



Breaking the Cycle



Women's Processes of Change in an Interpersonal Violence Prevention Program

Connections for Breaking
the Cycle of Violence (C-BTC)





presents:

Innovations in Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Trauma- and Violence-Informed Health Promotion

A NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Oct 1–2, 2025

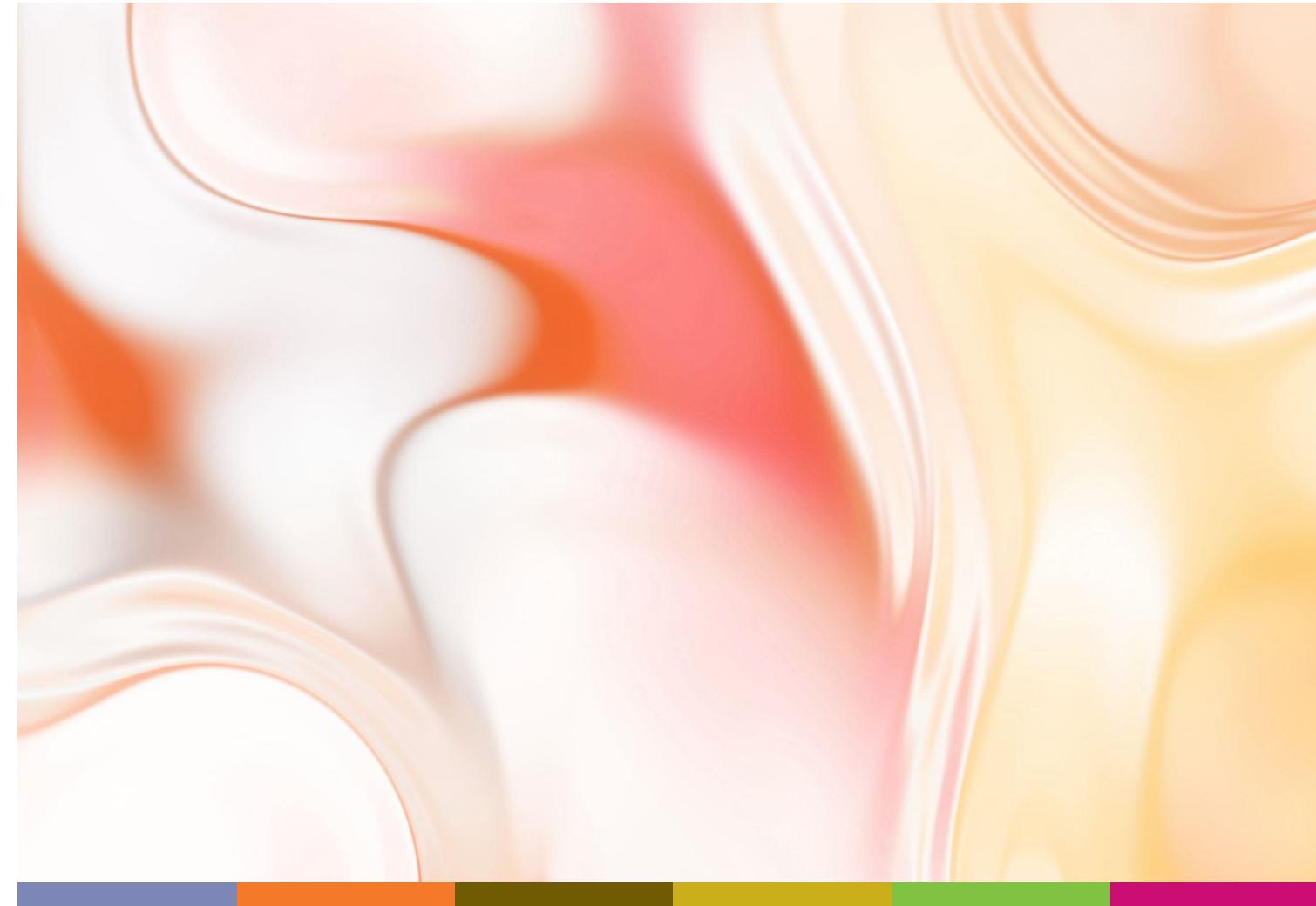
Locating Myself

- Clinical Developmental Psychology student
- Mixed ancestry (Scottish, Irish, German, Lakota, Abenakis-Métis)
- Woman, Trauma Survivor



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Discussed
program
experiences in a
follow-up
interview with me.

9 women aged 23-42
completed
Connections

Toronto
Lanark
Cape Breton
York



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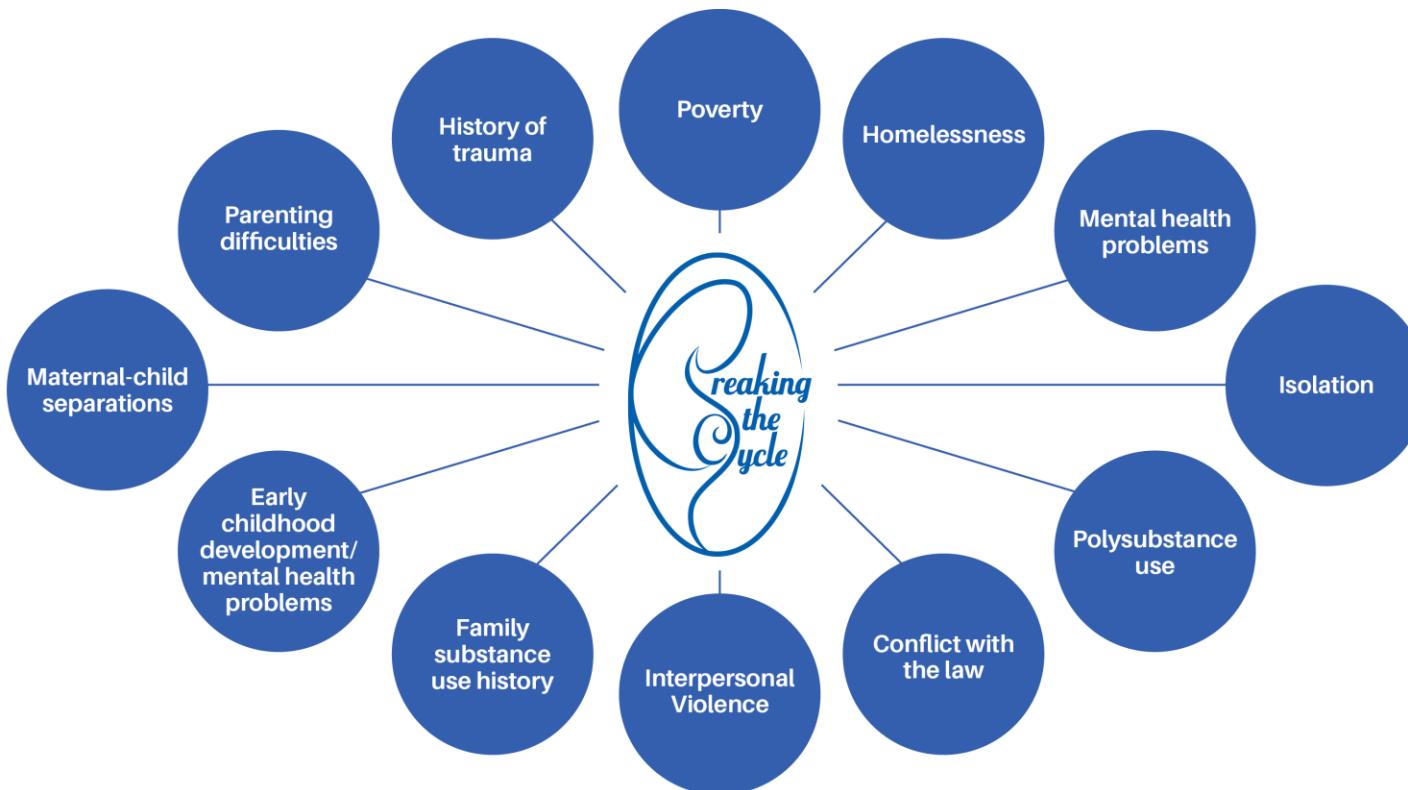
The women's most frequently reported demographics (i.e., mode) included

- a. being single,
- b. living in an apartment,
- c. having 2 children, and
- d. their children being under the age of 5 years.



Profile of BTC Families

Connections for Breaking the Cycle of Violence (C-BTC)



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Connections is a program for Indigenous and general population women, developed by Breaking the Cycle (BTC)



BTC = one-stop service for women:

- 1) who are substance-involved
- 2) who are pregnant or have young children

BTC Programs and Services

Connections for Breaking the Cycle of Violence (C-BTC)

Connections Interpersonal Violence Intervention

Mental Health Counselling

Health/Medical Services

- FASD Assessment/Diagnostic Clinic
- Pre-Postnatal Counselling

Basic Needs Support

- Food • Clothing • Transportation

Probation Services

Addictions

- Relapse Prevention Group
- Recovery Group
- Life Skills Group
- Individual Counselling

Developmental Clinic

- Screening and Assessment
- Developmental and Interactional Guidance
- Parent-Child Dyadic Interventions
- Home Visiting
- Early Intervention

Childminding

Pregnancy Outreach Program

Parenting

- New Mom's Support Group
- Circle of Security Parenting Program
- Cooking Healthy Together
- Parent-Child "Mother Goose" Program
- Make the Connection Program
- "Learning Through Play" Group



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BTC Partners

Connections for Breaking the Cycle of Violence (C-BTC)

Mothercraft

St. Joseph's Health Centre

St. Michael's Hospital

**Children's Aid
Society of Toronto**

**Catholic Children's
Aid Society of Toronto**

Hospital for Sick Children

**Toronto Western Hospital -
Mental Health and Addictions**

Toronto Public Health

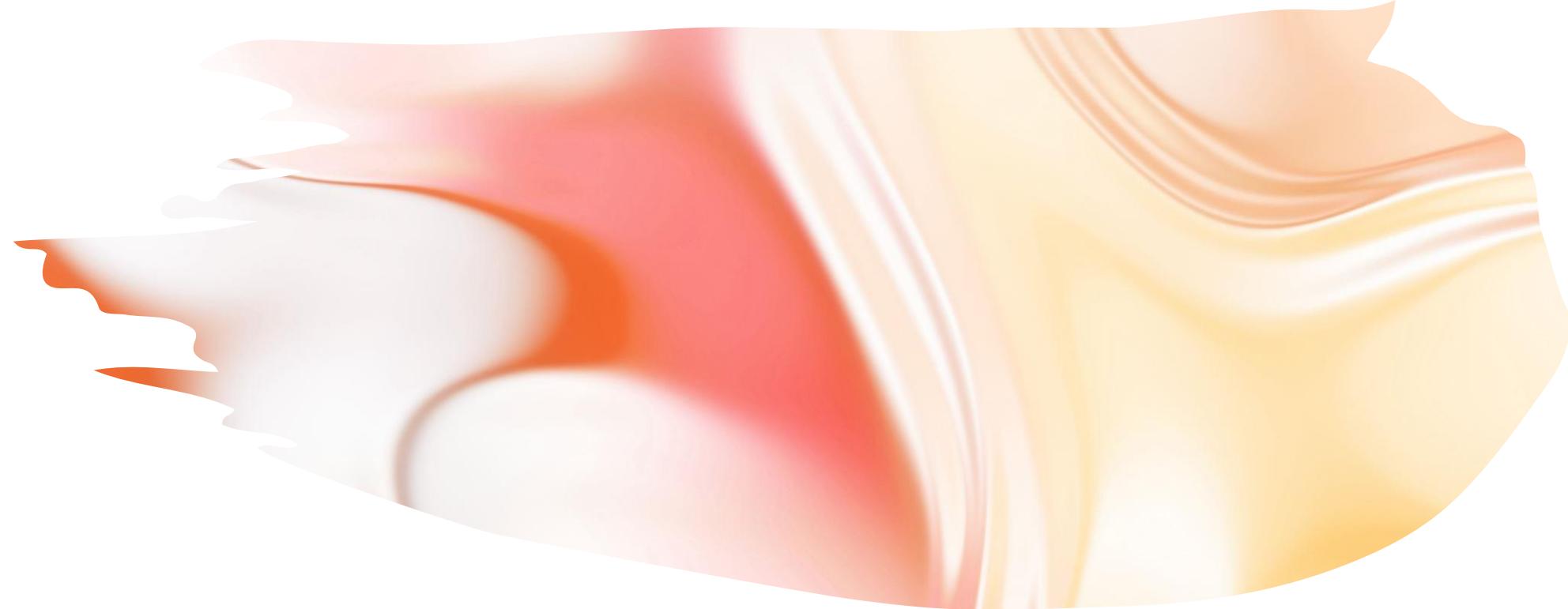
**Ministry of the
Solicitor General**

**Association of
Ontario Midwives**



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Connections for Breaking the Cycle of Violence (C-BTC)

- i. Evidence-based interpersonal intervention group
- ii. Pregnant women and mothers of children (0-6 years)
- iii. At-risk for/impacted by interpersonal violence or child maltreatment within the family

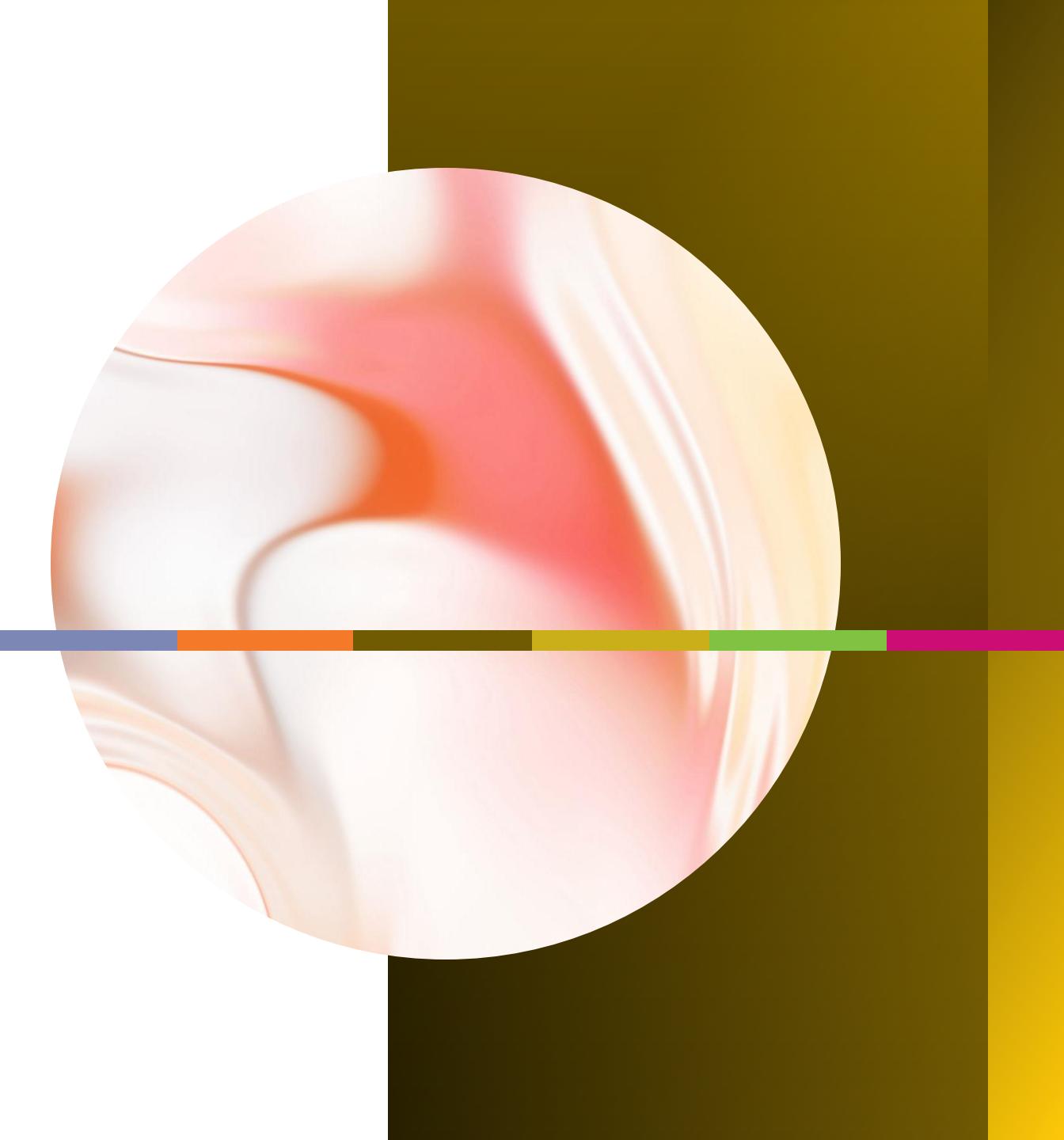


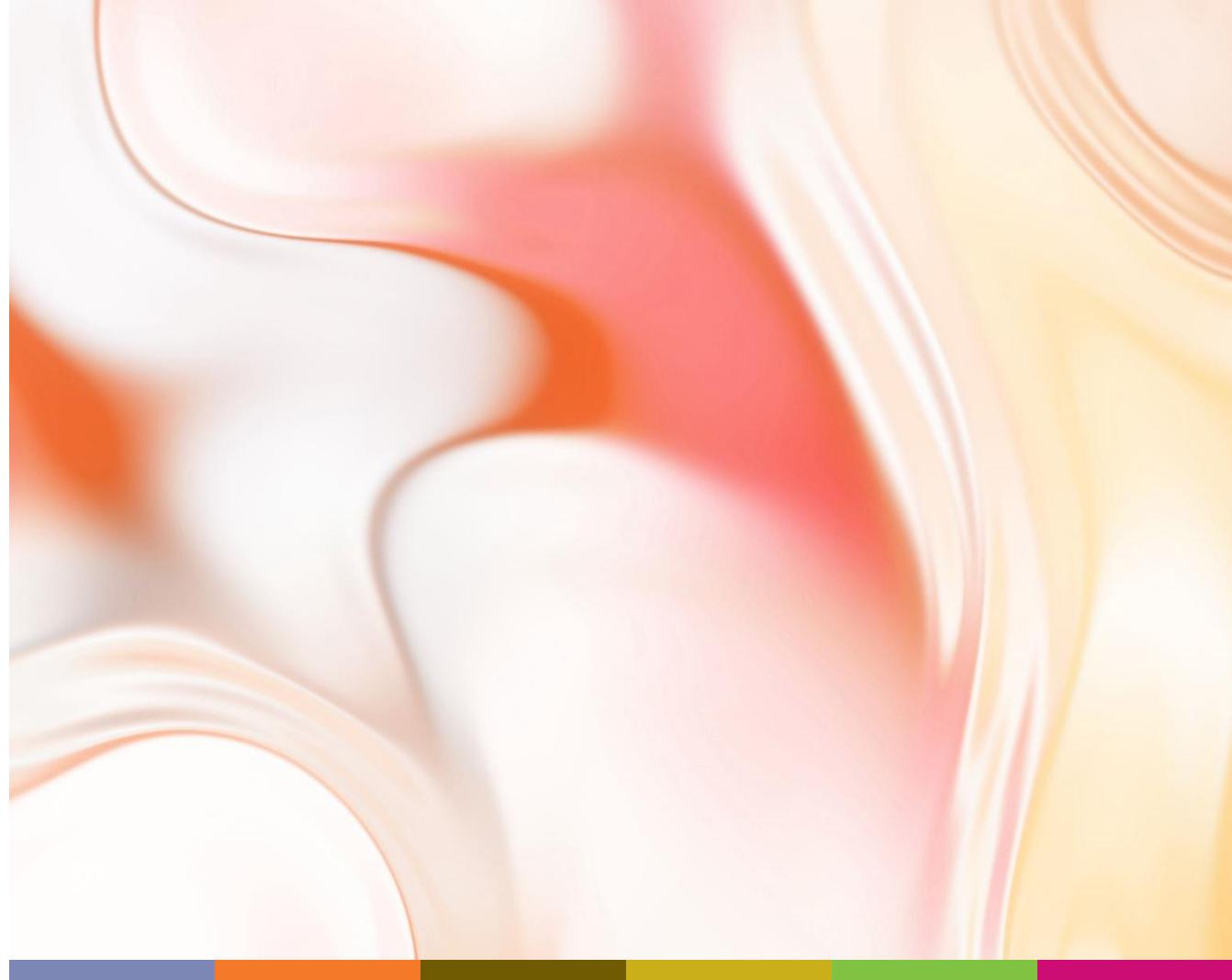
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This work is informed by my previous research

- i. Indigenous girls aged 12 to 18
- ii. Dilico Anishinabek Family Care (catchment area)
- iii. Some were also referred for family services at Dilico





Dilico

Anishinabek

Family Care

- Healthcare service network
- Promotes the healing and well-being of the Anishinabek people
- Integrated holistic approach
- Honours community values, culture, and traditions.



Research at Dilico Anishinabek Family Care

- Concerned staff at Dilico requested research
- Girls struggling with aggression problems
- Strengths-Based research to improve prevention and intervention efforts at Dilico (Dion, 2013).



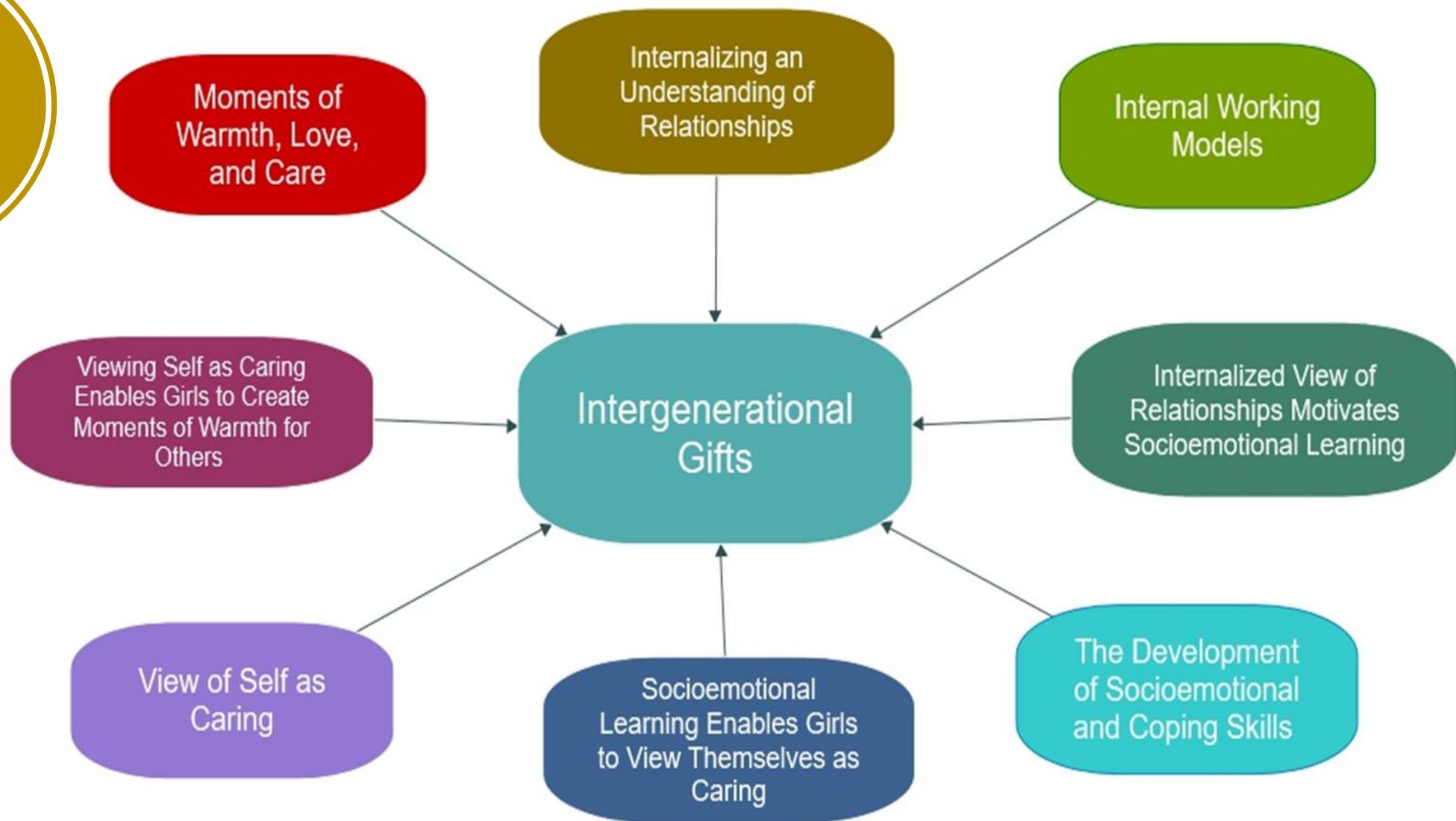
Girls

Development



- Received moments of warmth and care
- Shifted their relationship expectations
- Engaged in social emotional learning in relationships
- Built a view of themselves as a caring person

Continuity from Research with Dilico



Expand this Understanding Over Generations

1. Exploring mothers' processes of breaking cycles of violence
2. Giving moments of warmth and care to their children



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BTC Relationships

Connections for Breaking the Cycle of Violence (C-BTC)



- Child Functioning
- Relationship Between Mother and Child
- Relationship Between Staff and Families
- Relationships Among Staff
- Relationships Among Community Agencies
- Relationship-Based Theoretical Frameworks

The Women Supported Through Connections Were

- Powerful and courageous in their actions to access freedom from violence
- Proud of the awareness and skills they built to form lives filled with warmth and care

One Process Finding to Highlight

- Process whereby the women entered the work of cycle breaking for their children
- Encountered the truth that they were not excluded from the hope of a warm and caring life that is free from violence.
- The only way they were able to engage in the selfless behaviors that brought them to group =
 - By working in and through themselves.
- This is the process I am here to present today, the **Inner Process of an Intergenerational Cycle Breaker.**



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Inner Process of an Intergenerational Cycle Breaker

1. The impact of reparative relational experiences in Connections on women's understanding of relationships
 - a) physiological,
 - b) perceptual, and
 - c) intuitive (i.e., "gut feelings")
2. A felt sense of care in Connections group
3. Internalization of that care
4. Positive internal working models of relationships
5. Changes in behavior that is warm and caring towards
 - a) Herself
 - b) Child
 - c) Others



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1 WARMTH AND CARE IN CONNECTIONS



FELT
SENSE OF
CARE
INTERNALIZED AS
POSITIVE INNER
MODELS OF
RELATIONSHIPS

2 RECALIBRATION OF INNER WORKING MODELS

3 CHANGES IN ATTACHMENT BEHAVIOURS TOWARDS SELF AND OTHERS



Inner Process of an Intergenerational Cycle Breaker

I am still investigating the mechanism of this connection with inner models

A development,
A remembering,
A deepening,
A bit of all of them



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What do you think?

