**[Catharine Hydon]:** Thank you very much, Mary. It's fantastic to be here. And a big shout out to all of the people who are joining us today. We know that you probably had a really busy day doing lots of hand washing and temperature checking. And it's probably one of the most amazing times in early childhood education and care in its broadest form, including libraries and all the other things that happen in this amazing space with young children that we've ever been in. So, big recognition for the work that people are doing in that space. And also the work that VCAA does in terms of supporting the sector to really think about what it means to engage in curriculum decision-making around the big ideas in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework. So thank you for all of that work, and it's a great honour to be here in my role as a board member. It's been a really amazing time to be part of a really dynamic organisation, I think, that is shaping what we understand about education and curriculum, so really exciting. My job today is to facilitate a bit of a discussion around this amazing topic, talking about identity. And when Mary first started talking to me about it, it made me ponder about all the conversations that I've had with children and families, and myself - you know, like, in my family about what it means to be a member of my family and our community. So for many of you, it will cause you, I think - this discussion that we're going to have with Danielle and Jen - to ponder about your own understandings of identity and what it might mean for the children that you work with. I think some of you are very well informed and have really strong ideas about that. But I think what this literature review and practice guide does is extend the thinking and really engage us to think about what the possibilities might be. So I'm very much looking forward to a discussion with our amazing thinkers, and their contribution to these documents is really powerful. So, some of you, I'm sure, have downloaded them already, started to have a bit of a look, but I know that after this, you're going to go and dive into them a bit more and see what you might be able to find. So, really exciting times. So, I might start with a conversation and a question to Jen, because I'm interested in firstly that idea of what this thing called identity means, you know? And I know we can probably talk about it for four hours, but Jen's gonna help us sort of define what we mean by identity. I think some of us think we know, but maybe you could help us think about what is it that we're thinking about when we think about identity.

**[Jen Mitchell]:** Thanks, Catharine. And hi, everyone. I will join by acknowledging the traditional owners. I'm sitting here on Wurundjeri land, also known as Richmond. And I know that everybody is all across...actually across Australia. We've got some interstate people. And there we are already starting to talk about identity. Like, right from this very...You know, Mary does the little blurb about who I am, who Danielle is, who Catharine is, and that's a way of framing our identity, but actually how we might see our identity might be quite different. And when I think about identity in relation to this resource, I want you to picture...instead of a bunch of talking heads sitting on your computer screen, I want you to picture a group of public servants - so that's Mary and her team - and a few researchers sitting in a room together going, "How on earth do we create a practice guide about identity and a literature review?". Because let me tell you, when you go into the research...Now, if you go in and look for learning, you're going to find a lot of stuff. And those of you who might have seen our previous twilight seminar on learning will know that there was a rich research tradition there. You actually don't get a lot of research as writing saying "this is identity".

**[Catharine Hydon]:** Why is that Jen? Can I just interrupt you? Why is that?

**[Jen Mitchell]:** I think because it's really hard, Catharine. And I think it's one of the really exciting things about the VEYLDF and about working in early childhood, is you get to engage with these difficult concepts. So what we tried to do, OK...So, whether you're a Marie Kondo fan or not, what we tried to do was take all the things that identity could be that we found in the literature and we tried to sort of organise them into a model. Now, this is not the only way you could do this. You can arrange...like your beautiful bookcase there, Catharine, you could arrange that any number of ways.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** Yes.

**[Jen Mitchell]:** But this was OUR way of arranging what we found in the literature that related to identity hopefully in a way that helps you when you're trying to think, "How do I support children to develop a strong sense of identity?", that helps you kind of organise your thinking and maybe look for things that you haven't seen before. So perhaps this is a good time to jump to our slide. Catharine, what do you think?

**[Catharine Hydon]:** I think that's a really good idea because anything that's going to help us organise our random thoughts around what it means to have a sense of identity is really helpful. I like a good diagram, Jen, so you're helping me out no end.

**[Jen Mitchell]:** OK. Alright. Well, let's jump into the diagram. And there's only gonna be one, but I want... And Danielle's got a slide or two a little bit later.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** And people can look at this on their document, can't they? This is in the literature review.

**[Jen Mitchell]:** They can. So let's have a close look at this, because this is actually the building blocks, really, of the two resources. So we started by looking at what was in the outcome itself, so children have a strong sense of identity. And you can see in the horizontal...Here I am pointing at my screen. You can't see me pointing at all. But in the horizontal lines, we've got a sense.....we're saying a sense of identity is the awareness of identity. It's knowing. And for that sense to be strong, it's appreciation of that. So it's not just knowing who you are, it's actually valuing who you are. Look at that middle column. And we've tried to put some bold statements there about what kinds of things children should be able to say. Not that they would necessarily say them like this. But if you're thinking about the children that you work with, can they say, "I know who I am"? And then could they say, "I value who I am"? OK? So it's not just "I am this kind of person", but "I value that kind of person".

**[Catharine Hydon]:** A sense of pride.

**[Jen Mitchell]:** Well, we've...we've got a lot of words. Pride might be one, but people tend to think of pride as possibly not always a good thing. So we've tried to go into the literature and put some words in there which is how researchers and psychologists and so on describe these terms, and you'll notice in that middle column there's an awful lot of 'self'. OK? So, "I know who I am." Self-expression. You know, "Do I express who I am in my day-to-day interactions?" Self-awareness. "Do I understand what kind of person I am?" Going into, "I value who I am." Self-esteem. That's getting a little bit to what you're saying there, Catharine, with pride. And self-efficacy. That might be a new one for some people, but that means not only feeling proud of who you are, but believing that you're capable of doing something. So in that middle column, that's the child themselves. That's the personal - that's what's inside. Alright. Are we good with the middle column? Shall we have a look at the other two?

**[Catharine Hydon]:** Mm-hmm. Let’s do that.

**[Jen Mitchell]:** OK. Alright. Let's go to Social - Inward. What on earth are we talking about, "Social - Inward"? OK, this is... Identity is formed through interactions with other people, but it's towards the child, it's how other people see the child. So, here we've got - again - knowing and valuing. Awareness and appreciation. "You know who I am." Catharine, you know I'm Jen.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** Mm-hm.

**[Jen Mitchell]:** Do you VALUE who I am?

**[Catharine Hydon]:** I do! [laughs].

**[Jen Mitchell]:** Well, that's...this is good! See? And when you say that, my sense of identity becomes stronger. And you can see there some terms that will be very familiar to educators. "You know who I am." Attachment. That one person when the child comes into the room, they know that educator, they know that child. That's attachment. Communication. "Are you listening to me?" You know, "Do you know what I'm saying? Do you hear my voice?". Then there's that appreciation. You value who I am. Security. OK? So, knowing that that person is gonna look after you. And that's part of trust - that you can rely on that person to back you up. So, this is all the ways that how other people react to the child, have that influence on that middle column, have that influence on their own sense of identity. And you can see right away lots of things that you can do in that column that strengthen the middle column, that strengthen the child's sense.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** Mm.

**[Jen Mitchell]:** Are we ready for column three?

**[Catharine Hydon]:** I think we are. It's making lots of sense to me. And I like the fact that the arrows are going inwards there. So, that's a really helpful way of thinking about that. So, yes, take us to the last column.

**[Jen Mitchell]:** I'm glad you picked up on the arrow, because one of the things we wrestled with was which direction this arrow should go. 'Cause this last column is called Social - Outward, and that's how the child sees other people. And my colleague said, "Shouldn't the arrow go the other way?" Well, what we're interested in here is the child's sense of identity. When we look at other outcomes, like connection to community, that's how that child interacts with the community and influences their community, but this is how the child's view of others influences how they feel about themselves. So, let's have a look at the constructs. And it's worth spending a bit of time on this. I won't talk for as long on the other questions, Catharine, don't worry.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** [Laughs]. It's helpful to set the scene for what we're talking about, though, Jen. It gives us an opportunity to ask Danielle why all this matters.

**[Jen Mitchell]:** Indeed. So in that last column, "I know who you are" and "I value who you are". There are some interesting words in there that we found in the research under "I know who you are" - ingroup identification and outgroup identification, or outgroup recognition. So, that's saying "I know that you're a member of my family. "I know that you're a child who goes to my early childhood service. "I know that you're my neighbour. "You're part of my ingroup."

**[Catharine Hydon]:** Yeah.

**[Jen Mitchell]:** Outgroup is knowing that someone's different. And knowing about difference is part of growing up, it's part of understanding the world around you, and that's where the valuing becomes really important -that when you know whether you know someone's in your ingroup or your outgroup, that you show empathy towards that person and that you respect that person. And how you feel towards others, how you exercise those things outwardly, affects how you feel about yourself inwardly. I'll give you a quick example, because I really want to get this in early 'cause it's fantastic. One of the really special things about this resource is we had guest authors from Bubup Wilam Aboriginal Child and Family Centre, Lisa Thorpe and Angie Zerella, who have written an absolutely fantastic story in the practice guide about an Aboriginal and a non-Aboriginal child growing up together and how their recognition of each other's identity strengthened themselves.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** Yeah. Very powerful.

**[Jen Mitchell]:** That makes sense. You recognise and you value someone else and you become stronger internally. Once again, hopefully you're seeing in that things that you can do to actually develop that strong sense of identity in a child. That's spread...you know, things that are spread across all parts of the model.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** It's such a powerful way of describing it. And I think that that particular story, Jen, from Bubup Wilam is really powerful and gives us a very strong sense of what it means for children to craft that sense of identity.

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