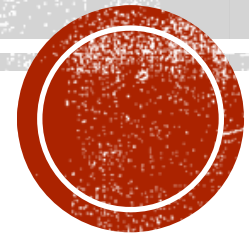
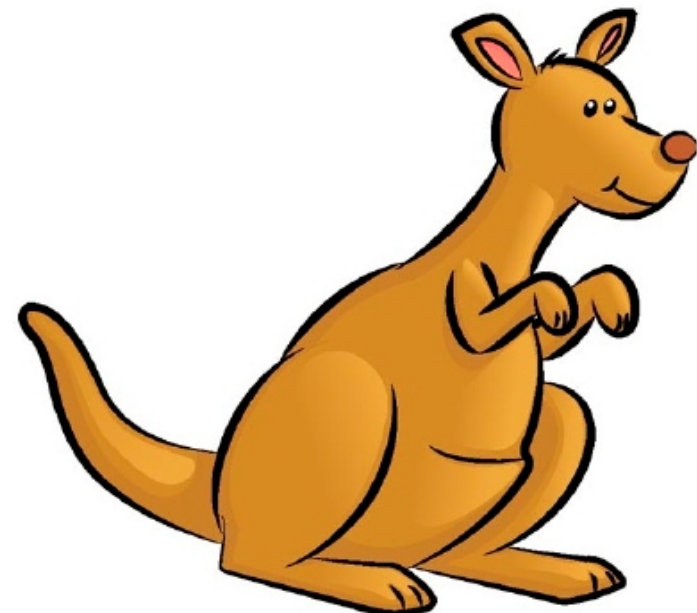


# SEE-LISTEN-HEAR-ACT



Young People, Caring and Protective Participation

Tim Moore 2017





- Participation



- Young Carers



# WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE TALK ABOUT PARTICIPATION?

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises that children and young people have a right to participate:
  - Article 12 - States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.



If we are to develop fully the potential for children and young people to participate in society, we may need to move beyond 'listening' and 'giving children a say' and to focus more directly on the meaning of participation in everyday life and on how young people can live 'active citizenship' (Woodhead, 2010, xxiii)

Youth participation is about developing partnerships between young people and adults in all areas of life so young people can take a valued position in our society and the community as a whole (as well as young people) can benefit from their contribution, ideas and energies. (FYA 2000, p4)

# WHY SUPPORT YOUNG CARERS' PARTICIPATION

- Young carers are already active participants (citizens) and assume a range of roles and have bounded agency
- Young carers are often excluded from participating: in education, in community in other opportunities to contribute
- Caring can be an isolating experience: participation can increase connections
- Caring can be disempowering: participation can increase (a sense of) control and influence
- Caring can be scary: when carers are not provided information
- Service responses can fail to meet needs:
  - Young carers can provide unique perspectives on care needs and the useability of supports
  - Plans are more likely to be implemented when they engage the whole 'care team'

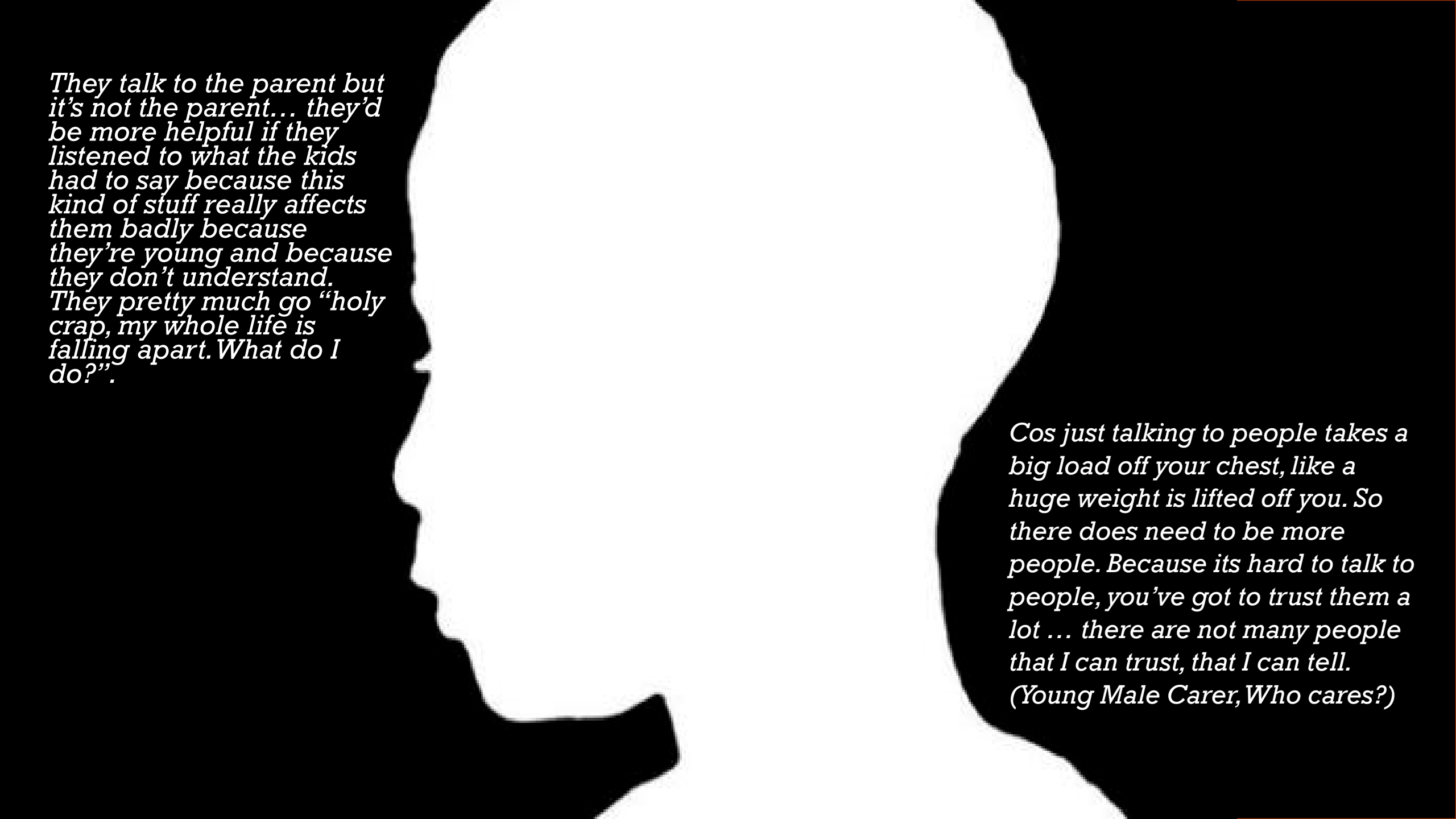
*It made me gain skills - like cleaning, cooking – things you wouldn't usually do when you were 7.*

***People were always coming into my home and asking how mum was. I suppose it was because they were worried about her, being sick and all, but they never once asked me how I was. They never asked me if I was doing OK or if I needed help.***

***“Before going on camp I was completely alone. I couldn't believe that there were other people out there like me... For the first time I wasn't the freak.”***

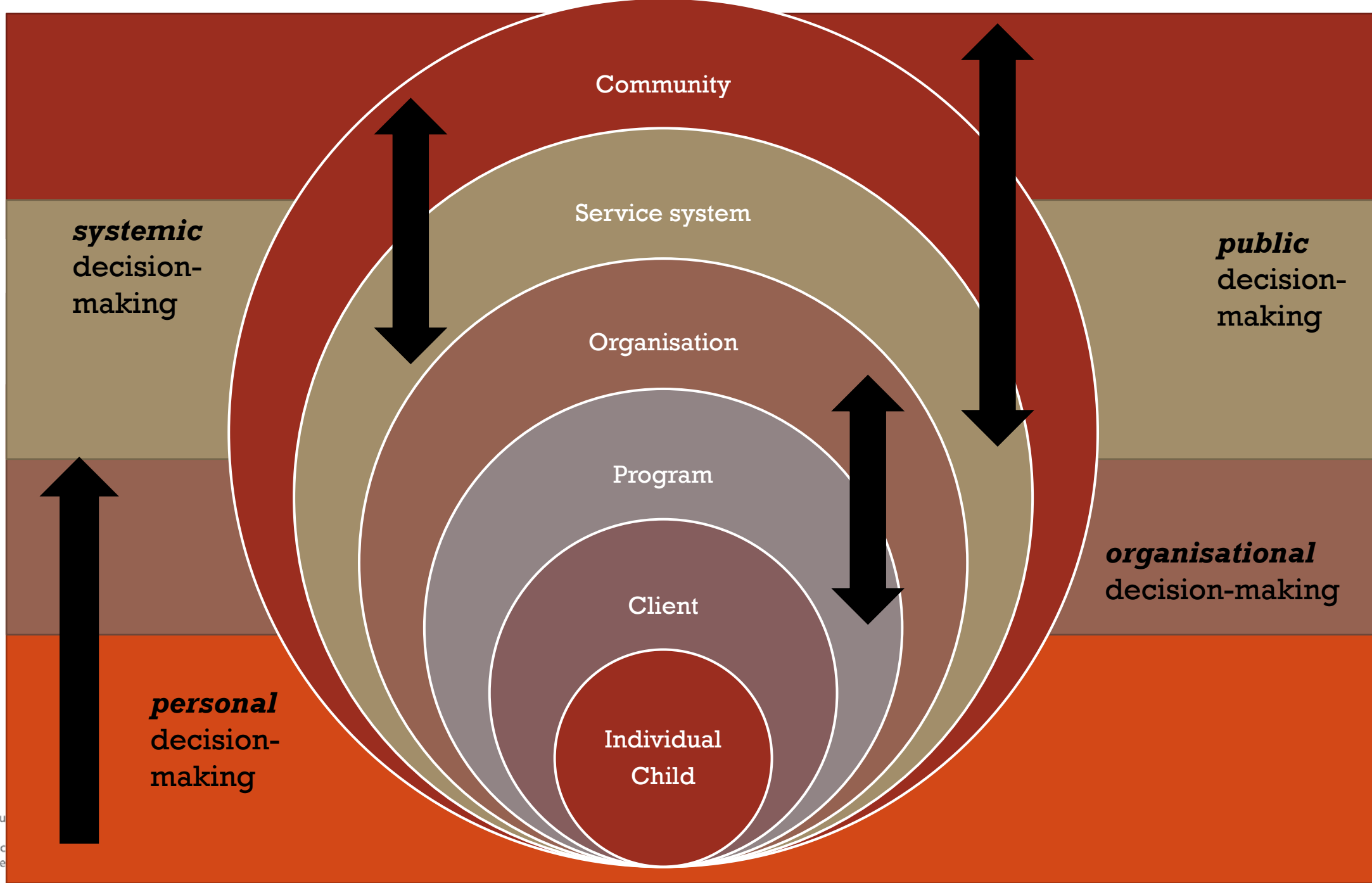
*I don't cry in front of my parents or friends. I cry in my pillow. I cry with my dog and he licks my face.*



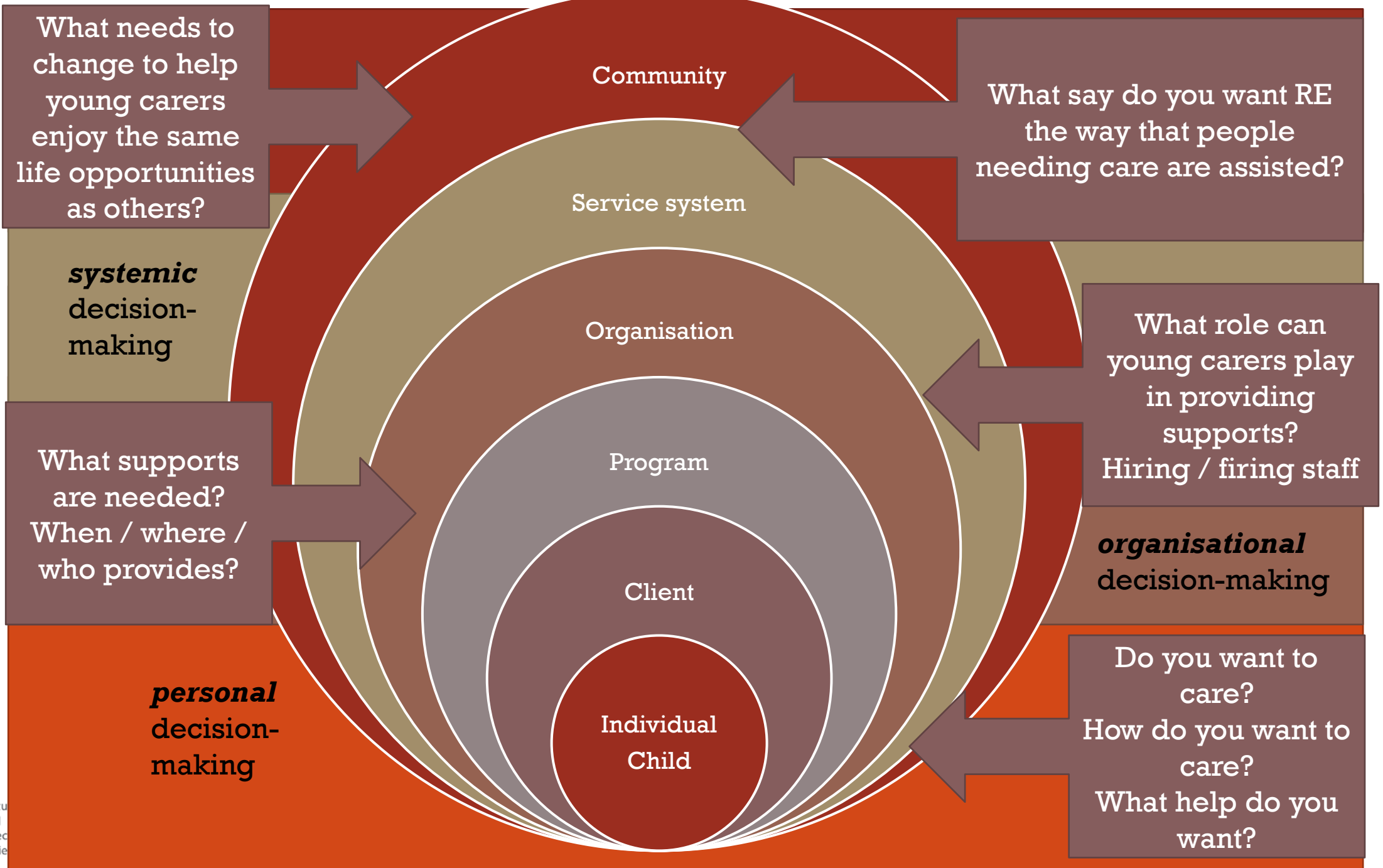


*They talk to the parent but it's not the parent... they'd be more helpful if they listened to what the kids had to say because this kind of stuff really affects them badly because they're young and because they don't understand. They pretty much go "holy crap, my whole life is falling apart. What do I do?"*

*Cos just talking to people takes a big load off your chest, like a huge weight is lifted off you. So there does need to be more people. Because its hard to talk to people, you've got to trust them a lot ... there are not many people that I can trust, that I can tell.  
(Young Male Carer, Who cares?)*











**GOOD  
PARTICIPATION  
EMPOWERS YOUNG  
PEOPLE BUT  
DOESN'T HOLD  
THEM SOLELY  
RESPONSIBLE FOR  
THEIR HEALTH AND  
WELLBEING**



# ***CHILDREN WILL ONLY TALK TO PEOPLE WHO ARE SAFE...AND MIGHT NEED HELP***

- *“We were pretty much too scared to say anything to anyone because we knew there were aggressive consequences if we said pretty much anything to anyone” (Young man, aged 17, Who Cares?)*
- Children and young people felt that children would only approach ‘safe’ adults who they believed were friendly, who would believe their stories, and help them deal with issues in a way that was respectful of them and their families
- *There should be stuff for kids: people they can talk to about stuff and not worry that people are going to think bad of their parents or get them in trouble. Kids won’t tell unless they know people are safe and they’re not going to help unless they think people are going to do something to help (Young man, aged 14, Who Cares?)*



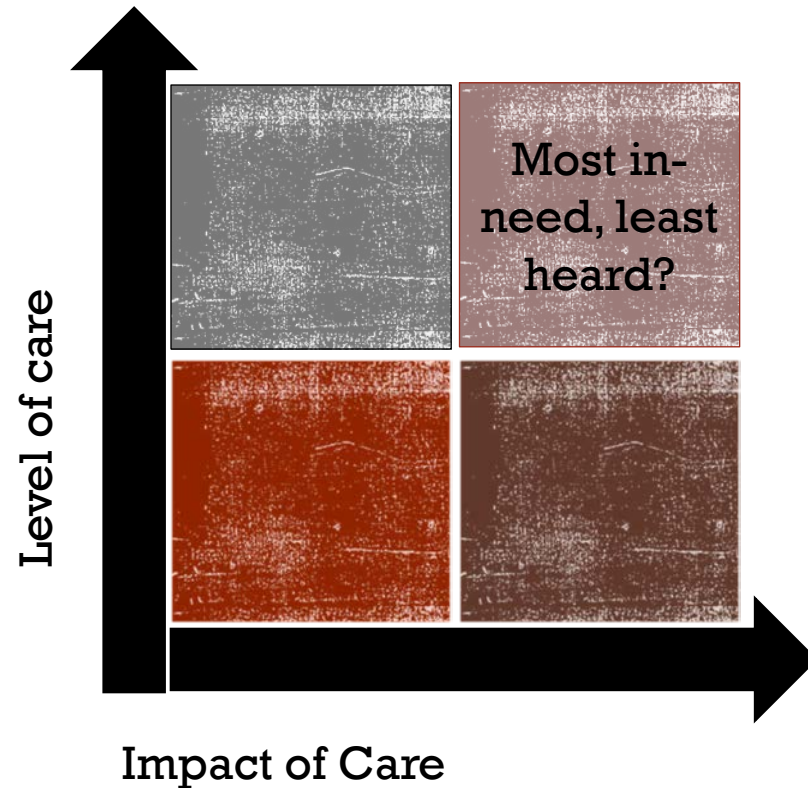
*“[This is] Monkey. He is special... Sometimes when [I’m] sad [I] cuddle him” (Boy, aged 10, Finding their way home)*





# GOOD PARTICIPATION IS INCLUSIVE

- We are increasingly engaging children in research, in program development and evaluation
- But who's missing out?
  - Parental Alcohol and Other Drug Issues
  - Migrants and Refugees
  - Children of Veterans
  - Young parents
  - Under 12s (no studies for U7s)
  - Doubly-disadvantage:
    - Young carers who have been removed
    - First Nation Young Carers
    - Homeless
    - Youth detention
    - Refugee Centres
    - Mental health facilities
    - Incarcerated parents
    - LBTIQ+ families



# GOOD PARTICIPATION IS INFORMING AND IT IS INFORMATIVE

- *I would often freak out coming home to an empty house. The Ambulance people would never leave even a note so if the house was empty Mum could be in hospital and we'd never know. (Young carer, aged 11)*
- *I never knew that I wasn't the only one. And I never heard about what was being done. Whats the point of things being done for young carers if we never hear? (young carer, aged 17)*

*“Kids should be asked about stuff that’s got to do with them...They can tell you stuff you’d never think of – ‘cos you’re not a kid”*

*(11 yr old boy, FTWH)*

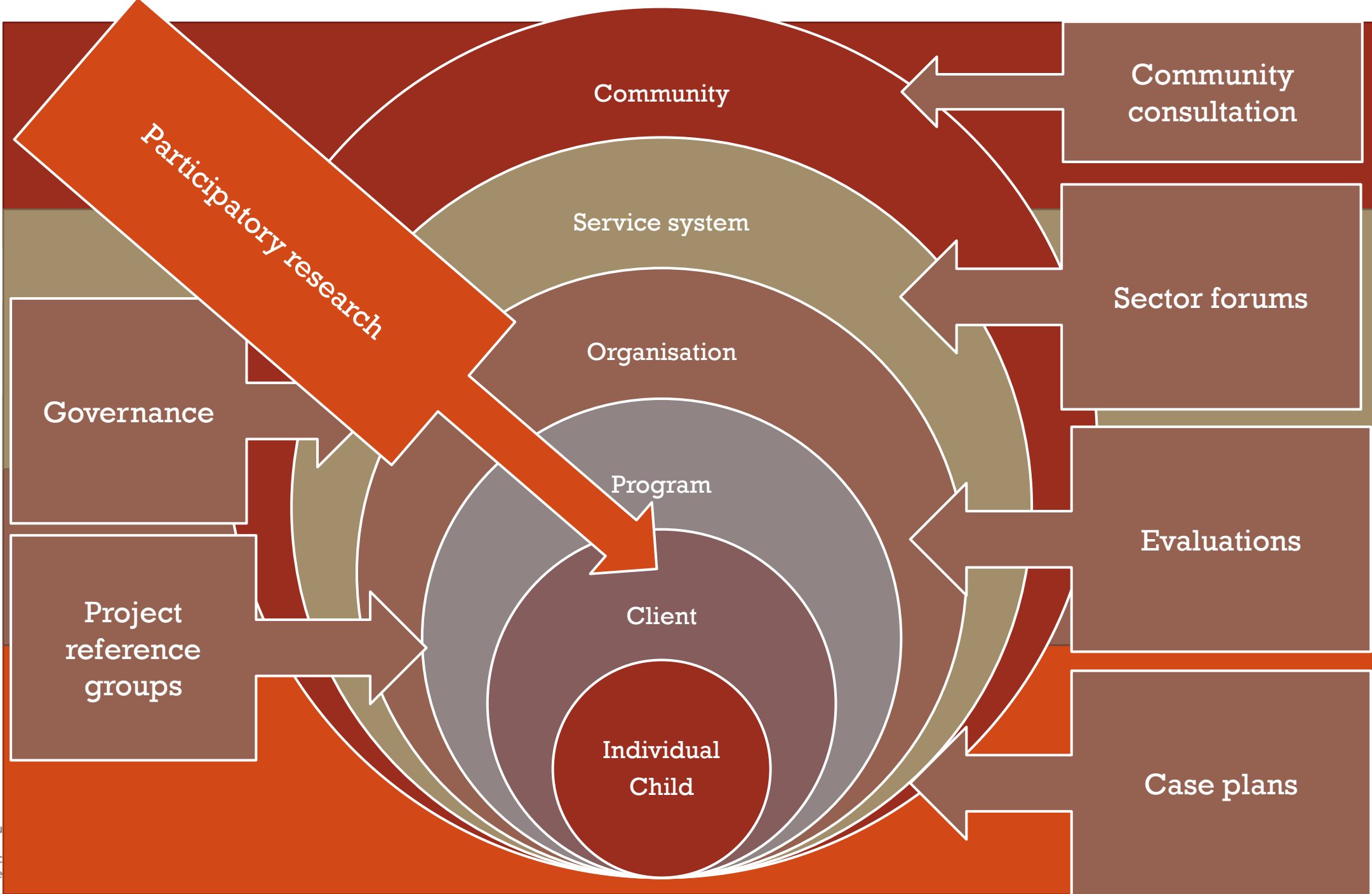




# GOOD PARTICIPATION OCCURS AT MULTIPLE TIMES AND IN MULTIPLE CHILD-CENTRED WAYS

- *It's nice that you ask us what kind of things we want to do when we're at [the young carers program] but you need to help us make real decisions in our lives. Like if we care, who helps us and how we want things to change*





# GOOD PARTICIPATION CAPTURES THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

- Surveys
- Complaints forms
- Workshops
- Presentations to boards and bosses

## When I'm not happy

What happened?



What I wish had happened



Why I think it happened



How did it make me feel?



What I'd like to happen now



## Action Sheet

What has been done about the issue concerned?  
(To be completed by the service)

I think things are better now and I don't need anything more to happen

I don't think that things have been fixed up and would like something more to happen

What I'd like to happen now

I know that if I'm still not happy about something that has happened to me or my family I can:



# GOOD PARTICIPATION IS HOLISTIC



One in 10 carers

One in twelve children (3-8%)

Young carers are children: they have a say about things that are important to children.

We support them to have a say about their health, education, play, their safety, their relationships

Young carers are carers: they have a say about things that are important to carers.

We support them to have a say about how carers are supported, how assistance is provided to their CFRs, how service systems meet their needs

Young carers are young carers: they have a say about things that are important to young carers.

We support them to have a say about how young carers are seen, how they are supported, what is right and wrong about what we do and how we do it



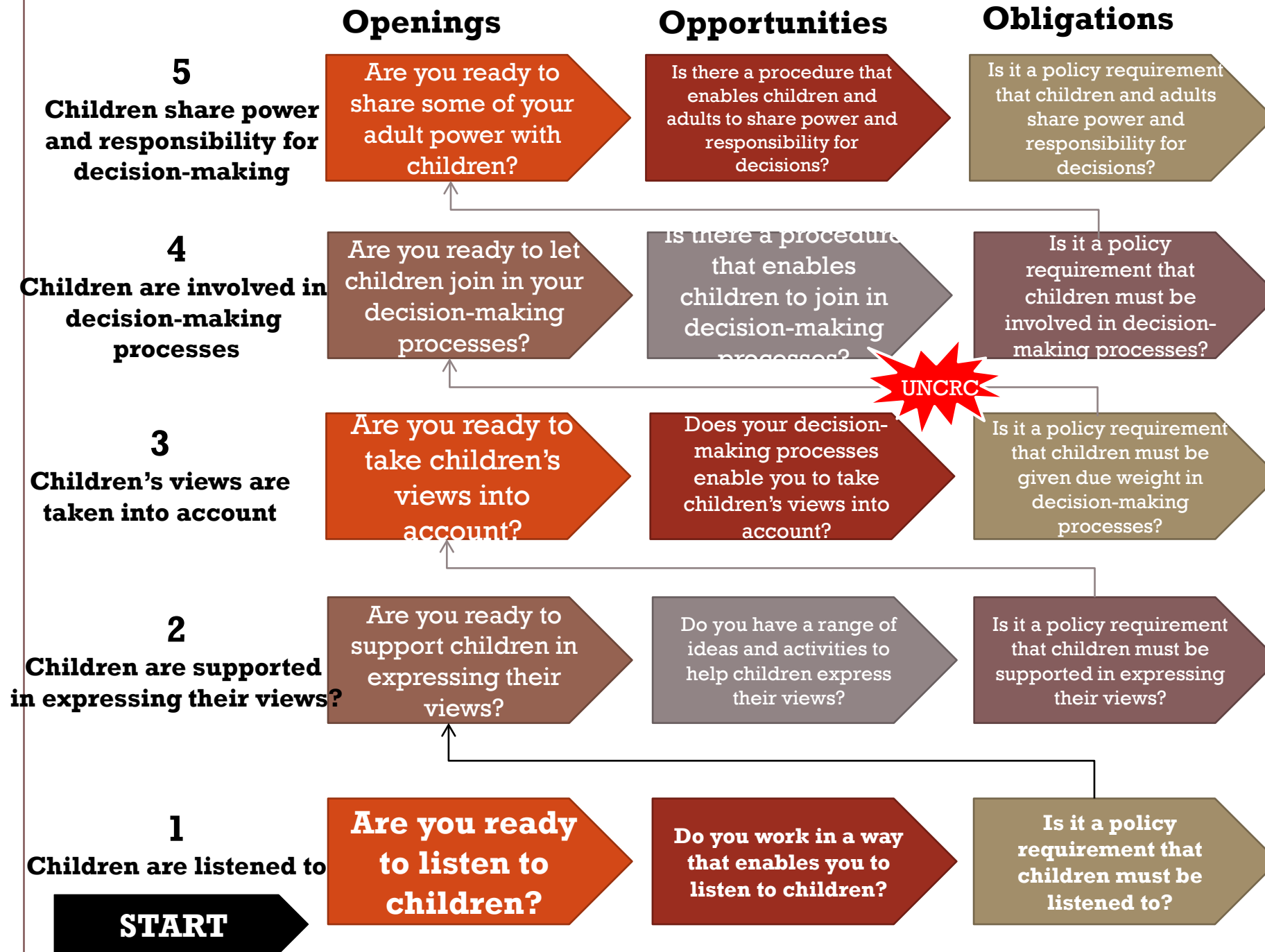


# GOOD PARTICIPATION IS EMBEDDED

- *Adults have no responsibility to kids. They say “we want to know what you think” or “what do you want?” but whats the point in asking if there’s no responsibility to do anything. There’s too many things that get in the way. Like if a worker’s boss tells them to do something they have to do it. But if a kids asks for something there’s no responsibility for them to do anything... It’s so frustrating”*



# Shiers

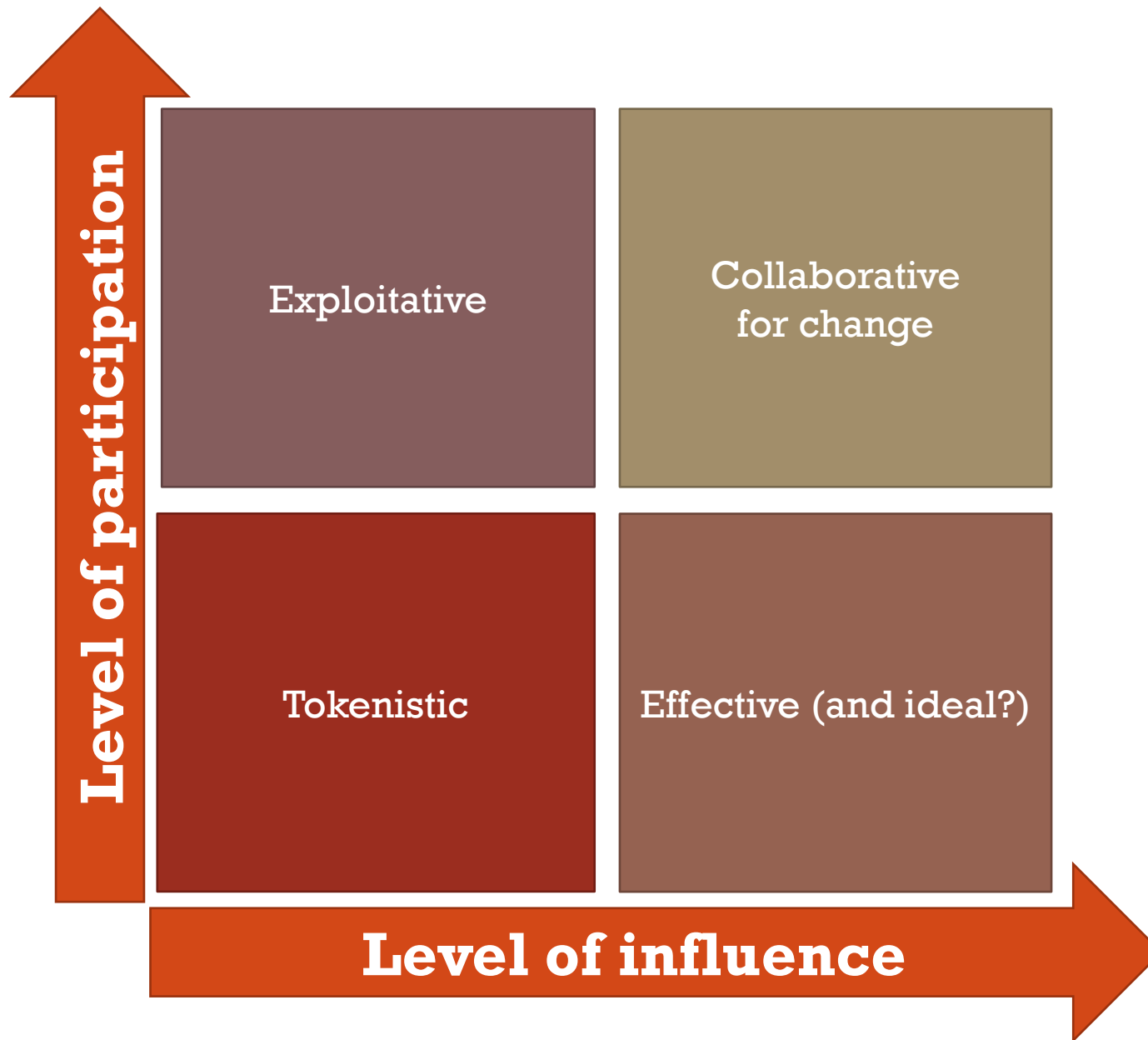


# GOOD PARTICIPATION LEADS TO POSITIVE CHANGE



- *I wish someone had stepped in when I was a kid, and like helped out. I shouldn't have gone through all that shit and have suffered the way we did. I dunno why they waited until things were so bad they couldn't be fixed. If they'd helped get Mum on track heaps earlier it would've been OK. I don't reckon that things would be like perfect but they wouldn't be as bad as what they are (Young man, aged 21)*
- **“They expect us to put in so much effort, its such a drain, but then they don't do anything with it.”  
(They've gotta listen)**







# YOUNG CARER RESEARCH



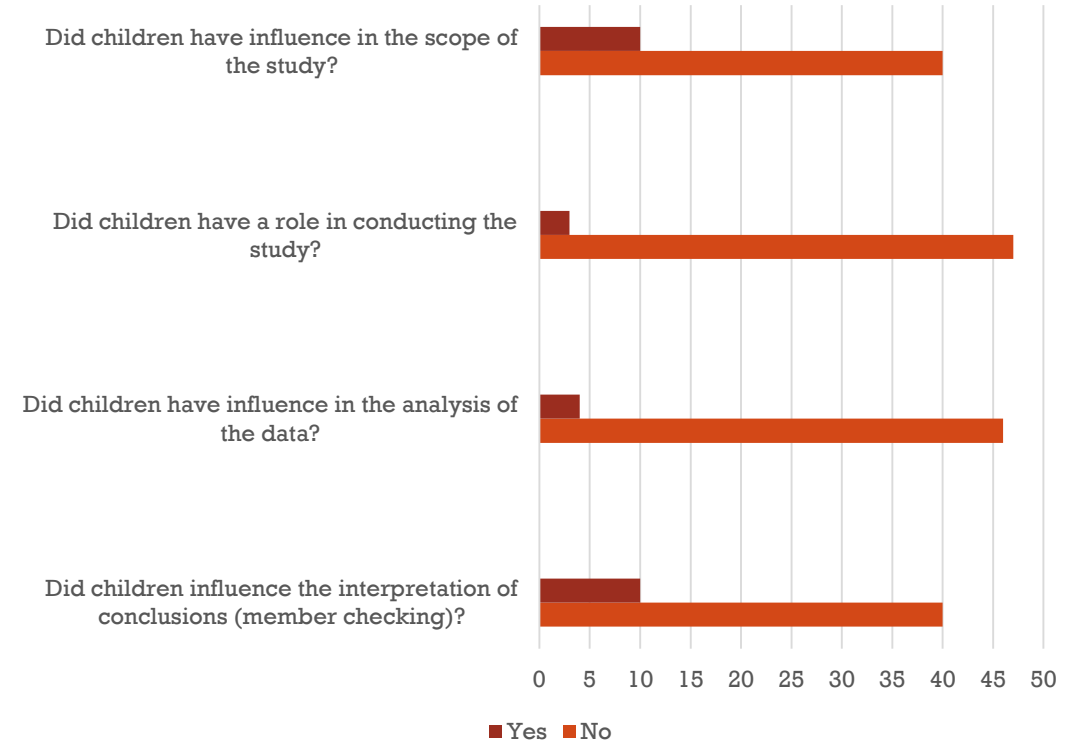
- There were 101 articles published between 2006 and 2015
- Of the 49 qualitative articles published between 2005 and 2017,
  - 42 specifically highlighted children and young people's wish to be recognized and respected
  - 43 to be given information and education about their CFR's condition, care needs and carer rights
  - 28 reported a wish to participate in decision-making and to be taken seriously



# PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

- In 17 of the studies young carers raised concerns with the 'young carer' label (and yet we continue to describe them this way)
- In 10, young carers played a part in designing the study (although none informed the research question), 3 in conducting it, 2 in analyzing and member checking, 3 in identifying themes
- In only 3 cases did researchers report that they had fed back findings to participants and none reported to young carers broadly

Participation in Research



# KEY MESSAGES

- If you are going to last in this game you need to start listening to kids
- Sometimes its hard to speak, we need you to help
- There's no point asking us if you're not going to do anything about it
- Sometimes we need you to step in and take control
- You need to be responsible for us and to us
- Together we can do almost anything



# ***RESPONDING TO CHILDREN***

It is clear that listening to children, hearing children and acting on what children say are three very different activities...

There have always been people who have listened, sometimes there have been people who have heard, and perhaps less often, those who have acted wisely on what children have had to say.

(Roberts 2000, p227)







# FIND OUT MORE

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- Institute of Child Protection Studies (ACU)  
[www.acu.edu.au/icps](http://www.acu.edu.au/icps)
- Young Carer Research  
<http://www.acu.edu.au/479895>
- Kids Central Resource: 60 tools for talking to children about sensitive issues  
[www.acu.edu.au/icps](http://www.acu.edu.au/icps)

