Australian Government
Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources

AusIndustry
Cooperative Research Centres Program

Evaluation of the current service delivery models and systematic review of telehealth post COVID.

David Murtagh
B4BA Network 06/10/21

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DEVELOPING NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

CHARLES DARWIN UNIVERSITY

Simbani Research
Telehealth, Digital Access, Innovative Remote Strategy Solutions and Service Development

BROADBAND
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Forum VI

Acknowledgement of Country

Photo thanks to Broadband for the Bush (B4BA) and Ali Mills

Simbani Integrated Research

Telehealth, Digital Access, Innovative Remote Strategy Solutions and Service Development

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Literature Demonstrates

- Videoconference-based Telehealth (VCBT) is superior to Telehealth "over the phone" from a clinical quality perspective (Bradford 2016, Goodwin et. al. 2017, Baird 2020, Jercich 2020).

- Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) survey respondents said most provided phone consultations, and more than half had provided video consultations. (Taylor et al. 2021)

- In internationally rural and remote healthcare, Telehealth has increased since the pandemic (Canada, US, UK) (Wherton and Greenhalgh 2020, Wiweko 2020, Huang, Ma et al. 2021, Jia, Zhang et al. 2021, Mehrotra et al. 2021).

Health System is Complex

State Government Funding

Commonwealth Government Funding

- Hospital & Health Service
- Allied Health Care
- Pathology Service
- Medical Imaging Service
- Ambulance Service
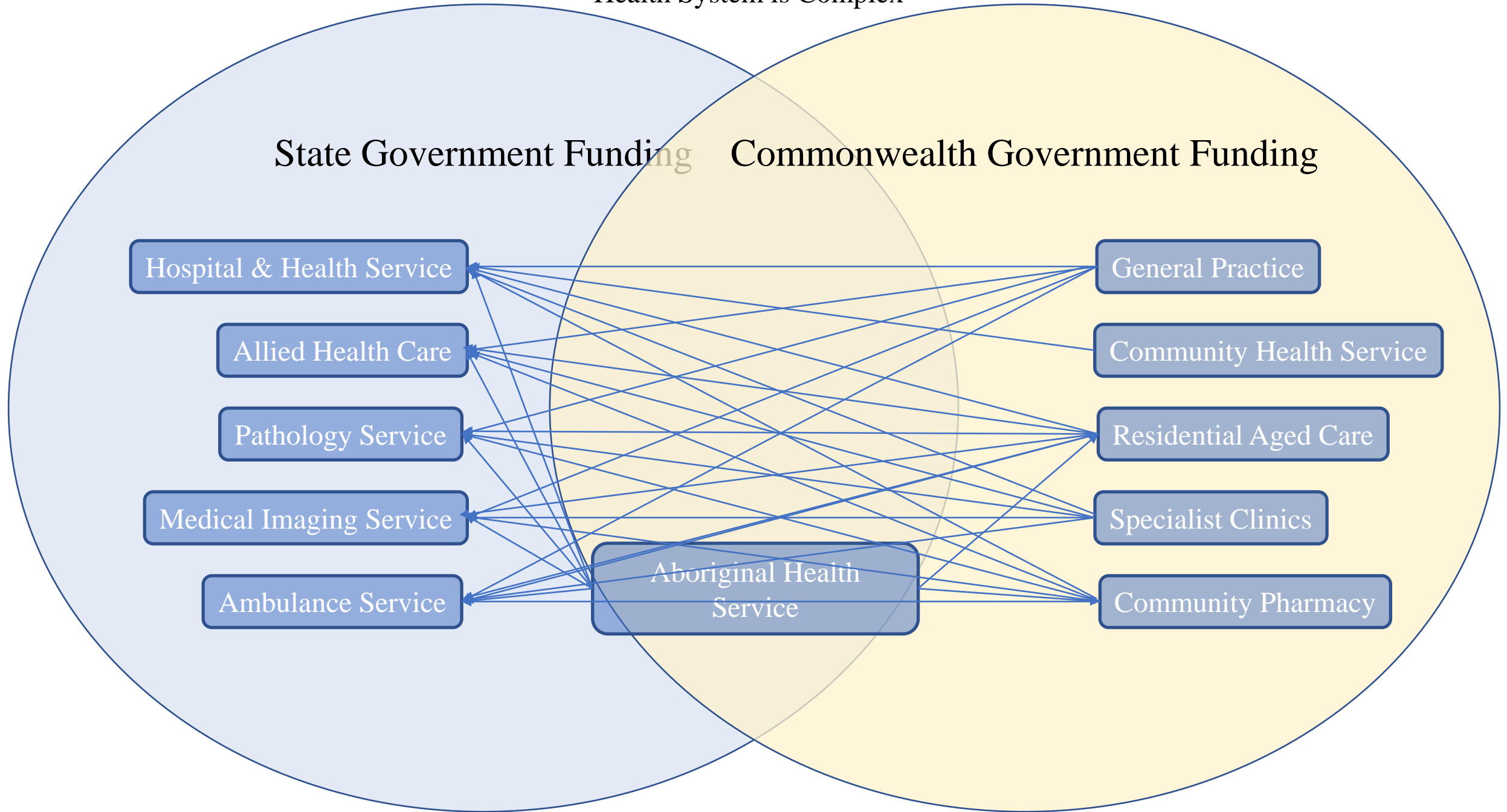- Aboriginal Health Service
- General Practice
- Community Health Service
- Residential Aged Care
- Specialist Clinics
- Community Pharmacy

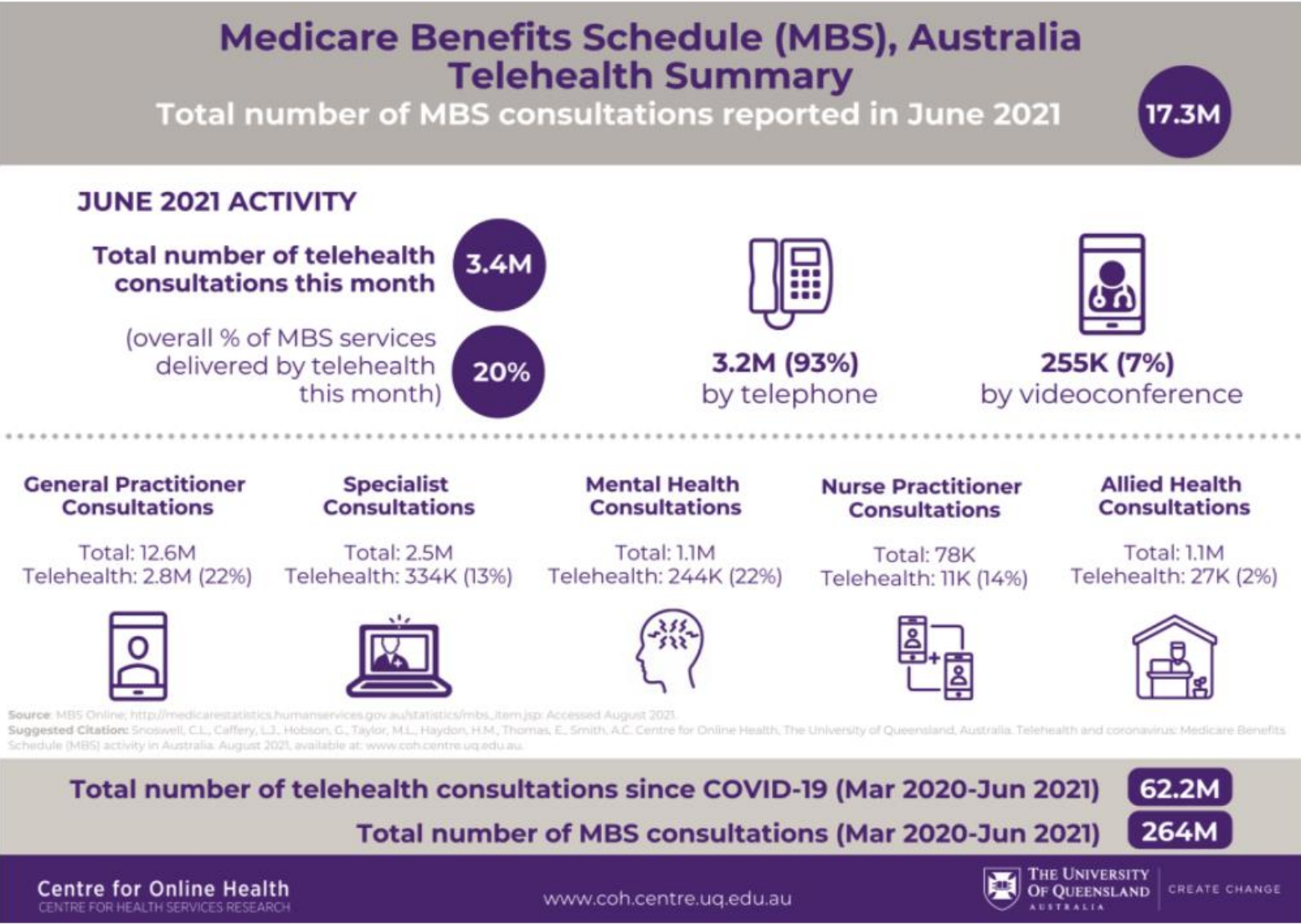# Australian Government Funded Telehealth Initiatives Pre-Pandemic Timeline

(Hall Dykgraaf et al, 2021).

2006	**Teleweb** (Telephone Counselling, Self Help and Web-based Support Program) Online and telephone-based services for mental health support, offered by a range of organisations. (ref)
2011	**Specialist video consultations** for patients living in regional, rural and remote areas, in eligible residential aged care facilities, or receiving care through Aboriginal Medical Services.
	Telehealth Pilots Program demonstration projects to trial and develop business cases focusing on aged care, cancer and palliative care services including advanced care planning.
2012	Emphasis on bridging the gap between residents of rural, remote and outer metropolitan centres with specialist services through real-time online consultations.
	Used NBN and linked to an early prototype of the national personally controlled electronic health record (My Health Record). **HealthDirect Videocall Service (VCS)** pilot program
	Established to trial the use of videocall services by organisations and general practitioners for medical consultations.
	Better Access Mental Health Initiative - Additional MBS items to enable patients in rural and remote areas to access mental health services by video conference.
2017	Initially available for services delivered by psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists.
	Extended to GPs and other medical practitioners to deliver focused psychological strategies, from November 2018.
	MBS Review taskforce considered how MBS items could be better aligned with clinical evidence and practice.
	Review of specialist consulting items recommended several changes to telehealth items including reinvestment in non-MBS mechanisms and broader rollout of telehealth modalities. (ref)
2018	**Drought Support**
	6 MBS items enabling people living in drought declared communities to access mental health and well-being services from their usual doctor via telehealth.
	HealthDirect VCS pilot program expanded to include additional services, extended to 30 June 2021.
	Rural and Remote Non-Specialist Telehealth Services
2019	12 MBS items enabling GPs and non-specialist medical practitioners to offer video consultations to patients living in remote and very remote areas. No restrictions apply to the location of the GP, although the patient need received 3 face-to-face services from the same GP in the preceding 12 months, and be located at least 15 km
2020	Drought support items amended to allow access by people affected by the 2019– 2020 **Bushfire Emergency**

MBS Telehealth Services Pre-Covid 2011 – 2019 (Department of Health 2020)

Financial Year	Consultations
2011-12	26,058
2012-13	71,324
2013-14	101,733
2014-15	125,770
2015-16	150,629
2016-17	162,468
2017-18	188,363
2018-19	236,910

Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS), Australia Telehealth Summary

Total number of MBS consultations reported in June 2021 — 17.3M

JUNE 2021 ACTIVITY

Total number of telehealth consultations this month — 3.4M

(overall % of MBS services delivered by telehealth this month) — 20%

3.2M (93%) by telephone

255K (7%) by videoconference

General Practitioner Consultations	Specialist Consultations	Mental Health Consultations	Nurse Practitioner Consultations	Allied Health Consultations
Total: 12.6M Telehealth: 2.8M (22%)	Total: 2.5M Telehealth: 334K (13%)	Total: 1.1M Telehealth: 244K (22%)	Total: 78K Telehealth: 11K (14%)	Total: 1.1M Telehealth: 27K (2%)

Source: MBS Online, http://medicarestatistics.humanservices.gov.au/statistics/mbs_item.jsp. Accessed August 2021.
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Total number of telehealth consultations since COVID-19 (Mar 2020-Jun 2021) — 62.2M

Total number of MBS consultations (Mar 2020-Jun 2021) — 264M

Centre for Online Health
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Australian Government
Department of Health

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Future focused primary health care:
Australia's Primary Health Care
10 Year Plan 2022-2032

October 2021

Telehealth Barriers and Enablers in Remote Australia

Telecommunications quality

(Bandias et al., 2005, St Clair et al., 2019, Featherstone 2020)

Affordable, easy to use and reliable videoconferencing hardware and software

(Mehrotra, 2021, Australian Department of Health, 2021)

Healthcare Consumers' Digital Inclusion

(Rennie et al., 2016, O'Kane, 2019, Guenther et al., 2020, Ali et al., 2020)

Capable clinical staff willing to embrace quality improvement using new technologies in their work practice

(Allen and Clark, 2013, National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, 2018, Gardener et al., 2011)

Viable business models that allow for the remuneration of Telehealth services

(Mehrotra, 2021, Australian Department of Health, 2021).

Collaborative partnerships between healthcare providers

(Kamsu-Foguem et al., 2015, Johnson et al., 2020).

Interoperable health information systems capable of recording and making available all patient health history upon request and with consent

(DeSalvo, 2015, Rowlands, 2020, Knibbs, 2021)
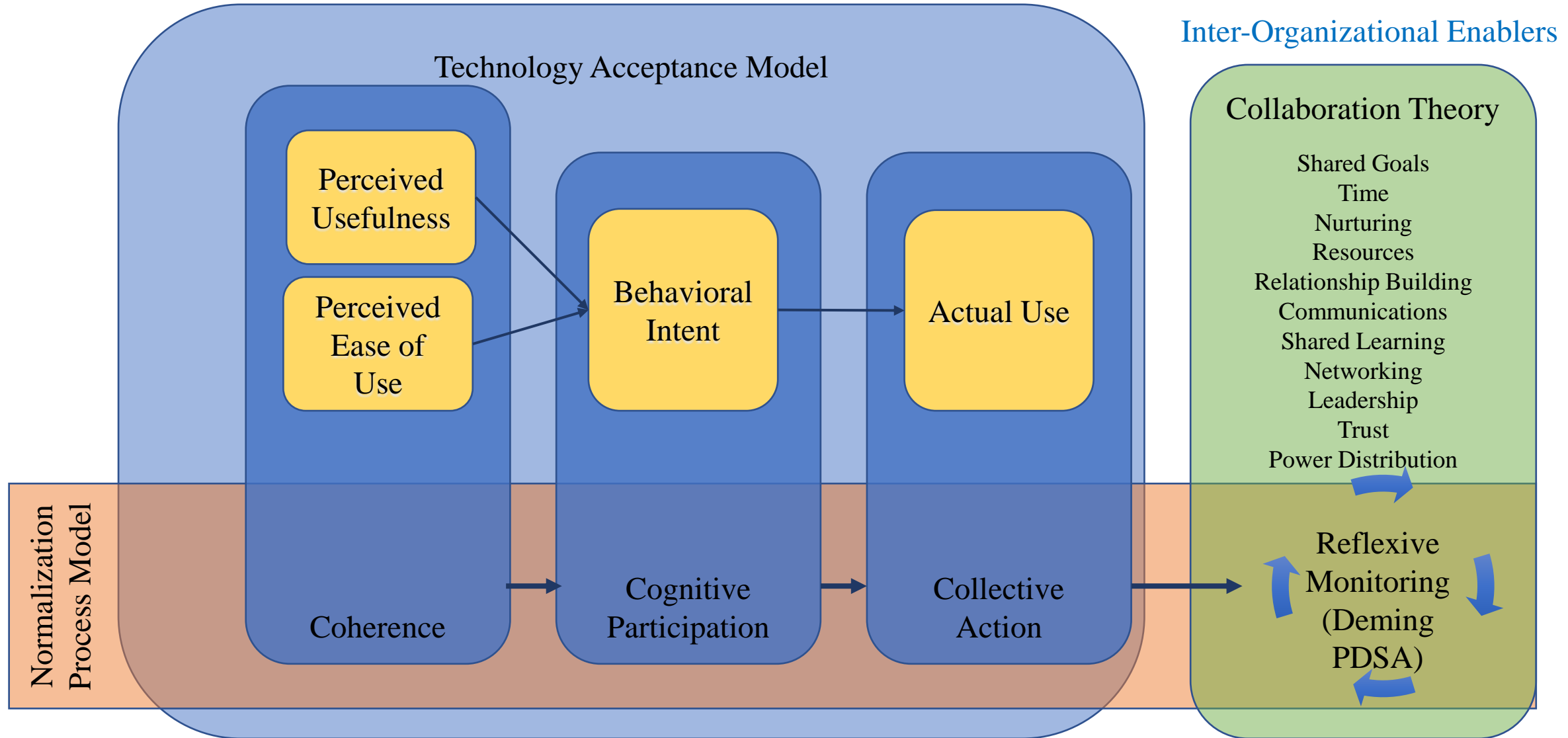
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Questions and Thank You?

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