



Evaluating an intervention for young people with multiple and complex needs

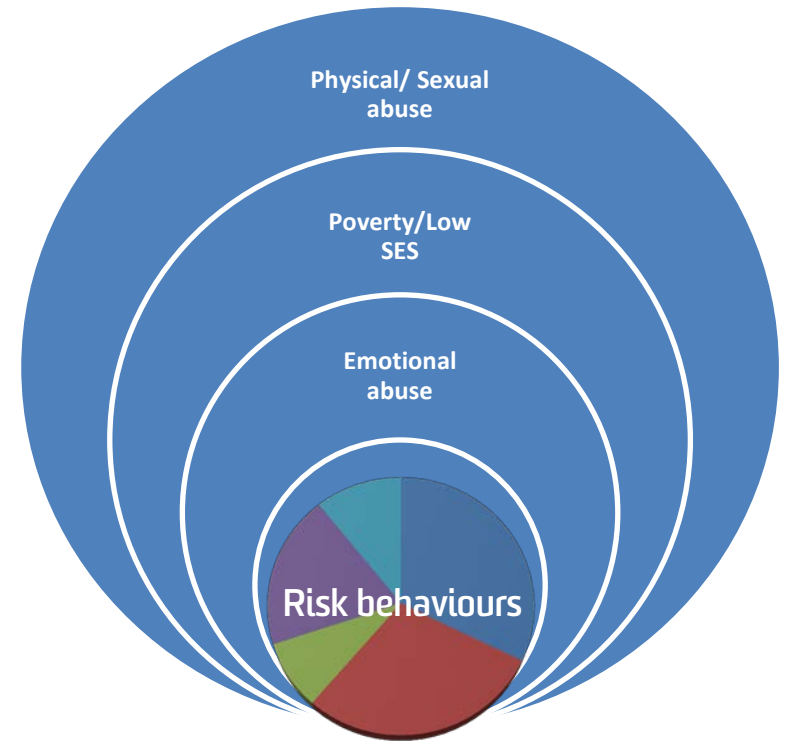
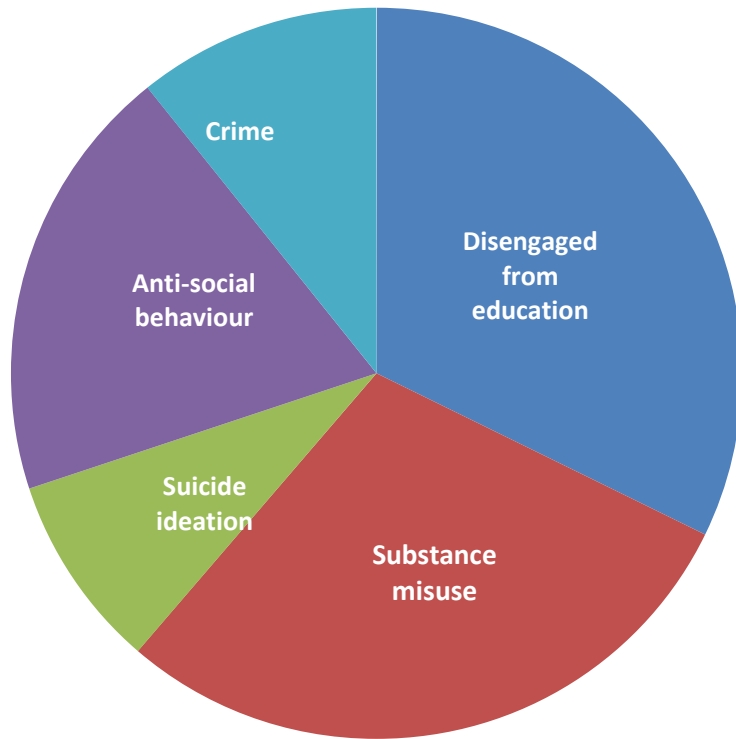
Medicine

National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre

Alice Knight



Young people with multiple and complex needs



- It's the aetiology of the risk behaviours that brings complexity, not just the presence of multiple risk-behaviours

Characteristics of BackTrack young people

Demographic	N=38
Age: 16-20 years	87%
Male	87%
ATSI	93%
Average school attendance per fortnight: Usually do not attend school	16%
Suspensions over lifetime >20	24%
Not working at the moment	68%

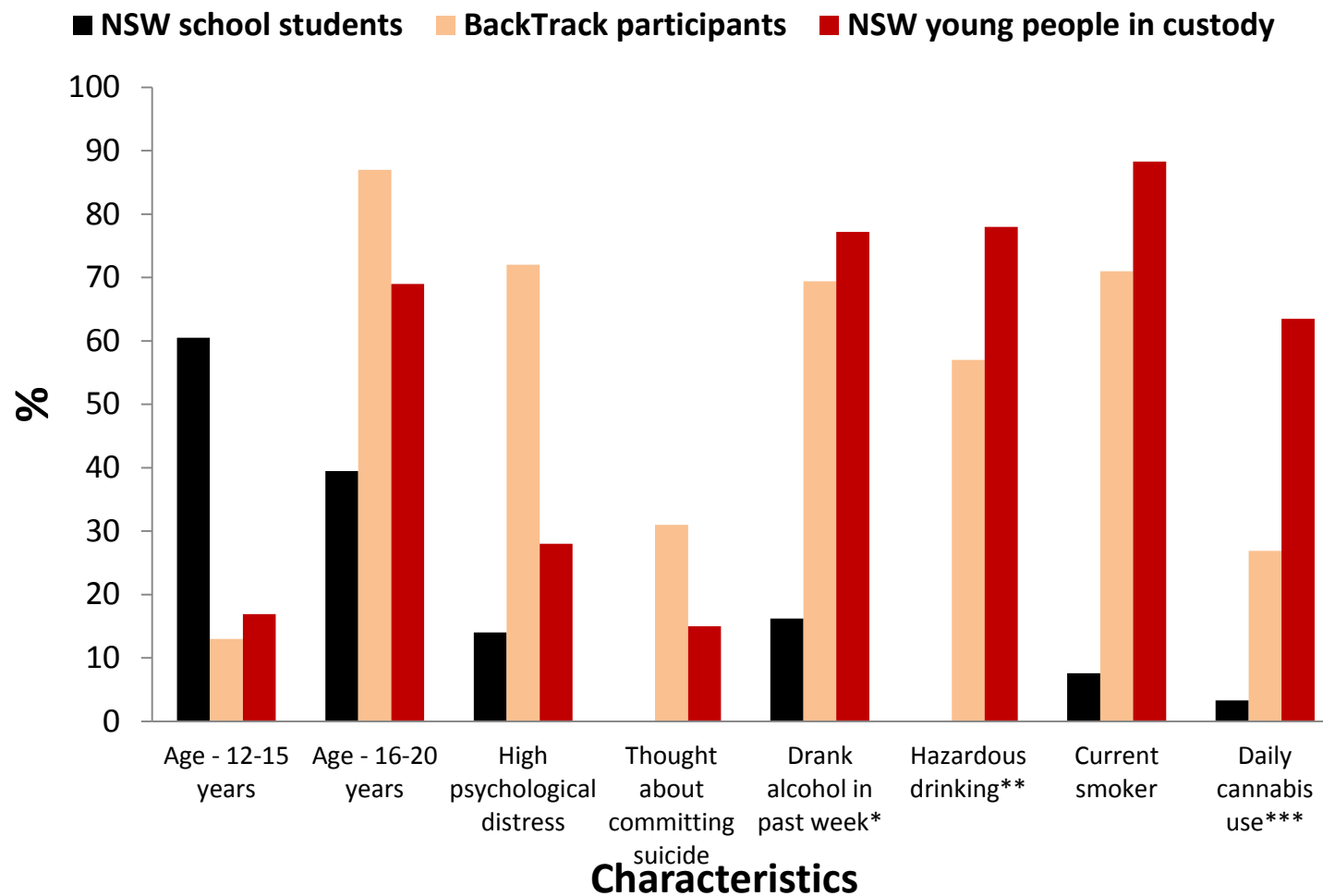
Substance use	N=38
Mean age (years) of first alcoholic drink	13
Drink at harmful levels (AUDIT-C)	57%
Current smoker	71%
First cigarette within 30mins of waking	55%
Daily cannabis use	27%
Have tried illicit drugs in lifetime (excl. cannabis)	14%

Criminal activity	N=38
Committed a crime in lifetime	68%
Been a victim of crime in lifetime	29%
Appeared in court as POI	19%
Been detained in juvenile detention	9%

Characteristics of BackTrack young people

Mental health	N=38
K6+2 Psychological Distress Scale:	
Moderate distress	22%
Severe distress	72%
Resilience: Average score (normative student sample in US = 30)	22
Suicide ideation questionnaire	
1. Thought life was hardly worth living	39%
	27%
2. Thought you would be better off dead	31%
3. Thought about taking own life	20%
4. Made plans to take your own life	8%
5. Ever attempted to take your own life	

How do BackTrack participants compare?

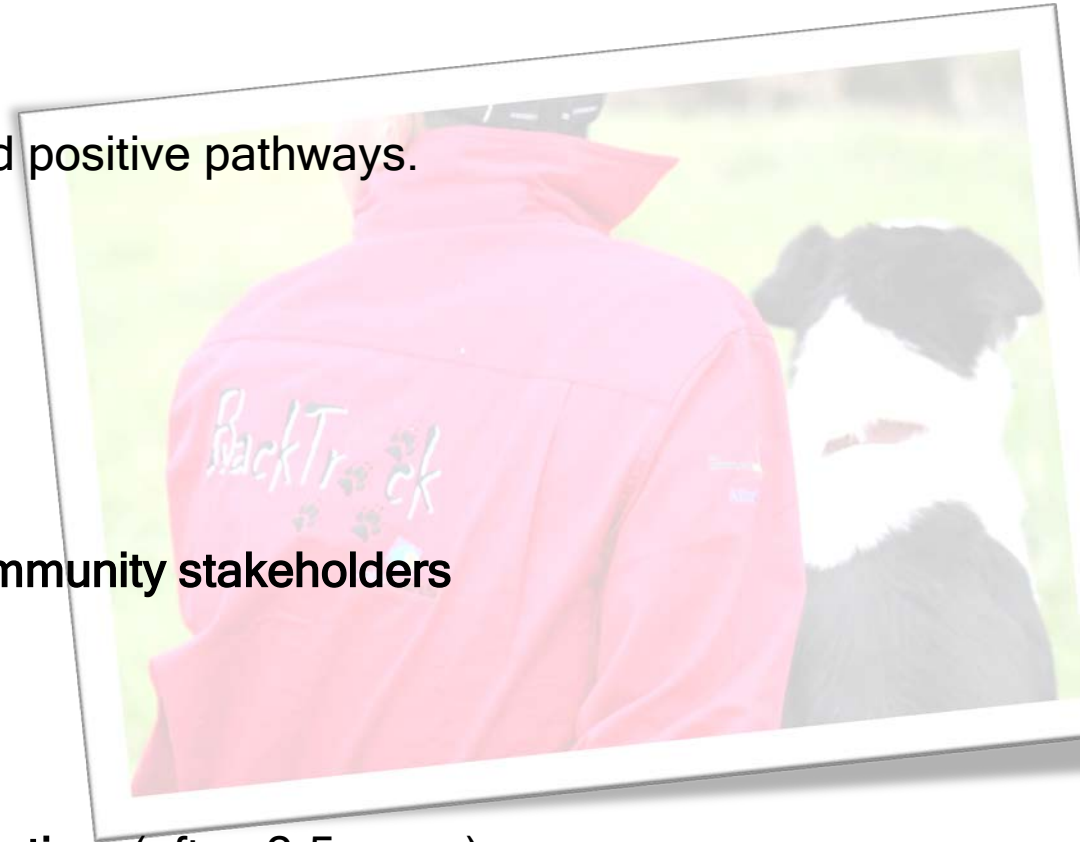


What is BackTrack?

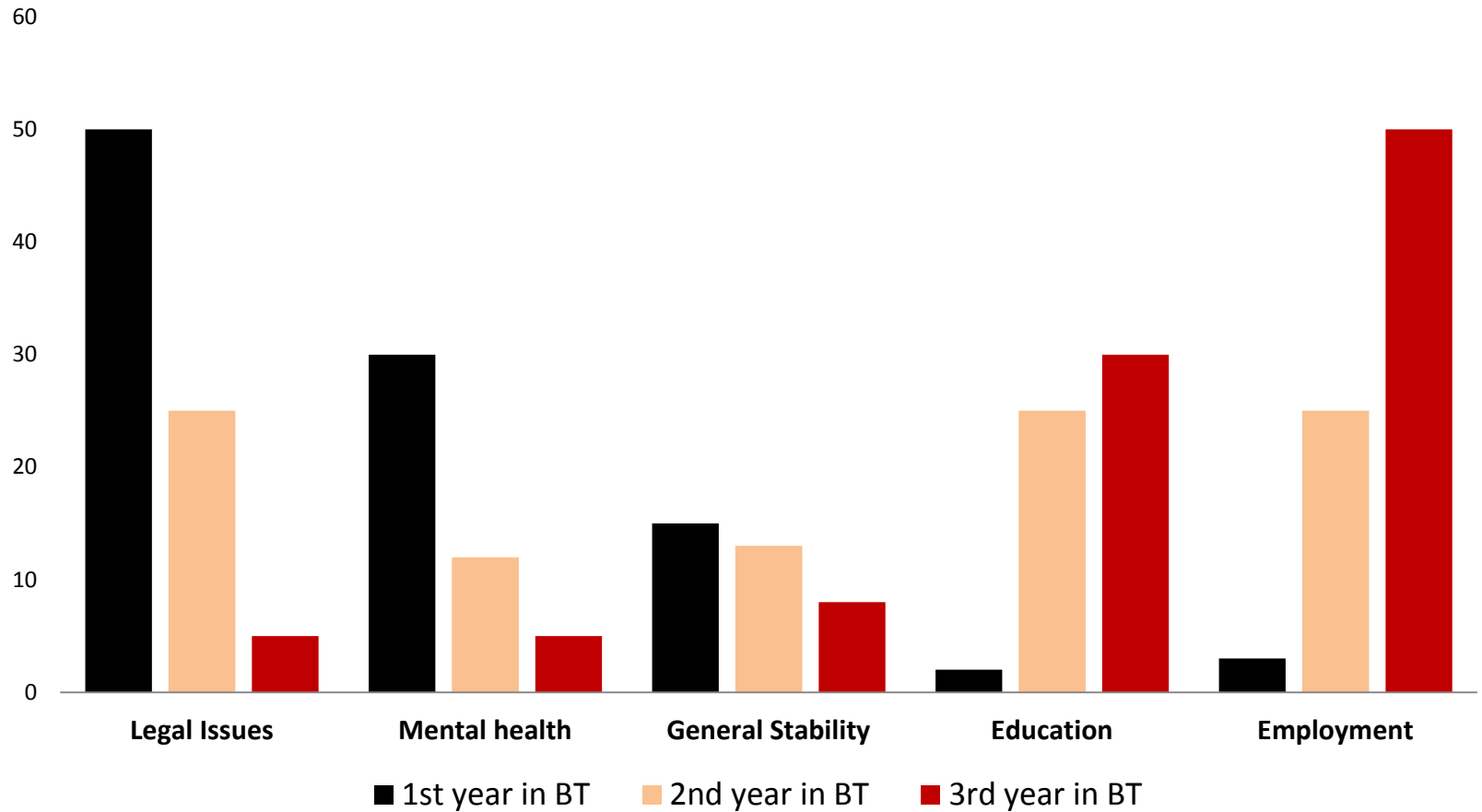
Objective: to provide alternative and positive pathways.

Key program principles:

- i) **A multi-component design**
- ii) **Active engagement of key community stakeholders**
- iii) **Flexibility**
- iv) **Recognition that change takes time (often 2-5 years)**



Participant development over time



Aims of the BackTrack evaluation

1. Define BackTrack: standardisation and flexibility.
2. Describe the characteristics of young people with multiple and complex needs.
3. Evaluate BackTrack program: How?

Outcome measures	Process measures
✓ Self-report	✓ Exposure to intervention
✓ Routinely collected data	✓ Intervention fidelity
✓ Interviews	✓ Participant satisfaction & acceptability
✓ Observation	
✓ Economic analysis	

Pros and Cons

- Developing an evaluation design for an intervention that is standardised....and yet flexible?
- Collecting self-report data from this group, in this context, has been difficult
- Using a model of practitioner - led research