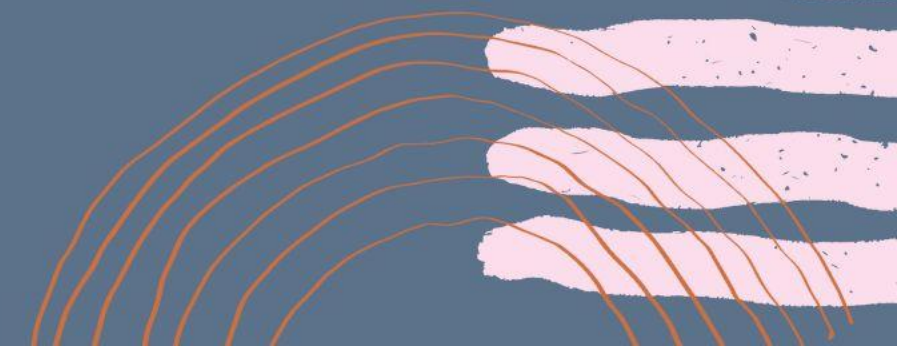


Increasing Access to Mentoring Support for Isolated Young Parents: A Mixed-Methods Evaluation of the SEPT Digital Delivery Pilot

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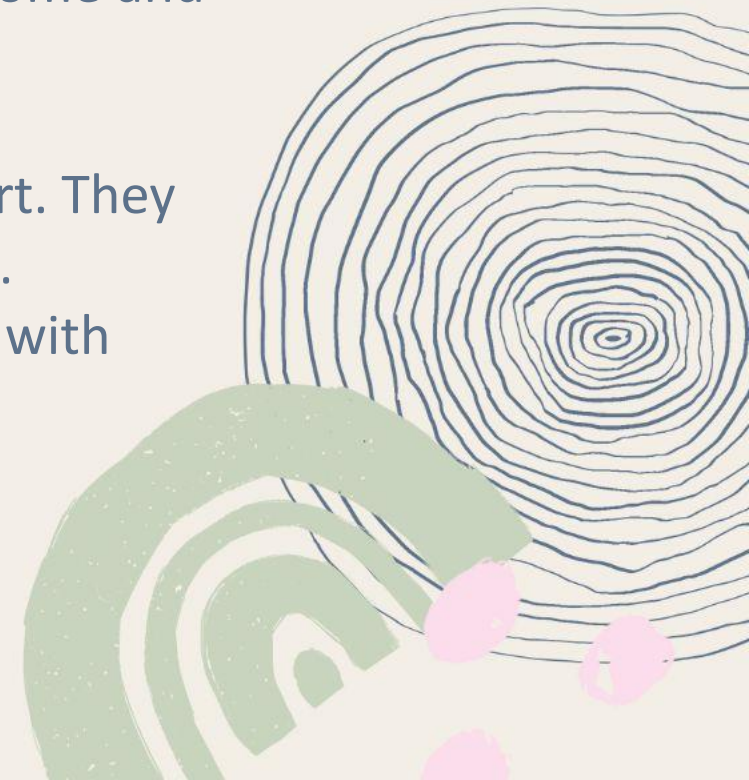




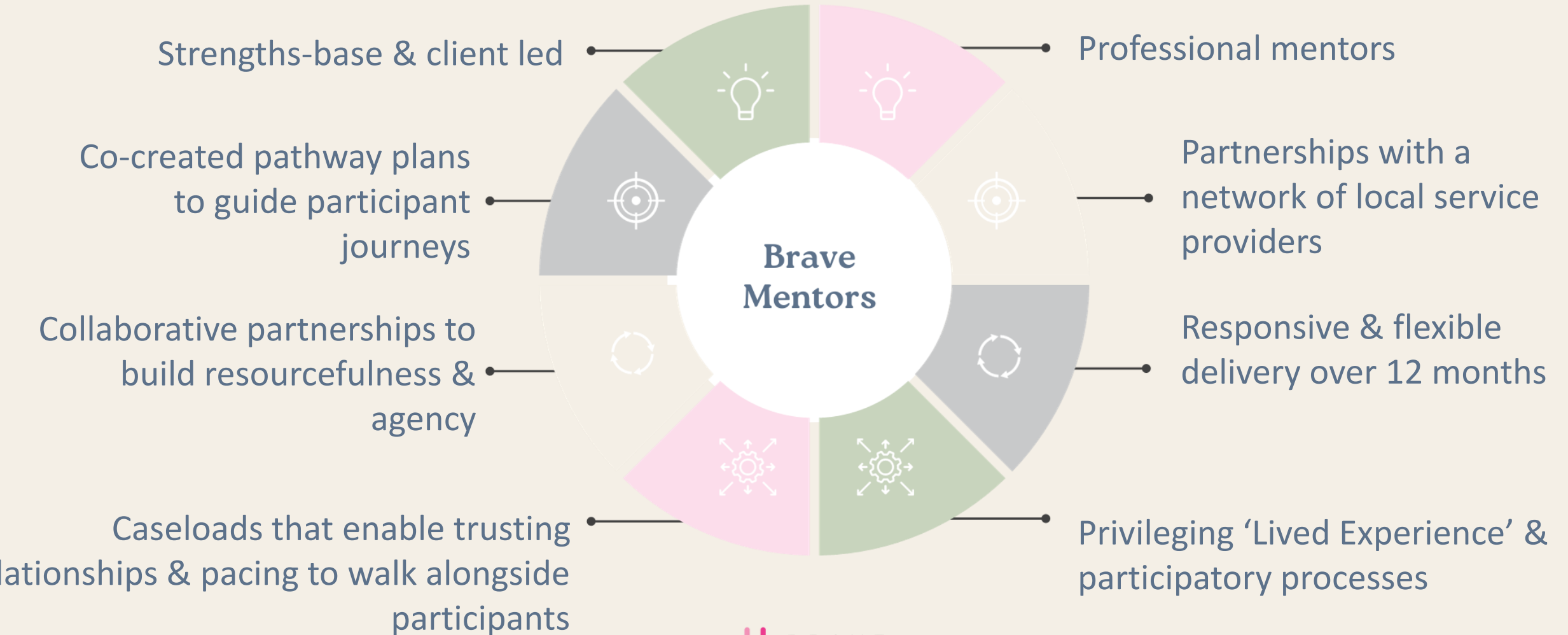
TC's Story

“I haven't had an easy road, so I guess my journey as a mother is going to be a lot harder than others because other people, I guess, have a mum to call up or, you know, Dad or someone to say ‘Hey, I'm having a bad day. Can you come and take the kids?’

You know, they have the support. They have a village, whereas I don't... Unfortunately, I wasn't blessed with that.”



Mentoring within SEPT

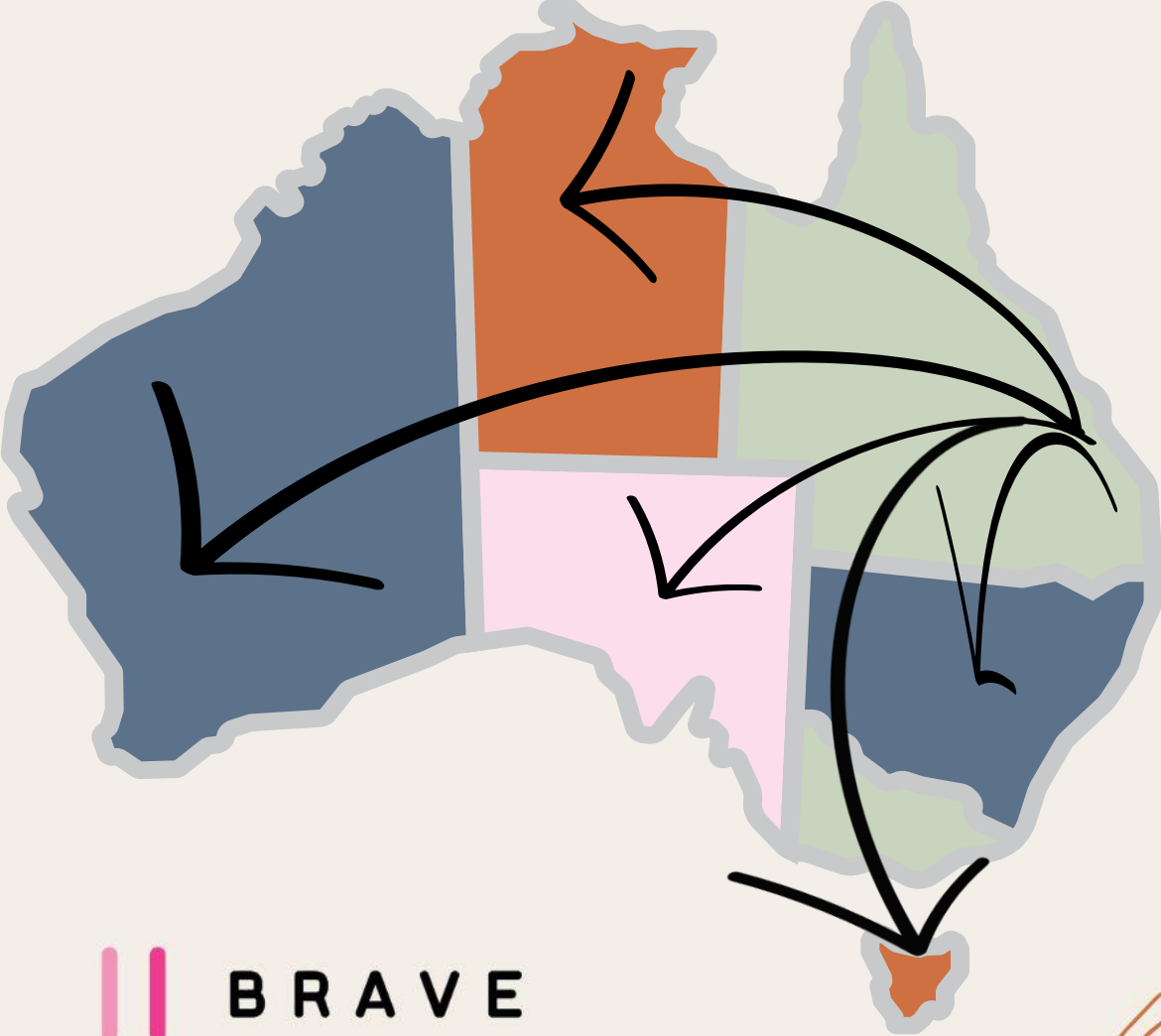


Can it Work in a Digital Format?





The SEPT Digital Delivery Program



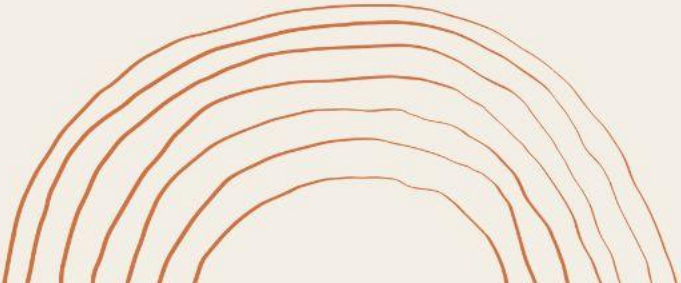
Established in response to Covid-19



Dedicated mentors



- Text
- Phone
- Messenger
- Email
- Video Call



Key Evaluation Questions



- **KEQ1:** How well does the Digital Delivery align with the SEPT program theory? Where are the points of difference?
- **KEQ2:** How valuable was the mentoring support to Digital Delivery participants & how do their experiences of the program compare to participants who received services in person?
- **KEQ3:** How effective is Digital Delivery in producing the outcomes identified in the program theory compared to in-person delivery?

The Participant Profile

35

Young Parents Completed the Digital Delivery program in 2023

14%

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

100%

Young Mums

48

Children (23 unborn)

41%

Single Young Parents



23%

Current or past Child Protection involvement



30%

Had housing insecurity concerns



43%

Affected by current or past family violence

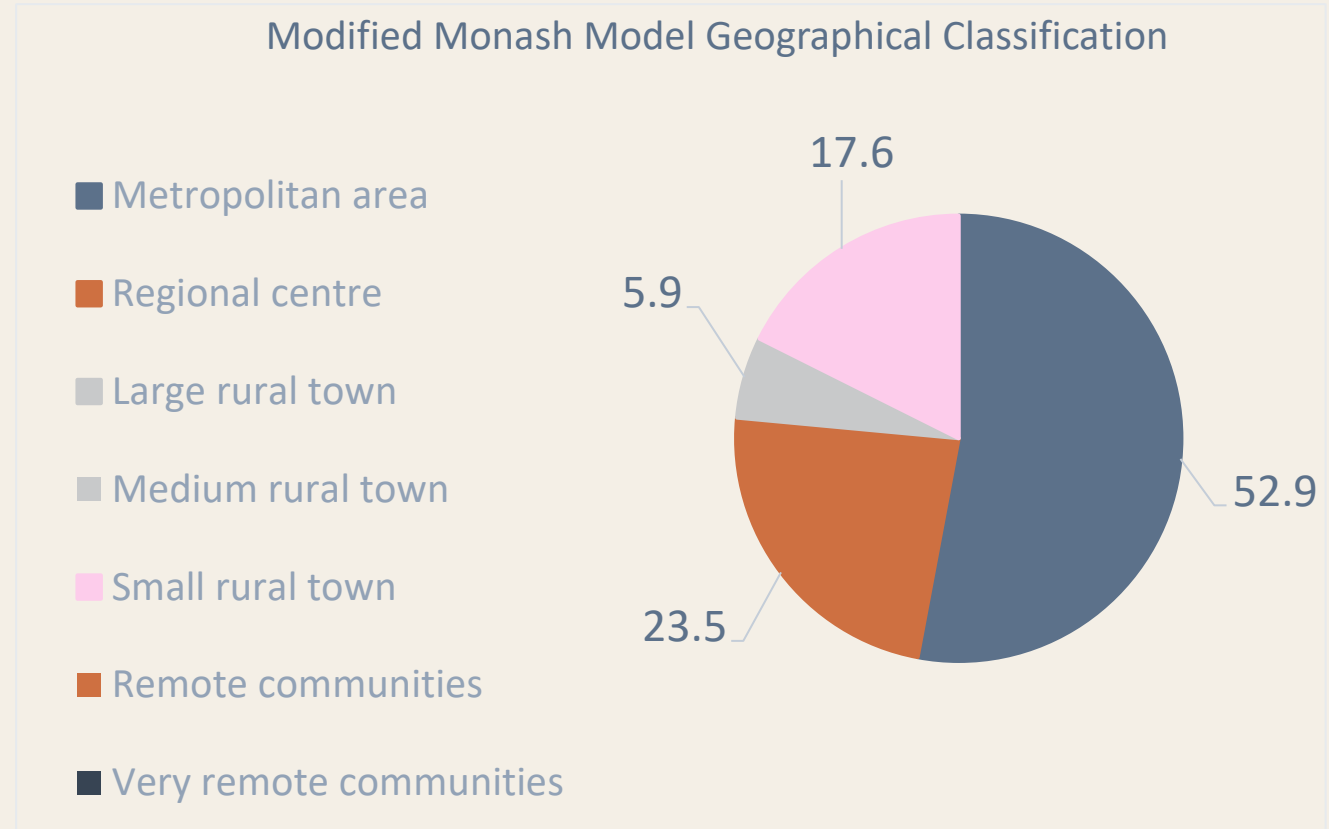
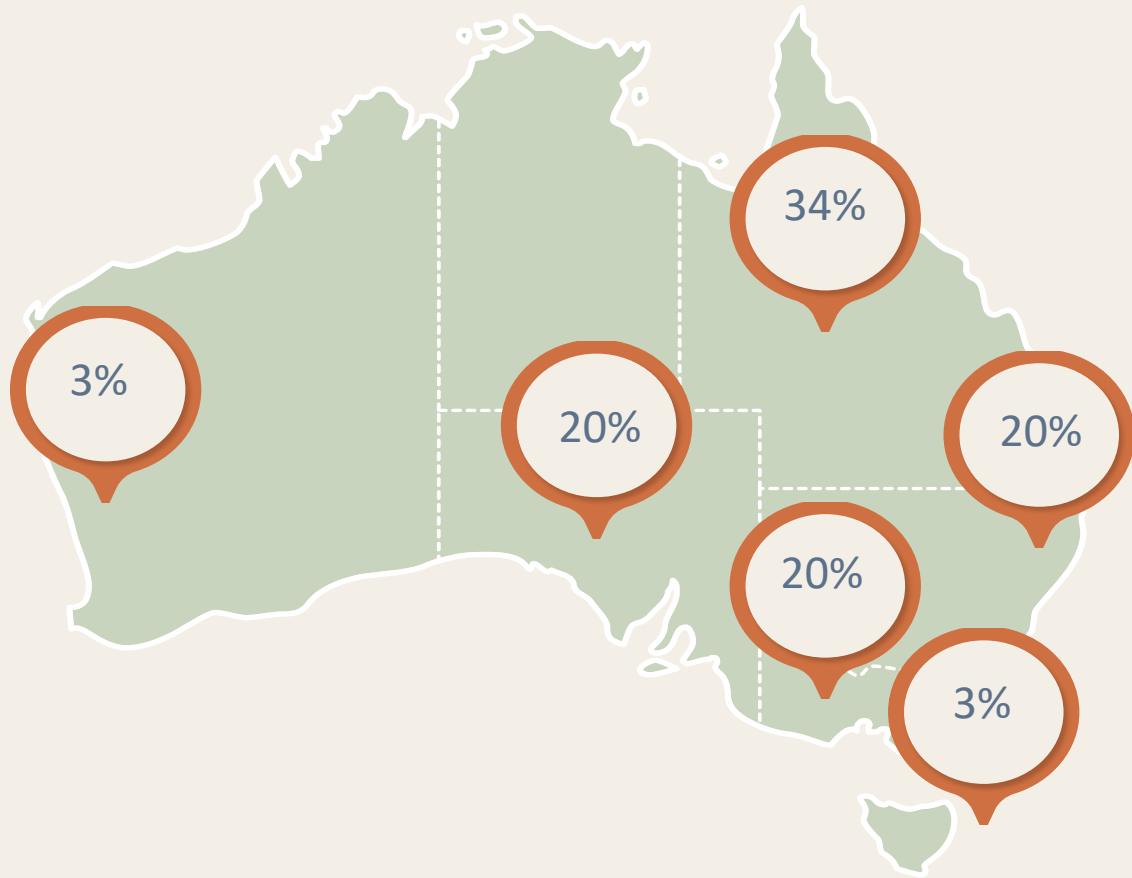


77%

Had known mental health concerns

Significant differences in the proportion of young parents with **housing insecurity** and **mental health concerns** across delivery modes.

The Participant Profile



20% lower conversion rate from referral to participation than in-person delivery and **no significant difference in geographical remoteness of Digital vs In-Person Delivery participants**, but due to place-based Mentors reaching young parents from remote and very remote communities and Digital Mentors reaching more young parents in small rural towns.

The Same Mentoring Model but a Different, Slower Approach to Relationship-Building

“I think we have a lot more short, sharp interaction with our participants than the face-to-face Mentors do... I talk to almost all my participants who are actively engaging once a week, you know, like I talk to them a lot and I think a lot of that is rapport building. I do a lot of Facebook messaging... They might not be using Facebook, but they’re using messenger a lot... and it’s a combination of, you know, really productive stuff...[and] there’s a lot of additional time spent doing chatty social trust building stuff to get to a place where they’re happy to engage with someone who they can’t see...” (Digital SEPT staff member)

“Most of them don’t want to do video chat... they want a call and not be face-to-face. So, there’s a lot of body language stuff that I miss out on from them, but they also miss out on that from me.” – Digital SEPT staff member

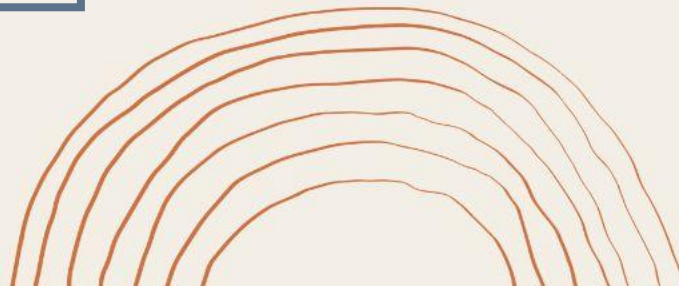


The Same Mentoring Model but a Different Mentoring Approach to Support Provision

“... that’s obviously a limitation where we physically can’t be there to sit with [participant at a playgroup for the first time] and, and say, you know, “It’s gonna be fine. Let’s sit there together and work through it” but doesn’t mean that it’s not achievable because it’s happened, where they’ve created a plan and... it was small steps toward being there for the whole playgroup... –Digital SEPT staff member

“She was able to cook dinner, while I was on the phone for her... so the flexibility of their busy lifestyle is really helpful and I think being able to be flexible with our time frames as well is important because we can have a few 20 minute conversations to make up one full meeting, if we're not restricted to having to spend one hour on the phone with them, that's really important, especially if they've got little ones already.” –Digital SEPT staff member

 **BR A V E**



Requires “Getting to Know” a Community from a Distance

““The challenges of not knowing the services in that region as well, not knowing the distance of, of other suburbs too, but [participants are] really understanding. I just say, you know, I haven't been there before, but I've supported lots of mums in places I haven't been... but can you tell me like, would this suburb work?” –Digital SEPT staff member

“So, when I was face-to-face, I just had to be familiar with my 60- kilometre radius... it was so much easier to build rapport with stakeholders and the services that were there and know what they do and familiarise myself with it... whereas now, we're doing states and we're getting referrals from all over each state...” –Digital SEPT staff member

I just Google all the services if the participant can't name drop any.... I Google them all, call them, find out what they offer... and then just work out which one would be suitable... I think the hard thing is not knowing how useful the service is. –Digital SEPT staff member

 **BR A V E**



Participant Experiences

100%

felt comfortable
talking to their
mentor

100%

said their mentor
helped them build
relationships with
others

100%

would recommend
SEPT Digital

94%

said their mentor
encouraged them to
set goals

93%

said their mentor
connected them to
community supports &
resources

92%

felt less stressed &
more motivated

Impact on Participants

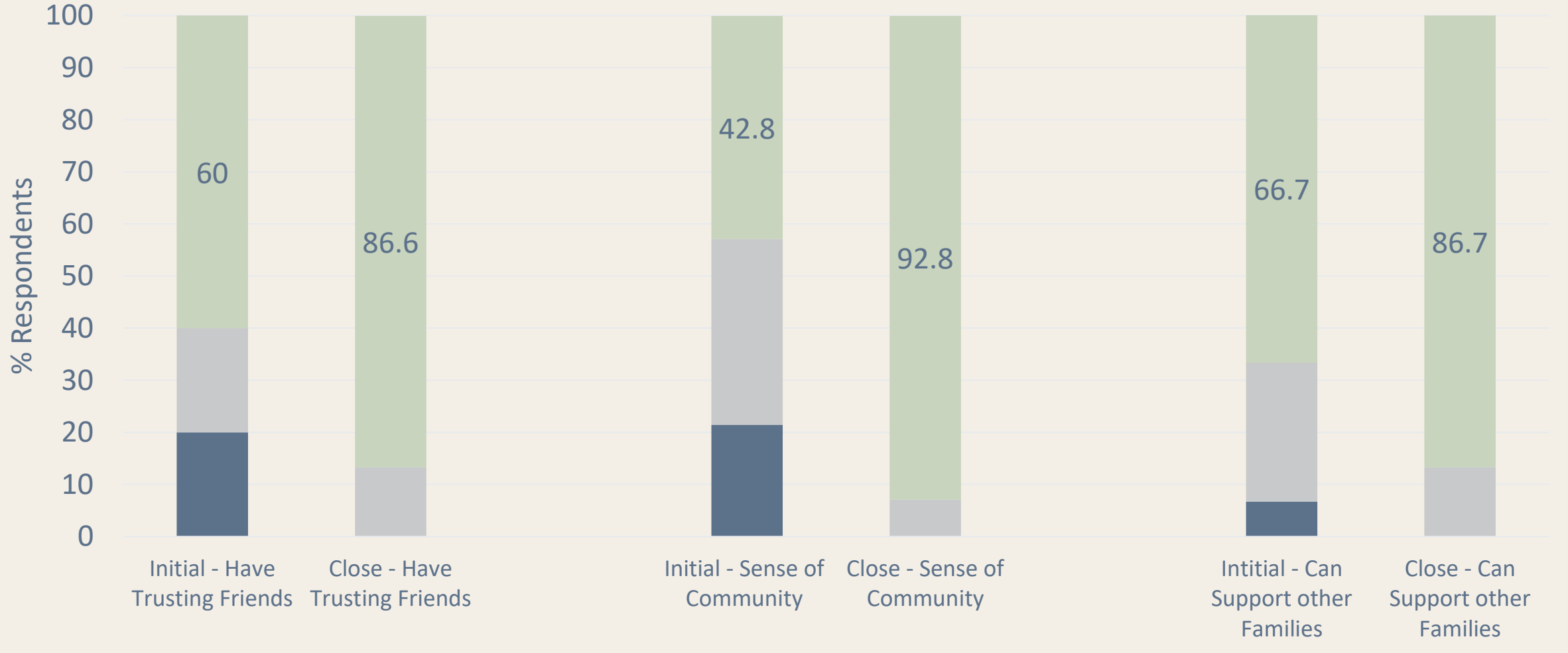
“It really gave me confidence that like I can manage my life. I can, I can do what I want, I can build a life that I’m proud of, and this kind of gave me that, like dignity almost back, you know? And then with getting pregnant, there was a lot of motivation. Like that changed my life... Yeah putting that motivation into action was what, what she [Mentor] really helped with.” –Digital SEPT participant

“This helped [daughter], give her space that she can grow up in, cause [Mentor’s name] helped a lot with finding housing and getting it all organised... that period of my life has made me, like, I’ve grown up a lot because of getting pregnant so young and I think it has only been that way because of [Mentor’s name]... I still have like struggles and like challenges or it’s just kind of life, yeah, but I think it put me in a really good position now that I’m able to deal with things that might be difficult that come up...” –Digital SEPT participant

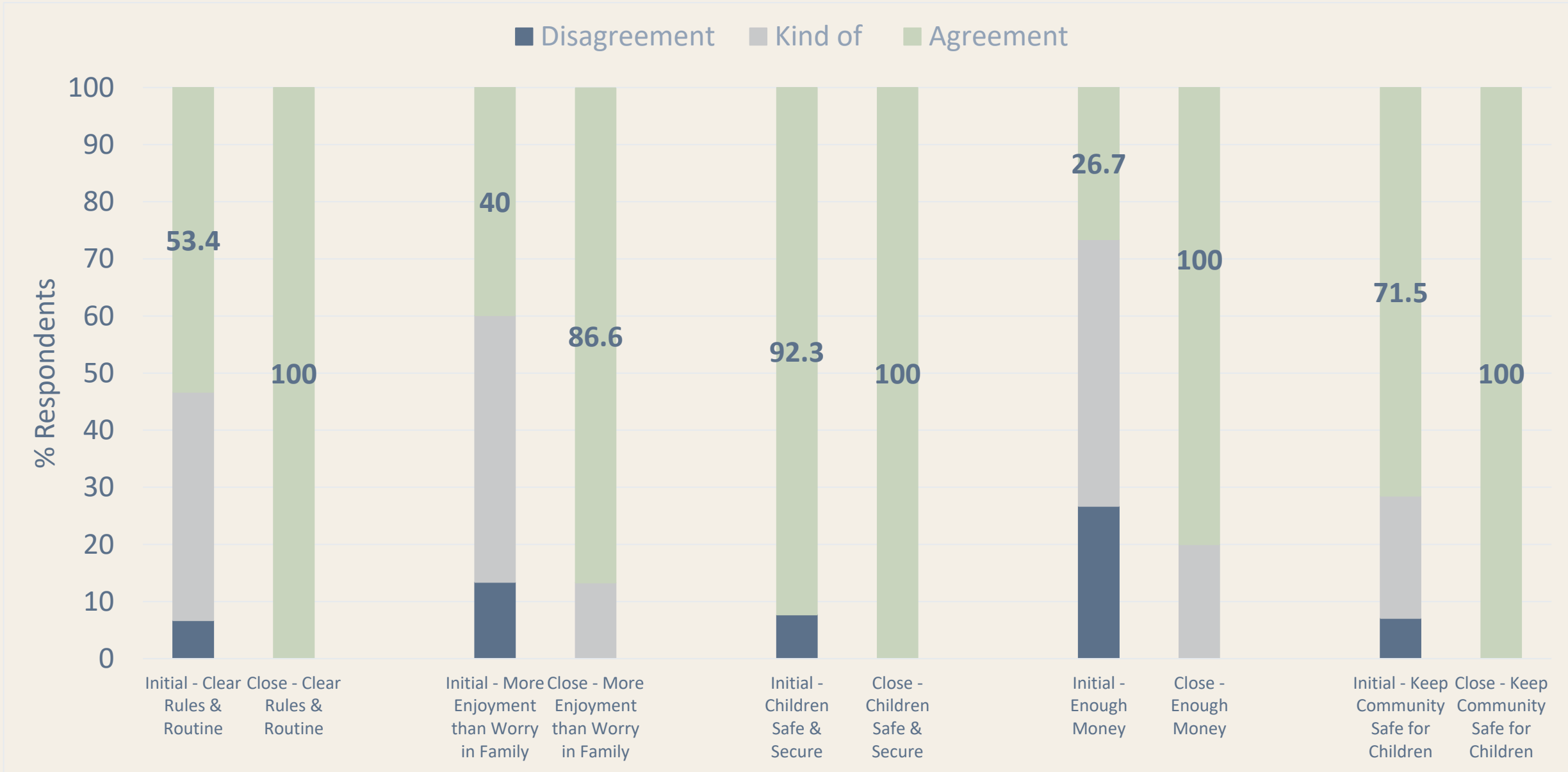


Connection Outcomes

■ Disagreement ■ Kind of ■ Agreement

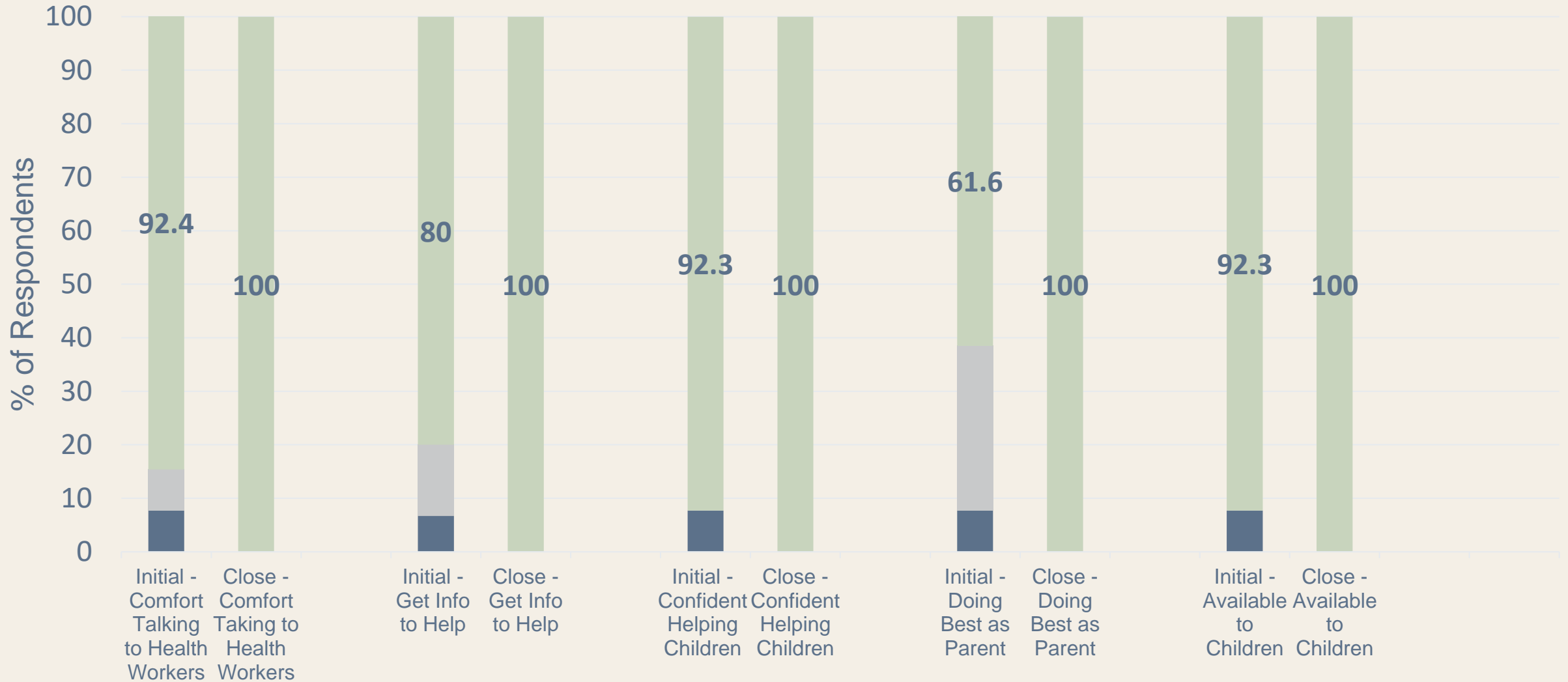


Family Security Outcomes

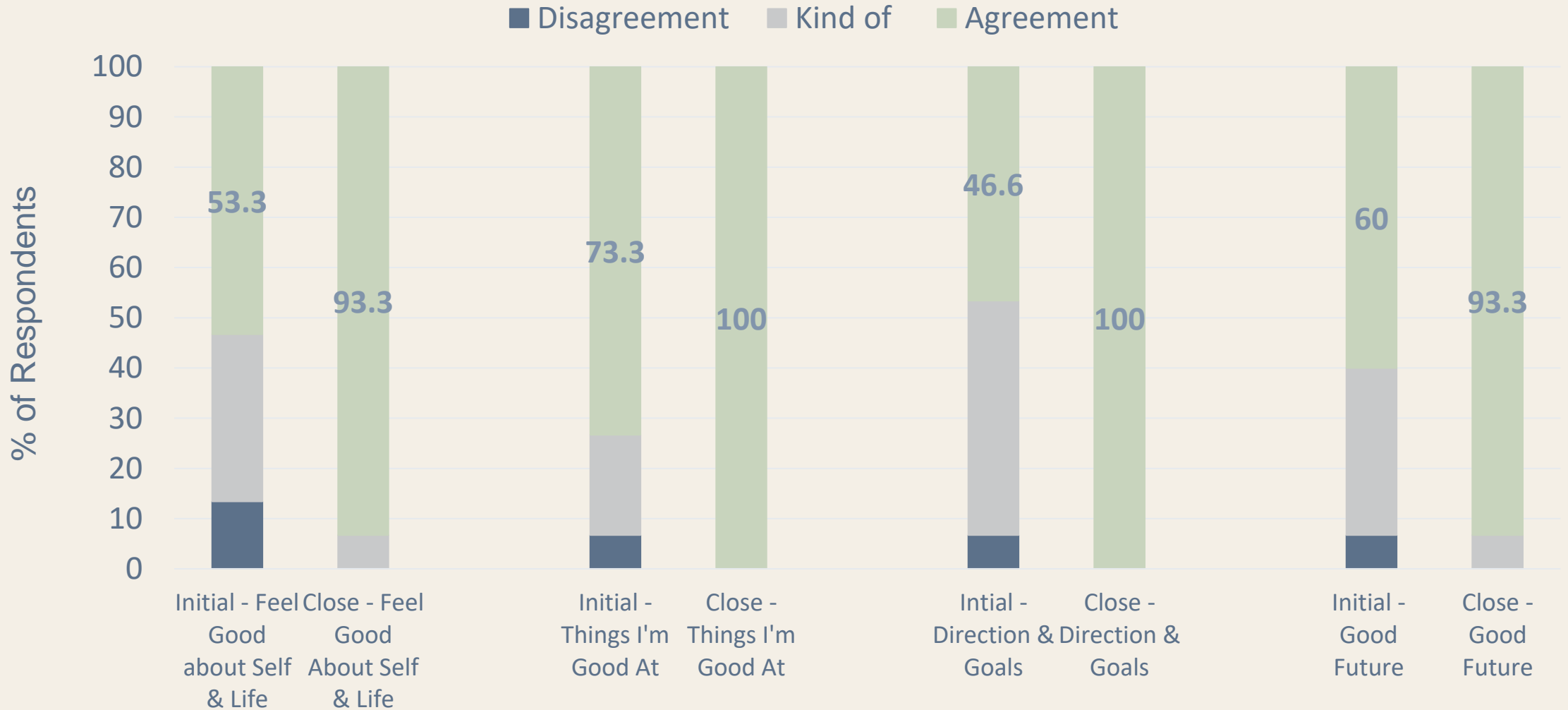


Parenting Outcomes

■ Disagreement Kind of ■ Agreement



Personal Agency Outcomes





Programming & Practice Implications

- There is substantial merit in continued delivery of SEPT Digital to reach young parents who are isolated by circumstance, disability or geography
- Assessment of young parent readiness to engage and support for participants to engage relationally via technology could amplify impact
- Mentors new to Digital Delivery would benefit from training and ongoing support focused on the unique skills required for digital mentoring
- Dedicated support for stakeholder engagement activities could create efficiencies and enable scaling opportunities constrained by reliance on Mentors to develop and maintain relationships across an extensive referral network of referral partners





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