



# MIFA Siblings Project

Stage 1

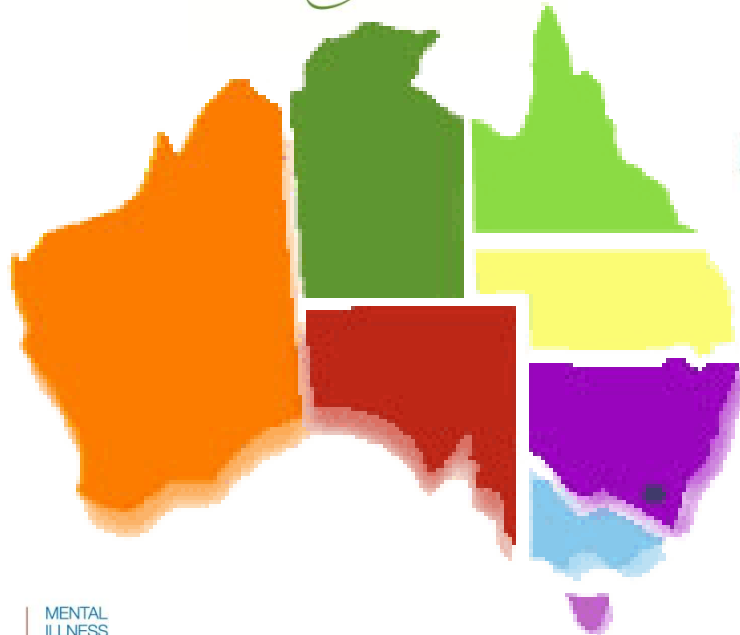
Francesca Coniglio & David Meldrum

Workshop

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# Presentation Outline

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- Project stages
- Literature review
- Review of service provision
- Study design and stages
- Key findings of Delphi study
- Implications for practice

# Project Stages

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Stage 1: Literature review of sibling experience and best practice.

Stage 2: Service review of MIFA's member organisations and relevant community providers.

Stage 3: Delphi and phenomenological study on lived experience of siblings and current and potential needs.

# Literature Review

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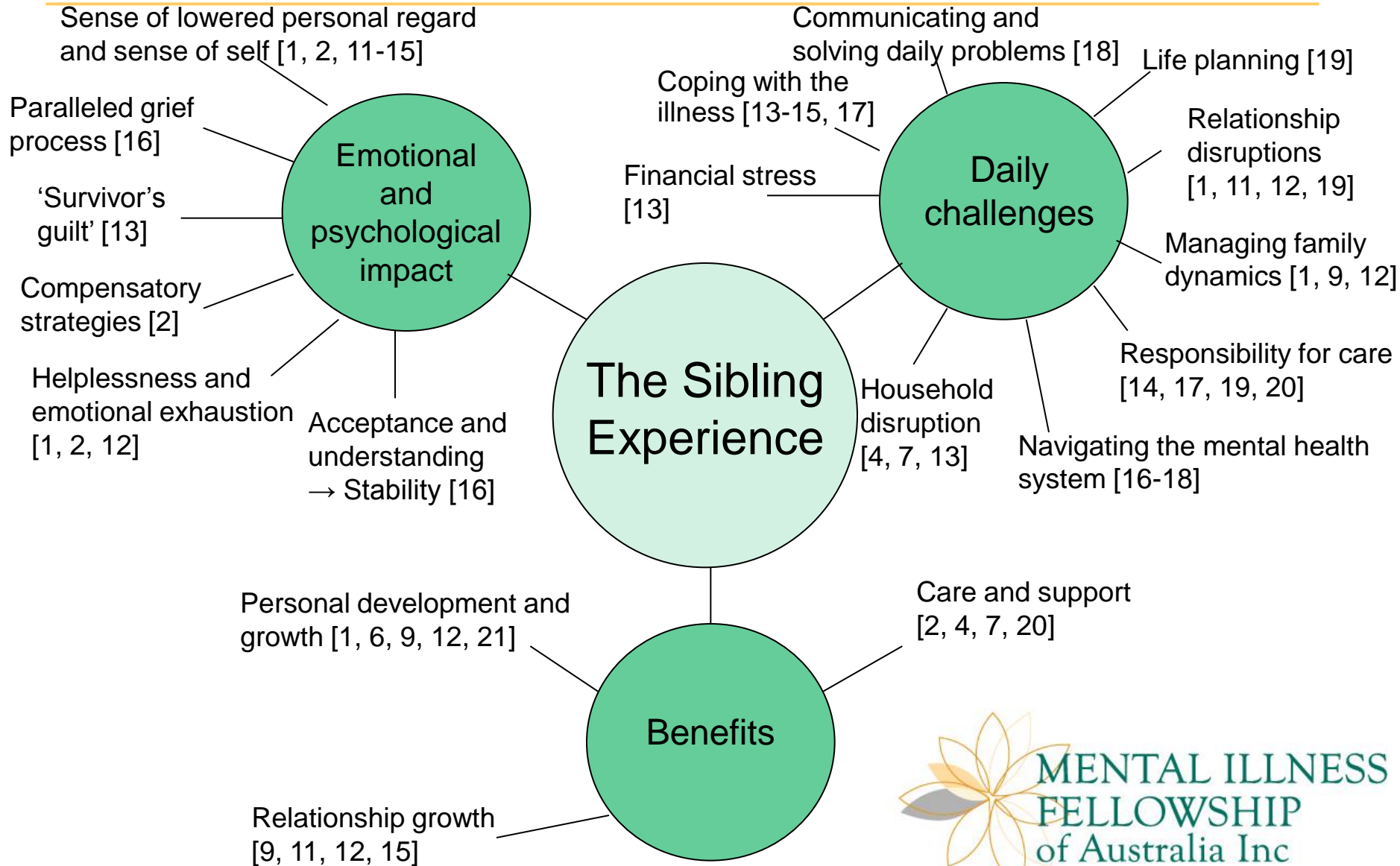
- Majority of literature:
  - Focuses on children.
  - Intellectual disability.
- Mental health literature:
  - Quantitative.
  - Focuses on subjective burden (emotional support) and objective burden (instrumental support).

# Trends in Sibling Involvement

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- Those who are more likely to provide support to siblings:
  - Sisters [1-3].
  - Older [4].
  - Unmarried and childless [5, 6].
  - Geographically closer [4, 7].
  - Both parents have passed away [4].
- Relationships where siblings:
  - Are closer in teenage years [5, 8].
  - Have not felt threatened [9, 10].
  - Have mutual reciprocity [5].

# Literature Review: The Sibling Experience



# MIFA's Current Service Provision for Siblings

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- 7 different categories of support:
  - Education
  - Information provision
  - Family support
  - Carer support (education sessions, respite, peer support and psychosocial support)
  - Respite
  - Formal peer support groups
  - Counseling



# Service Provision of Other Service Providers

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- Services fall within:
  - 1. Mental health information for consumers.
  - 2. Resources for the family unit.
  - 3. Resources for carers of people with mental illness.
- Siblings Australia provides support to adult siblings of people with disabilities.

# Aims of the Study

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1. What is the experience of teens and adults in living with a sibling with mental illness?
2. What supports have been sought in the past? What supports were helpful/accessible and which were not helpful/accessible?
3. What types of supports are needed at present?
4. What types of supports can you anticipate that you will need in the future?



# Participants' Characteristics

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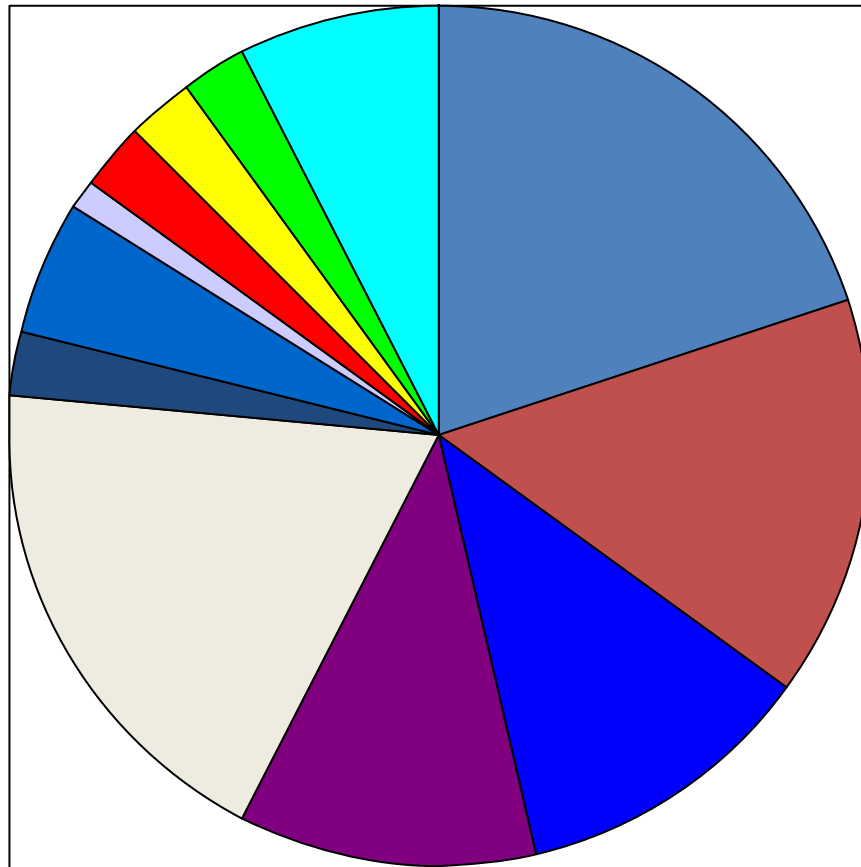
- Total of 40 participants.
- Mostly female (F=35).
- Most lived in NSW (n=18) or SA (12).
- Range of ages 17-63 years (mean=40 years).
- 7 identified as primary carer.
- 6 lived with sibling(s).

# Siblings' Characteristics

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- 46 siblings (6 participants identified having one or more siblings with mental illness).
- Equally divided between males (n=24) and females (n=22).
- Median age group – 36-45 years (n=17).

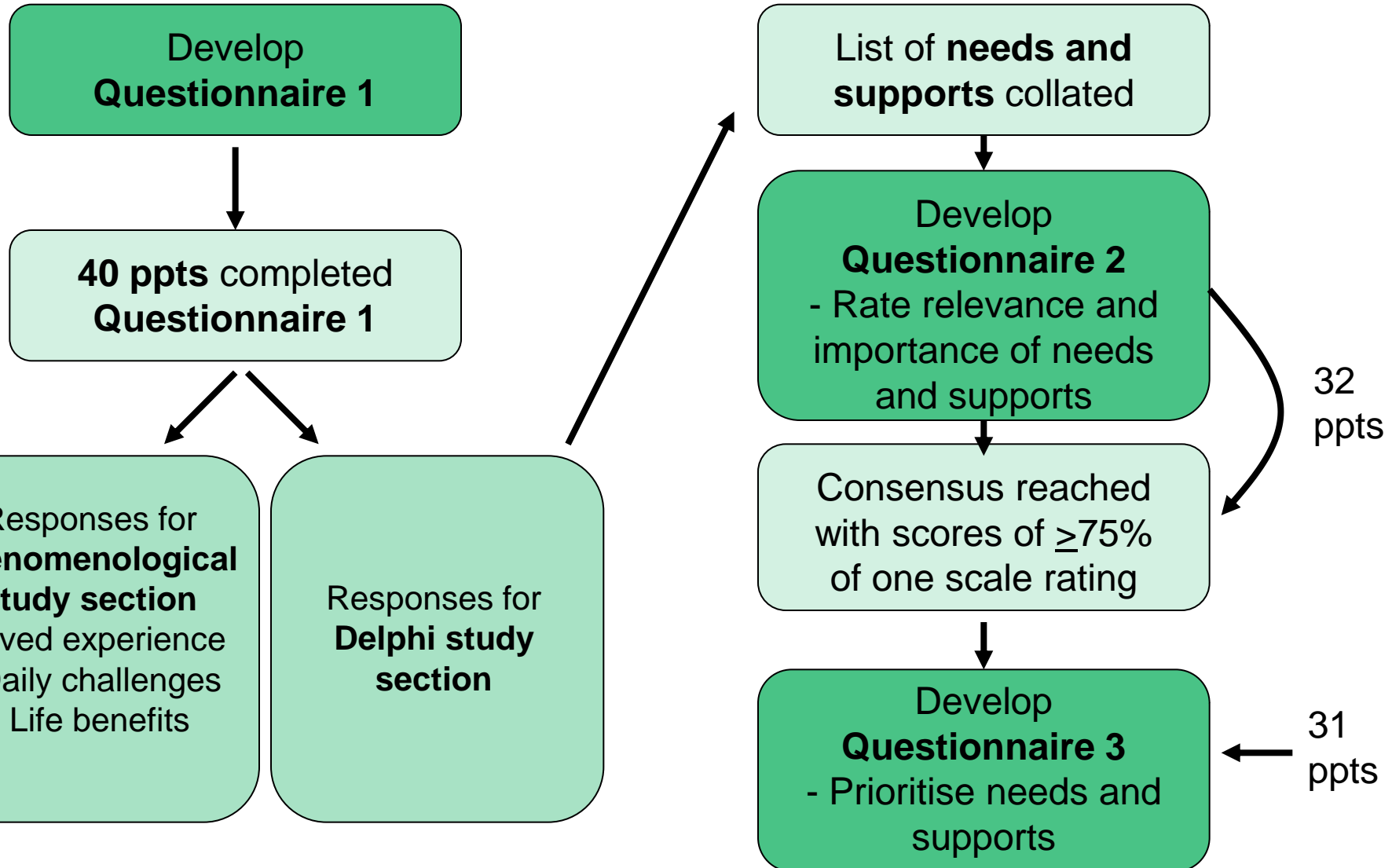
# Siblings' Characteristics



n=46

- Schizophrenia
- Bipolar disorder
- Schizo affective disorder
- Anxiety disorders
- Chronic depression
- Borderline personality disorder
- Obsessive compulsive disorder
- Other personality disorders
- Anorexia nervosa
- Bulimia
- Autism spectrum disorder
- Other

# Delphi Study: Process



# Findings: Needs & Supports

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- 2 categories of needs/supports:
  - Supports identified to directly meet sibling's needs.
  - Supports identified to meet the needs of person with with mental illness.

# Findings: Needs of the Sibling

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1. Communicating with sibling
2. Having time for myself
3. Providing support to our parents
4. Managing family dynamics and relationships
5. Developing coping strategies for emotional resilience
6. Eating well
7. Maintaining my sibling role rather than carer role
8. Engaging in physical exercise or leisure activities
9. Developing coping strategies for practical situations
10. Taking on of support responsibilities from parents

# Findings: Desired Supports of Sibling

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1. Family
2. Partner
3. Friends
4. GP
5. Counsellor or therapist
6. Understanding and supportive workplaces
7. Information on mental illness
8. Advocacy and support organisations with a mental illness focus
9. 24 hour helplines
10. Advocacy and support organisations with focus on carers

# Findings: Needs of Consumers

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1. Looking after their mental well-being
2. Looking after their physical health
3. Social support and community integration
4. Attending medical and other appointments
5. Looking after their self-care needs
6. Accommodation and housing
7. Looking after their home and domestic chores
8. Community follow-up and continuity of care between all service providers
9. Finances and budgeting
10. Monitoring and care of co-morbidities



# Findings: Desired Supports of Consumers

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1. Medication
2. GP
3. Psychiatrist
4. Wellness Recovery Action Plans or Relapse prevention plans
5. Medical and mental health services
6. Counsellor or therapist
7. Home care support
8. Mental health trained workers in government departments
9. Psychosocial rehabilitation day programs
10. Mental health trained police

# Implications for Service Provision

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1. Review of current practice in meeting siblings' needs.
2. Make recommendations to develop practice changes in education and support opportunities for siblings:
  - Voice of siblings in whole family approach.
  - Role of sibling rather than 'carer'.
  - Increased recognition of role of 'holistic services' to meet siblings' needs.
  - Age-specific, period of illness specific and flexible in delivery and structure.
3. Need identified for broader study to validate findings.



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# MIFA Siblings Project

[www.mifa.org.au](http://www.mifa.org.au)

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# Workshop Questions

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In your organisation or in the organisations that you're affiliated with:

1. What do you currently do in way of services and programs for siblings of people with mental illness?  
How do these match up with what is needed?
2. What do you know about service provision for siblings outside of your organisation?  
How do these match up with what is needed?
3. What are the actual changes to service provision required?
4. If we could only address 3 things from the list of supports identified, what would be your 3 highest priorities?

