

# We can do this!

Mainstreaming mental health activities into the  
Families in Cultural Transition Program



# About Families in Cultural Transition (FiCT)

- ▶ FiCT is a group based psychosocial education program
- ▶ Based on a kit of activities that helps build a conceptual framework that empowers participants to better understand and take control of practical challenges and manage the emotional impact of settlement on the family.



# How is FiCT delivered?

- ▶ FiCT Project Officers (the FiCT Team) recruit and train bicultural facilitators
- ▶ FiCT Project Officers support and supervise the bicultural facilitators
- ▶ Facilitators chosen for their ability to speak community language(s) + English+ knowledge of their community + facilitation and teaching experience
- ▶ Program is delivered by two trained bicultural facilitators



# FiCT is a 10 session program

- ▶ 1. Introduction
- ▶ 2. Support Services
- ▶ 3. Money
- ▶ 4. Trauma and Healing
- ▶ 5. Families
- ▶ 6. Children
- ▶ 7. Gender
- ▶ 8. Youth
- ▶ 9. Employment
- ▶ 10. Enjoying the new environment



# We can do this!

- ▶ FiCT team obtained funding from PIR to develop a resource to be used within the FiCT program
- ▶ Rationale was based on feedback from participants during evaluation to incorporate further explicit wellbeing activities in addition to Module 4 (Trauma and Healing)
- ▶ Resource designed to help participants to share their personal and cultural understandings of mental health and wellbeing
- ▶ Participants learn and share practical ways to support and strengthen personal and community mental health and wellbeing



# Program design

- ▶ Activities delivered weekly to build up story of a character
- ▶ Character is newly arrived and dealing with many mental health challenges
- ▶ Each week participants identify character's state of mental health to identify current problems and explore ways to reduce problems and increase mental health and wellbeing (use of emojis)



# Weekly activities

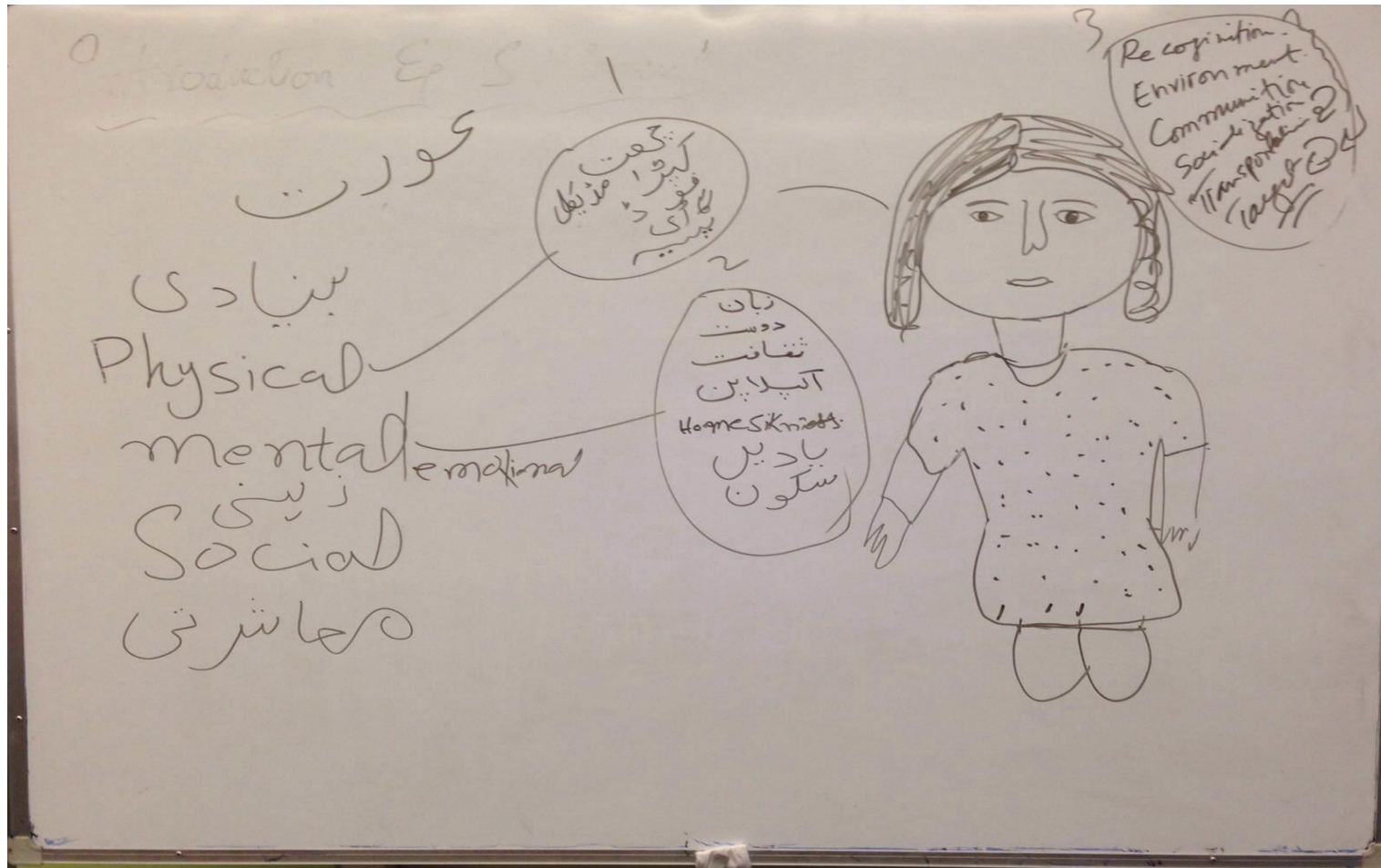
How do you do	Introduction to activities
Let it go	Stress ball exercises
Smile	Short breathing exercises
I walk therefore I am	Mindfulness walking meditation
I hear, I'm here	Mindfulness listening activity
Small good things	Identifying strengths in daily life
Morning is wiser than evening	Simple approaches to managing insomnia
The well	Stress/ exhaustion
Body matters	Exercise and nutrition
Wild weather	Anger management exercise
A problem halved	Sharing and support
Yes I said, Yes I will	Final exercise, bringing it together

# Pilot phase

- ▶ 16 experienced facilitators invited to attend training-  
Afghan, Arabic, Urdu, Tamil, Karen
- ▶ Approach explained and activities discussed
- ▶ In pairs facilitators worked on an activity and presented it  
to the group
- ▶ Most activities around 15-20 minutes
- ▶ Discussed integration into the existing FICT program
- ▶ Trialled in mid 2016



# Case study: Urdu speaking women's group



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- ▶ Urdu speaking women's group based in Mt Druitt, mostly from Pakistan
- ▶ Facilitators trained and took part in the pilot
- ▶ Participants called the character "Rosie" and followed her progress each week as she dealt with many challenges
- ▶ *"We called her Rosie because she is us. We want to share things related to women, we see Rosie as ourselves. She is easy to identify."*
- ▶ *"Sharing her experience makes it very practical and easy to understand."*
- ▶ **From the facilitator:**
- ▶ *"The participants have become quite attached to Rosie and have made suggestions based on the activities on how she can improve her state of wellbeing."*

# Case study: Tamil men asylum seekers

- ▶ The young men called their character Kabala (after a Tamil hero Kabali). He is a role model for them.
- ▶ They reported that they'd been shown deep breathing exercises before but hadn't felt comfortable doing them. The difference with this approach was that they were teaching Kabala how to do the exercise.
- ▶ “we spend a lot of time walking but the walking meditation helped us to walk with mindfulness”
- ▶ “ Having Kabala with us as we learn how to cope in Australia has given us hope. There are many small things we can do to help ourselves”

# Preliminary evaluation results

- ▶ Take home, accessible exercises, easily understandable and culturally relevant
- ▶ Not all groups went through the entire program, and not all used the character
- ▶ Timing is an issue as these activities are not to take away from FICT content.
- ▶ Facilitators struggled for time to add in new activities within the 3 hour time
- ▶ Participants enjoyed the breathing exercises.



## From a facilitator:

- ▶ We all have different emotions when we first come to Australia and these activities show it is OK to feel these emotions (and that there are things we can do to help ourselves) - Arabic facilitator

# Next steps

- ▶ Finalise kit of materials
- ▶ Roll out training to all interested FICT bicultural facilitators
- ▶ Take home materials ??
  
- ▶ Questions?