



BRISBANE YOUTH SERVICE

NEW FUTURES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Brisbane Youth Service

- Multidisciplinary youth service supporting homeless and disadvantaged young people aged 12-25 years, and their children.
- Holistic support programs include emergency support, intake and brief intervention, Centre for Young Women and Young Families, AOD services, a health clinic, psychologists, mental health recovery programs, sustaining young tenancies program, housing and tenancy support (26 units), crisis housing, transitional housing, safe and connected families, couch surfing hotline project and others....
- Strategic commitment to Research and Evaluation

Measuring outcomes of programs that work with young people

- Why are we doing this??
- Why is it so hard??
- How have BYS approached building evaluation capacity?
- How do we measure outcomes?
- What are the critical success factors?
- What are the hard bits/mistakes to learn from?

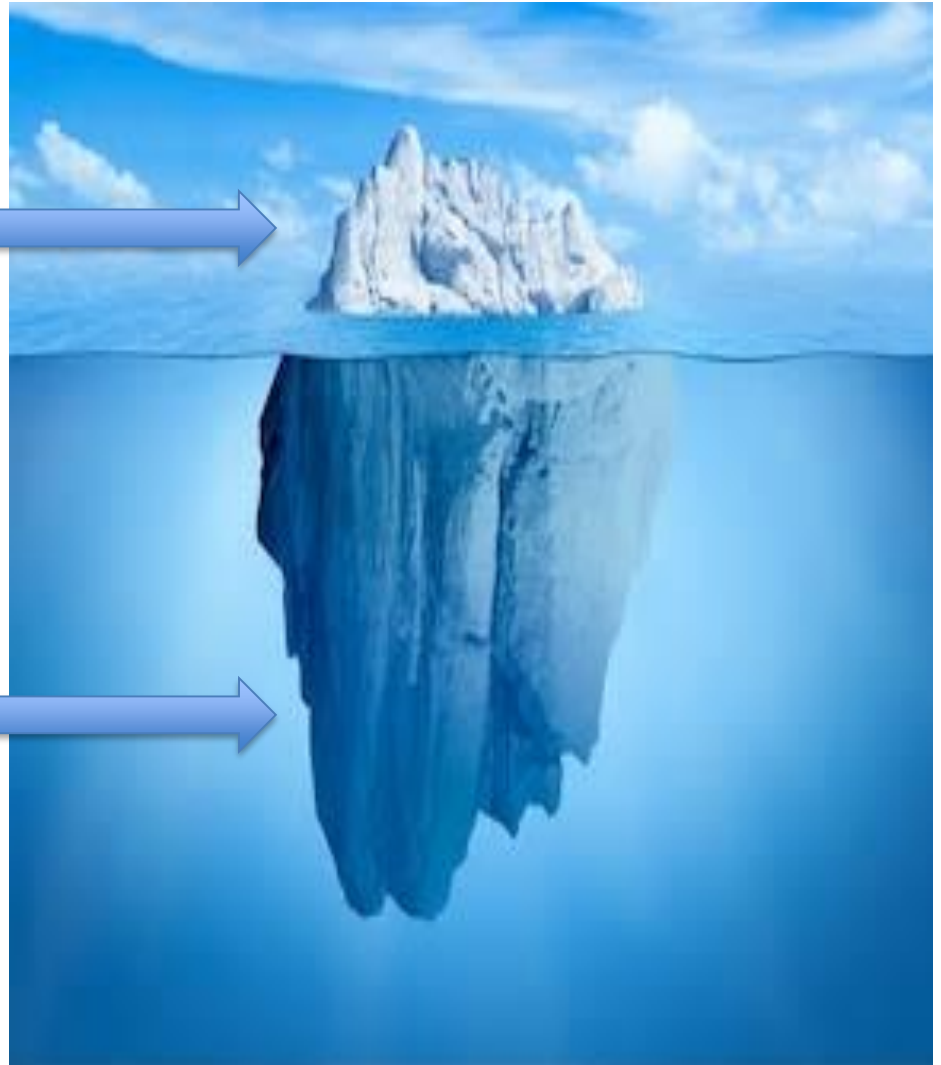
First decide:
**Why *are* we trying
to measure
outcomes of our
work with young
people??**

- **Are we really making a difference??**
- **How can we improve?**
- **How can we be accountable for our funding?**
- **How can we tell others how great we are (and get more money to make more difference)?**



We want to know how to improve our services

We want to show others how great our services are; get more money from funders; feel good about our work; have good looking dashboards for our annual report and website and build our reputation in the sector



Why is **youth** program evaluation so hard???

- Complexity complexity complexity
- Research/compliance resistance
- Highly transient, crisis-driven engagement
- Change is not linear, multiple emergent influences over time
- Change is relational, informal, subjective, experiential, cyclical and long term
- “Client led work” – resistance to imposing target outcomes
- No clear end point
- Low trust and telling us what we want to hear
- Emergent nature of youth culture/experiences

Two Key Challenges

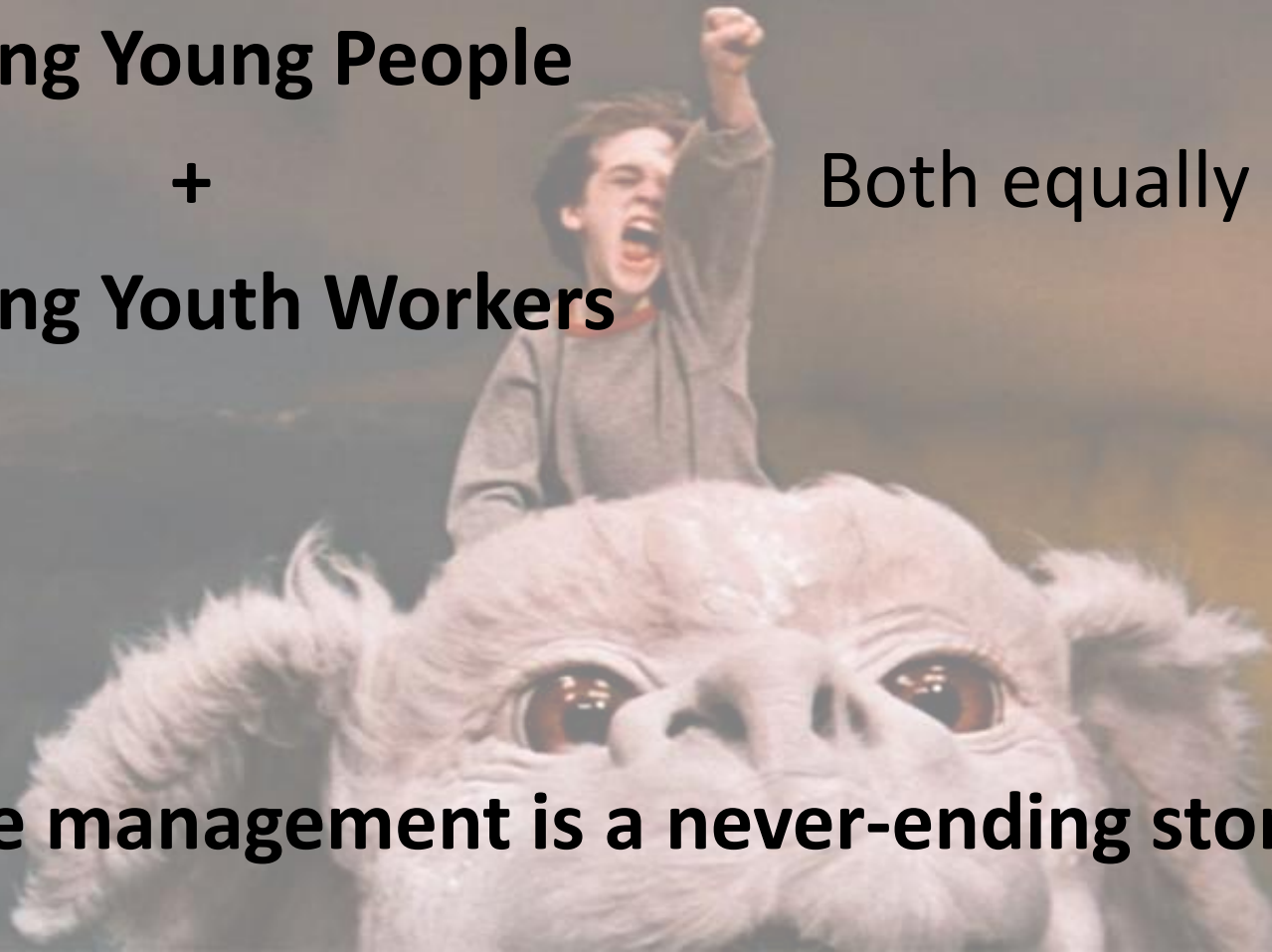
Engaging Young People

+

Engaging Youth Workers

Both equally hard....

Change management is a never-ending story....



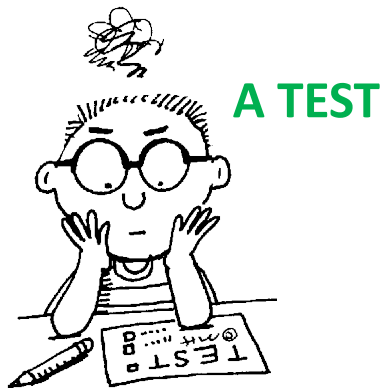
“Multi-disciplinary Participatory Pragmatic Evaluation Capacity Building”

- Create a shared vision
- Co-design and teach people to evaluate their own programs
- Active engagement in designing their own meaningful tools and approaches (no one size fits all) – participatory and transformative
- Shared language
- Multi-level stages of learning and engagement
- And ongoing feedback of learning to show it is actually useful
- And a clear focus on only what is useful and feasible in the context
- Ongoing review, refinement and humble evaluation of the evaluation process

Evaluation...

Evaluation = Finding out what works... for whom...in what ways...and how can it be improved....

Evaluation is NOT



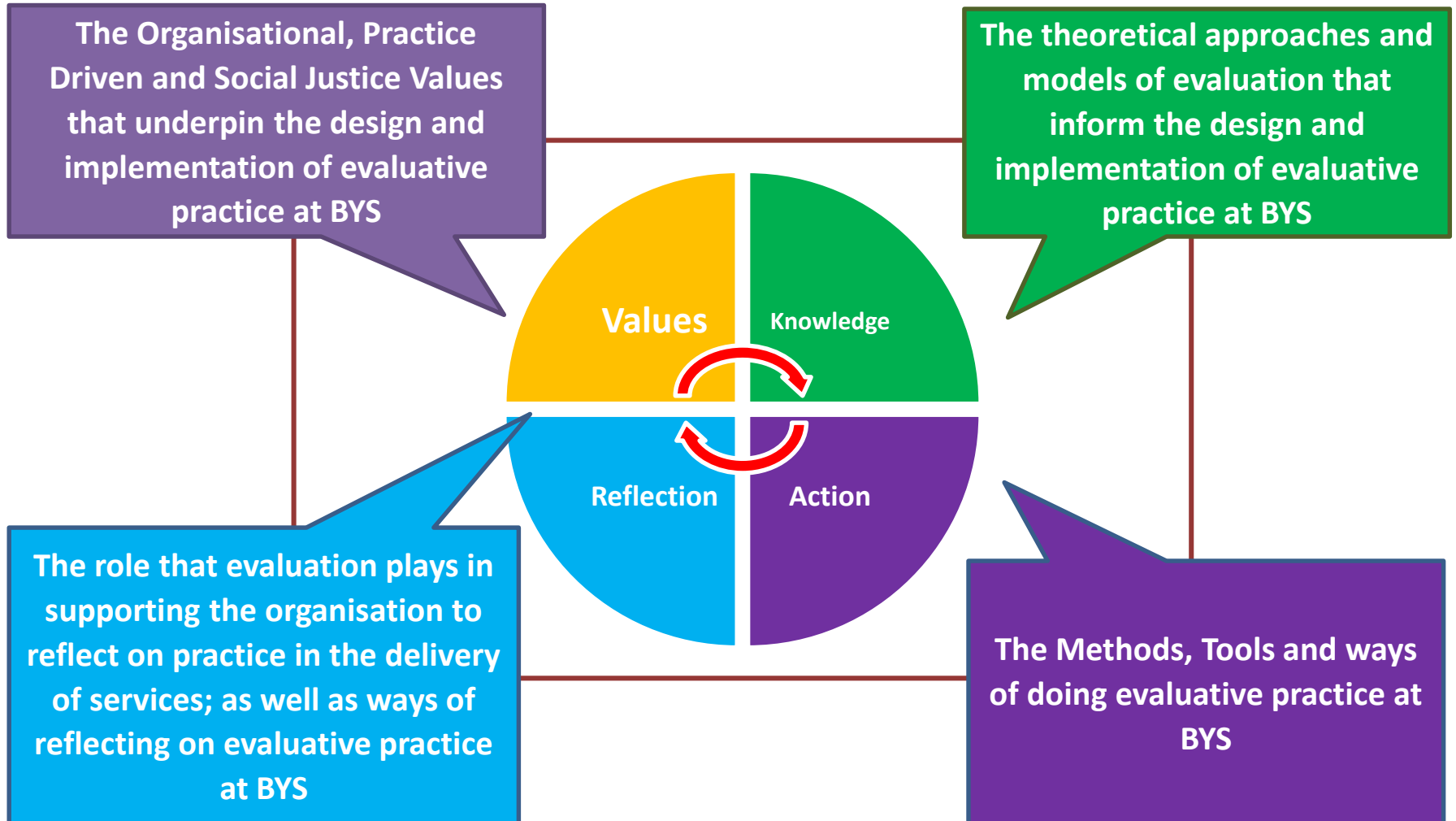
MORE BORING
ADMIN
PAPERWORK

REWARDS!

- ✓ Short term
- ✓ Ongoing, regular
- ✓ Specific to each's needs and wants...



Value driven evaluation



Practice Driven Values:

- **Mutual benefit:** Collect information in ways that are **EMBEDDED** within therapeutic processes for young people e.g. within needs assessments, reviewing progress to goals, meaningful self-reflection
- **Pragmatism:** Collect in ways that are practical, feasible, have lowest possible impact and do most good.
- **Relationship-based engagement:** Collection by workers who have an established trust relationship with young people.
- **Client-centred practice:** Collect in ways purposefully adapted to the young people and context of the service (may not be validated tools).
- **Evidence informed practice:** **USE IT** for critical reflection, continual improvement and informing ethical decision making

Org Wide	Quantitative (qualitative)	BYS Client Profile Pre-Post Support Intake and Outcomes Assessment
	Qualitative	Stories of Most Significant Change
	Quantitative (qualitative)	Annual Client Feedback and Outcomes Survey
Program Specific	Quantitative +Qualitative	Client Progress Reviews Intake, progress and final outcomes assessments of program specific wellbeing domains + MSC Stories
	Quantitative +Qualitative	Program Evaluative Review Intensive review of a program area with multiple data sources
	Quantitative +Qualitative	Project Evaluations Purpose designed strategies for short term projects and trials

Pre-Post Profile

Baseline = Intake
Assessment & Goals

Outcomes = welfare
check follow up and
re-assessment as a
reflection on progress
(>30 days of no
contact).

1. Ask young people about how they currently rate themselves against the desired outcomes of the program
2. Ask the same questions at the start and at the end, and compare the results
AND/OR
3. Ask for current ratings at the start and then, at the end, ask how much has changed

Most Significant Change Stories

1. What has been the most significant change that has happened in your life since coming to BYS?
2. Why was that change significant for you?
3. How, if at all, did BYS contribute to this change happening?
4. If your story had a title, what would it be called?

The 'Most Significant Change (MSC) Technique

A Guide to Its Use

by

Rick Davies and Jess Dart



Program Reviews

4. Thinking about your goals for being confident to manage day to day life well....How did you go with achieving these goals?

"COULD BE A LOT BETTER"	"COULD BE BETTER"	"OKAY"	"DOING WELL"	"DOING GREAT"
-------------------------	-------------------	--------	--------------	---------------

Don't feel like I made much progress/I don't feel very confident or capable in daily living

1

Comments about why?

5. Thinking about your money to get by, how

"COULD BE A LOT BETTER"

I don't feel like I made much progress towards getting my needs met/I still don't have a lot of what I need to get by.

1

Comments about why?

6. Thinking about your use, violence, abuse or

"COULD BE A LOT BETTER"

7. Thinking about your goals for feeling connected with good social/services/cultural/community supports, how did you go with achieving these goals?

"COULD BE A LOT BETTER"	"COULD BE BETTER"	"OKAY"	"DOING WELL"	"DOING GREAT"
-------------------------	-------------------	--------	--------------	---------------

d progress
ling
'supported
ways in my
! pretty
; my
s/support

4

I made great progress/am well connected to the supports and/or people I want in my life

5

ter yourself and living a healthy

"COULD BE A LOT BETTER"
progress
ng with my
ing as
an be/I am
well at looking
th.

4

"DOING GREAT"
I made great progress/feel confident I can keep myself healthy

5

pretty good about yourself, with achieving these goals?

"COULD BE A LOT BETTER"
d progress
anaging

"DOING GREAT"
I made great progress/feel confident

BRISBANE
YOUTH SERVICE

NEW FUTURES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



"Adulthood"
aka my daily
living skills

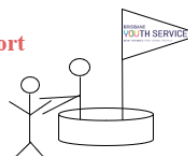
Housing
+ Stuff I need



Keeping
myself safe



My support
crew



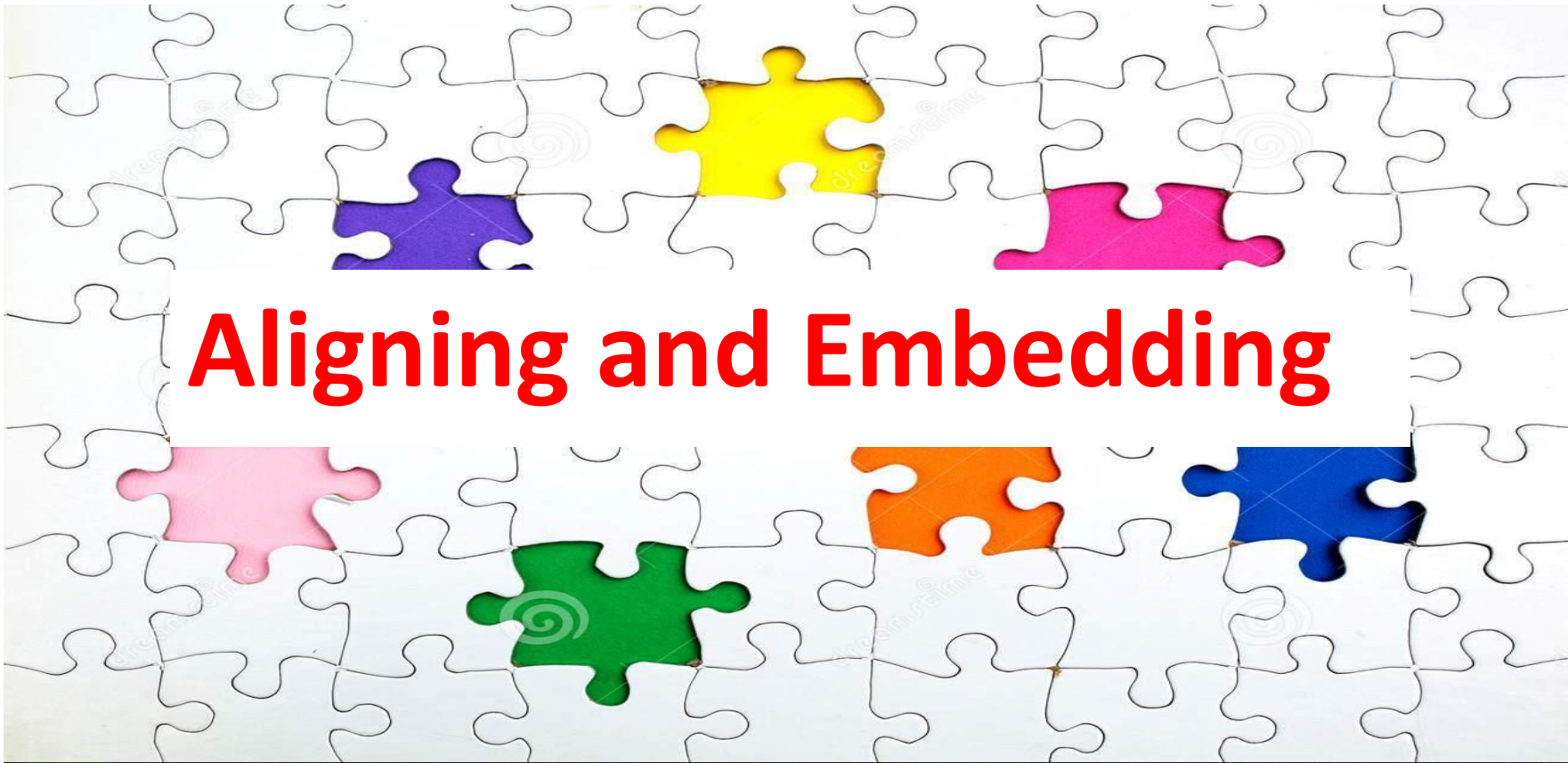
My physical
health



- 1 = could be a lot better
- 2 = could be better
- 3 = okay
- 4 = doing well
- 5 = doing great

Thinking about the above areas of your life, please rate on a scale of 1 – 5 how you are feeling at the moment

Critical Success Factors



Aligning and Embedding

Learn from my mistakes

- Start small and build up....
- Only collect what you can analyse
- Don't try and give everyone what they want
- Suck it and see – don't wait until it is perfect, something is better than nothing.
- Really know your audience
- Know what will be **both** USEFUL and USED



Want to know
more?



Rhianon Vichta

BA Psych. MA ArtTh. Grad Cert Social Change & Dev. MA Eval.

Research and Evaluation Coordinator

Brisbane Youth Service

rvichta@brisyouth.org

07 3620 2400