

**AN ECOLOGICAL
EXPLORATION OF YOUTH
PSYCHOSOCIAL NEEDS AND
WELLBEING WHILST IN
RESIDENTIAL CARE**

Presented by Carolina Aguirre

Master of Applied Psychology-Community

YOUTH RESIDENTIAL CARE IN VICTORIA

Department of Health & Human Services:
Child Protection



Kinship care



Foster care



Residential
care



OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Assessing the psychosocial needs of children in residential care settings has been dominated by a clinical perspective.
- Stanley (2007), examined the experiences of young people in residential care and their psychosocial needs in England



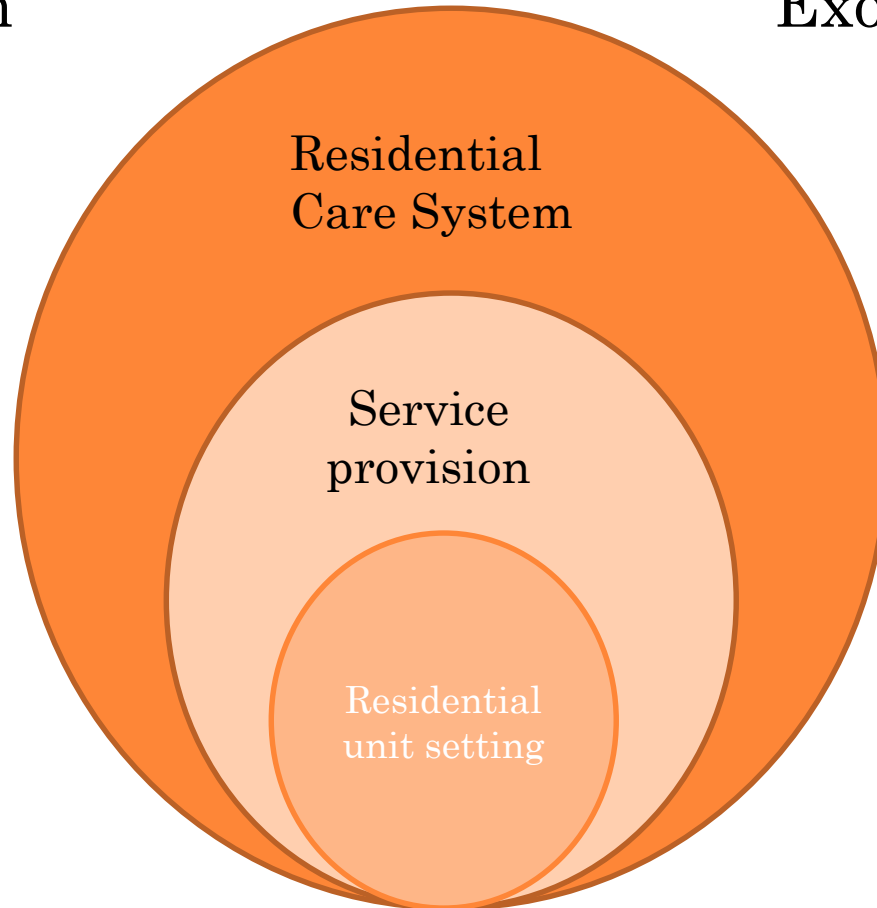
BRONFENNBRENNER'S THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Macrosystem

Exosystem

Mesosystem

Microsystem



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How does the residential care setting provide for the psychosocial needs of youth in care?
- In what manner does the residential care unit facilitate access to community services to meet youth psychosocial needs?
- How is the residential care system interpreted and reflected in the experiences of the young people and unit staff in residential care?



METHODOLOGY & ANALYSIS

- Phenomenological methods of enquiry
- *Sampling*- 11 young people and 8 residential unit workers & community service providers participated in semi- structured interviews
- A coding strategy was created using Bronfennbrenner's theoretical framework, four theme clusters emerged:
- Residential unit setting (Microsystem), Service provision (Mesosystem), Residential care system (Macrosystem & exosystem), Residential care improvements.



FINDINGS- RESIDENTIAL UNIT SETTING

- Positive relationships with resi unit workers were usually collaborative, supportive and empowering;
- “They got to know me but they didn’t read my case files and say oh this is [this young person]they got to know me for me and then read the case files.”



FINDINGS- RESIDENTIAL UNIT SETTING

- Most young people described negative relationships with other young people living in their unit;

“If you’re different or you don’t take drugs they don’t like you, if you’re not the type that can stand up and fight back they’re gonna pick on you and you gotta watch your stuff cos it goes missing so easy”



FINDINGS-SERVICE PROVISION

- A young person's positive experience of mental health treatment and programs;
 - “ [The agency] do like trips, they do it so like you can release your whole stress and anxiety and stuff go away for a week take a trip to get your mind off it and help you out and stuff. The guy that runs it is a psychologist and you go and you talk about all your feelings and stuff.



FINDINGS-RESIDENTIAL CARE SYSTEM

- DHHS and Community Service Organisational policies: young people's placement into residential units

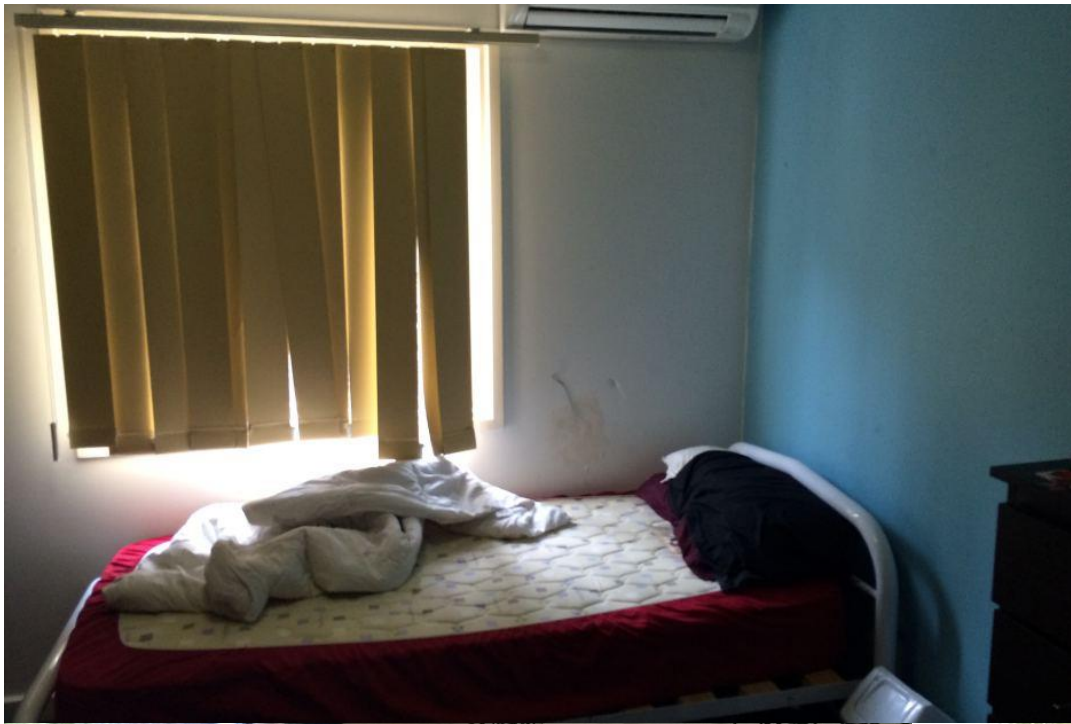
“It was the same routine, every [agency] has different regulations or rules and different [units] have different workers some places were high-risk units even when you weren't supposed to be in a high-risk unit. Like I was the low risk kind but I was placed in many high risk units where I was forced to deal with things that I would never have had to deal with if they had placed me in a low-risk unit.”



FINDINGS-RESIDENTIAL CARE IMPROVEMENTS

- Receiving individualised care from residential unit workers and the residential care system in general
- Young people and workers suggested improving the residential unit environment
- Workers suggested improvements to the service delivery for both Centrelink and mental health services.





Residential care unit examples.

Source: Commission for Children and Young people (2016)

