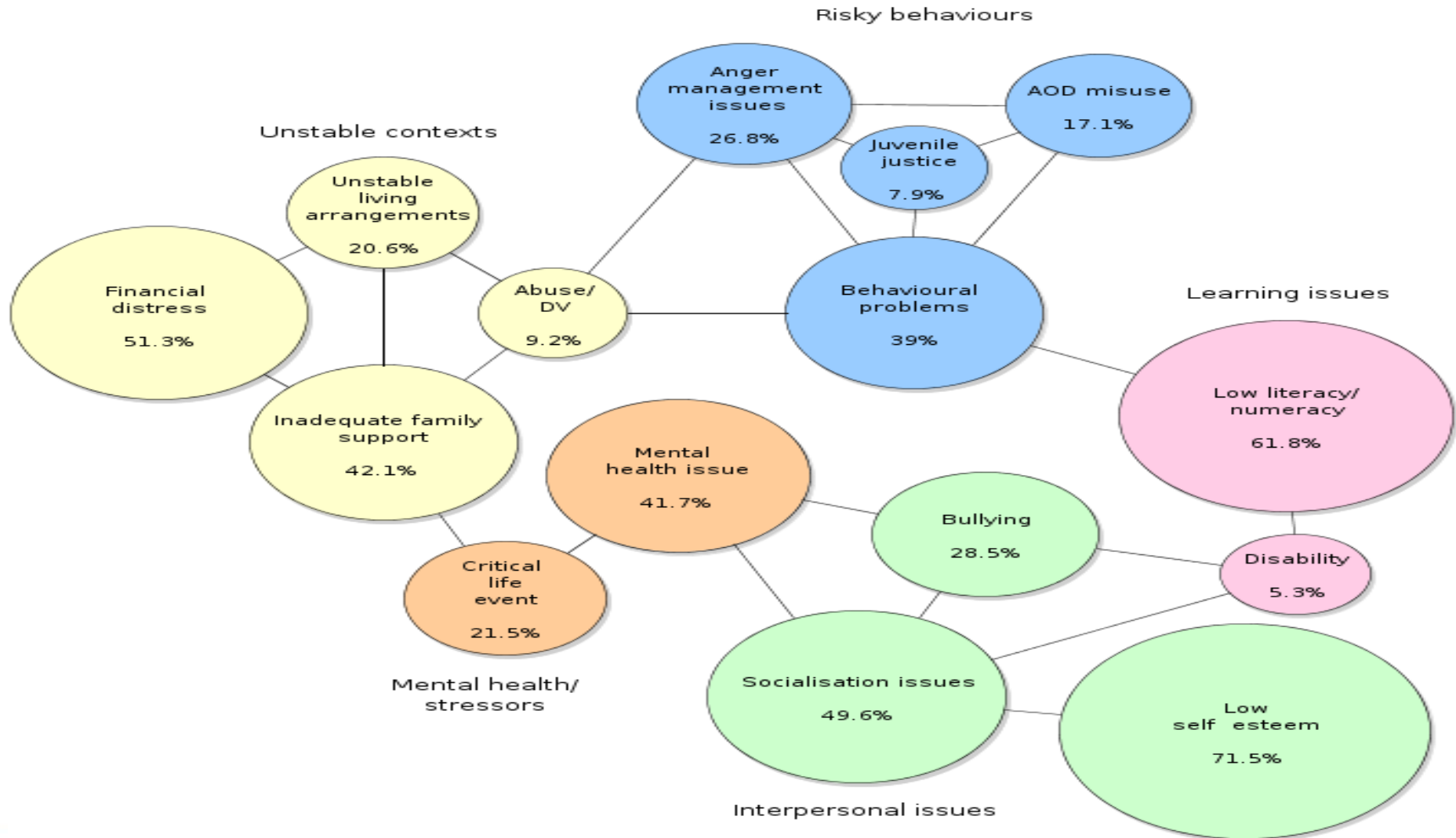


# ***Navigating VET: 'at risk' youth and re-engagement programs***

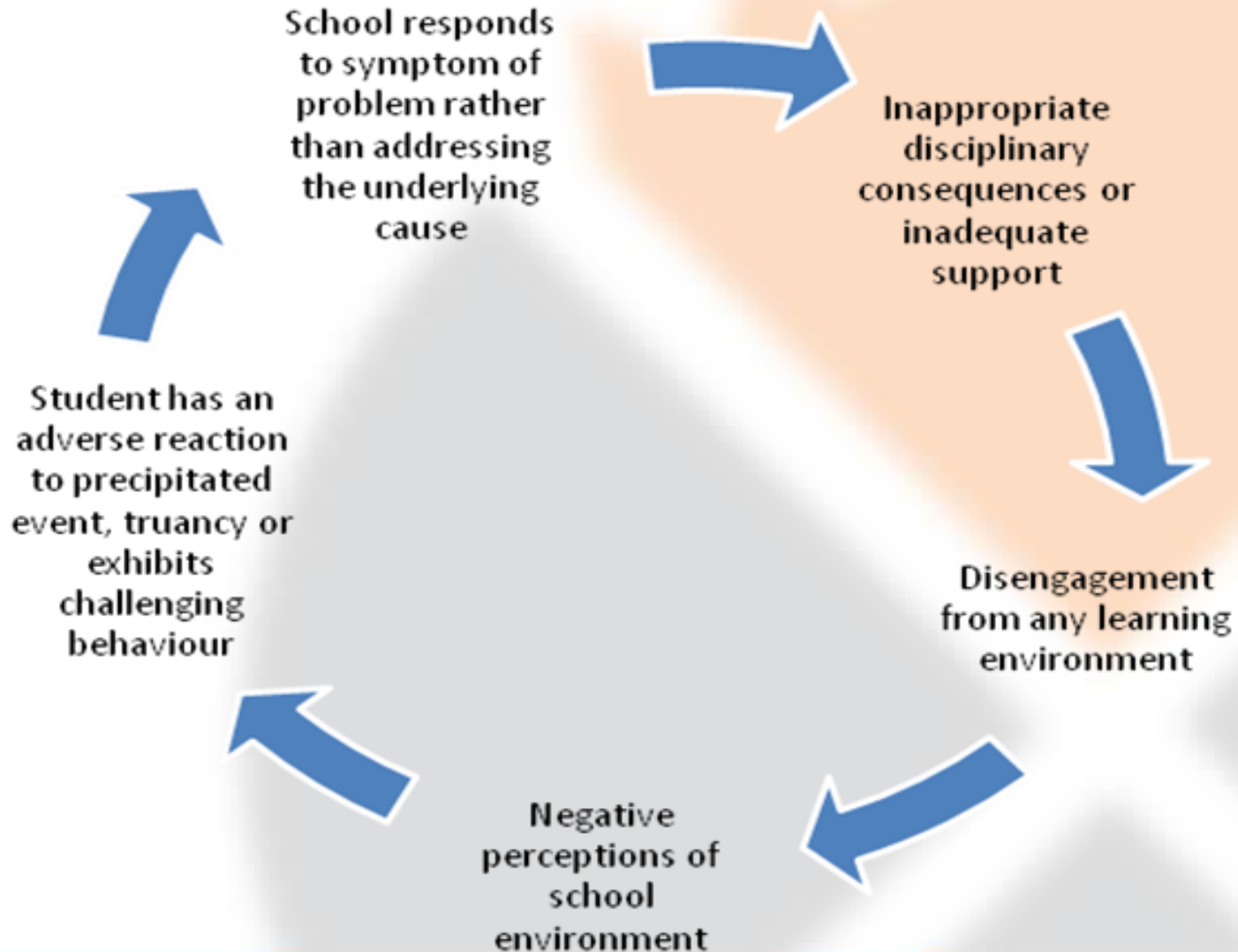
***National Vocational Education and Training Research 'No Frills' Conference  
July 11-13 2012***

***Dr George Myconos  
BSL, Research and Policy Centre, Fitzroy, Victoria (gmyconos@bsl.org.au)***

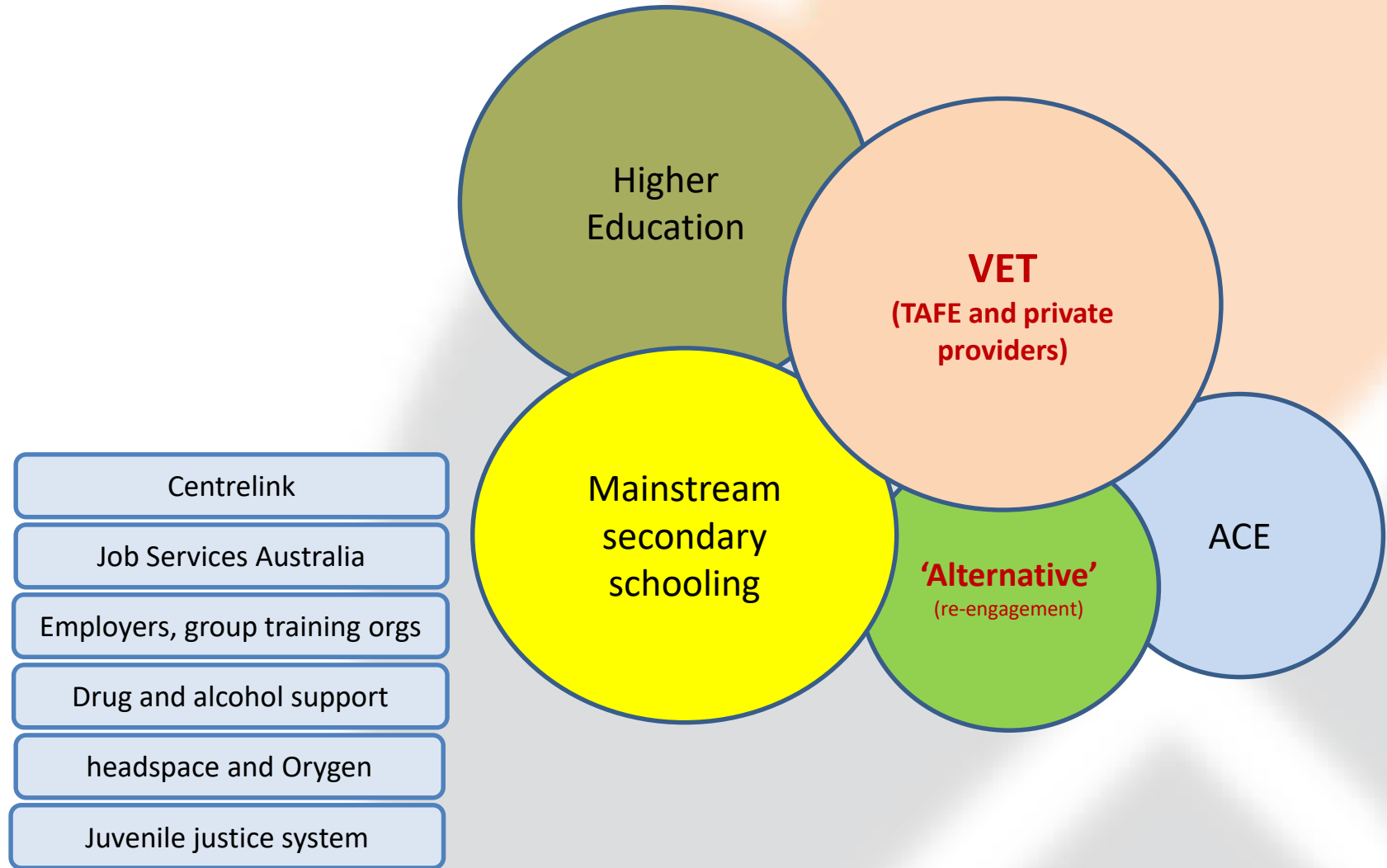
# Youth disengagement: the nature of the problem



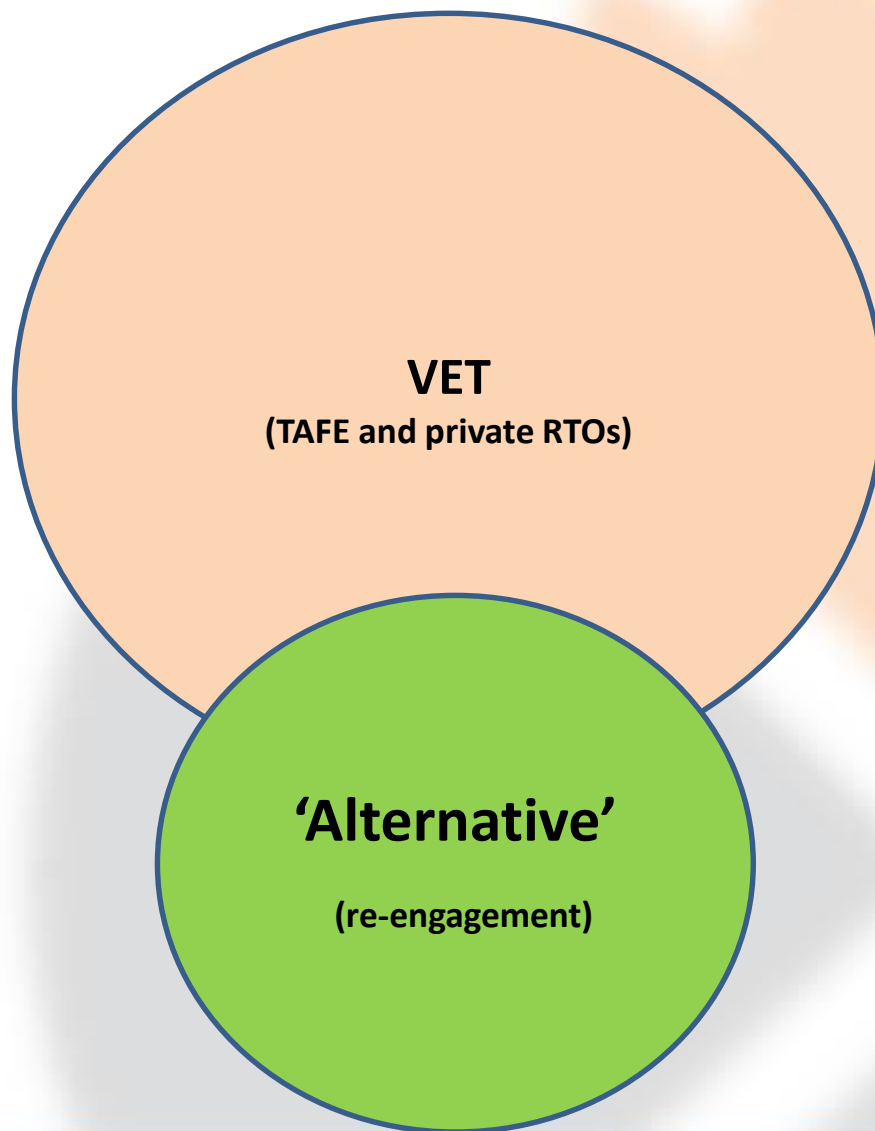
# *The cycle of disengagement*



# *Institutional support*



# *Institution-sector overlap*



# *Case study: Community VCAL and the VET connection*

**Location: Frankston**

**Student numbers/profile**

**Staffing**

**Curriculum framework**

**Attainments**

**Complexities and challenges**

# *Organizational issues*

**Vis-à-vis:**

**Schools and department regions**

**Referral organizations and services**

**State and government agencies**

**Registered training organizations**



# *The culture clash*

“...the kind of knowledge that you learn in VET assumes that you’ve been through school; that you’re an adult; that you have a specific skill set already; and that you’re there to further that skill set or develop something new that’s kind of related to what you want to do...So if you put a young person whose 16; severely disengaged...into a classroom with another cohort of people who are completely different to him or her, with a curriculum that doesn’t fit their place at that time, I think that we’ve got a real [problem] on our hands” (teacher)



“I haven’t been to that [RTO] yet because I was scared...I was just scared to go...I was that scared, I made myself sick and I just didn’t go.”

“I actually did the whole test you do in TAFE and I got in, but then I was too scared to actually go and do TAFE because of my anxiety. That was quite a while ago so I haven’t actually been to TAFE”

# *Literacy and numeracy*

“I could do a book in my two days...[but] I’m not - because it’s worded differently, they’re using bigger words, and it’s like I don’t know what that word is, and I have to keep going back to the dictionary...like it’s taking me extra time to do it, because I’m so confused at it, like it’s the same as what I’ve done, but it’s just so different. So I’ll read a sentence and I’ll understand two words in the whole sentence.”

“[hi] im at tafe, and im still not learning anything...i asked her for help she says ‘well mayb u should’ve been listening’ but i was listening she just didn’t even give me a chance. I cant do this. I wanna leave.”

# *Assistance*

“Even other students didn’t understand it. One of the other ladies, she was 24 or something. She didn’t understand the work...And then I go up, “Can I have help...I don’t really understand any of the work.” [trainer...]’No, you have to do it yourself. ”

# *Assistance*

“The only time you ever get to talk to the trainer is if you actually go find them and ask them to come and look at your stuff.”

“I was doing bricklaying. I didn't really get my Certificate because I'd wake up...4.30 of a morning just to get there [by 8 AM] because it takes like I don't know, two hours from Frankston train station to Holmesglen. I was supposed to do that for four months or something and I couldn't cope”



“I paid for the course... travelling to and from the city every day, I was leaving at 6 in the morning, getting into South Yarra at about 7.30...then getting something to eat, catching the Sandringham Line to Windsor, and then walking. And I’d get there just on 9 o’clock. And then we didn’t finish until 4.30 pm, so I’d have to walk to Windsor, catch a train from Windsor to South Yarra, and then get the train back to Frankston, and then the bus back home. It was costing me \$50 a week, and there’s food and stuff as well. And after a month, it just got too much.”

# *Repercussions and responses*

**Low completion rates**

**Program disorientation**

**Inefficiencies and waste.**

**Secondary disengagement**

# *What we need*

**Program and service level**

**Sector level**

**Policy level**

## *What we need*

**“What we need are small  
spaces in big places”**



Brotherhood  
of St Laurence



Working for an Australia free of poverty





Brotherhood  
of St Laurence



Working for an Australia free of poverty