



Charles Sturt  
University

# The Family Empowerment Program



Supporting Rural Families Affected by Substance Use

**We are pleased to share our third update on the Family Empowerment Program, a research initiative led by the Charles Sturt University Rural Health Research Institute.**

Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, the program has worked alongside families in rural and regional areas to help them navigate the challenges of a loved one's substance use.

In this edition, we're sharing some of the practical outcomes, including how local practitioners have been supported to deliver evidence-based care through the CRAFT model.



## Supporting Practitioners to Deliver CRAFT

As part of the Family Empowerment Program, psychologists from New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland came together for a two-day training focused on the Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT) model. The training provided a mix of practical activities and skill-building sessions to help practitioners feel more confident in supporting families affected by a loved one's substance use.

## Voluntary Accreditation

After completing the initial CRAFT training, several practitioners opted to continue their development through a voluntary accreditation process. This involved submitting recordings (with all identifying information removed) of client sessions for review by an international supervisor. The process was flexible and practitioners could take their time and resubmit recordings as needed until they demonstrated all core elements of the CRAFT approach.

Detailed feedback was provided for each submission, supporting practitioners to strengthen their skills and confidence in delivering the model.



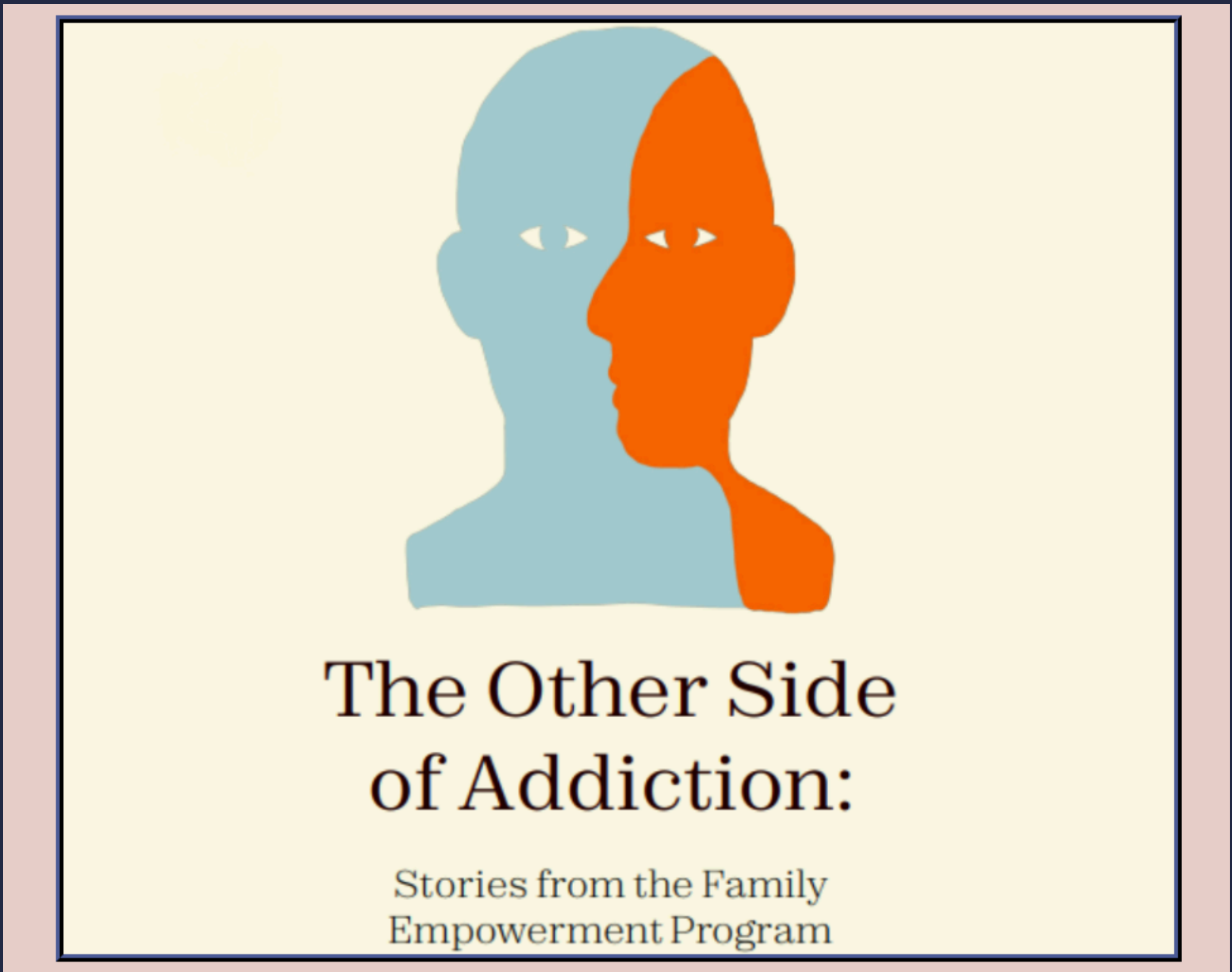
## Over 600 Sessions Delivered

By the end of the project, six practitioners had successfully completed the accreditation. Together, they delivered more than 600 online CRAFT sessions to families across rural and regional communities, a significant contribution that extended the program's reach and impact.

# Learning Together

Alongside their training, practitioners were offered optional group sessions to ask questions and share experiences. Those who joined said they found these incredibly helpful, “It was reassuring to know others were facing similar challenges,” one participant said.

## Podcast Series Coming Soon!



We’re pleased to share that all recordings for the Family Empowerment Program podcast series, ***The Other Side of Addiction: Stories from the Family Empowerment Program***, are now complete. The series brings together the voices of participants, researchers, and professionals, offering reflections and insights on supporting families affected by a loved one’s substance use. We look forward to launching the series soon and sharing these important conversations with you.



Please feel free to share this newsletter with colleagues, community members, or anyone who may find it useful. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about the Family Empowerment Program, we'd be happy to hear from you.

Thank you for your continued interest and support.

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