Residential care: An international exploration

Professor Lisa Holmes

REVITALIZING RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

CROSS-NATIONAL TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

EDITED BY JAMES K. WHITTAKER, LISA HOLMES,
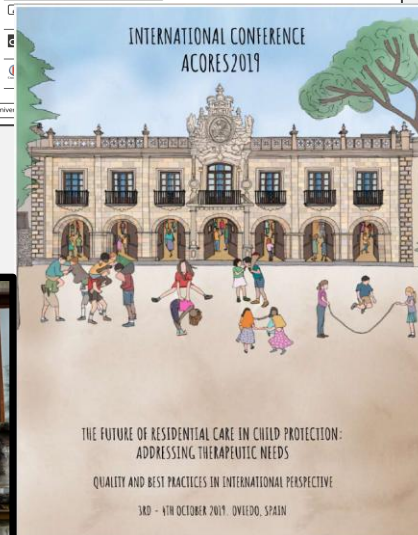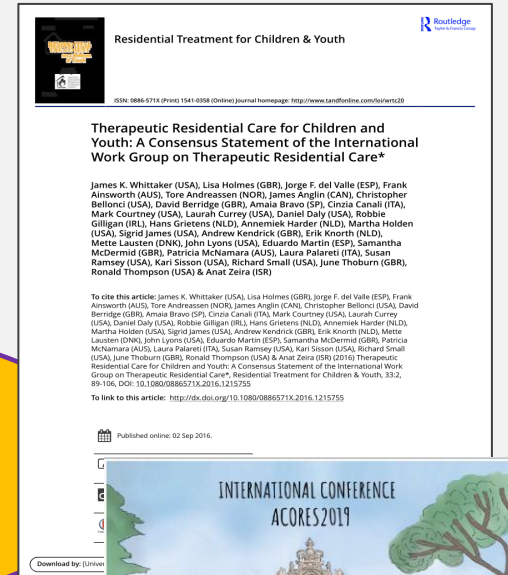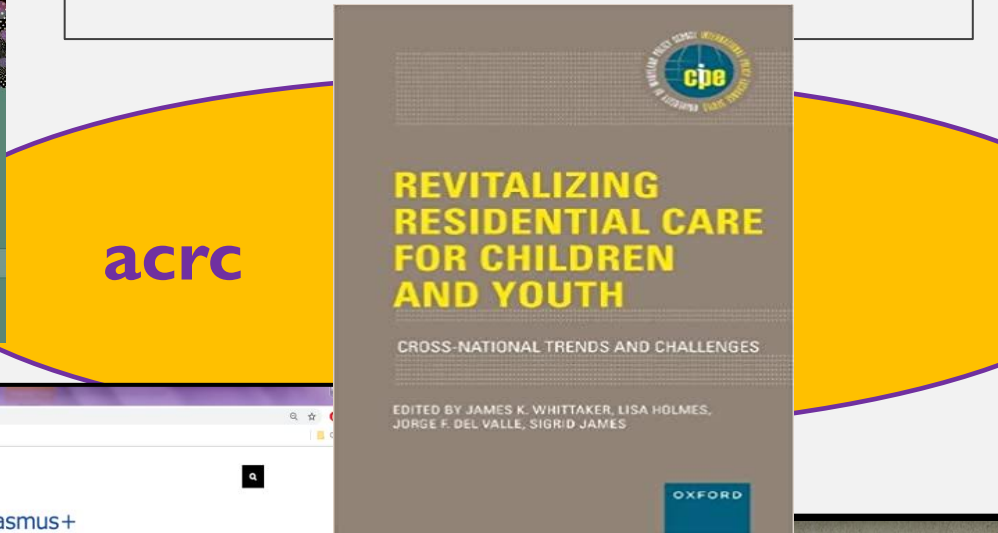JORGE F. DEL VALLE, SIGRID JAMES
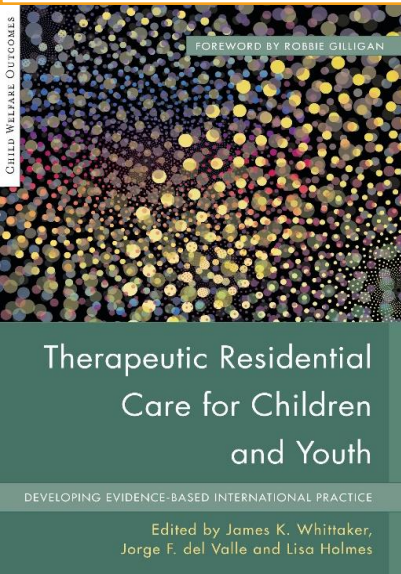
OXFORD

Aim of the book: To address "how societies with developed welfare and social service systems are assessing current needs and future directions in their residential child and youth care sectors" (p.3).

Countries profiled:
England, Scotland, Ireland, United States, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Netherlands, France, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Germany, Israel, Finland, Argentina

Malosco, IT

Therapeutic

'Therapeutic residential care' involves the planful use of a purposefully constructed, multi-dimensional living environment designed to enhance or provide treatment, education, socialization, support, and protection to children and youth with identified mental health or behavioural needs in partnership with their families and in collaboration with a full spectrum of community-based formal and informal helping resources.' (Whittaker, Del Valle, & Holmes, p. 24)

Some common themes (issues)

Complexity of needs

Best use of available (limited) resources

Unintended consequences of policies

Disproportionate spend on late intervention

Neurodiversity

Mental health

Privatisation and profiteering

Inappropriate placements

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Some common themes (responses)

Inter-agency working

Multi-disciplinary teams

Family partnership

Peer mentors

Collaborations across the sector (public and private)

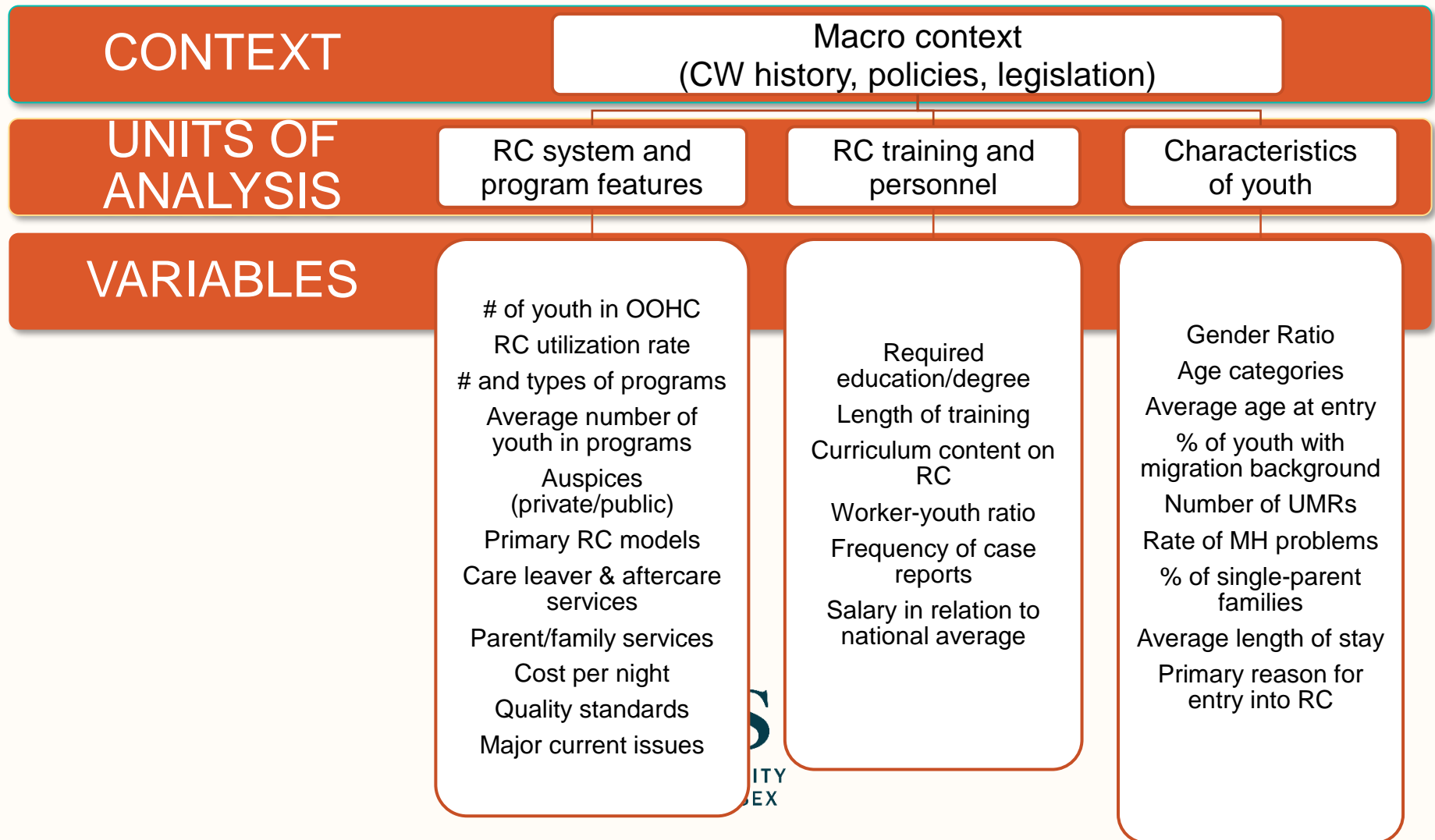Move away from linear pathways

Trauma informed

Supervision

Therapeutic placements

Residential care comparisons (focus on workforce)

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Toward meaningful comparison

CONTEXT

Macro context
(CW history, policies, legislation)

UNITS OF ANALYSIS

| RC system and program features | RC training and personnel | Characteristics of youth |

VARIABLES

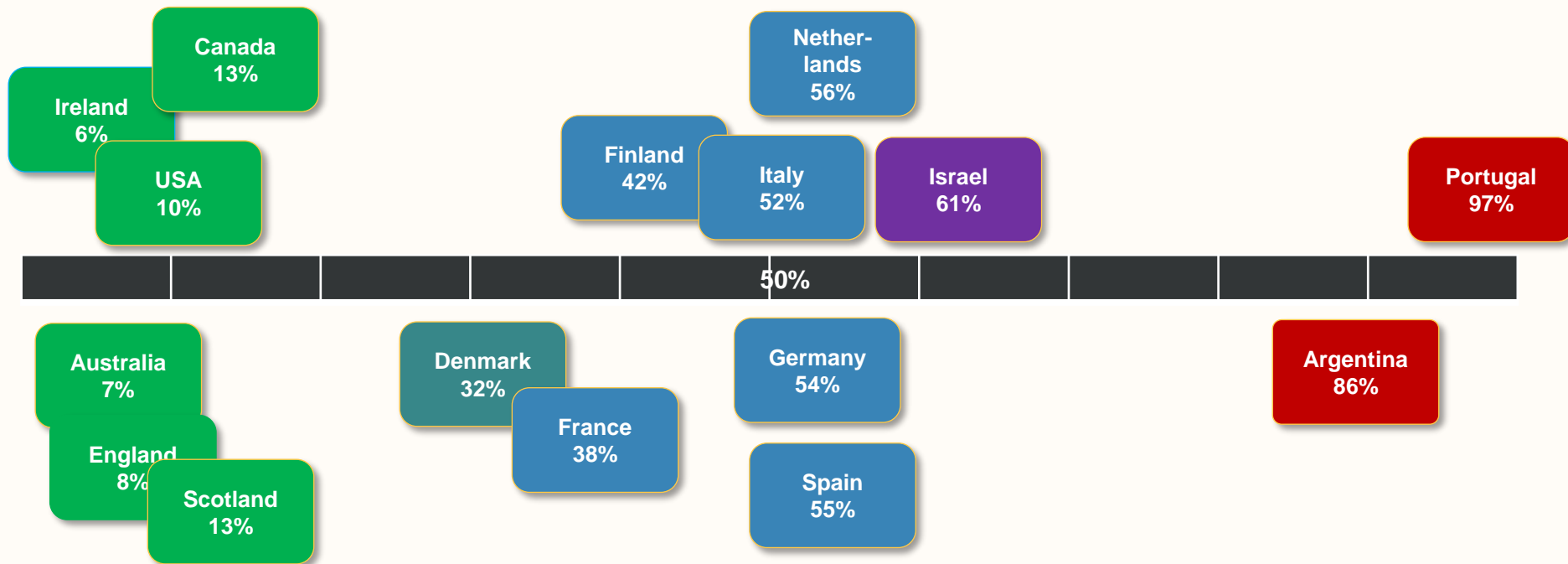| RC system and program features	RC training and personnel	Characteristics of youth
# of youth in OOHC	Required education/degree	Gender Ratio
RC utilization rate	Length of training	Age categories
# and types of programs	Curriculum content on RC	Average age at entry
Average number of youth in programs	Worker-youth ratio	% of youth with migration background
Auspices (private/public)	Frequency of case reports	Number of UMRs
Primary RC models	Salary in relation to national average	Rate of MH problems
Care leaver & aftercare services		% of single-parent families
Parent/family services		Average length of stay
Cost per night		Primary reason for entry into RC
Quality standards		
Major current issues		

METHOD

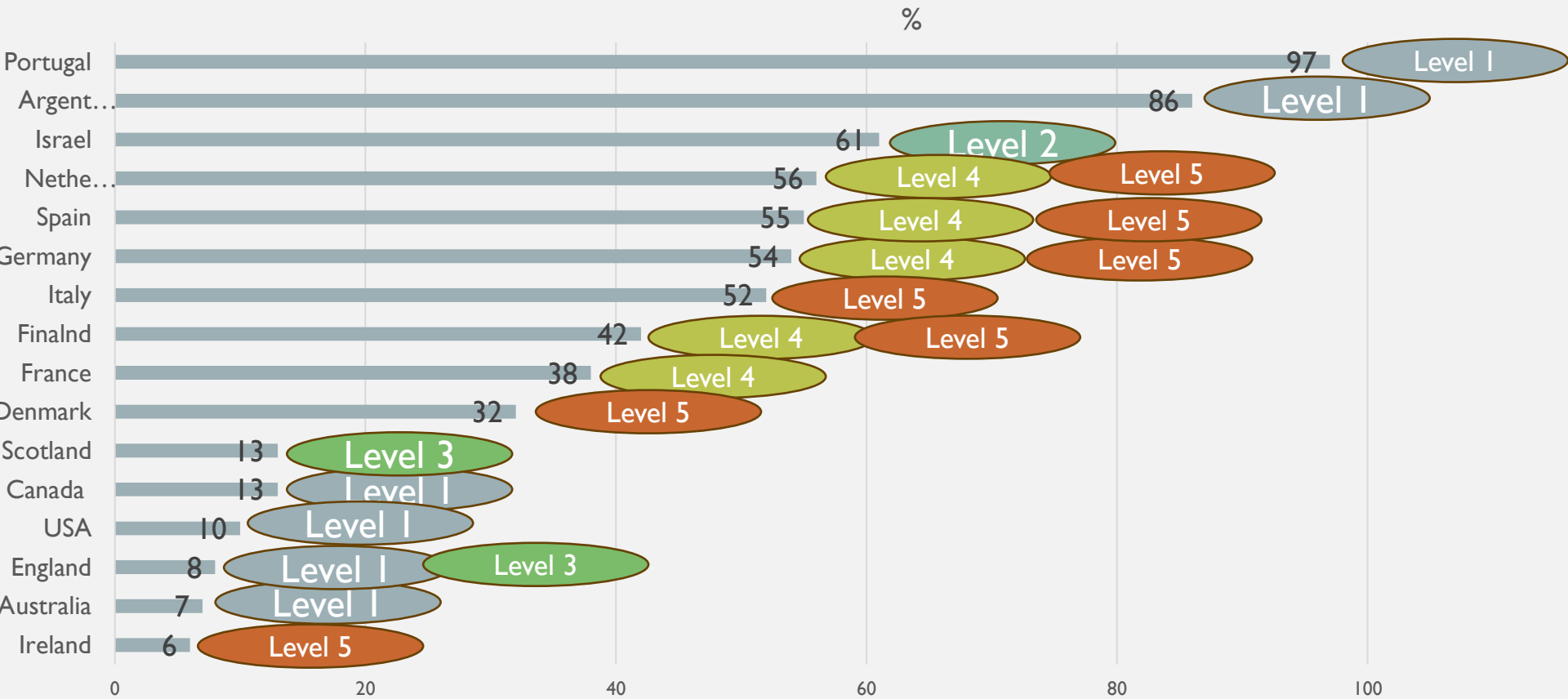Expanded matrix capturing relevant analytic categories (deductive and inductive process)

Data collection for each "case" by respective 'country teams'

Analysis of data – intra-case analysis by authors; inter-case comparison/analysis by editors

Utilisation rates

UTILIZATION AND QUALIFICATION

%

Country	Value
Portugal	97 — Level 1
Argent…	86 — Level 1
Israel	61 — Level 2
Nethe…	56 — Level 4, Level 5
Spain	55 — Level 4, Level 5
Germany	54 — Level 4, Level 5
Italy	52 — Level 5
Finalnd	42 — Level 4, Level 5
France	38 — Level 4
Denmark	32 — Level 5
Scotland	13 — Level 3
Canada	13 — Level 1
USA	10 — Level 1
England	8 — Level 1, Level 3
Australia	7 — Level 1
Ireland	6 — Level 5

Workforce differences

Our focus is on residential care frontline staff, but we recognize that a range of different roles are employed in residential care programs

Workforce not static

Pre-service and in-service training

Different underpinning practice models

Minimum qualifications

Policy & legislative changes

Preferred qualifications

Regional/state differences

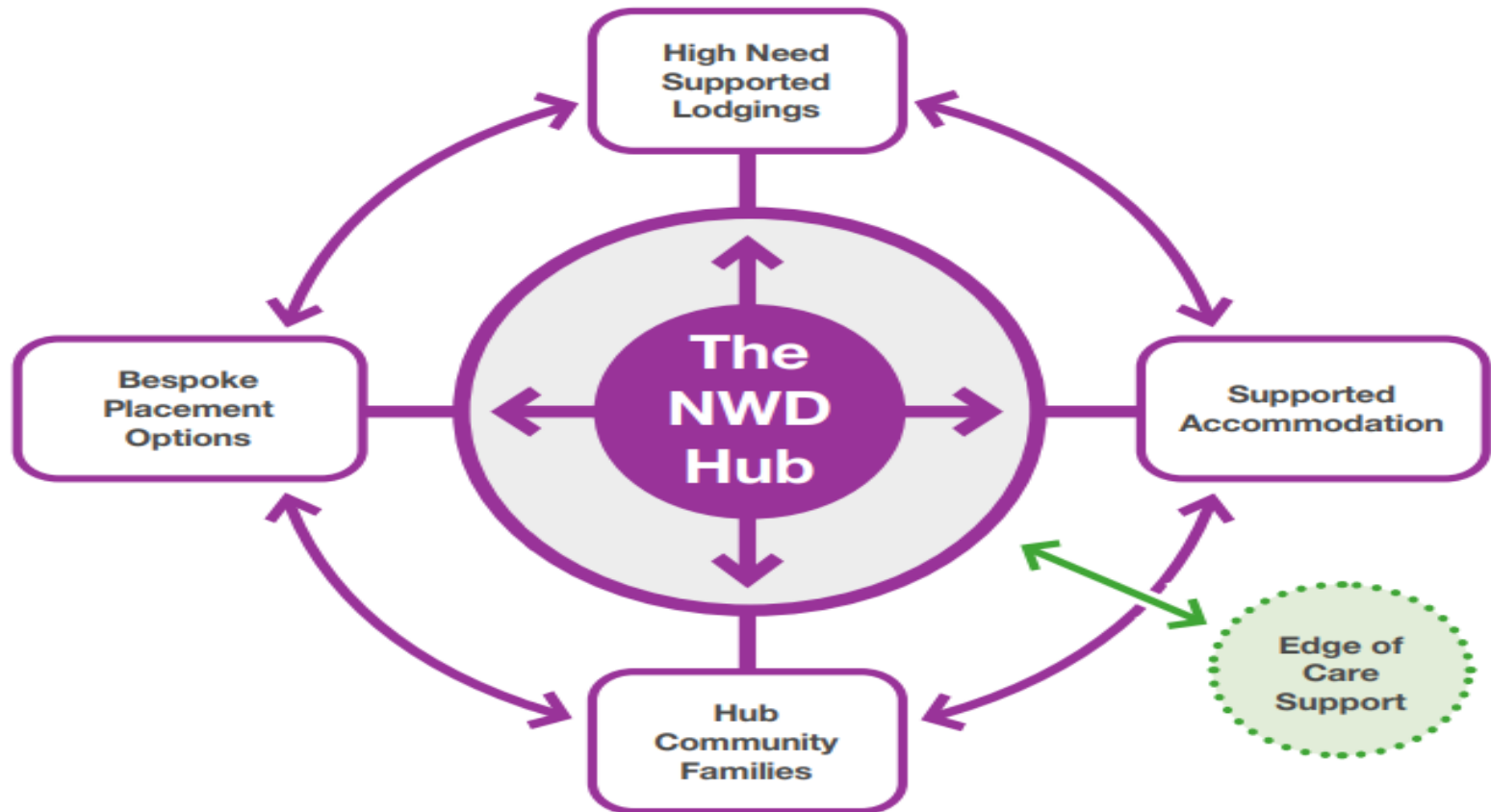Variations between providers

Predominant qualifications

Relationship building skills

Calibration & reflexivity

Crisis inter-vention

'Dealing-with-difficult-behaviour' skills

Interdisc. collabor-ation & teamwork

Engage-ment & activatio n skills

Trauma-informed care

Evaluative skills

NEEDED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS --- LESSONS FROM ERASMUS PROJECT AND BEYOND

No Wrong Door

Sycamores

Not for profit provider in California

Our spectrum of services connect people with exactly what they need, whether that means participating in a training program, attending a community event, or receiving ongoing care and attention through a combination of one-on-one services.

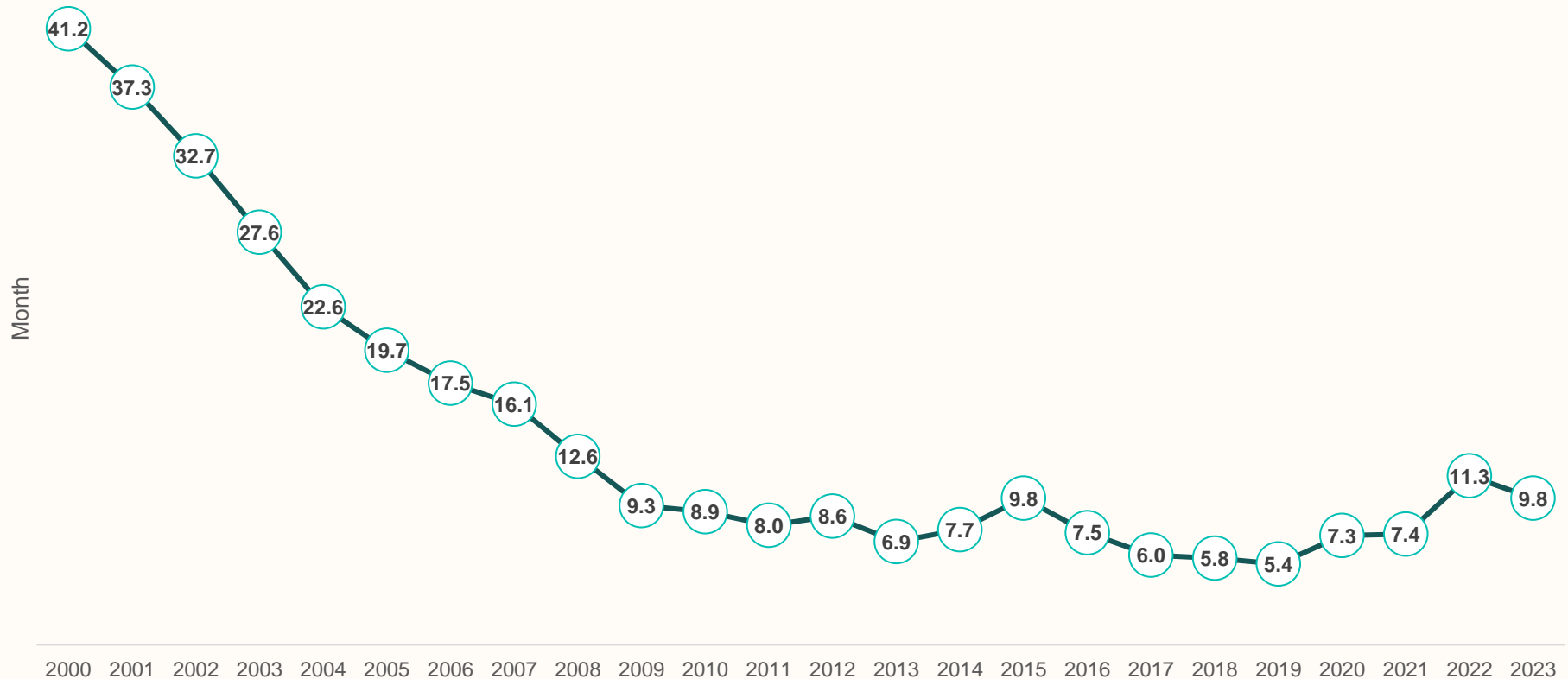**Services for families and individuals:**
Homeless and housing support
Residential services
Family resource centre
School and education services
Advocacy

Residential Wrap: Length of stay trend

Month

41.2 — 2000
37.3 — 2001
32.7 — 2002
27.6 — 2003
22.6 — 2004
19.7 — 2005
17.5 — 2006
16.1 — 2007
12.6 — 2008
9.3 — 2009
8.9 — 2010
8.0 — 2011
8.6 — 2012
6.9 — 2013
7.7 — 2014
9.8 — 2015
7.5 — 2016
6.0 — 2017
5.8 — 2018
5.4 — 2019
7.3 — 2020
7.4 — 2021
11.3 — 2022
9.8 — 2023

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Training models (examples)

Whole team training

Teaching family model: https://www.teaching-family.org/

CARE (Children and Residential Experiences): https://rccp.cornell.edu/CARE_LevelOne.html

Focus on implementation

Evidence-based programmes

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Shared family care (SFC)

SFC has been described as involving the planned provision of out-of-home care to parents and their children so that the parent and the host caregivers (supported by professionals) simultaneously share the care of the children and work toward independent in-home care by the parent (Barth & Price, 1999).

This definition contains several conceptual dimensions of SFC: (1) parents and children living together; (2) the host family, staff, or structural components of the program provide support or care for needs of the children and share the care of the children with parents during at least some portion of their time out-of-home; and (3) the program employs a team, that also includes professionals, to help the families obtain skills and resources. Unlike other service settings with a single identified patient, a Shared Family Care program may focus primarily on the needs of the parent (including their substance use or parenting capacity), or the needs of the child (intensive mental health or behavioural care).

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Questions and discussion

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Further resources

Definition of Therapeutic Residential Care consensus statement:
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/0886571X.2016.1215755

Key international literature on residential care is usually published in either:

Residential Treatment for Children and Youth:
https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/wrtc20/current and many key articles are open access (so free to download)

OR

Children and Youth Services Review:

https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/children-and-youth-services-review and again many key articles are open access

Further resources

Other key websites and organisations:

https://togetherthevoice.org/

And in relation to engagement and work with families:

https://www.fredla.org/

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Further resources

Supporting reunification:

In the UK recent work by NSPCC and Action for Children (broader than residential care): https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2024/home-again-reunification-practice-in-england

And cost analysis of supporting reunification:

https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/vhbfj2xk/reunification-costings-report-home-again.pdf

For international papers (there are quite a few), I suggest using the Residential Treatment for Children and Youth link and searching for articles

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Further resources

Integrated models/providers offering both residential and foster care – there a number of these in the US. The most well known is the following:

https://www.boystown.org/child-family-services/residential-care#home-program

Uses of administrative data for longitudinal analysis of outcomes – examples from Denmark:

https://www.vive.dk/en/about-vive/