

# Grief & Loss: The impacts of placement transitions on foster carers and their children

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# The Grief and Loss Project

Literature  
review

## Carer Survey N=103

Vic	72%	FC Experience	No of children
NSW	23%	6 mths – 33 yrs	1-5 59%
WA	5%		6-9 25%

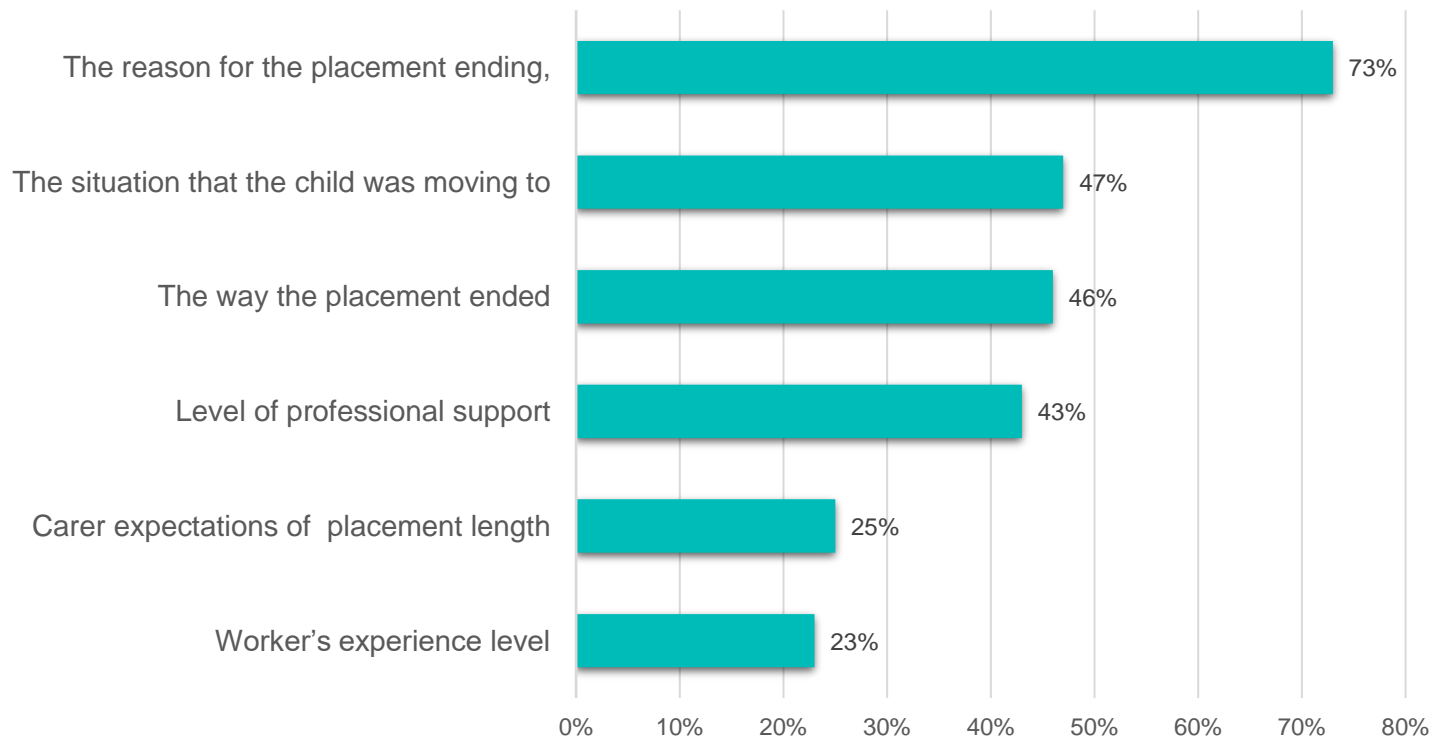
## Interviews N= 22

Vic -7    NSW - 6    WA - 4  
5 biological children of carers (adults)

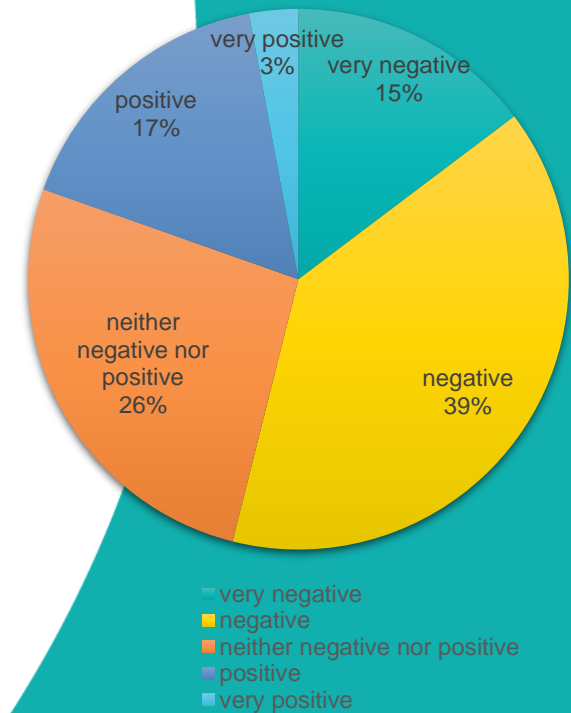


# Carer Survey

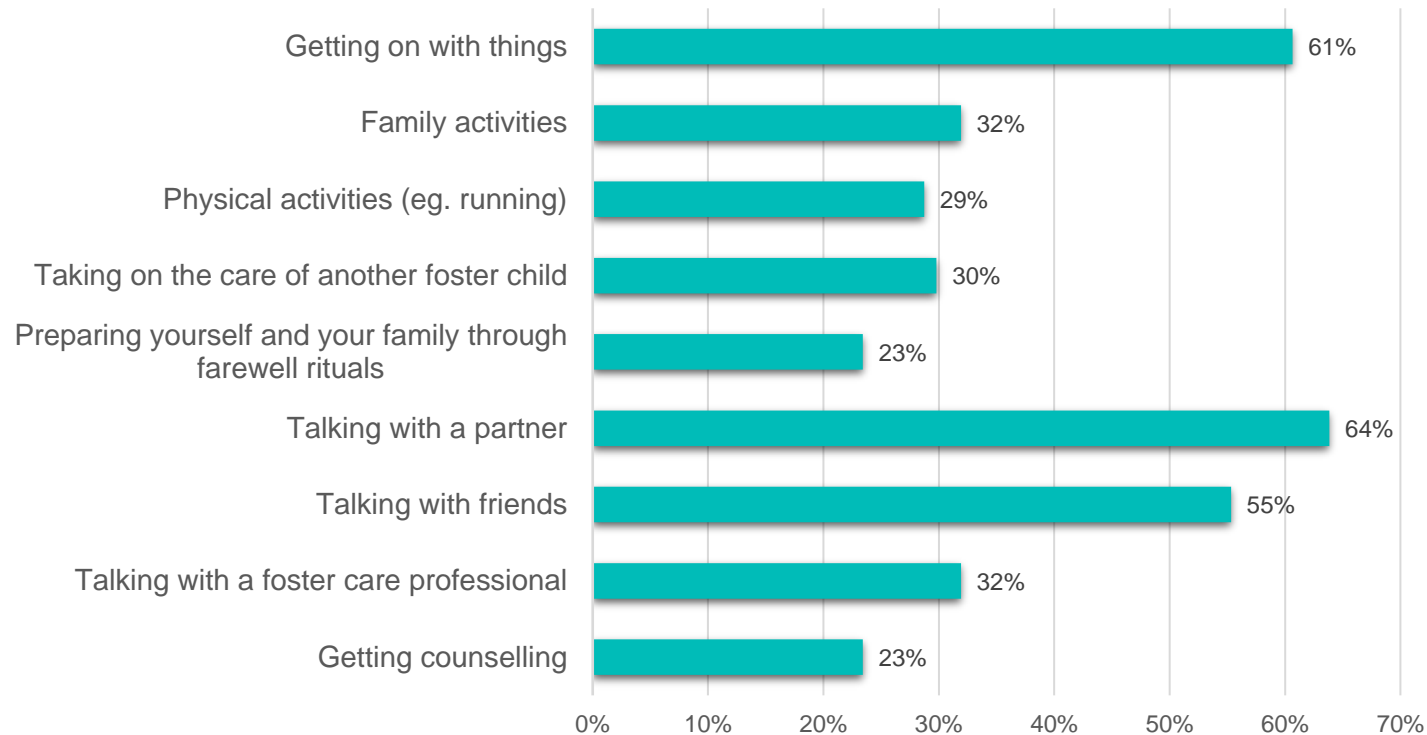
## What made the experience difficult?



## Impact of children leaving placement



# How carers said they coped




“

*Trying to maintain contact with the children where appropriate.*

*When the child leaves your home it takes a toll on you. For me this means giving myself time to recover before I take on another needy child.*

”

# Interview themes

1. Carers feel deeply connected with the children they care for and believe the children are attached to them
  2. Carers seek respect for their experience, judgement and expertise
  3. The importance of communication
  4. Workers need to understand what carers experience
  5. Supporting / training workers to support and educate carers
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# Biological Children of Carers

1. Children are part of the foster family care team
2. The adults I spoke to were not consulted about placements
3. Generally, carers believe they are best placed to support their children
4. The experience of a foster child leaving differs with every child

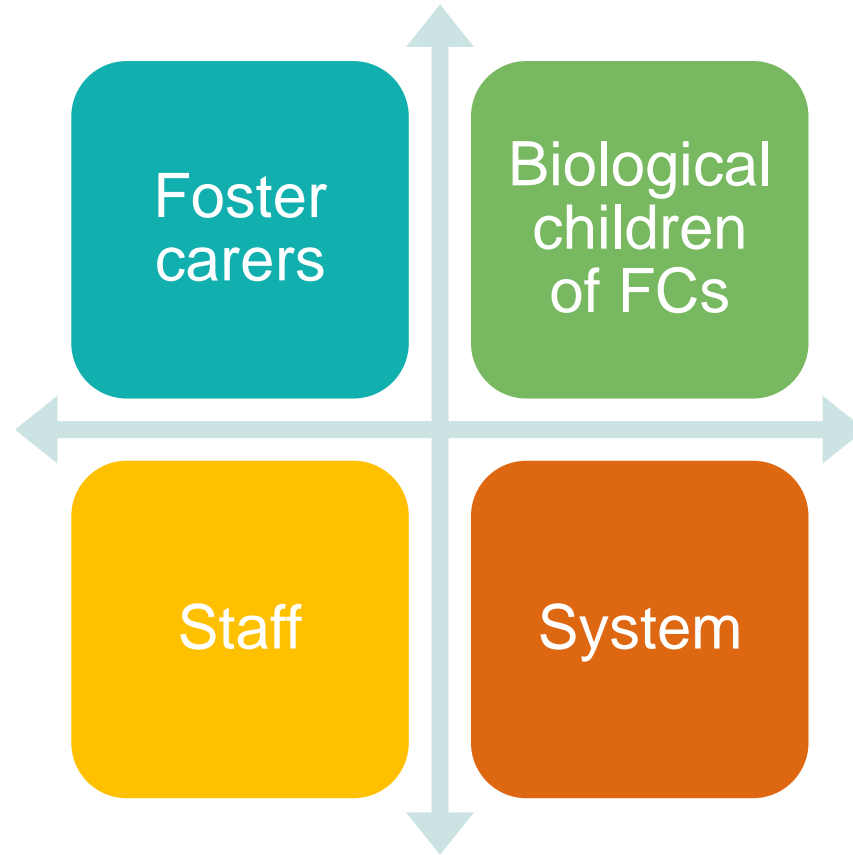


# MacKillop's Spotlight Project

## Focus Areas

- Regular and high-quality carer supervision
- Allegation or investigation information and support
- **Support/counselling when a placement ends**
- Carer Specific Learning and Development Platform
- “Foster Care System” training for Carers
- Foster Carer Mentoring Initiative
- Carer Feedback Loop Procedures
- Familiarisation with carers’ assessments and history
- Regular communication with carers who have limited contact with the agency (respite carers/on hold)
- Case Management Induction Training

## Emotional and Psychological Support for Carers when a placement ends





# Emotional and Psychological Support for Foster Carers when a placement ends

## Foster Carers

- Podcast
- Trauma Informed Care training
- Preparation and Post-Placement Processes



# Emotional and Psychological Support for Foster Carers when a placement ends

## Biological Children

### Preparation and Post-Placement Processes:

- Include biological children in support sessions
- Consider recognition of biological children in terms of their contribution and need for support



# Emotional and Psychological Support for Foster Carers when a placement ends

## Staff

Review of Staff Training to include:

- Counselling Skills
- Understanding and responding to grief / loss
- Having difficult conversations and imparting difficult news
- Facilitating effective Carer Support Sessions



## Emotional and Psychological Support for Foster Carers when a placement ends

### System

#### MacKillop OOHC Practice Guide Review:

- Expectations for communication of sensitive information
- Processes to support other proposed practice improvement strategies regarding grief / loss
- Clarify access to internal clinical consultation for this topic
- Outline for appropriate and helpful rituals/processes around transitions and processing grief/loss.

**External Support service for carers.**

