

Southern Region Family Reconciliation Peer Support Group
Thursday 12th June 2008
Venue: Moira

Topic	Discussion
1. Introductions	Amy Carson, FRMP - Melbourne Citymission; Yin Zhang, Melbourne Citymission - FRMP; Jane Smith, Moira; Garyth Hampson, Fusion Youth Housing; Sandra Roldan, WAYSS; Fiona Rout, Fusion Youth Housing; John Ravesi, Family Mediation Centre; Michele Clayton, Gateway Reconnect - Melbourne Citymission; Tracey Hall, Reconnect - Connections; Paula James, Reconnect - Connections; Tim Strange, Fusion Youth Housing
2. Apologies	Robert Coller, Youth for Christ; Russell Armstrong, Youth for Christ; Susan Fallow, Southern Region Networker, Lisa Prince, Glen Eira Police Service, Sharni Macdonald, SKYS
3. Previous Minutes	N/A
4. New Business	<p>Southern Region Family Reconciliation Peer Support Group has been set up following interest from workers in the southern region.</p> <p>The aim of this group is to provide peer support and reflection, enhance the concept of family reconciliation into practical work and share information and resources among workers within the southern region.</p>
5. Consultation with Group	<p>Participants were asked to discuss in small groups about what they wanted to get out of the group and what interests them in attending a group like this.</p> <p>The reports back from workers show that they are keen to explore the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case support: e.g., bring a difficult case for group discussion to see whether there are other options for the clients being worked with; • Referral: refer a client to another service which is more suitable • Space for (critical) reflection: to look at different ways of working with young people and the latest issues within the sector • Networking • Learning • Training info <p>The participants agreed that the current agenda supports the above interests.</p>

	<p>Membership of group, frequency, speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency: the meeting will be held on a quarterly basis for an hour and half. • Membership: the group is mainly targeting at workers working in youth housing sector, but open to workers from cross sector to get a wider variety of background and information with the peer support group. • Speakers: speakers will be first selected within the group for the whole group to get a better understanding of the roles of other group members. External speakers will be considered afterwards to get more perspectives.
6. Speakers	<p>Jane Smith, Counsellor - MOIRA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane spoke about her background in family therapy work and her role at MOIRA - she is a family therapist in the youth service and also works at some disability programs. • Jane mentioned the concept of family can be extended to any other key persons that young people feel they have a connection with. • The fundamental thing when she works with young people is to find out where young people come from, including exploring their extended families. • Jane initially finds out as little information about young people as she can in order not to form assumptions of the young person. • It is often the case that young people do not have to be in the homelessness system and there is much which could have been prevented if family reconciliation had brought into work initially. • It is crucial for young people to find a sense of connection with their family, regardless of any unpleasant experience with their family. For young people who suffer from grief and loss, it is also possible for them to regain the sense of connection with other important people around them. <p>Sandra Roldan, Housing Placement Worker, WAYSS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandra works with young people up to 25 who are homeless or at the risk of homelessness • A key point from Sandra is family reconciliation is not just about young people returning home but more about young people connecting with their family. Young people do not have to go back home but it is important for them to maintain a relationship with family. • It is common among youth workers, especially those working within youth crisis services, that family approach is not seen as the most important area to be focussing on. The option of connecting with families as a part of support for young people can be excluded. • This brings up another issue of how to speak to young people about connecting with families.

	<p>Many workers ask straight forward whether the young person wants to go back home and young people will most often answer 'no'. It should be encouraged among workers to discuss more with young people about their families to get a sense of their connection with family.</p> <p>Reflection from the presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A youth rights frame work should include a young persons right to maintain connection with family and/or significant others. • The way of working with young people is often filtered through organisational culture and thus the concept of a family inclusive approach should be raised to the upper level of the management within services. • Workers can find out more positive parts of young people's family as a way of exploring the dynamics of their family - important to find the 'exception' in young people's lives.
7. Case Study	Due to the lack of time - sharing of case studies will not happen today.
8. Resources, Training, Agency & Sector Updates	<p><u>Amy - FRMP</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FRMP has updated new magnets for workers and wallet-size brochures for young people. • Upcoming training on SAAP Calendar, "Youth Centred Family Focussed Interventions; what does it take?" Tues 22 July 2008 - contact Amy for more information on 8625 4477 or check out FRMP website www.frmp.org.au <p><u>Michele - Reconnect</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed information cards about Reconnect - Michele recently commenced at Melbourne Citymission and program is accepting referrals - Statewide Program. <p><u>Tracey - Connections</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Who's in Charge" an eight week program for parents who are experiencing violence from their adolescents will be run through the Pakenham office by facilitator, Eddie Gallagher - cost is \$5 per session. <p><u>John - Family Mediation Centre</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FMC will become a registered training organisation later in the year and runs a range of training in adolescent mediation, contact FMC for further information.

	<p><u>Garyth & Fiona - Fusion Youth Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fusion have recently completed an aerosol artwork at Fusion which included young people
9. Next Meeting	<p>When: 10am - 11.30am, Thursday 11th September 2008 Where: TBA Guest speaker: John Ravesi, Family Mediation Centre Rob Coller, Youth for Christ (to be confirmed)</p> <p>If you would like to make any suggestions about this group, please feel free to contact Amy Carson, FRMP - Melbourne Citymission on 8625 4477 or via email acarson@mcm.org.au</p>