

Integrated Systemic and Cognitive Behaviour Intervention for Addressing Harmful Sexual Behaviour in Adolescents with Cognitive Disability

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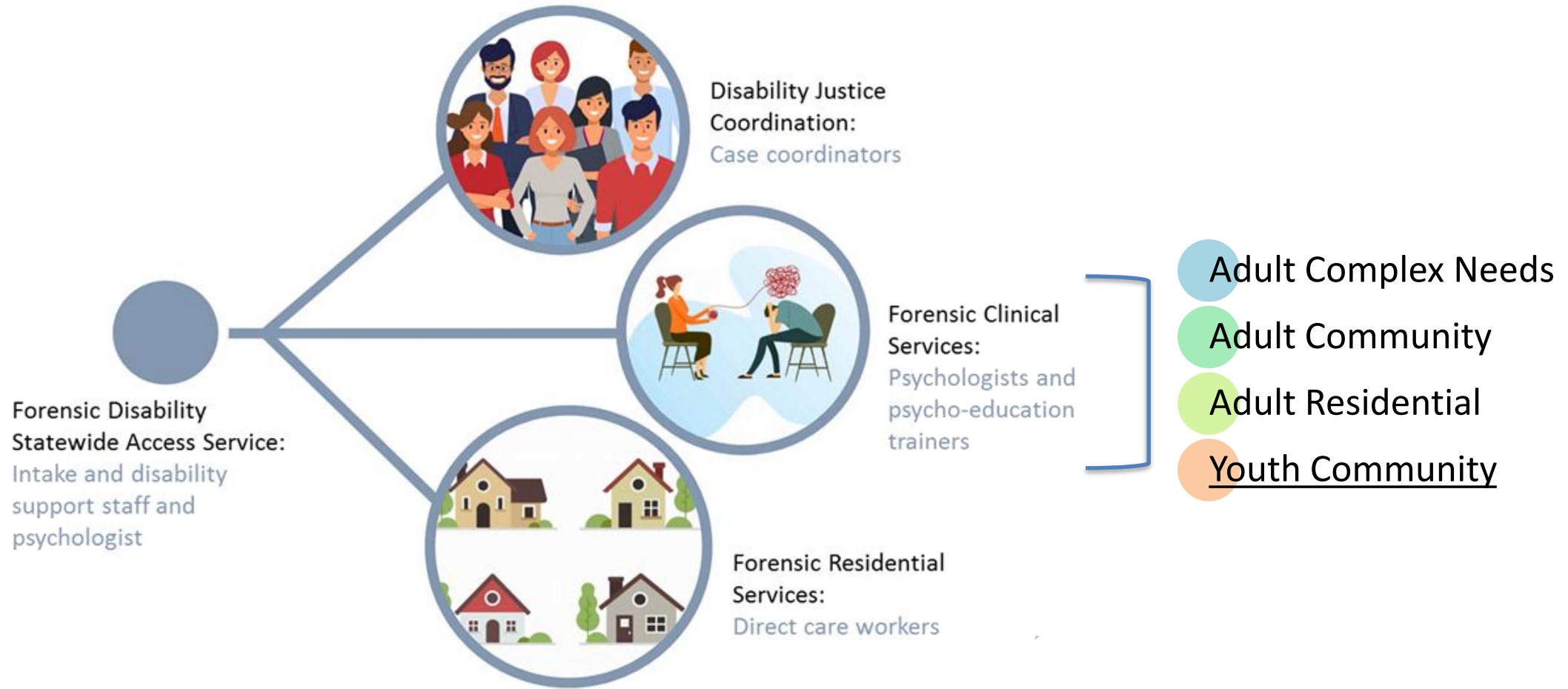


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Who does YFDCS support?

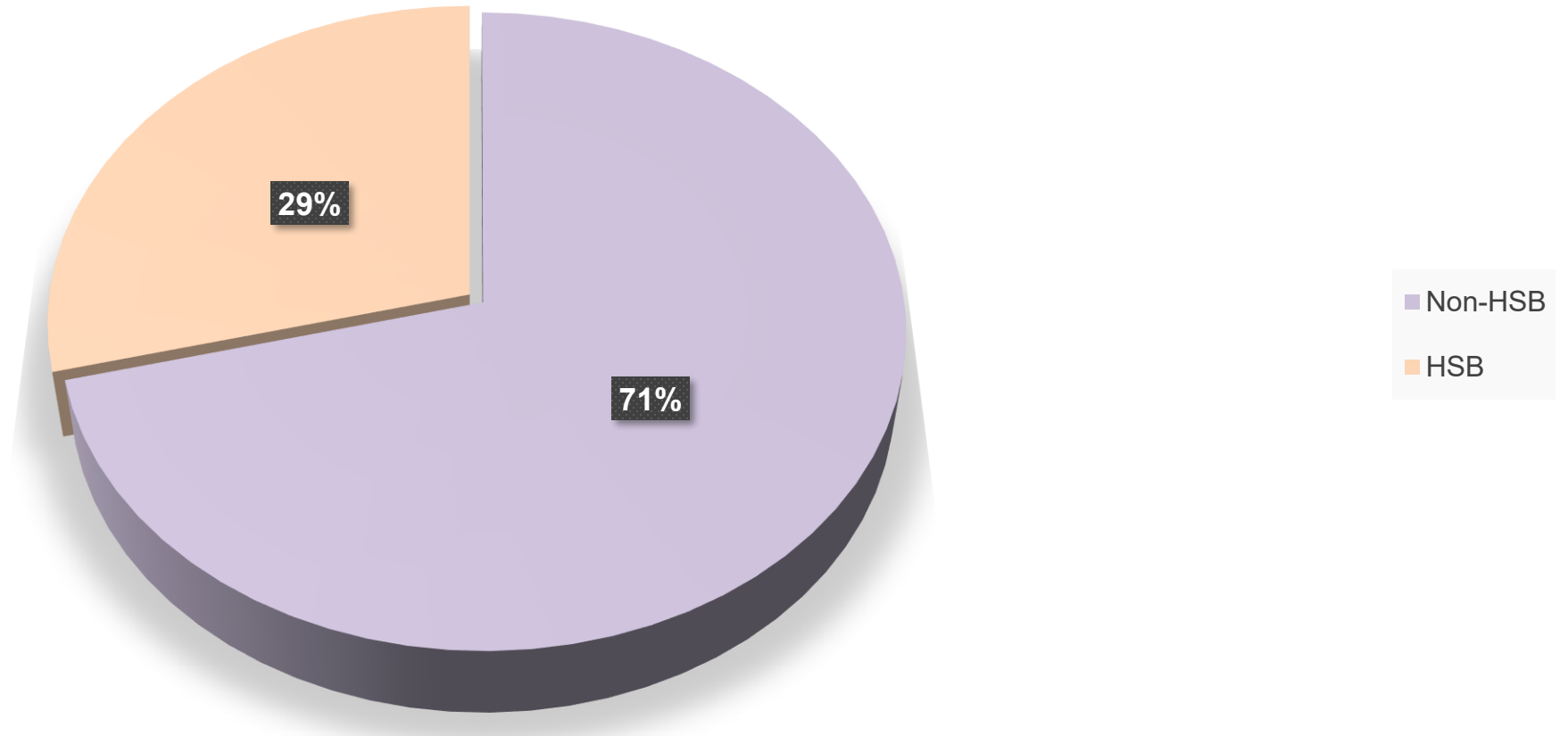
**1. Aged 10-21
years**

**2. Cognitive
Disability**

**3. Involved or
at risk of
involvement in
the justice
system**

Why focus on adolescents who engage in HSB?

Proportion of YFDCS clients engaging in HSB?



“The child is not a miniature adult”

Treatments are generally designed with adults in mind

Differences between youth and adult clientele

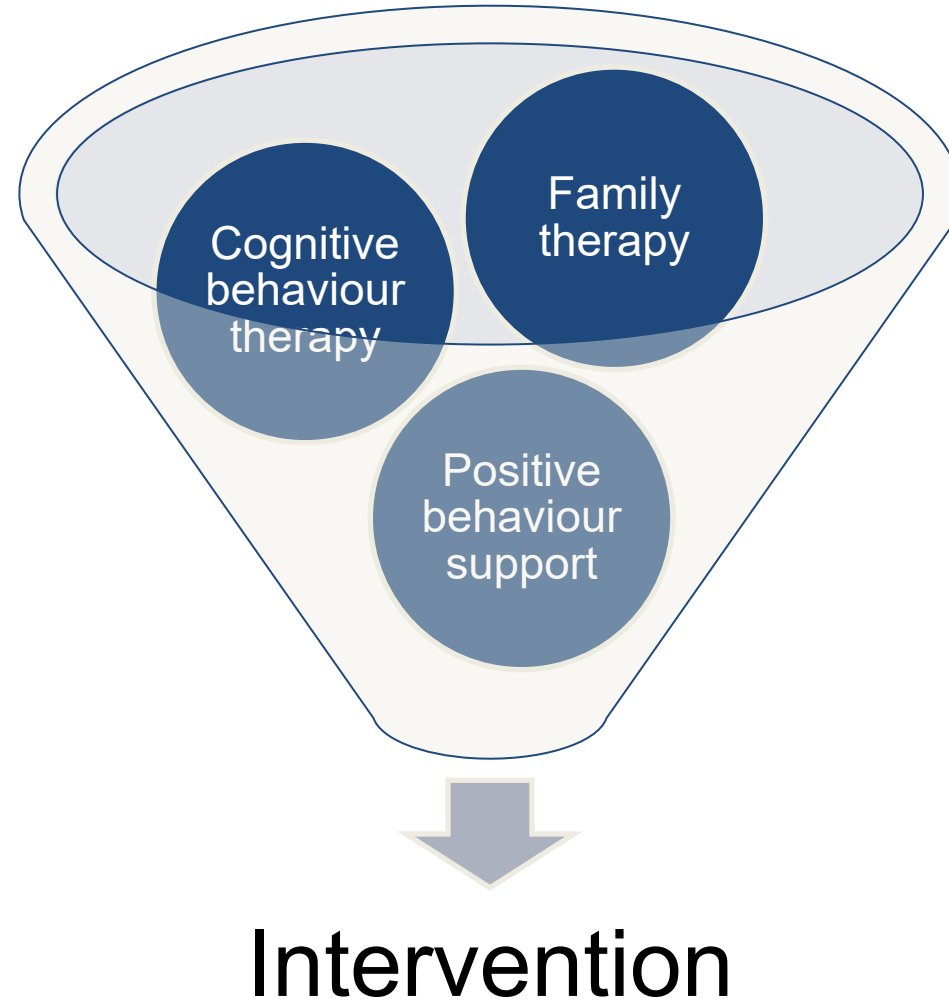
- **Contextual:** voluntary v mandated participation; differences in autonomy (age, services)
- **Developmental:** work with youth necessarily considers attachment, trauma, physical and social environment, developmental stage

Requires flexible, responsive, tailored approaches, but still grounded in evidence

Youth team (YFDCS) is new

- Established in 2023/24 to prioritise earlier intervention and reduce future justice demand
- Responding to the specific needs of our cohort, acknowledging a smaller evidence base
 - ‘what works?’

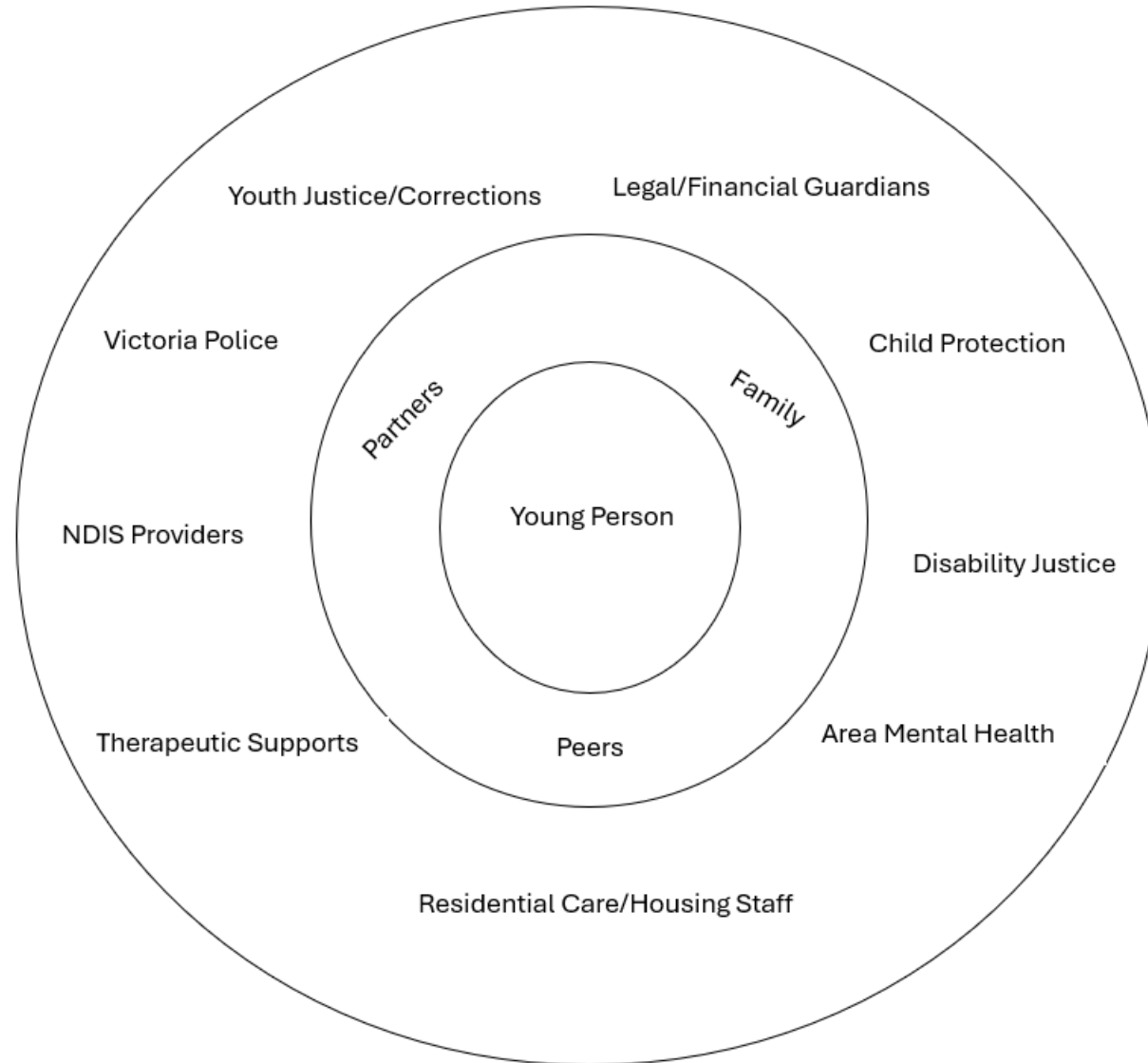
What does treatment look like?



Evidence for family therapy

- Strong effect of FT for various problems. Especially effective in eating disorders and for younger teens.
- Farrington & Welsh 2003 meta-analysis found significant reduction in recidivism for those in FT (48 studies). Parent training had a strong effect, but not school based interventions.
- Littell, Pigott, Nilsen, Roberts & Labrum (2023) systematic review & meta-analysis found inconsistent results amongst 20 studies.
- Minimal research in young people with cognitive impairment

The systems around a young person with a disability



Systemic intervention principles - Systemic (Milan)



- Systems rely on homeostasis
- Dysfunction occurs at a transitional point due to beliefs
- Inflexible patterns are no longer helpful
- Use of circular questions
- Acknowledges structural concepts such as enmeshment and hierarchies

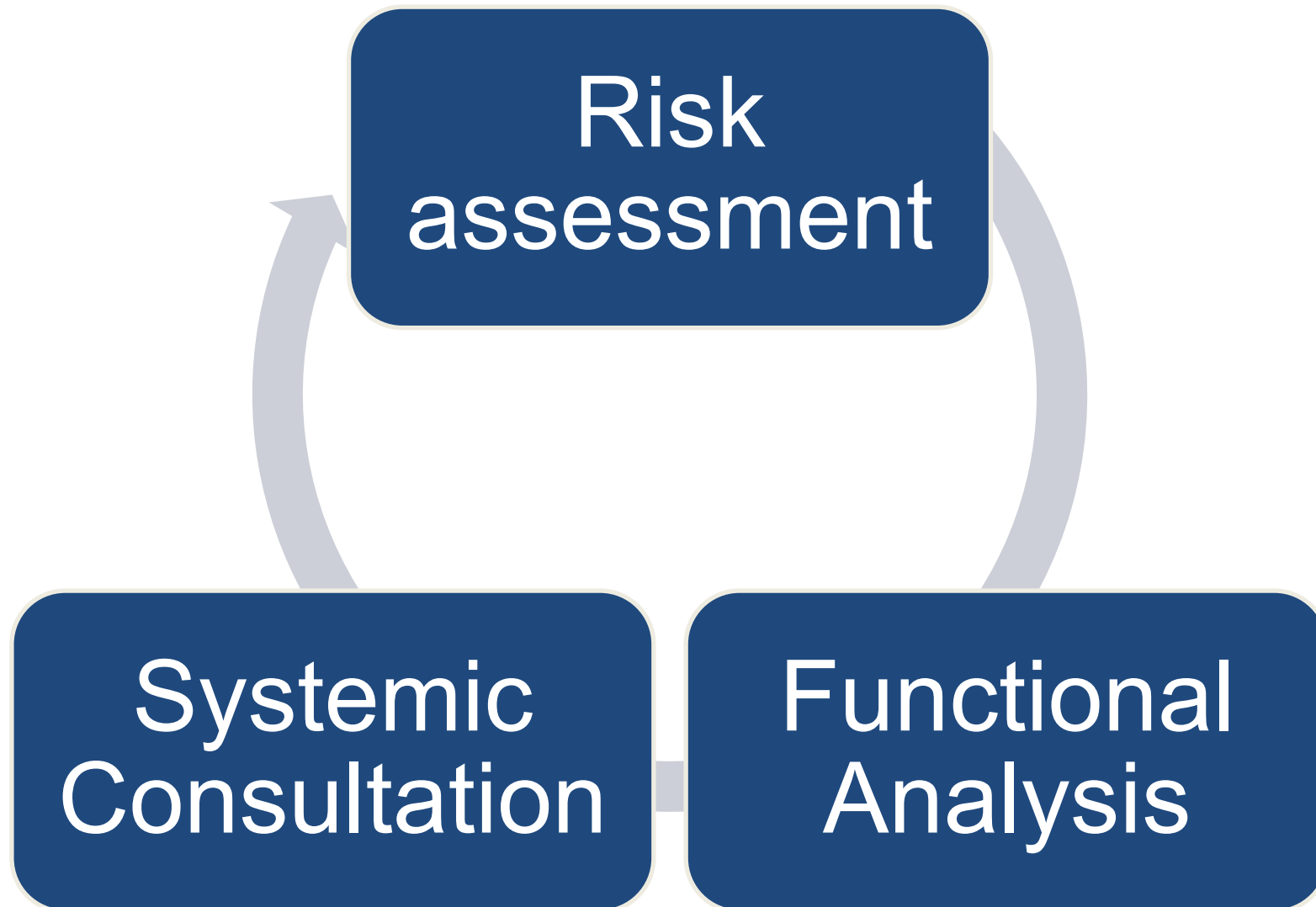
Systemic intervention principles



Post Milan

- Emphasis on narrative techniques
- Techniques including externalising the problem
- Recognition of enmeshment with system and need for independent actors
- Acknowledges social and cultural influences on families

What does assessment look like?



Systemic intervention - principles

Systemic consultation

- Explore important relationships
- Identify interpersonal needs of clients AND the supports to enable appropriate behaviour
- Consider systemic and structural hypotheses
- Reflective
- Can include client and family members

Family therapy

- Explore relationships
- Consider systemic and structural hypotheses
- Attend to attachments / relationships
- Support move to virtuous cycles through amplification

Case Study: 'Craig'



• 16yo, M, non-metropolitan

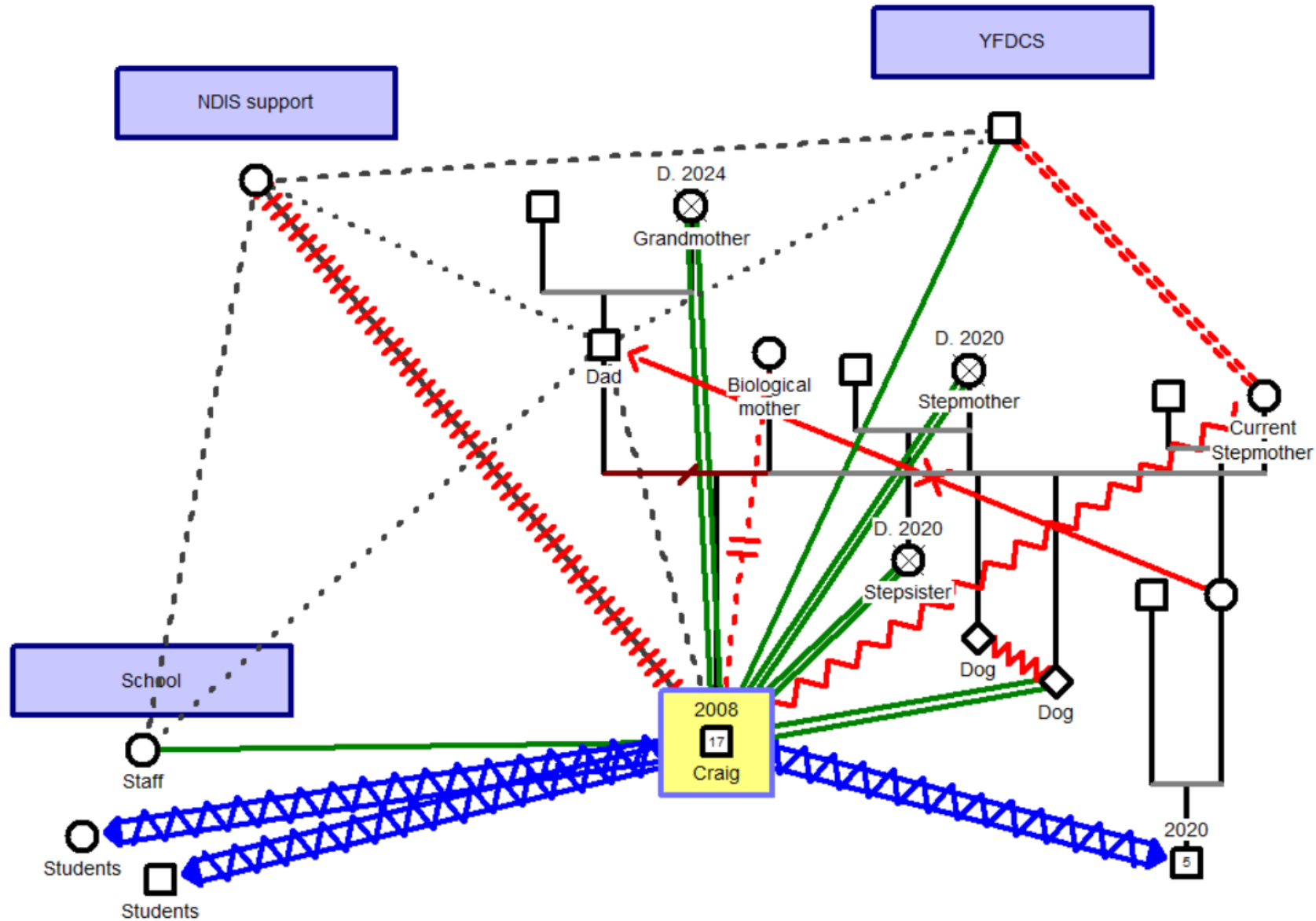
• ID, ADHD, physical disability

• Contact & non-contact HSBs

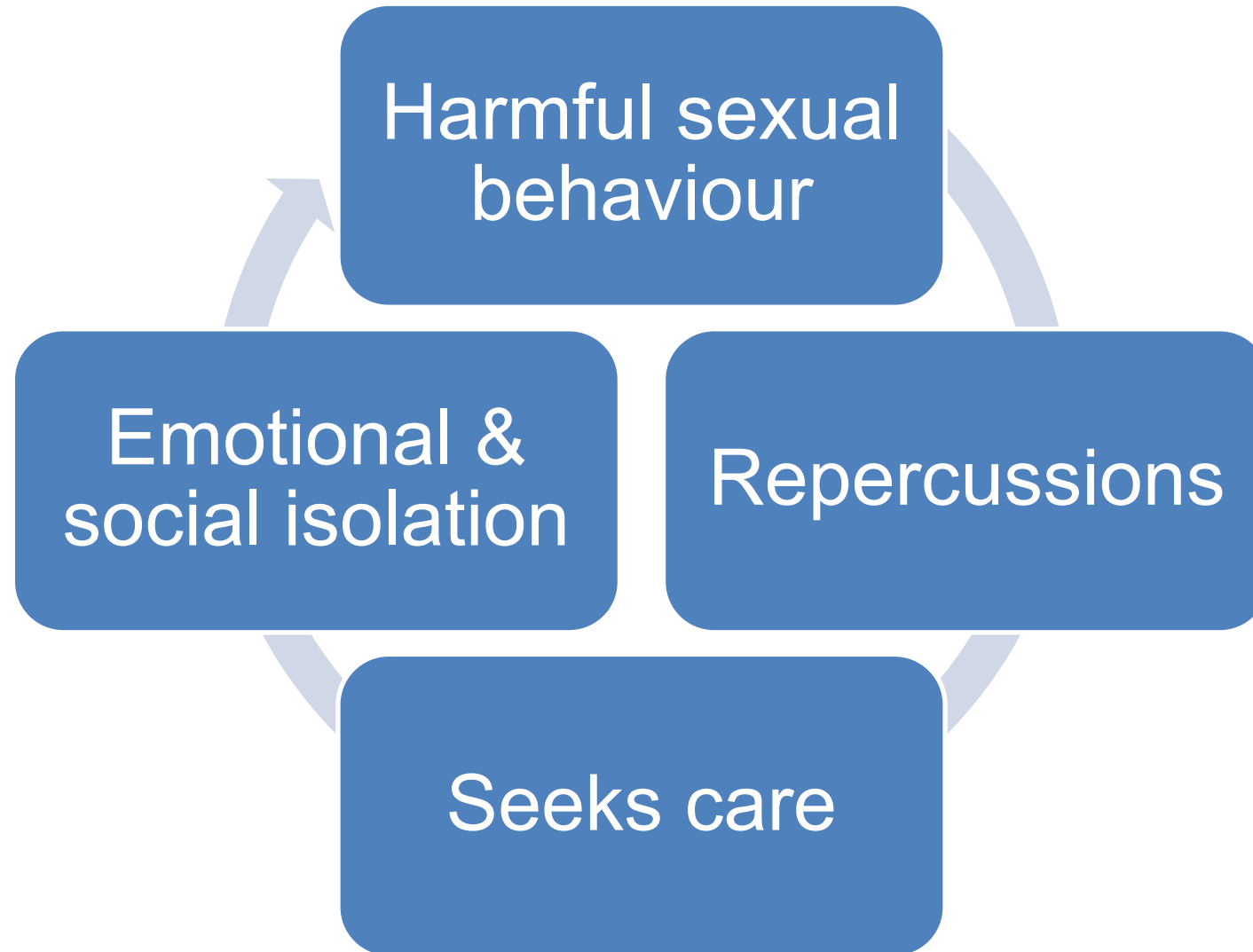
• Disrupted attachment, loss, grief

• NDIS, school, friends

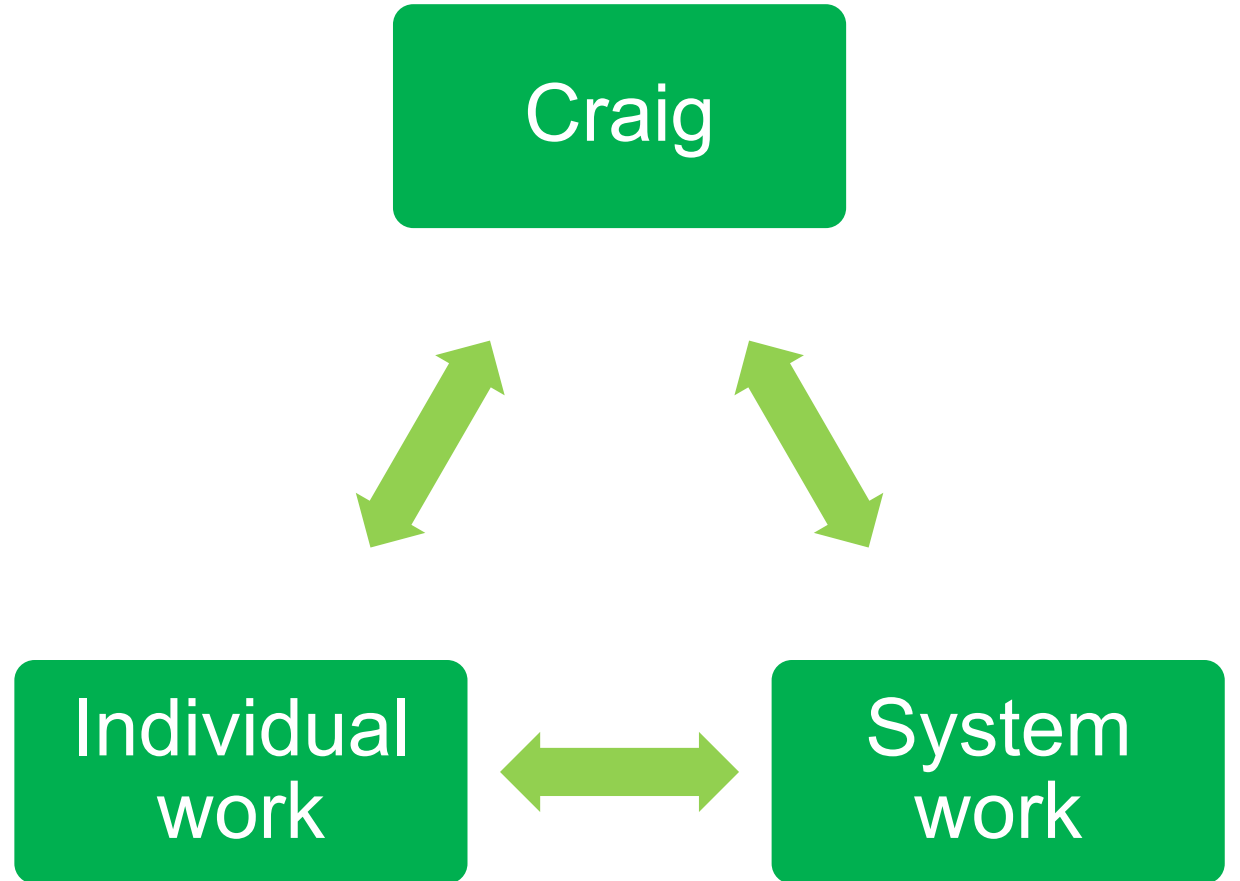
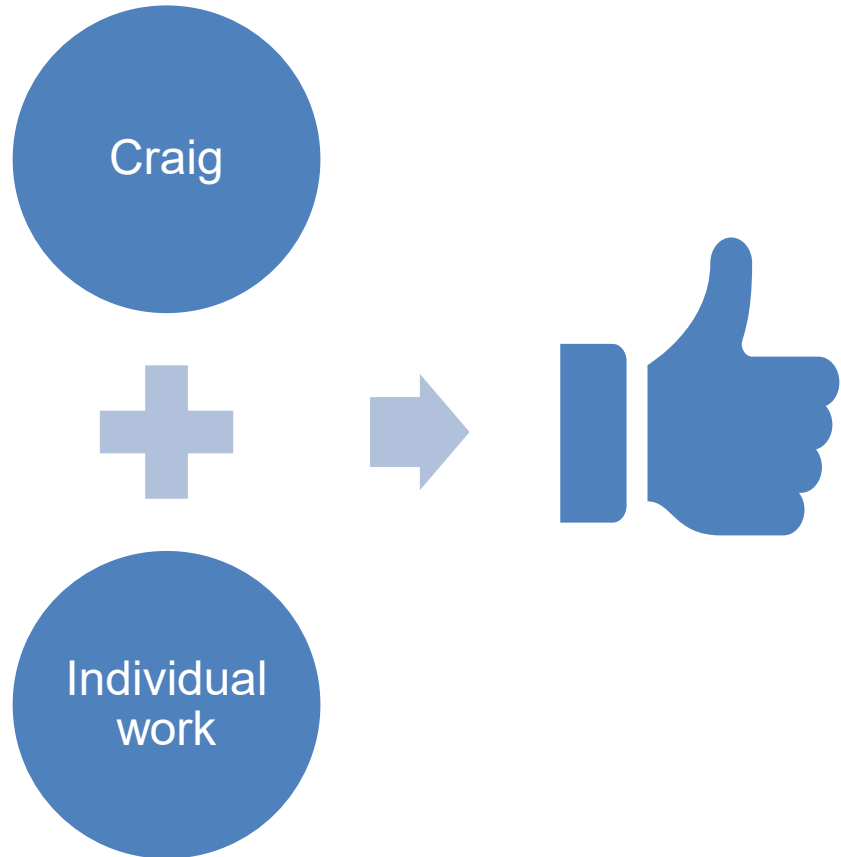
Case Study: Craig (in his system)



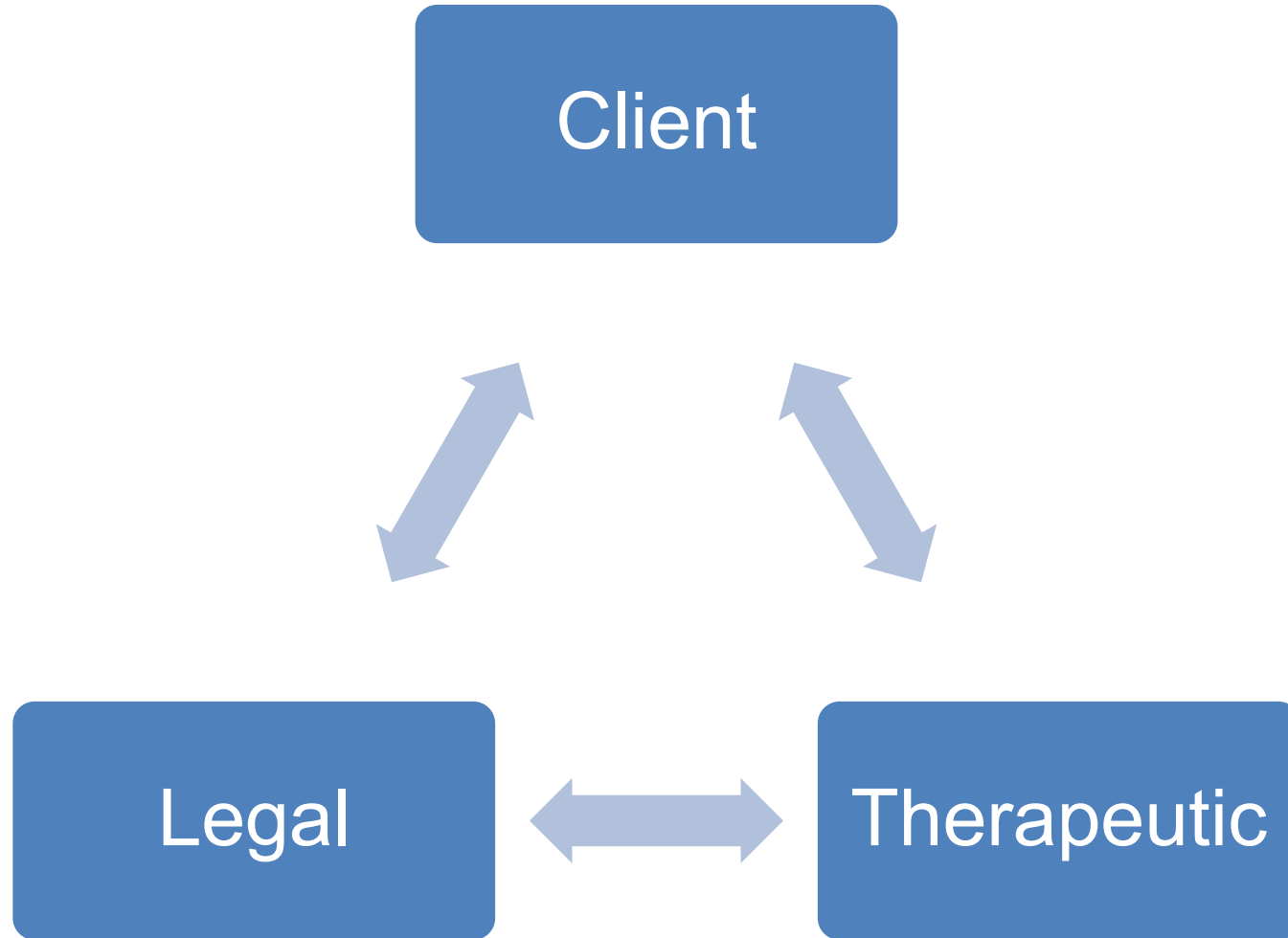
A systemic view of Craig's offending behaviour



Effectively intervening with Craig



Where to from here?



Contact us

Referrals for Forensic Disability Services:

☐ **Phone:** 1300 390 709

☐ **Email:** ForensicDisability.Access@dffh.vic.gov.au

☐ **Website:** <https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/forensic-disability-services>



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