebanon for international clients including Terre des hommes, Islamic Relief Worldwide, and UNICEF. Professor O’Leary’s work has influenced international domestic violence and child protection policy and practice. Professor O’Leary was commissioned as an Expert Academic Advisor to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Professor O’Leary is the Chair of the Clinical Advisory Committee for Survivors and Mates Support Network (SAMSN) a lead national organisation supporting male survivors of child sexual abuse. He has served as a Senior Research Fellow with UNICEF’s Office for Research. Professor O’Leary has published in high quality journals and his work has been highly cited.

Jioji Ravulo is the Professor and Chair of Social Work and Policy Studies in the Sydney School of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney. His research and areas of interest include mental health and wellbeing, alcohol and other drugs, youth development, marginality, and decoloniality. Nuanced with a genuine commitment to the dynamic inclusion of cultural diversity and its differences, Jioji is super-keen to create collaborative spaces for individuals and families alongside their broader communities that lead to inclusive societies.

Lauren Redmile contributed her lived experiences to this edition in the hopes that her contribution will improve a broken system that does not adequately serve women and mothers who experience domestic and family violence. As a mother herself, Lauren is extremely passionate about helping people who are experiencing hard times. Experiencing life in foster care as a child, Lauren has firsthand knowledge about how hard systems can be to navigate. However, she is adamant that the difficult experiences that she has faced in life do not define her. She knows that anyone can fall on hard times, which require them to seek help from services. She hopes that her contribution enables service providers to better understand the lived experiences of service users.

Lynette Riley is a Wiradjuri and Gamilaroi woman from Dubbo and Moree. She is an associate professor in the Sydney School of Education & Social Work, the University of Sydney; and Program Director for Indigenous Studies and Aboriginal Education. Lynette trained as an infants/primary teacher through Armidale CAE, 1975–77. She has been a classroom teacher in primary and high school; an Aboriginal Education consultant for schools; an Aboriginal Development Manager for VET; Manager of the Dubbo TAFE Campuses; State Manager for NSW DET, Aboriginal Education; and an academic at UNE and Sydney University. Her career focus has been on improving educational delivery for

Aboriginal students and educating the wider public about Aboriginal people. Where possible Lynette incorporates her own cultural practices into her teachings. Lynette had her PhD conferred with ACU, in 2017, with her research on ‘Conditions of Academic Success for Aboriginal Students’. Lynette seeks to create sustainable change for Aboriginal communities, through knowledge of cultural education and competence.

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā hau e whā, e te iwi o te Moana nui a Kiwa, tēnā koutou katoa. To all authorities, all voices, the four winds, and the people of the Pacific, greetings to you all. **Sharyn Roberts** is a tangata whenua social worker of Ngāi Tahu, Kāti Mamoe, Waitaha, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairoa, and a mix of English, Irish, and Scottish descent. She is the Pou Ārahi Manager at Te Ora Hou Ōtautahi, a Kaupapa Māori Youth Development Organisation located in Christchurch, Aotearoa where she has worked for the past 15 years. Sharyn’s area of interest is Māori succeeding as Māori and she is the current President of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW). Sharyn proudly leads the ANZASW Board and the Association at this exciting time of social change and mandatory social work registration.

Ives Rose is a former refugee from Burundi; he arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand as a teenager with his family in 2005. He subsequently came out as gay, experiencing significant rejection and discrimination within his Burundian community. He demonstrated a determination to rebuild and maintain relationships within his community and has taken a leading role in relevant community activities and events, and in advocacy, activism, and health promotion. He has a Bachelor of Social Practice from Unitec Institute of Technology. He is working as a children’s practitioner with Brighter Futures for Children in Reading, England. He previously worked for New Zealand’s child protection agency (Oranga Tamariki) and his interests include supporting LGBTQIA+ young people.

Pooja Sawrikar has worked at the School of Human Services and Social Work at Griffith University (2010–20), the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales (2005–14), and the Department of Psychology at the University of Sydney (2000–05). She obtained her Bachelor of Science (Hons) in 1999, was awarded her PhD in Psychology in 2004, and completed her Postdoctoral Fellowship in Social Work/Social Policy from 2007–10. Her academic career spans twenty years; since 2000, she has taught over 10 000 students Psychology and Research Methods subjects, and conducted commissioned research for Australian state and federal governments, and national and international non-government organisations (NGOs). Her research areas and publications cover racism, sexism, child protection, domestic violence, culturally appropriate service delivery, culture, migration, mental illness, and social cognition. She is

experienced in a wide range of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, including multiple and logistic regression, structural equation modelling, semi structured interviews, focus groups, auto ethnography, systematic literature reviews, and theory development. She uses research to not just comprehensively capture and explain the size and nature of a phenomena, but to use that evidence to reduce injustice and increase wellbeing.

Dorothy Scott has an adjunct academic position at the Australian Centre for Child Protection at the University of South Australia, and is also a Professorial Fellow at the University of Melbourne. Dorothy was the Foundation Chair of Child Protection and the inaugural Director of the Australian Centre for Child Protection at the University of South Australia. Previously she was Head of the School of Social Work at the University of Melbourne and, prior to that, the Executive Director of the Ian Potter Foundation. Her clinical practice has been in the fields of child welfare, sexual assault, and mental health. Her research has also been in these areas as well as in the fields of maternal and child health and child protection policy reform. She has been an adviser to national and state governments, and for her services to the community she was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia and the Centenary Medal. Dorothy co-edited the second edition of this text.

Jo Spangaro is Professor of Social Work at the University of Wollongong and an internationally recognised researcher on responses to gender-based violence. Her research builds on 20 years' experience in frontline practice with both people who have experienced sexual and domestic violence, as well as perpetrators. In addition, she has extensive experience in training and policy development in this field. Her research focuses on the impact of interventions to address gender-based violence. Her current work includes studies on sustainability of screening for domestic violence in antenatal clinics and efficacy of mother-child interventions after domestic violence. Other recent projects have included a study of Aboriginal women's decisions to disclose domestic violence, and a systematic review of interventions to reduce risk of sexual violence in conflict and humanitarian crises. She has a particular focus on strengths-based responses and vulnerable populations.

Margaret Spencer is a social work academic at the University of Sydney. Margaret holds qualifications in nursing, theology, and social work. Margaret's research focus is on disability justice in the area of child protection practice. She has over 35 years' experience as an advocate for parents with intellectual disability and their children and is highly recognised nationally and internationally for her knowledge and contribution. As part of her PhD research Margaret developed an accessible process to enable practitioners and

parents with intellectual disability to engage in collaborative dialogue in order to understand and plan support. Prior to taking up her current academic position in 2014, Margaret established a specialist advocacy program for parents with intellectual disability involved in care and protection matters.

Dave Vicary has extensive clinical, policy, management, research, and evaluation experience in a range of sectors including the health, research, welfare, and not for profit. He has worked in the child protection and human services sector for 30 years. Dave has a PhD from Curtin University of Technology where he studied engagement methods for use by non-Aboriginal practitioners working with West Australian Aboriginal clientele. Since receiving his doctorate Dave has been involved in several large government and not-for-profit projects and grants that have investigated the mental health of Aboriginal children across Australia. Dave has a special interest in out-of-home care, child protection, mental health, ageing and dementia, and family violence interventions and has published extensively in these areas. Dave currently works for Bapcare and is the Divisional Manager for Family and Children's and Mental Health Services in Victoria and Tasmania and Manager of Research Partnerships. Dave is an adjunct professor at the Health and Social Care Unit at Monash University Melbourne Australia.

Irene Wardle is a proud Darug woman, employed at the University of Sydney as an Aboriginal Research Partnerships manager and is contributing to research at the Research Centre for Children and Families. Irene also teaches Aboriginal Studies at the Sydney School of Education & Social Work. She has held numerous community roles in health, policing, employment, and education. Irene believes in empowering our Aboriginal communities and celebrating their success. She feels there is an expectation that her educational opportunities have come with responsibilities. As an Aboriginal mother, grandmother, and teacher, she believes education and kindness is the key to a brighter future.

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