



FRMP CONSULTATION WITH GEELONG
17th AUGUST 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?

- Rejoining & reconnecting
- Having a shared understanding – involves forgiveness and coming back to something intrinsic
- Coming to terms with – acceptance of why things are happening
- Intergenerational parenting issues – including client's accompanying children
- Sometimes requires separation, space and independence
- Response to a lack of resources
- Recognition of family systems
- Getting unstuck – moving on
- Can be a process involving significant others, or with "self"

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

- Doing something 'different' with clients
- Identifying 'blockages' for clients – family dynamics, financial, cultural stigma
- Identifying clients' extended family
- Discuss family during assessment
- Establishment of a family support plan
- Support young people in recognizing that moving home may not be an option, however reconciliation is still possible & conflict is resolvable

6. Constraints to reconciliation practices?

- Clients' negative past experiences of counseling and mediation
- Credibility of referral process to other professionals (ie lack of credible and appropriate practitioners)
- Clients in ongoing crisis
- Lack of funding and service options
- Vicarious trauma and stress carried by workers
- Lack of flexibility within some SAAP services
- Child Protection System overloaded

7. Brokerage

- Mediation, reconciliation, discretionary funding
- 10 sessions, up to \$150 per session
- There can be interventions of counseling between partners, as long as it is along side the intervention with the YP 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

Group discussions around how brokerage can be accessed

Question

- *Some young people supported within SAAP require complex service system responses. In particular, some young people may benefit from FRMP but have mental health issues. Is this a barrier?*

No, this isn't a barrier. FRMP will assist in accessing a private practitioner who is willing & skilled in working with young people who have mental health issues. The only criteria is that the guidelines aim at semi-therapeutic interventions, so it needs to fit into a 'medium term' intervention – not long term (ie. up to 10 sessions).

Action

To support the delivery of family mediation as needed within Barwon region. To do this it was identified that a skills audit of workers within the region needs to be completed first – this will provide an overview of who can and who is available to deliver mediation. The FRMP can then fund these mediations through brokerage. Yasmin will contact Marina and SAAP agencies from the areas surrounding Geelong within the next fortnight and assist in establishing this list. Workers believe this will be a really useful resource.

Question

- *Does the process of providing feedback to FRMP after three sessions require a release of information form signed by the client?*

When applying for FRMP funds, it may be helpful for workers to inform their clients that they will be providing some feedback to FRMP regarding the client experience of the intervention and the private practitioner. A consent form may formalize this process. The feedback required by FRMP does not require any information about the young person's support needs. FRMP simply needs to know that the young person is attending and engaging with the practitioner and things are progressing.

Question

- *Can non-SAAP agencies working with homeless young people apply for FRMP funding?*

FRMP funding is available to SAAP agencies and THM providers. Non-SAAP agencies wanting to access funding for their clients need to apply in collaboration with a SAAP or THM service.

8. Training Needs

- Mediation
- Single Session Training
- Working with Interpreters
- Parenting Pack

9. Website

All information regarding the FRMP Program (including brokerage application forms) available online

10. 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

11. Closing summary and questions

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