



# Brave Foundation

Centring the voices & lived experience of young  
parent participants

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# Supporting Expecting & Parenting Teens Program

- Mentoring program for expecting or parenting young people
- Mentors:
  - Work with participants to build & develop goals
  - Link to other support services & resources
  - Walk alongside participants as they work towards goals
- Supports young parents for 12 months (flexible to circumstance)

Decorative graphic in the top right corner consisting of three orange semi-circles and several grey circles of various sizes, some overlapping.

A national NFP founded  
& designed by women  
with diverse lived  
experience of teen  
parenthood

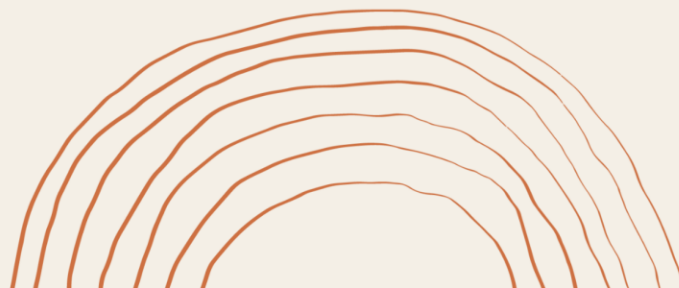
# Brave's Past Youth Participation Efforts

- Co-design of SEPT with young parents
- Brave Alumni
- SEPT Lived experience working group & advisory body
- BRAG (Brave Representative & Advisory Group) founded
- What we didn't prepare for...



# Global Challenges with Authentic Youth Participation

- Availability & experience of staff to lead & implement initiative
- Budget constraints
- Limited structures & processes
- What do participants get out of being involved?
- Engagement platforms
- Maintaining engagement



# Global Challenges with Authentic Youth Participation



- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) Article 12 is “*one of the of the provisions most widely violated and disregarded*” (Shier, 2001, p. 108)
- There continues to be a gap translating principles into practice (Braithwaite & Deane, 2023)
- What is contributing to this gap?



**References:** Braithwaite, J. & Deane, K. (2023). Youth participation in Aotearoa New Zealand. Rationales, rights and responsiveness. In B. Percey-Smith, N. P. Thomas, C. O'Kane, A.T-D., Imoh (Eds.). A handbook of children and young people's participation (2nd ed.). Routledge.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003367758>

Shier, H. (2001). Pathways to participation: Openings, opportunities and obligations. *Children & Society*, 15, 107-117. <https://doi.org/10.1002/chi.617>

# The Roots of the Problem

*The biggest challenge is adultism...* (Ausberger et al. 2020, p. 254)

- Examples:
  - Adults taking over because it's in the 'best interests' of the young person or project
  - Expectations that young people volunteer while adults get paid
  - Organisational structures & processes that are not youth-friendly
  - Soliciting views without closing the communication loop
  - A romanticised view that "youth-led" means adults stay on the sidelines

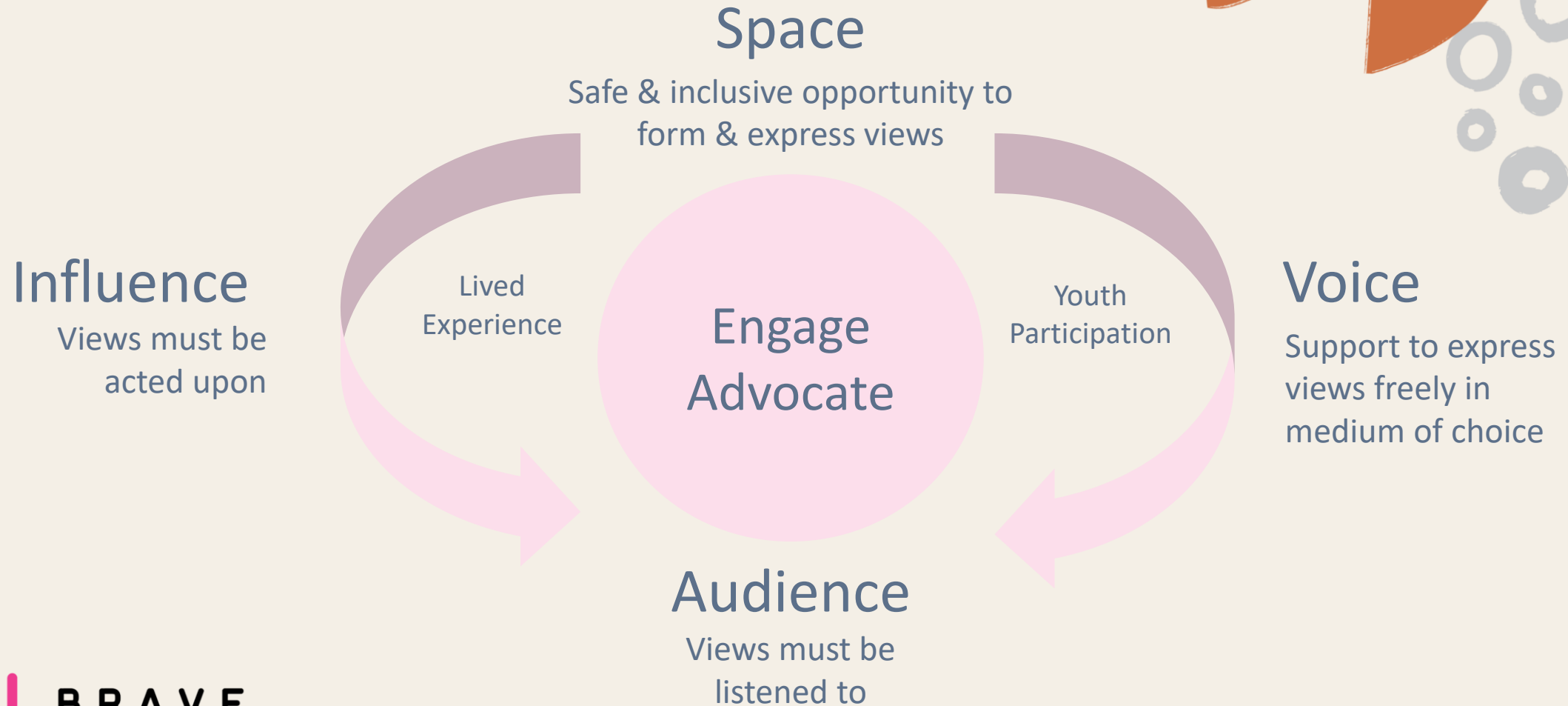


**References:** Ausberger, A., Toraif, N., Springwater, S. S., Koshinsky, G. H., & Martinez, L. S. (2020). Strategies for engaging youth currently and formerly in foster care in child welfare policy advocacy. *Child Welfare*, 97(6), 251-270. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/48626325>

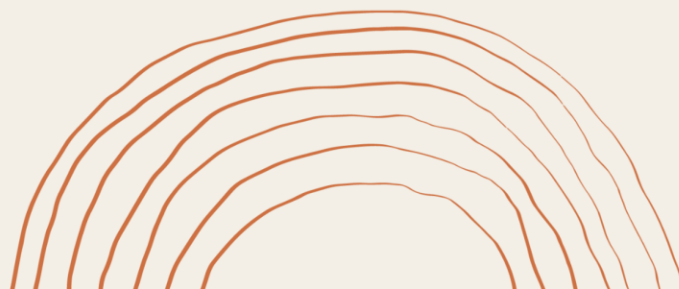
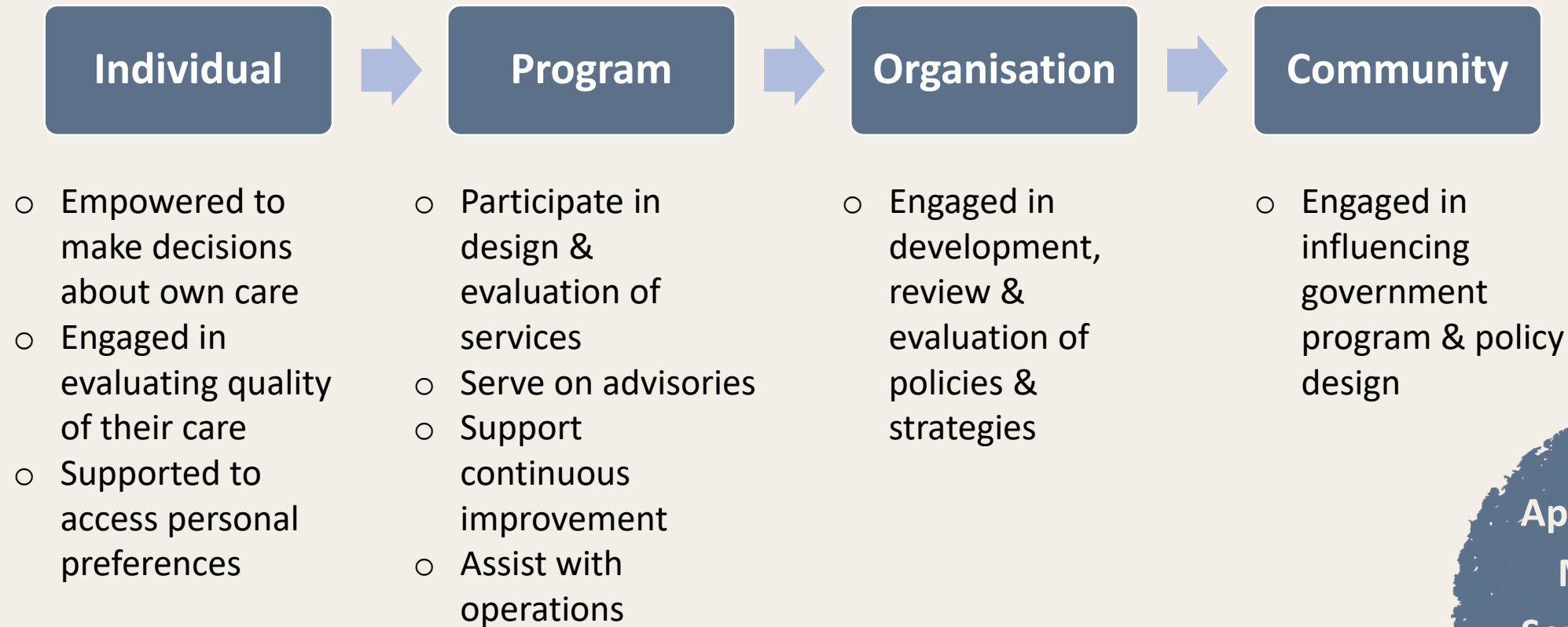
Deane, K., Ahmad, M., Bullen, P., Chuah, Y., Fenaughty, J., Joseph, D., Kalsi, K., Marlowe, J., Paky, V., Tang-Taylor, J. (2023). Connect & Korero: Innovating to amplify refugee and migrant youth voice in Aotearoa New Zealand policy. Ministry of Youth Development Te Manatu Whakahiato Taiohi.



# Brave's Conceptual Model of Participation



# Brave's Framework



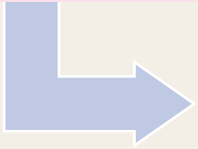


# Translating Principles into Practice



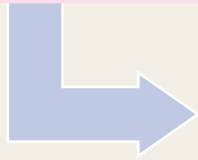
## Recruitment

- 10–12 participants representing diverse identities, backgrounds & personalities
- Peer outreach & mentoring



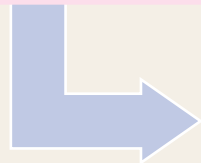
## Readiness

- Pre-participation conversation to assess readiness, explore interests & needs



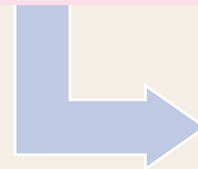
## Onboarding

- Co-development of individual workplans



## Involvement

- Remuneration for time & expertise
- Flexible participation
- Special projects & working groups
- Scaffolded support in areas of interest



## Offboarding

- Debrief
- Recognition
- Further opportunities through peer mentoring

# Achievements & Insights

- ✓ BRAG re-established in July with 9 diverse & active members
- ✓ Established shared agreement & Facebook group
- ✓ Input on meeting structure & processes
- ✓ Currently revisiting name of the group
- ✓ Members have already participated in government consultation & program evaluation opportunities
- ✓ Working groups identified to create promotional video stories & review Welcome Pack for new program participants
- ✓ 3 Meetings have been held & most recent co-facilitated with youth member

Flexibility &  
persistence is  
key



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 BRAVE

# Discussion

- What tensions have you or your organisations faced when trying to support children & young people to genuinely participate in decisions that affect them?
- Any tips to overcome them?
- Do you have any success stories, tools or resources you'd like to share?

