



Together, we'll
Find a way

Acknowledgement of Country

Relationships Australia – Northern Territory (RA-NT) acknowledges the Aboriginal Traditional Owners of the lands throughout the Northern Territory on whose country we have the privilege to live and work. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We also acknowledge the funding provided by Australian, State and non-government providers which underpins the services we deliver.

We particularly thank the Commonwealth Department of Social Services and Attorney-General's Department for the ongoing trust they place in RA-NT to deliver crucial services in support of Northern Territory families and communities and extend that thanks to our other funders.



Welcome



Relationships Australia – Northern Territory provides a range of services, including counselling, family dispute resolution, children’s services, services for victims and perpetrators of family violence, services for older people and services specially tailored for First Nations and our diverse multi-cultural communities. We aim to support Territorians to live with positive and respectful relationships.

Our work is grounded in compassion, collaboration, and a commitment to making a difference in the lives of individuals, families, and communities, providing tailored support that meets the unique needs of those we serve.

RA-NT’s values bring together different elements of our approach to working together and with our clients.



Listen with compassion

We care deeply for each other and our clients. We are committed to listening with curiosity and empathy, and to providing a space for people to feel safe and supported.

Work together with respect

Relationships and the way we connect with each other are our lifeblood and are core to building each other up and working towards growth and healing.

Celebrate difference and promote fairness

We embrace diversity and prioritise inclusion, equity and self-determination. We are strong in our commitment to social justice across ages, gender, cultural and financial differences.

Strive for quality and trust

We value honesty and truth, and we do what we say we will do with a commitment to quality and professionalism. We are always learning about our clients, ourselves and best practice, to deliver the best services and programs that we can.

As we continued to see increased rates of gendered-based violence and mental health issues within our community, we know the quality of relationships is intrinsically linked to mental health and wellbeing and the work we do is critically important.

Periods of relationship difficulties, particularly relationship breakdown, can have a significant impact on the wellbeing of family members, including the resilience of children. Meanwhile, the protective

nature of healthy, supportive relationships cannot be overstated. People who are connected and enjoy respectful relationships experience greater well-being, are more productive, and more connected.

The services provided by Relationships Australia – Northern Territory are intended to foster healthy and respectful relationships and assist individuals, couples and families to recover from trauma.



Relationship Indicators



Relationship Indicators is a longitudinal survey of the state of relationships in Australia, based on a representative sample of the Australian population.

In late 2024, Relationships Australia carried out a follow-up to the 2022 survey, the results of which have since been shared as a full report, fact sheets relevant to special interest groups (including people living with a disability and older persons), and presentations within the federation and beyond (for example to the Elder Abuse Action Australia network).

While we continue to interrogate the rich data, some of the key take-aways from the Relationship

Indicators survey over time are that: loneliness is increasing; families with children are feeling the most pressure; people are feeling less safe disagreeing with their most important person (usually their partner), and more often than not, people are managing their relationship difficulties on their own. Men continue to be the least likely to seek support from others, and younger adults have less often listed a partner as their most important relationship.

60%

said their **partner** was the most important person in their life

1.7mil

Australians **feel unsafe** disagreeing with their most important person

1/3

people feel socially **lonely**

Our Impact Story

This report highlights the range of services we provide by exploring the impact RA-NT has on individuals, families, organisations and our community through a range of Data and Impact Stories.

Total Clients: 3667 **Overall Sessions: 15,517**

27% First Nations Clients
11% Culturally Marginalised Clients
15 Remote community services
21 Unique funded programs
68 Employees

5 Social Worker Student Placements
3 Service Locations + outreach services
Counselling and mediation services
91% Clients agreed that that the practitioner understood their concerns and provided useful supports.
95% Clients agreed that they felt safe, comfortable and respected by the practitioner.

Our Services

- 

Individual and family counselling
- 

Specialist Support Services
- 

Specialised family violence services
- 

Employee Assistance Programs
- 

Organisational Wellbeing Services
- 

Family Law Pathways Network, Alice Springs
- 

Post separation family support, Central Australia
- 

Open Arms to members and families of Defence
- 

Family law counselling, mediation and dispute resolution
- 

Aboriginal services including group sessions
- 

Elder Abuse Prevention and Support Service
- 

Children's Counselling

Supporting Individuals, Couples and Families

Counselling Services provides counselling to families, couples, individual adults and children. This service supports people experiencing diverse issues including those concerning personal and workplace relationships. Counsellors draw from a range of modalities including trauma informed therapy, narrative therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, emotion focused therapy and person-centred therapy.



Counselling Services are provided to a broad range of clients including Police, Fire and Emergency Services, ex serving and serving defence personnel, NT Govt Employees, Not-for-Profit Organisations and individuals seeking support for separation, family law and family and relationships issues.

Counselling Services also supports specialised programs including:

- Counselling ASsist, where counsellors from Darwin travel to Alice Springs to meet client need,
- Darwin Indigenous Men's Service to provide trauma healing group care,
- Sunrise Centre where people living with drug and alcohol issues and homelessness are supported in their rehabilitation and reconnection to the community.

1836

Total Counselling clients

4344

Total Counselling sessions

"The counsellor has been such an incredible help to our relationship and makes us both feel so heard."

"They are just wonderful, and I can't credit them enough for how much they have helped with me my individual work."

The Family Relationships Services Program (FRSP)

FRSP focuses on families who are at risk of separating, or who have separated and aims to improve the wellbeing of families, children and communities. FRSP Services are funded by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department

and include information and referral, support, education and skills training, counselling, dispute resolution, outreach and community capacity building and development. Children are centred through the separation process.

Listening to the voice of the child to help guide challenging relocation disputes

Many separated families engage with Family Dispute Resolution to navigate relocation issues. The Northern Territory has a very transient community, with a high cost of living and for many, family support is located "down south" or interstate. These are difficult cases for parents to negotiate on their own, even in previously amicable and collaborative co-parenting relationships. The stakes are high, and emotions are often heightened.

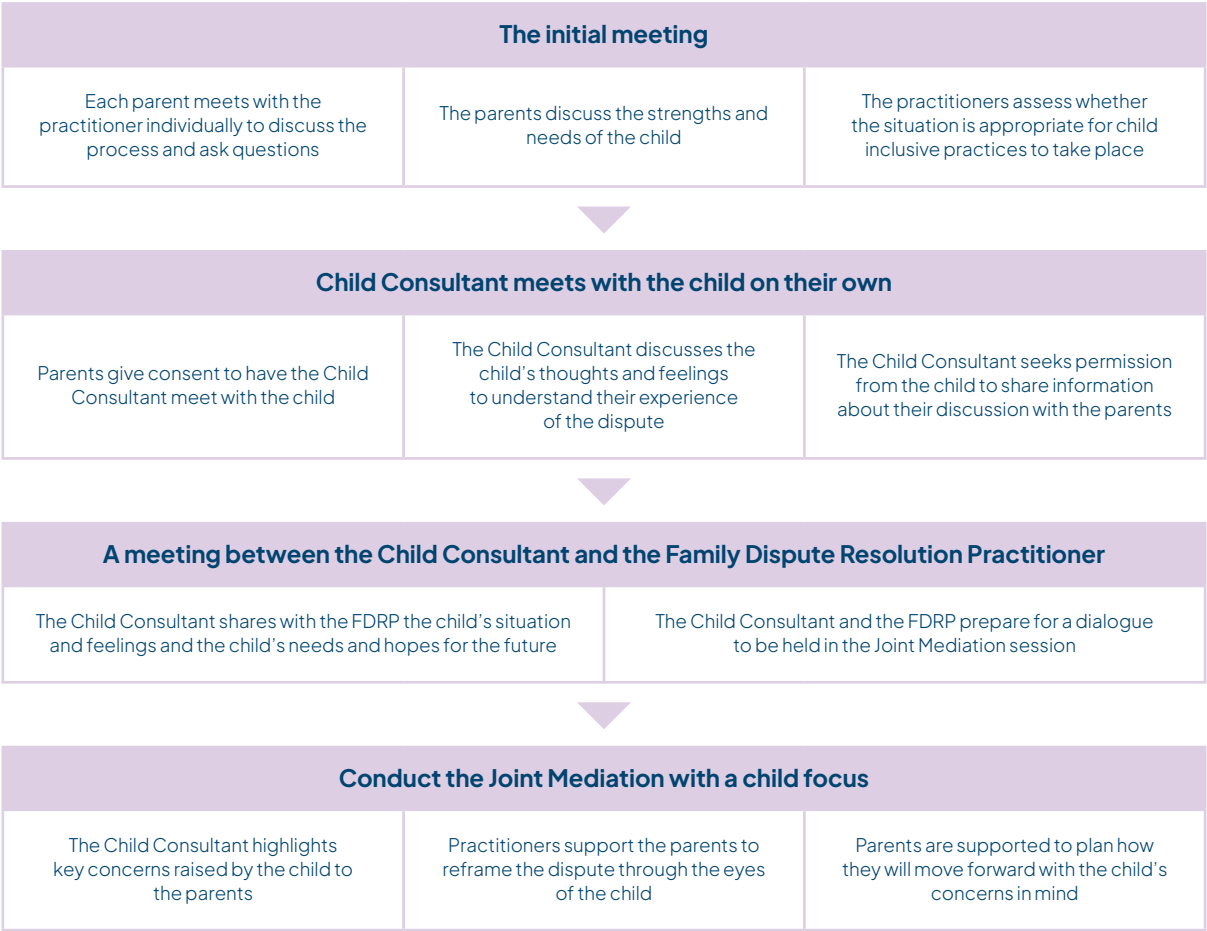
In cases such as these, it can be helpful to engage a Child Consultant to assist the parents to consider the proposed move from the child's perspective. Child Consultants are practitioners who have undergone specialised training enabling them to conduct an age-appropriate discussion with children about

their experiences of the dispute. Children are not asked to solve problems or provide their opinion on the dispute. Instead, Child Consultants discuss their feelings and experiences and then communicate these findings with parents, enabling them to take their child's views into consideration. Research shows that child inclusive practices such as these improve relationships across the family, leading to greater psychological wellbeing for the children. Additionally, agreements are more durable and new litigation is less likely when child inclusive practices take place (McIntosh et. al. 2007).

3104 Parenting and Property Sessions



The Child Inclusive Practice Process for Family Dispute Resolution:



Impact Story !!

Parents experiencing a separation and considering a move visited the service. Both parents indicated they were keen to hear what their daughter was thinking and feeling but did not want her to feel responsible for any big decisions. The Child Consultant's role was explained to highlight that they would not ask Dee* whether she wanted to move, but would instead focus on understanding her feelings and experiences of life through the separation. Consent was then given by both parents to participate in the CIP process.

The Child Consultant met with Dee's parents individually, and then Dee. They then met with the Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner to share their findings. In the Joint Mediation, the Child Consultant highlighted the high level of parental attunement and connection from the parents, evidenced by both parents having similar accounts of their child, and the

fact that Dee had stated she generally felt joyful and happy.

The Child Consultant then shared what she had learnt about Dee, including her hobbies and her description of life in each parent's home. She noted the fact that Dee was very in touch with her emotions and body reactions, using phrases like "it's the hormones" or "I'm trying to stop but the tears keep coming". The Child Consultant noted that Dee spent a lot of time talking about her pets in both homes. The Child Consultant clarified that Dee had brought up the topic of relocation herself and the Child Consultant had merely repeated and summarised her statements.

The key points the Child Consultant invited the parents to consider were:

- Pets are very important to Dee. She had made a

point of saying Molly* (the family cat at the Father's house) needed to be with her wherever she lived.

- Dee says she is happy with the current week about arrangement.
- Dee stated that when the move is brought up by either parent, "the joy leaves my body".
She became quite upset at the thought of either leaving Molly behind or taking Molly and then her father no longer having Molly at his home. She said, "If I could put a wish out there, it would be for everyone to stay where they are and no one to leave".
- Dee talked about feeling connected to both homes, with there being lots of memories in Mum's house and a pool at Dad's new house.
- Dee said she originally wanted to move but now doesn't want to.

- She wants Dad to take her seriously and understand that she has big feelings about the move.

After listening to the Child Consultant, both parents acknowledged that they hadn't been focusing on how important Molly was to Dee. The mother said it was good for her to hear. The Child Consultant suggested that in moving forward, it would be important for both parents to:

- Agree on how they will talk about the move and take seriously Dee's expressed desire to hear less about it.
- Discuss how they will support Dee to manage any grief associated with a move if it happens.
- Discuss how they would support Dee to maintain close relationships if the move was to occur.

*names changed

Outcomes



The introduction of Child Consultants into the mediation and post-separation work supports parents to reframe their focus during a dispute to

ensure that the best outcomes are achieved for the child, which often results in reduced acrimony as parents work together to support their child.

The key outcomes of Child Inclusive Practice are:

Helping parents to understand how children are feeling and coping in difficult family situations

The parents agreed to speak to Dee together after the Joint Mediation and say: "Thanks for talking to [the Child Consultant]. We've taken on board what you've said. We are going to put the move on hold. Everything will stay the same."

Ensuring children are not left out when a family is making significant decisions

The information from the Child Consultant led the parents to agree to "put the plans to move on hold" until she had finished Year 9

Children feel emotionally safer, more resilient and more confident in their parents' choices

Dee felt listened to and supported by her parents

Parents understand effects of conflict on children

They agreed to be more mindful of Dee's wellbeing and to limit initiating conversations, instead texting one another about the move

Improvements to wellbeing and mental health regardless of desired outcome

Prior to beginning the process, the father's mental health and wellbeing was already improving (DSS score 3). By the end, he was demonstrating adequate ongoing mental health and wellbeing (DSS score 4). Before the process, the mother's mental health and wellbeing was significantly negatively impacted (DSS score 1). By the end of the Joint Mediation session, considerable progress towards improving her mental health and wellbeing was evident (DSS score of 3), despite the fact that she decided to postpone her desired move as a result of the process. Both parents gave feedback that the service listened to them and understood their issues; that they were satisfied with the services received; and they were better able to deal with the issues that they had sought help with.

Sunnys Nest: New Children's Counselling Centre

82 Woods Street, Darwin



Sunny's Nest has been designed as a fit-for-purpose child and family centre. It provides a range of programs and services in a variety of locations across the NT, for children, young people and their families including:



Pitta Room:
Children 0–8 years old

Named after the Rainbow Pitta, a small, brightly coloured Northern Territory bird, this room is designed with play and imagination at its heart.



Kooki Room:
9–12 years old

Named after the Kookaburra's playful nickname, this room invites children and young people to explore arts and crafts in a fun and creative way.



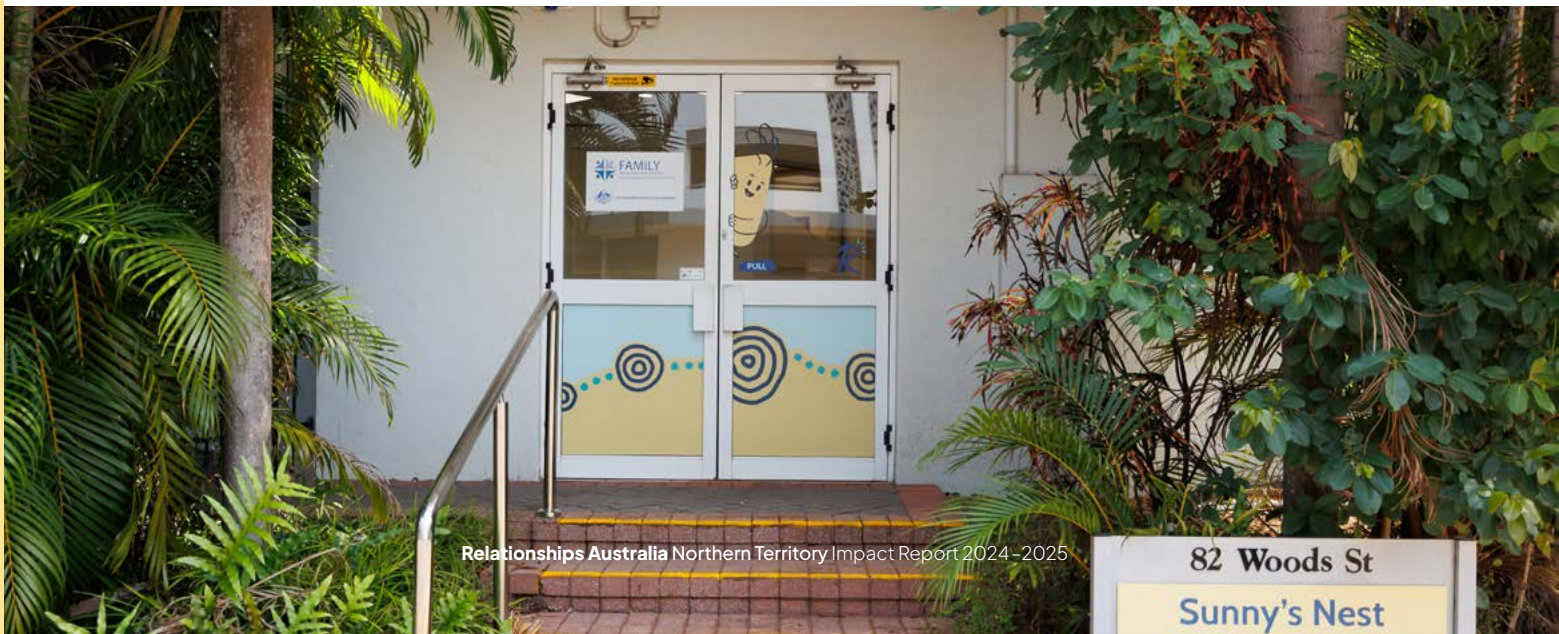
Brolga Room:
12 years and above

Named after the Brolga, a large and elegant crane celebrated for its graceful dances, this room has been thoughtfully designed for older children and teenagers



Kite Room: Family,
Parent/s, Caregiver/s

Named after the Black Kite, a bird native to the Northern Territory, this space draws inspiration from their habit of soaring together in wide, drifting circles.





Our Children's Therapeutic Team (CTT) deliver a range of programs across the Territory including:

- Specialised Family Violence Children's Counselling – Darwin and Palmerston
- Outreach: Safe Empowered and Reconnected – Darwin and Palmerston
- Holding Children Together – Central Australia and Wurrumiyanga (Tiwi Islands)
- Inter Country Adoptee and Family Support Services – Darwin and Palmerston
- Child Consultants for Family Relationships Services – NT wide

These programs and services are facilitated by children's counsellors trained in providing one-on-one therapeutic support to children and young people, family counselling, parent/caregiver consultations, and group-based work with children, young people and parents.

Our Children's Therapeutic Team takes a family systems approach to supporting children and young people by inviting parents/caregivers, family members and other supportive adults as co-agents of change in the child/young person's therapeutic journey. We aim to create a warm and supportive environment where children and young people feel heard, valued and empowered.



Specialised Family Violence Program: Safe Empowered and Reconnected



Our specialised violence family program funded by Department of Social Services enables outreach services in Darwin and Palmerston to provide support to children and their families who have been affected by domestic and family violence. This program is free and includes strengths-based coaching in therapeutic parenting practices for parents/caregivers and counselling for their children 0 – 12 years old.

Impact story 1 !!

Restoring Safety and Voice for a 10-Year-Old Boy

Background

A 10-year-old child and his parent were referred to the SFVS following experiences of coercive control, including physical and emotional abuse by the boy's previous stepfather. The perpetrator was no longer in the family's life, but the child continued to experience psychological distress around his weekly visitation with their other parent.

The child initially presented as shy and socially withdrawn, except when discussing their interests in Pokémon, mechanics, and soccer. At school, the child was described as hyperactive, noisy, and occasionally destructive. These behaviours were often misunderstood as defiance rather than indicators of distress.

Challenges

- Ongoing psychological distress around times of visitation with his father
 - Hypervigilance to noise and environmental changes
 - Social withdrawal and difficulty trusting adults
- School misinterpretation of distress behaviours as behavioural issues
- A caregiver with limited support networks, navigating complex legal and child protection systems

Intervention

Over 18 months, RA-NT practitioners provided:

- Child-led therapy in a safe, grounding space where the child could explore feelings and interests
- Strengths-based parent coaching to support the parent in understanding their child's behaviours as trauma responses
- Guidance to help the parent advocate to the school, to the other parent, and external agencies for the child's needs
- Collaboration with legal services and child protection to address safety concerns as they arose over engagement

Through consistent support, the child became more regulated after sessions, less serious, and able to engage in play – regaining aspects of childhood that trauma had restricted.

Outcomes

- The child was able to communicate safety concerns to appropriate services
 - The parent gained confidence in advocating for their child's wellbeing
 - The family is now linked into ongoing safety and support networks
- The school shifted its perspective from seeing the child's behaviour as "problematic" to understanding it as trauma-related

Family Feedback

The parent expressed deep appreciation for the service, acknowledging that the support helped rebuild trust, strengthen the parent-child relationship, and give the child a sense of safety and voice.

Impact story 2 !!

Building Presence, Safety, and Self-Advocacy for an 8-Year-Old Girl

Background

A young Aboriginal child was referred by the local Domestic Violence Shelter's Counsellor. The child presented with frequent dissociation, often "zoning out," which limited their ability to engage in daily life. The child was developing trust in themselves, the courage to take positive risks, and the skills to express and maintain personal boundaries.

Challenges

- Frequent disconnection from the body and present moment
 - Low self-esteem and limited self-advocacy skills
 - Difficulty asserting and maintaining boundaries
- Navigating the emotional impact of family breakdown

Intervention

This child and caregiver have been engaged with the SFVS for 2-months and have completed 6 sessions, with ongoing plans to continue service. The practitioner used a combination of Children's Counselling and Art Psychotherapy, incorporating:

- Drama Therapy: Role play, storytelling, and improvisation to explore courage, self-assertion, and safe risk-taking.
 - Child-led Non-directive Play Therapy: Opportunities for authentic expression and autonomy, including hide-and-seek play to explore attachment and separation.
 - Synergetic Play Therapy Principles: Tracking bodily sensations and nervous system responses to strengthen self-awareness.
 - Physical Grounding Techniques: Using sensory experiences (e.g., temperature of metal, feel of grass, breeze) to anchor in the present moment.
- Collaboration was central, and included:
- Weekly calls with the school to address daily needs and track progress.
 - Regular caregiver consultations, plus ongoing communication to align strategies at home and in the classroom.

Outcomes

- Improved ability to remain present and grounded during sessions
- Increased confidence in expressing needs and asserting boundaries
 - Stronger sense of autonomy and safety
- Consistency of approach between home, school, and therapy sessions

Ongoing Plan

Continue building the client's mind-body connection so the child can independently identify feelings of safety and confidently advocate for their needs in different environments. Sessions will maintain a focus on empowerment and reinforcing the child's sense of worthiness of safety.



Holding Children Together

Holding Children Together (HCT) is a free program for children aged 5 – 12 years old who have experienced interpersonal trauma, and their families. This program is delivered in Central Australia and Wurrumiyanga (Tiwi Islands) and provides individual counselling to children and young people 5 – 12 years of age, family counselling, parent/caregiver consultations and

group work. The program uses a mix of approaches, such as art therapy, sand tray counselling, play therapy, cultural counselling, group work and where possible the formation of a care-team with other services involved to support the children engaged in the program.

Sessions: 1011

Disengagement to Re-engagement

A 10-year-old First Nations boy was referred to the Holding Children Together program after concerns about school disengagement and social withdrawal. Teachers observed that he often stared into the distance, appeared withdrawn, and spent time alone.

From the first session, he settled easily into counselling but found it hard to end sessions—showing how safe and meaningful the playroom felt. Through play, he began to share experiences of loneliness, bullying, and family changes, including reflections on where his parents were and the importance of returning to country.

Art and play became powerful tools for building confidence and self-esteem. During one activity, he shared, “I like myself,” reflecting a growing sense of self-worth. Over time, his friendships and social connections strengthened, proudly saying, “I’m

happy today,” after making new friends. His empathy and prosocial behaviour also grew—wanting to make gifts for classmates and encouraging the counsellor to see others he felt might need support.

Through play, he began processing fragments of grief that were not identified in the original referral, expressing emotions safely and in his own time. He shared that the coming to the playroom for counselling “makes me happy” and that it feels like his safe space.

Through the Holding Children Together program, he has found a nurturing environment to rebuild trust, confidence, and connection. Play has become a pathway for healing, helping him feel more secure, socially connected, and resilient both at school and in his community.

Impact of Loss and Grief

A 10-year-old girl was referred to Holding Children Together to help her manage grief and anxiety following a significant loss. When she began counselling, she found it difficult to talk about her feelings and often felt overwhelmed. Through gentle engagement, the counsellor focused first on building trust and safety through play and creative activities.

Art and sensory play quickly became powerful tools for expression and regulation. Creating artwork and playful rituals—like making goodbye cards together—helped her process emotions, find comfort, and facilitated a sense of connection and closure. Working closely with her school’s Inclusion Team ensured consistent support between sessions, strengthening her confidence in both the classroom and therapeutic settings.

Over time, the child developed a greater understanding of her emotions and built a “toolbox” of strategies to calm herself when feeling anxious or sad. Her enjoyment and engagement in sessions reflected her growing sense of safety, trust, and self-expression.

Through creative and relational counselling, Holding Children Together helps children rebuild a sense of safety after trauma, strengthen family and school connections, and develop the skills to manage big emotions. For this young girl, counselling became a space where healing could happen through art, play, and laughter—laying foundations for lasting emotional wellbeing and resilience.

In 2025 RA-NT was successfully re-accredited after external audit.



The audit report stated:

The audit found RA-NT demonstrates a mature child safeguarding culture, shaped by its governance framework, comprehensive safeguarding screening for personnel, meaningful community engagement and consistent implementation of safeguarding policies, procedures and protocols. Safeguarding is deeply embedded across all levels of the organisation, supported by robust mechanism and well-trained and dedicated personnel who prioritise child safety and wellbeing. Personnel interviewed consistently emphasised RA-NT's belief that safeguarding is a “**shared responsibility**” reflecting a **collective commitment** to keeping children safe. This attitude reinforced by RA-NT's governance, has enabled the organisation to continually refine and strengthen its child safeguarding programs, policies and procedures.



Supporting Vulnerable populations



Our Specialist Support Services Team provide Therapeutic Counselling and Case Management for our following support service programs including Forgotten Australians, Forced Adoption Support Services, Intercountry Adoptee Family Support, Post Adoption Support and Redress Support.

The **Redress Support Service Scheme** is funded by the Department of Social Services to provide acknowledgement and support to people who experienced child sexual abuse in institutional contexts across Australia before 2018. This service supports people who access the Australian Government National Redress Scheme that

acknowledges the widespread sexual abuse of children in Australian institutions, recognises the suffering endured by survivors, holds institutions accountable for the abuse, helps people who experienced institutional child sexual abuse gain access to counselling, a direct personal response, and a redress payment.

The Redress Support Service offers trauma-informed and culturally safe counselling, practical guidance, and emotional support. This service helps survivors understand their options, prepare applications, and navigate the process with care and respect, ensuring no one has to do it alone.

236

Clients

1425

Sessions

81%

First Nations

44%

Clients living with a disability

Impact stories !!

Empowering Healing and Justice in Remote Top End Community

After seeing a poster for Relationships Australia – NT's Redress Support Service at the local shops, a First Nations woman living in a remote Top End Community reached out for help. Because a practitioner was visiting the community that day, she was able to meet face-to-face immediately and begin her healing journey.

Using a trauma-informed and culturally safe approach, the practitioner supported the client to share her story at her own pace, often meeting outdoors where she felt most comfortable. Together they traced her early life records, clarified her adoption status, and gathered documentation needed for her National Redress Scheme (NRS) and Territories Stolen Generations Redress applications.

Warm referrals were made to Find and Connect Support Services, the NT Adoptions Unit, and Knowmore Legal Service, ensuring the client received emotional, legal, and practical support. With this guidance, she chose to proceed with her NRS application, which was successfully submitted.

The client expressed deep gratitude for the consistent, respectful support she received, saying she felt truly understood and empowered. Her story demonstrates how trauma-informed outreach and culturally grounded practice enable survivors in remote communities to access justice and healing with dignity.



Healing, Trust, and Transformation in a Remote Community

During an outreach visit, a Relationships Australia – NT Redress Support Service counsellor met a young First Nations man who, at first, wanted nothing to do with the service. He voiced strong distrust and was reluctant to engage, having carried deep wounds from past institutional mistrust. Yet, through patience, cultural sensitivity, and gentle presence, rapport was slowly built over two visits.

When he finally felt safe enough to share his story, it marked a profound turning point. Over time, he began to speak openly about his experiences of sexual abuse, shame, guilt, and struggles with identity and sexuality. Regular face-to-face and phone sessions helped him find words for pain he had never voiced, and the courage to reconnect with himself and others.

With ongoing support, he built the confidence to regularly check-in, advocate for his own needs, and face the National Redress Scheme (NRS) process

with strength. He asked for his outcome to be delivered in person rather than over the phone, so he could receive it safely, surrounded by care and support in his community which RA-NT advocated strongly on his behalf.

After receiving his redress outcome, he worked with a financial counsellor to manage his payment thoughtfully, made positive changes to his home and family life, and bravely shared his experiences with his partner for the first time. What began as deep distrust transformed into empowerment, connection, and hope.

Today, he has become a community connector and advocate, encouraging younger people to access support and share their own stories. His healing journey stands as a powerful example of how trauma-informed outreach and relational trust can open pathways to dignity, justice, and renewed purpose.



Elder Abuse Prevention and Support Services

Elder Abuse Prevention and Support Services provides counselling, case management and family facilitated meetings services to older people in Darwin and Alice Springs who are currently experiencing or at risk of experiencing elder abuse. This service delivers comprehensive awareness programs on elder abuse and RA-NT’s Elder Abuse Prevention and Support Services, targeting both stakeholders and the broader community.

The service also facilitated art therapy sessions in Darwin and a movie day for senior community members in Alice Springs, both received positive feedback. Additionally, the Elder Abuse Prevention and Support Services program has been actively engaged in forums and workshops that aim to create measures to address ageism and elder abuse, where the team has been able to share and highlight the voices and experiences of older people.



708 • Community Engagement • Awareness Sessions • Counselling sessions

Working through complexities with support, trust and advocacy

Initial presentation
An older woman living with multiple mental health diagnoses, chronic pain and mobility challenges sought support after experiencing escalating conflict and emotional abuse from her adult son and his partner. After selling her home of 35 years, she had invested her life savings into a shared property interstate, titled solely in her son’s name, based on a verbal agreement that he would provide care and support as she aged.
Complexity
The client’s situation involved intersecting vulnerabilities: financial dependence, isolation and deteriorating family relationships. She faced intimidation, verbal abuse and financial coercion, including pressure to repay personal debts of her son and his partner. Her ability to maintain safety was compromised by geographical isolation, limited mobility and restricted access to her grandchildren, who were a key source of emotional wellbeing.
Intervention
The service provided intensive emotional and practical support to address both immediate safety and long term stability. This included: – Regular counselling and safety planning – SMS and phone check-ins to monitor wellbeing and sense of safety – Advocacy to access legal advice and explore repayment options – Discussions with mediator to try and progress the matter – Collaboration with a local police officer – Support to plan her relocation, including timelines for packing and transition – Assistance to navigate documentation for a legally binding repayment agreement
Outcomes
With support, the client developed a safety plan, reconnected with health services and gained confidence to assert her rights. Engagement with police and legal services resulted in her son agreeing to a staged repayment of \$160,000 toward her financial contribution, paving the way for her to relocate to a safer and more supportive environment.
Impact
This case highlights the service’s role in addressing elder abuse through trauma informed, person centred intervention. By combining counselling, safety planning, advocacy and legal navigation, the client was empowered to restore control over her finances and living situation, reinforcing dignity and independence in later life.

Healing Inside – NT Department of Corrections

In September 2024, RA-NT commenced a new collaboration with NT Department of Corrections for Domestic Family Sexual Violence (DHSV) Counselling Services to women in prison within Darwin and Alice Springs Correctional Centers.

RA-NT have in consultation with the Women developed a new model of Care – ‘*Healing Inside*’. This program is making a powerful impact within correctional facilities across the NT, bringing culturally safe, trauma-informed counselling and group education to those who need it most.

Healing Inside aims to provide holistic, trauma-informed counselling and group psychoeducation to women who are incarcerated and have been impacted by domestic, family and sexual violence within the Northern Territory. The model of care

integrates narrative therapy, psychoeducation, and a feminist framework to empower women, help them reclaim their narratives and foster healing in the context of their experiences.

The program’s core values are centred on dignity, empowerment, safety and respect, with an emphasis on creating an environment that recognises and challenges the broader social and gendered contexts of violence, particularly from a First Nations lens.

Find and Connect > > >

The Find & Connect Support Service (FCSS) at RA-NT provides free, confidential support to people who experienced institutional or out-of-home care before 1990. The service helps Care Leavers access personal records, understand their history, and reconnect with family, culture, and community.

Support may include records searching, counselling, and assistance to make meaning of past experiences in a safe and trauma-informed environment.

- 48 Clients • 81% Indigenous
- 60.4% clients living with a disability

Reconnecting Generations Through Records

A Torres Strait Islander woman in her early fifties reached out to the Find & Connect Support Service at RA-NT seeking information about herself and her late mother, who had both spent significant time in institutional care. Her extended family had all also been separated as children, and an elderly relative had recently asked her to help uncover what had happened to their family.

Through collaboration with several record-holding bodies, including welfare, adoption, and institutional archives across two states and territories, we compiled a detailed family history timeline tracing experiences of institutional care across multiple generations. The research revealed a recurring pattern of family separation extending back to the client’s great-grandparents.

To support the client in understanding these records, a supported release session was held with the records researcher and a counsellor within the FCSS program. She attended with her adult daughter.

Together, they reviewed the documents and reconstructed the history of her mother’s removal and life in institutional care. The story that unfolded reflected the harsh realities faced by young women of the time: lack of family support, limited education around relationships and sexuality, and restricted access to reproductive healthcare.

The session prompted rich discussion about the historical treatment of women and the intergenerational impact of child removal. Initially reserved, the daughter became deeply engaged, expressing compassion and newfound understanding for both her mother and grandmother. By the end of the session, there was a visible sense of connection, healing, and shared purpose between them.

The experience also inspired both women to advocate for women’s rights, particularly for comprehensive sex education, reproductive choice, and the empowerment of young women to achieve independence.

Supporting our Communities

Healing Our Children (HOC) is an early intervention and prevention program operating in the Top End of the Northern Territory. HOC was developed because Tiwi and North-East Arnhem Land Elders were concerned about their grandchildren being exposed to violence, drug and alcohol misuse, child abuse and neglect and other traumatic events.

The program involves group education workshops focusing on the impact of domestic and family violence on children's brain development from pregnancy until they become adults, in a safe, non-blaming environment. The program uses storytelling, imagery, and art to explore the effects of violence and other trauma on children's lives. The program not only benefits the women who participate but their children, families and community as a whole.



“The Pinyama tree likes to grow near the beach in swampy conditions. The fruit flesh is eaten when ripe red but the seed is not eaten. In the tunga bag, there are some pinyama fruit that children can collect to take home. The fruit represents the change we want to make for our people.”

– Cosi Tipiloura

The Pinyama tree represents the Evaluation model adopted by the Tiwi people in the Healing Our Children (HOC) project. Co-ordinated by Relationships Australia – NT, HOC aims to prevent young children's exposure to trauma and promote healing within the family. The seed on the Pinyama is like starting new life and new babies being born. It is about looking forward to a strong future with our strong families in strong culture. The tunga full of good quality fruit represents a good quality program that is good and healthy for Tiwi people.

162

Group & Community Engagement Sessions

Healing Our Children – Men’s Program

While the current HOC program is tailored for women, Tiwi participants have strongly advocated for a culturally appropriate version for men to maximise positive outcomes for children, families and the community.

In 2025, a number of our cultural advisors met with men’s groups and community leaders across Wurrumiyanga to present the concept

of a **Healing our Children: Men’s Program**.

Engagement was strong, with conversations covering brain development in children, the role of positive behaviour modelling and the impact of colonisation on cultural and family structures.

The visit strengthened relationships, built community momentum and secured early support from local leaders.

Darwin Indigenous Men’s Service (DIMS)

This program originated in 2023 through a partnership between RA-NT and Darwin Indigenous Men’s Service (DIMS). Aboriginal men, who are residents of Foundation of Rehabilitation with Aboriginal Alcohol Related Difficulties, participate in DIMS and the RA-NT led group sessions. The RA-NT sessions focus on healing from trauma and use a strengths-based narrative therapy approach.

An image of the ‘Tree of Healing’ and its 6 features of roots, ground, trunk, branches, leaves and fruits are central to the facilitation process. The ‘Tree of Healing’ is based upon the ‘Tree of Life’ from Yarning with a Purpose: First Nations Narrative Practice (Dulwich Centre, 2020).

Participants are also asked to consider what is a strong man and are encouraged to think about strength not just as physical, but also mental, emotional and spiritual. Again, the facilitators share their personal experience on what makes a man strong to then invite participation from the group. Although the men’s experiences and stories are encouraged, no one is forced to speak, and the facilitators emphasise that the men’s participation is understood by way of their presence.

RA-NT led groups in the DIMS program consist of 2 x two-hour sessions spaced one week apart.

100%

of respondents liked the group session

64%

felt less stressed after the session

93%

would like to attend future sessions

91%

of respondents found the session helpful

87%

felt good sharing their thoughts and feelings

The Sunrise Centre



The Salvation Army Sunrise Centre provides services for those who are homeless and/or wanting to work on their relationship with drugs and alcohol. The centre helps people re-connect with their community through developing various skills and strategies which will assist in a person's rehabilitation and re-introduction into their community. RA-NT has had the privilege for the past two years to be a part of this process.

In consultation with the Sunrise staff a need for a program where participants could develop their skillset around healthy relationships and communication was identified. Sunrise wanted professionals from outside their organisation to provide this learning in a non-threatening environment. In response RA-NT developed a program which focusses on respectful relationships, communication and consent that has been tailored to meet changing participant needs. Over the last financial year (2024–2025) there were a total of 38 clients and 4 sessions involved in this program.

“Overall, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with participants and staff expressing appreciation for both the content and delivery of the session. I believe this has contributed to breaking down barriers and increasing awareness of the vital services provided by Relationships Australia – Northern Territory. Thank you for the education and support you provide to the participants and staff at the Sunrise Centre and I look forward to the continued collaborative work.”

Sunrise Clinical Co-ordinator



**Neighbours
Every
Day**

Neighbours Every Day (NED) is Relationships Australia's year-round social connection campaign that empowers individuals, communities, organisations and governments to build a more connected, inclusive and resilient Australia.



Neighbours Every Day – Alice Springs

Neighbours Every Day means any day is a good day to start building connections. The community you want starts at your front door.

Starting from a simple idea – that small every day actions make a big difference – the campaign has grown into a proven, evidence-based national platform that addresses loneliness, supports mental health and strengthens community cohesion.

In 2024–25, Neighbours Every Day was endorsed as a leading prevention initiative in Australia’s National Suicide Prevention Strategy 2025–2035 (National Suicide Prevention Office, 2025). It was also highlighted in the World Health Organization’s (WHO) report on social connection for its innovative, community-based model, that NED is one of the only evidence-based campaigns of its type worldwide (Garcia, Hunter & Anderson, 2025). The campaign has also been recommended as a priority investment by the ACT Legislative Assembly’s Inquiry into Loneliness (Standing Committee on Education & Community Inclusion, 2024) and the NSW Parliament’s report on the prevalence, causes and impacts of loneliness (Standing Committee on Social Issues, 2025), and is backed by over 20 years of cross-sector partnerships with local governments, not-for-profits and corporates.



Kate Muir (RA-NT) and local NED Advocate Jonathan Pilbrow.

RA-NT awarded **Mikaila Mangohig** as the **Unsung Hero** for her Oleander Park Meet Up, in Alice Springs, which now attracts **30+ families monthly**. Since May 2024 she has created a **monthly neighbourhood get together** from the surrounding streets. From babes in arms through to 65 years+ this is a melting pot of people who share the locality and a wish to create connection with those ‘next door’.

Mikaila credits the **Neighbours Every Day** campaign, promoted through RA-NT, as inspiration for the initiative. It all came about when she came home from an interstate trip and the curfews had started. After listening in to a radio interview with local Neighbour’s Every Day advocate, Jonathan Pilbrow and ABC radio personality, Meredith Lake, about the Neighbours Every Day campaign, Mikaila decided to make it happen in her local park. She letterboxed dropped in the 3 streets around her home and kicked off the first gathering.

No matter where you live, you can do something similar too.



Kate Muir (RA-NT) caught up with Mparntwe/Alice Springs’ Unsung Hero award winner Mikaila Mangohig (in yellow on right) and some of the Oleander Park Meet up community to talk Neighbours Every Day on Friday 4 April 2025.

Supporting Organisational Wellbeing



RA-NT's Organisational Wellbeing Services provide a suite of tailored, trauma-informed offerings designed to meet a team's specific needs. These services can contribute to reduced burnout and overwhelm, strengthened interpersonal trust, mitigated psychosocial risk, and a culture of care.

Services include:

Workplace Wellbeing Workshops

Practical, evidence-based sessions on creating sustainable wellbeing habits at work and beyond (in-person or online).

Critical Incident Response

Rapid, on-site psychological first aid and follow-up support after distressing or traumatic workplace events, such as accidents or bereavement.

Interpersonal Communication Support

Facilitated communication processes to restore safety and connection where conflict or breakdowns have occurred.

Grounded in the latest research on workplace wellbeing and trauma-informed care, our programs help teams feel supported, regulated, and connected — building a foundation for healthy organisational culture and sustainable performance.

Ongoing wellbeing support after incident

Since we began rolling out Organisational Wellbeing services for local organisations. A great example is our partnership with a local school which holds an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) contract with RA-NT. Following a critical incident, our counsellors provided on-site support, which led to broader conversations about improving staff wellbeing.

In response, four members of our counselling team delivered a 10-week series of five workplace wellbeing workshops for staff. Topics included

the importance of wellbeing within and beyond work, nervous system regulation, self-soothing & regulation, creating a culture of care among colleagues and developing a personal wellbeing plan.

"Great sessions, got a lot of good information and ideas to help myself and others."

"Really well presented. Facilitators were really engaging and tailored sessions to our needs."



"Great session – amazing to have staff open up in front of each other. Facilitator was amazing – sessions were interactive and personalised to us and our context."

Employee Assistance Program

For over 15 years, RA-NT has continued to be a supporting partner with organisations to support employees mental health and wellbeing through our Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Services are delivered by counsellors who **live and work in the Northern Territory** and **understand the local context**. Support extends beyond workplace stress to include relationships, family issues, grief, trauma and life transitions.

RA-NT recently relaunched our EAP animal series marketing campaign as below:



“It’s hard to believe it’s only been a year since I began my journey with Relationships Australia in July 2024 as a student on placement. From the start, I was both excited and nervous, eager to learn from experienced practitioners. My involvement in campaigns like Neighbours Every Day and Elder Abuse Prevention and Support Services helped shape my understanding of the profession and the kind of person I aspire to be. These experiences laid a strong foundation for my growth.

In September 2024, I transitioned into a part-time role as Intake Officer for the mediation team, where I quickly became **immersed in the complexities of family dynamics and conflict resolution**. The warm welcome from both the intake and mediation teams created a supportive environment for learning and

personal development. I learned to embrace my shortcomings and use them as stepping stones toward improvement. The **guidance from colleagues and supervisors** made the shift from student to professional feel natural and empowering.

The journey wasn’t without challenges, visa issues and an unexpected extra semester added pressure to an already demanding schedule. Balancing study and work tested my resilience, but I discovered the **importance of perseverance and asking for help**. Supportive friendships and flexible work arrangements made a huge difference. Now, as a full-time staff member pursuing FDRP training, I’m excited to continue growing and contributing meaningfully to the community we serve.”

“Working with the Elder Abuse Prevention and Support Service program during my placement was an incredibly **meaningful experience**. It provided me with the opportunity to engage with older adults in the community— an often overlooked and invisible segment of society bringing their stories and challenges into sharper focus.

This experience offered me a fresh perspective on ageism, **allowing me to recognise its far-reaching impact** in ways I had not previously considered. I also gained valuable insights into the complexities of elder abuse, including its systemic and interpersonal dimensions.”

“Beginning as a placement student with the Counselling Intake team was an eye-opening and **deeply rewarding experience**. I learned so much about the **power of listening, empathy, and supporting people** during challenging times.

Moving from student to employee has been incredibly meaningful to me, it’s more than a role; **it’s being part of a team** that truly makes a difference in people’s lives. This journey has shown me the **impact of compassion in action**, and I feel grateful every day to continue learning and contributing alongside such inspiring colleagues.”

Valued partnership with CDU: Student Placements to Professionals

Charles Darwin University are proud to partner with Relationships Australia – Northern Territory to grow the next generation of Social Workers. Congratulations on employing the last 5 students from CDU after completion of their final Student Placements. We have received excellent feedback from our students, outlining that RA-NT provide a supportive environment for students to apply their theoretical frameworks in real practice environments across various programs. Many have completed a student placement within a set area but are now working within dedicated programs. We are delighted to see students that study with CDU Darwin, stay in the Territory and apply their skills. Thank you for your innovation, openness and commitment to developing the future workforce of the Northern Territory.



"I have always been familiar with attachment theory and trauma-informed approach but I never actually understood the depth of putting them into practice and how that could inform my work. Through several observations in counselling and supervision sessions at Relationships Australia, I am now able to confidently implement those frameworks into practice" (Recent CDU graduate)

Angus Stead
Academic Lead Social Work Field Education
Charles Darwin University

During student placement with RA-NT **Bormei Than** wrote a booklet called 'What is Counselling?'. This booklet is a new resource shared organisation wide to support children and their families starting counselling.

What is Counselling?



Relationships
AUSTRALIA - NT

*"My placement involved working in counselling intake, where I developed skills in engaging with clients and carrying out risk assessments. I also had the opportunity to join the Elder Abuse Prevention and Support Services team on outreach visits to clients' homes, which helped me understand how building trust and meeting clients in their own environment can make support more accessible and meaningful. Additionally, I was able to **shadow a counselling session** with the client's consent, which reinforced the importance of consent, boundaries, and being trauma-informed when working with clients.*

*This experience was deeply meaningful to me as it allowed me to **apply theory into practice** and see how the concepts I learned in my studies **translate into real-world client interactions**. It also strengthened my confidence in working with clients, enhanced my understanding of the counselling process, and **confirmed my passion for supporting people** through challenges in a respectful and empathetic way. Thank you."*





Inform • Support • Connect
for individuals, families & communities



Darwin
5 Shepherd Street
Darwin 0800

Sunny's Nest
82 Woods Street
Darwin 0800

Katherine
6 Katherine Arcade
15 Katherine Terrace
Katherine 0850

Alice Springs
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