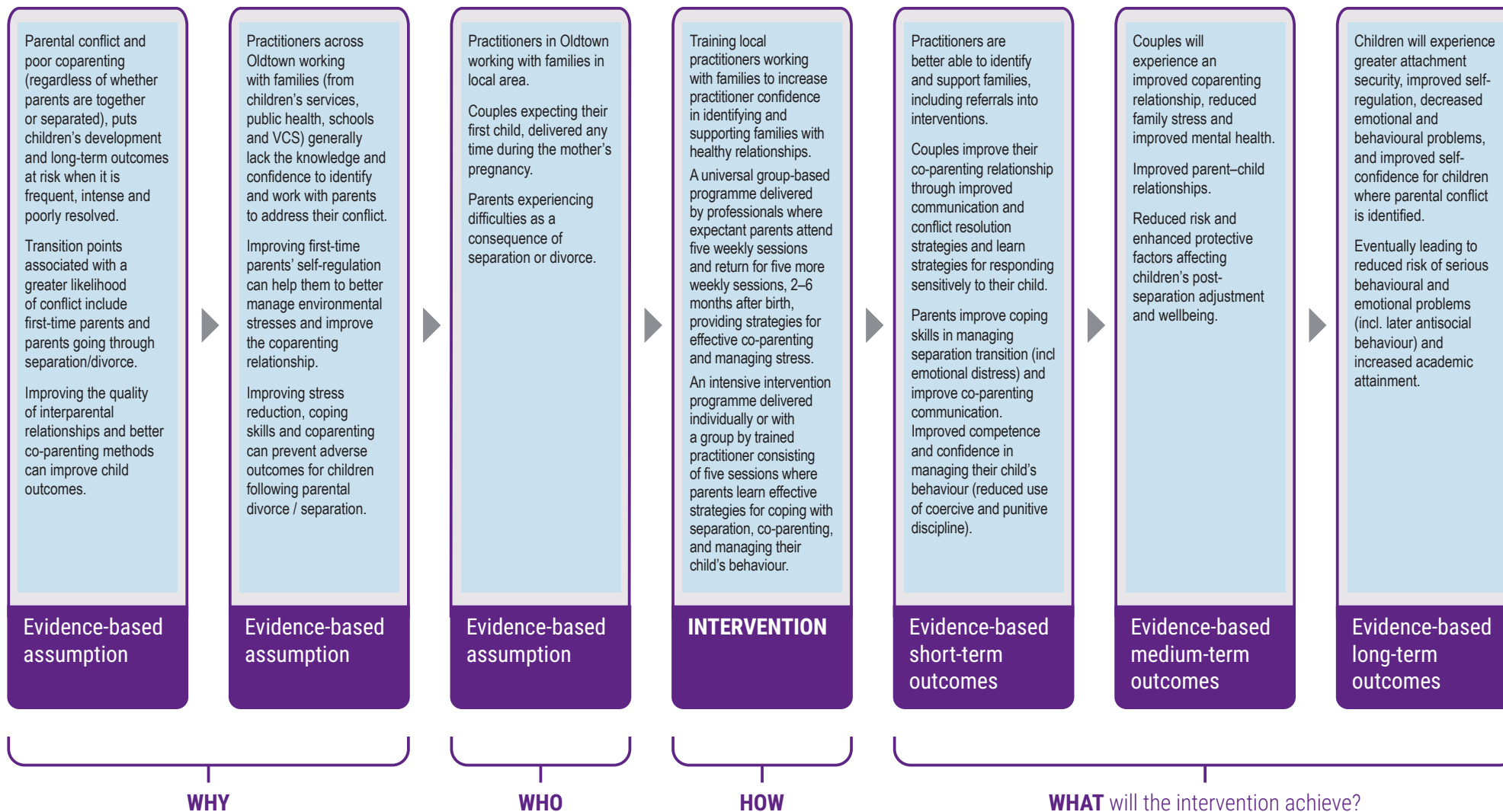# EXAMPLE THEORY OF CHANGE: OLDTOWN

Oldtown used their theory of change to create a common set of evidence-based outcomes for the various RPC interventions they were delivering (a universal intervention for first-time parents, a targeted intervention for separating/divorced couples, and an RPC training programme) centred on improved self-regulation and decreased emotional and behavioural problems for children. This provided a clear illustration of the need for each intervention and how it intended to achieve its outcomes, as well as the gaps in the current provision. The theory of change was then used to agree the focus of their evaluation and the basis for their intervention logic models and evaluation plan.

Evidence-based assumption	Evidence-based assumption	Evidence-based assumption	INTERVENTION	Evidence-based short-term outcomes	Evidence-based medium-term outcomes	Evidence-based long-term outcomes
Parental conflict and poor coparenting (regardless of whether parents are together or separated), puts children's development and long-term outcomes at risk when it is frequent, intense and poorly resolved. Transition points associated with a greater likelihood of conflict include first-time parents and parents going through separation/divorce. Improving the quality of interparental relationships and better co-parenting methods can improve child outcomes.	Practitioners across Oldtown working with families (from children's services, public health, schools and VCS) generally lack the knowledge and confidence to identify and work with parents to address their conflict. Improving first-time parents' self-regulation can help them to better manage environmental stresses and improve the coparenting relationship. Improving stress reduction, coping skills and coparenting can prevent adverse outcomes for children following parental divorce / separation.	Practitioners in Oldtown working with families in local area. Couples expecting their first child, delivered any time during the mother's pregnancy. Parents experiencing difficulties as a consequence of separation or divorce.	Training local practitioners working with families to increase practitioner confidence in identifying and supporting families with healthy relationships. A universal group-based programme delivered by professionals where expectant parents attend five weekly sessions and return for five more weekly sessions, 2–6 months after birth, providing strategies for effective co-parenting and managing stress. An intensive intervention programme delivered individually or with a group by trained practitioner consisting of five sessions where parents learn effective strategies for coping with separation, co-parenting, and managing their child's behaviour.	Practitioners are better able to identify and support families, including referrals into interventions. Couples improve their co-parenting relationship through improved communication and conflict resolution strategies and learn strategies for responding sensitively to their child. Parents improve coping skills in managing separation transition (incl emotional distress) and improve co-parenting communication. Improved competence and confidence in managing their child's behaviour (reduced use of coercive and punitive discipline).	Couples will experience an improved coparenting relationship, reduced family stress and improved mental health. Improved parent–child relationships. Reduced risk and enhanced protective factors affecting children's post-separation adjustment and wellbeing.	Children will experience greater attachment security, improved self-regulation, decreased emotional and behavioural problems, and improved self-confidence for children where parental conflict is identified. Eventually leading to reduced risk of serious behavioural and emotional problems (incl. later antisocial behaviour) and increased academic attainment.

WHY   **WHO**   **HOW**   **WHAT** will the intervention achieve?

DEVELOPING A THEORY OF CHANGE

Evidence-based observation	Evidence-based need	Target population	Intervention activities that will address the need	Immediate outcomes	Intermediary outcomes	Primary outcomes
Evidence-based assumption	Evidence-based assumption	Evidence-based assumption	**INTERVENTION**	Evidence-based short-term outcomes	Evidence-based medium-term outcomes	Evidence-based long-term outcomes

Question 3:
Why is the intervention necessary?

Question 4:
How will it add value?

Question 5:
Who is the intervention for?

Question 6:
What will the intervention do?

Question 7:
How much of it is required?

Question 2:
Why are the primary outcomes important?

Question 1:
What are the primary outcomes?

WHY   **WHO**   **HOW**   **WHAT** will the intervention achieve?

EARLY INTERVENTION FOUNDATION