



## **FRMP CONSULTATION WITH BALLARAT** **19th JULY 2005**

### **1. Welcome**

Introduction and role in agency

### **2. History of the FRMP and summary of Youth Homelessness Action Plan (YHAP) First Stage Report, & Project i Research**

### **3. Introduction of the Family Reconciliation and Mediation Program (FRMP)**

#### **FRMP Team and their roles**

- Mandy Baxter – Manager
- Scott Dutton – Family Mediator & contact person for brokerage
- Yasmin Thomas – Senior Community Development Worker
- Linda Schwan – Community Development Worker

#### **Overview of 3 Program objectives:**

- a) To support the homelessness sector to assist young people, where possible and appropriate, to return home or to reconcile with family / significant others.  
Reconciliation options include:
  - semi therapeutic interventions, such as counseling to assist a young person to 'make sense of' their experience of homelessness and family breakdown'. These services will be brokered from existing local services and accredited private practitioners where possible.
  - Up to 10 sessions / \$150 per session
- b) To provide a front-end family mediation service. Within metropolitan Melbourne, Scott Dutton will provide this service. In rural Victoria, local services will be utilised, or where gaps in service provision exist, services will be brokered-in.
- c) To establish pilot programs to support those young people who have experienced episodes of chronic / longer- term homelessness. This objective relates to the first two objectives, and will come from the first year's learnings.

**4. BRAINSTORMING RECONCILIATION - What is reconciliation?**

- “That’s where the main resources are – back with the family”
- Connecting
- Developing more positive relationships – ie not just dysfunctional relationships
- Two people with different ideas finding common understandings
- Move away from blaming
- Forgiveness
- Choosing to take responsibility for, and acknowledging what happened
- Wanting to change
- Negotiation
- Work in progress, a continuum

**5. Percentage of Reconciliation work currently done?**

- 70%
- small %
- 10%
- 50%
- little (refer out to other agencies)
- rarely
- little (not something that young people want)

***General Comments:***

- More referrals this year to Lisa Lodge than in previous years – has to say no to some referrals because of travel restraints, and young person residing outside of their agencies catchment area (covers a large area)
- Reconnect worker in Daylesford 2 days a week
- Family workers in Bacchus Marsh

**6. What reconciliation interventions do you / your agency practice when working with clients?**

- SAAP housing is sometimes a “time-out” for young people and their family
- Assisting young person to engage with birthdays or special occasions related to a family member
- Affecting behavior change of young person
- Challenging young person – ie telling young person the reality of independent living
- Refer to specialist family reconciliation service (eg Lisa Lodge or Reconnect)
- Helping young person to find a practical reason to go home (ie opportunity to go home to pick up birth certificate)
- Taxi ride, transport cost, money, use of office facilities
- Therapeutic interventions – ie writing a letter to a family member
- Listening to young person

## 7. Constraints to reconciliation practices?

- ❑ Issues of privacy for the young person ie young person is not ready to engage in reconciliation with their family
- ❑ Focus is on housing and other immediate support needs eg pregnancy, accompanying children
- ❑ Young people sometimes have habits they have been into for a long period of time
- ❑ Developmental stage of young person can be limiting
- ❑ Living in a country town – rural community often cannot provide the necessary resources for young people eg no respite, limited youth housing beds, transitional housing that does not meet the needs of all young people
- ❑ Limited access to services, resources and funding for generalist youth workers
- ❑ Young people involved in a culture of dysfunctional families, and with nothing to do in country towns
- ❑ Waiting list for General Practitioners at average of 2 weeks, and in some cases there is a need for a referral from a GP to a private practitioner

## 8. Mediation

Definition displayed on overhead for comment

## 9. Brokerage

- ❑ Mediation, reconciliation, discretionary funding
- ❑ 10 sessions, up to \$150 per session
- ❑ Not counseling between partners, but rather young person and their family. Can be linked to intergenerational patterns that exist between young person and how they were parented
- ❑ 20 agencies have accessed money to-date
- ❑ family therapy, mediation, counseling

## Examples of successful reconciliation applications

### *Example 1*

- **Service accessing brokerage:** Youth Refuge
- **Funding requested:** Reconciliation – individual counseling
- **Details of young person:** 17 year old male living in a refuge. Requesting individual counseling around issues of grief and loss, and assistance with relationship with father and stepmother.
- **Gaps in services:** *No services available*
- **Own provider / assistance:** *Worker has own contact to provide counseling*
- **Funds used for:** *Assessment & then family counseling with specialist*
- **Sessions requested:** *10 (3 for assessment)*
- **Cost:** *\$150 / session*

### *Example 2*

- **Service accessing brokerage:** Youth Refuge
- **Funding requested:** Reconciliation – individual counseling
- **Details of young person:** 16 year old female living in a refuge. Requesting individual counseling to assist with dealing with issues related to her family, including trauma, protective services involvement, relationships with her siblings, refugee & CLD considerations.
- **Gaps in services:** *No services currently available*
- **Own provider / assistance:** *Worker has own contact to provide counseling*
- **Funds used for:** *Individual and family counseling*
- **Sessions requested:** 10
- **Cost:** \$150 / session

### **Examples of discretionary funding**

- A rural youth refuge identified that they have access to a bush house, to be utilized by young people and their families working toward family reconciliation. Specialists, including family mediators, family therapists and individual counselors visit the young person and their family whilst staying at the house. The only cost that cannot be financed over these couple of days is food for the young person and their family. FRMP agrees that as the family are engaging in a reconciliation process, discretionary funds may be accessed to cover these costs.
- Costs of a translator to assist in counseling session
- Babysitting provided for the children of young parents attending counseling

## **10. Actions within the Grampians region to support the enhancement of reconciliation work?**

- FRMP will initiate ongoing and future dialogue with workers in the Ballarat region regarding the identification of local practitioners (such as counselors, family therapists & psychologists). FRMP will support the incorporation of these practitioners within the FRMP database.
- Future discussions between FRMP and Support workers regarding the possibility of bringing in a practitioner from Melbourne to work with clients. This option will be considered if local practitioners are not identified (see above Action)
- SAAP support workers in the Ballarat region will undertake a stock take of the skills held by workers within their own agencies, and other agencies with whom they work. It is anticipated that this process might illuminate skills and qualifications

that may include counseling & mediation. These workers may be able to be utilized as practitioners, and funded for individual client interventions via brokerage money.

## **10. Training Needs**

Registered Training Organizations will deliver a consolidated training package within context young person and family centered approach

### ***Suggestions for training:***

- ❑ Family specific
- ❑ Within the Ballarat region
- ❑ Options of a variety of skill levels – training often aimed at the new workers and therefore needing to include training at an advanced level also
- ❑ Practical strategies for workers to take away

### ***Themes***

- ❑ Intergenerational family work
- ❑ Aggressive adolescents in the home

## **11. Website**

All information available online

## **12. PUBLICITY MATERIAL**

- Stickers, posters, fridge magnets & a young person flyer are currently being developed
  
- A comprehensive Directory will be available on the FRMP website in the near future, detailing the location of: SAAP agencies, SAAP funded reconciliation workers, Reconnect workers, and practitioners such as counselors and psychologists

## **13. Closing summary and questions**