



FRMP CONSULTATION WITH SHEPPARTON
10th 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?

- Change / transition
- Repaired relationships
- Connectedness
- Acceptance – of difference and of separation
- Acknowledgment that family relationships are not the ‘norm’
- Peace
- Understanding and learning from each other
- Communication
- Dependent on level of maturity – developmental stage
- Can accompany process of sobriety (cease use of drug/s &/or alcohol)
- Can accompany recovery from illness (eg: mental illness)
- Process requires provision of safety (including housing, food & community)

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

- Assisting client contact with families via telephone
- Linking client to mentoring program
- Advocacy, liaison and referral with other services on behalf of client
- Discussions with client about their family
- Acknowledging and listening to family of client
- Providing respite (onsite, both for family and young person)
- Informal mediation – separate conversations with young person and their family
- Identifying needs of accompanying children
- Challenge young people regarding the ‘harsh reality’ of the homelessness service system, cost of living out of home, private rental market etc
- Referral to onsite family therapist

6. Constraints to reconciliation practices?

- Transport – private practitioners don’t do outreach, many clients have no transport, transport in rural areas is limited
- Funding (\$) to access counselors
- Some housing programs have no Outreach component attached – thus process of reconciliation is purely client driven
- Engagement – some clients don’t respond well to the word ‘counseling’
- High demand of practitioners within the region – waiting lists are long
- Limited knowledge of available services
- Limited services – it would be good to have a ‘Mediation Centre’ that clients could access separately to SAAP
- Young people with their own family – ie balancing needs of accompanying children

- Extended family of young people requiring mediation / counseling often get involved. This can exacerbate the conflict, make resolution difficult, and make the process drawn out
- Lack of accommodation – basic needs of young person must be met if settling, healing is to take place
- Poor integration / links with education system

7. 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

Group discussions around how brokerage can be accessed

Question

- *Can a worker funded by the Office of Housing to support at-risk tenants living in Public Housing access FRMP funds?*

FRMP will confirm

Question

- *Can FRMP brokerage be used to support a young woman (with 3 children) who is experiencing conflict with her eldest child aged 14. Interventions would include mediation &/or counseling to support her relationship with her son.*

As long as young woman is being supported by SAAP or living in Transitional Housing, and the eldest child agrees to participate in the reconciliation process.

Question

- *Could a PP be booked to come to an agency and potentially see a number of young people during this visit? Would the PP's travel fees be covered under discretionary costs?*

Yes, a PP could be based at an agency and see a block of individual clients on a particular day. The kilometers traveled by the PP would be added to their invoice, in addition to their hourly fee.

Question

- *Could funding be used to support clients after they have ended therapy? For example could money be used to access some sort of therapeutic group work, or education around 'healthy relationships'?*

Yes, discretionary funding could be accessed. As long as the intervention can be linked to a family reconciliation process.

Question

- *Could discretionary funding be used as Material Aid to 'reward' for young people doing well? For example, could discretionary funding be used to pay for a client's methadone program costs (totaling \$120 – including medication and GP fees)*

Unfortunately funding of these interventions cannot be provided within the guidelines of the FRMP Program. However, FRMP recognizes that there is a need for some young people to be financially supported in this way.

Question

- *A 15 year old female is currently residing at a youth refuge. She refuses to have any conversation with her family. Workers cannot pinpoint why. Can FRMP funds be used to support a process of counseling for this young woman, so that this issue of why she doesn't want to speak with her family can be clarified?*

Yes. FRMP funds can be accessed for counseling for this young woman, to uncover reasons why she chooses not to have any contact with her family.

Question

- *A young man is currently engaged with a therapist on a monthly basis to assist in his anger management. Workers have identified that this young man may also benefit from additional weekly support during the 3 weeks in-between these appointments. Can FRMP funds be accessed so that this young man can see a psychologist on a weekly basis to address barriers relating to his family?*

Yes. FRMP funds can be accessed in this way, as a compliment to existing therapy/interventions. Again, as long as the FRMP funding relates to that young person reconciling any issues relating to their family.

General comments

- Workers acknowledge that they need to explore internal staff as a resource, thus, use local mediators first before accessing FRMP brokerage
- Need to establish a list of mediators in the Hume region. This will involve contacting services to discover what skills exist. Yasmin will assist in this process (see Action below)

Action

To support the delivery of family mediation as needed within Hume 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 Jan Armstrong and SAAP agencies from both the Shepparton areas within the next fortnight and assist in establishing this list. Workers believe this will be a really useful resource.

8. Training Needs

- For training to be regional - travel costs and time restraints (especially for sole workers)
- Family Mediation
- Working with high risk adolescents – refer to recent David Cherry training
- Mental health
- Dual diagnosis
- Basic training on ‘how to engage young people’? What are good questions to ask in an assessment? Motivational interviewing?

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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