

## Strong Bonds Fact Sheet:

# Professional Issues : When to Refer and to Whom

The focus of the Strong Bonds project is to encourage workers with young people to place a high priority on building suitable and safe connections with family. It may feel as though this will take additional time and effort on your part.

Identifying and facilitating strong family connections for a young person, however, ensures that appropriate support will exist for the young person now and into the future. A focus on family connections recognises the fact that relationship difficulties in families often contribute to a young person's problems and that families need to be part of the solution to those problems.

### Continuum of Family Work

Workers with young people who have complex needs often come from remarkably diverse backgrounds, in terms of education, training, employment and personal background. The roles that workers play may also vary significantly, for example, supporting young people regarding mental health issues, homelessness, drug use, education, employment, and/or counselling, or a more generic role.

Your ability to address family relationship issues including past traumas and attachment issues, will depend on:

- the type of work you do
- limits to your role
- the level of experience and skills that you have
- your interest in family dynamics and their effects on young people.

Family-aware youth work practice requires appropriate systemic support from management. Where this is not yet present, workers may need to initiate discussion and educate their organisation about the benefits and possibilities of family work.

If it is not within the scope of your role to work directly with a young person's family or you do not feel you have the expertise to deal with the complexity of family issues that a young person is experiencing, it is important to be aware of family counselling, intervention and support services in your region.

Below is a list of resources that may assist you in making an appropriate referral<sup>1</sup>. This information should be used as a guide only.



### Issue

- Young person discloses abuse (physical, sexual, emotional), neglect or trauma, or you form the view that this is occurring within the family, or that the family are not sufficiently protective. Risk is current.

### Intervention

- Notify the Department of Human Services and consult/negotiate regarding yours and their intervention.
- Refer for counselling as appropriate, below

### Resources

- Department of Human Services' (DHS) Child Protection Services  
[www.dhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au) ('Youth' > 'Office for Children' > 'Child Protection' > 'Service Directories and Contacts', also read 'About Child Abuse'). Find your local office at [www.whitepages.com.au](http://www.whitepages.com.au)

1. Contacts given are current at the time of writing (June 2006).



### Issue

- Young person discloses abuse (physical, sexual, emotional), neglect or trauma within the family, in the past. No current risk issues.

### Intervention

- Provide a safe and supportive environment for them to talk about their experience if they choose to.
- See Guides re Working with Young People (about Families)
  - Provide young person with other resources to support their recovery
  - Provide or refer for specialised counselling for young people who have experienced abuse/trauma

### Resources

- National Child Protection Clearinghouse  
List of Counselling Services for Parents & Children  
<http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/nchhelp.html>
- The Australian Childhood Foundation  
<http://www.childhood.org.au>  
Ph: 9874 3922
- CASA ( Centre for Sexual Assault state-wide services)  
<http://www.casa.org.au/index.php/1/11>  
Telephone Helpline: 1800 806 292
- Southern Family Life  
[http://www.sfl.org.au/children\\_support.html](http://www.sfl.org.au/children_support.html)
- Victims of Crime Counselling Services  
[www.justice.vic.gov.au/victimsofcrime](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/victimsofcrime)  
Victims of Crime Helpline Ph: 1800 819 817
- Grief and Loss Counselling Services  
Centre for Grief Education, Clayton  
Ph: 03 95439449



### Issue

- Young person is concerned about family relationships and dynamics. No apparent abuse, past or present.

### Intervention

- Facilitate development of understanding and practical solutions in a way that promotes positive view of self, realistic view of others, relationship skills, and importance of connecting with family if family contact is appropriate.
- Provide or refer for youth- or youth-family counselling

### Resources

- Services which have a youth and family, integrated focus are listed on the following websites:
- 'Reconnect' <http://www.gatewayreconnect.org/>  
Directory of Family Relationships Services Program site at:  
<http://famnet2.facs.gov.au/quicksearch.asp>  
(then type in State and Service Type)
- Youth counselling
- Local Government Services
- Local Community Health Centres
- Non-Government Organisations
- Contact details can be found in service directories as follows:
  - [www.vicnet.net.au/government/localgovt](http://www.vicnet.net.au/government/localgovt)  
(type in the area and search 'community directory' for 'youth')
  - [www.serviceseeker.com.au](http://www.serviceseeker.com.au)  
(look under 'community care' or 'health' and then 'counselling' or 'youth')
- Youth-friendly resources including information regarding families:
  - [www.thesource.gov.au](http://www.thesource.gov.au)  
( 'Find' > 'Life' > 'Relationships' )
  - [www.reachout.com.au](http://www.reachout.com.au)  
( 'Sorting Stuff Out' > 'Family Issues' )  
[www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au](http://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au)  
( 'Health & relationships' > 'Family & friends' )
- Counselling & support services for migrant and refugee young people:
  - Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues  
<http://www.cmyi.net.au/MakingaReferral>  
Tel: (03) 9340 3700



### Issue

- There is a conflict or disagreement between the young person and other family member/s that they cannot resolve on their own.

#### Intervention

- Refer to Adolescent-Family Mediation or Therapy Service

#### Resources

- Reconnect' <http://www.gatewayreconnect.org/>
- Adolescent Mediation and Family Therapy Services  
For a list of services see the Directory of Family Relationships Services Program at:  
<http://famnet2.facs.gov.au/quicksearch.asp>



### Issue

- Young person is homeless or at risk of homelessness

#### Intervention

- Facilitate conflict-resolution, or refer for counselling or mediation to try to salvage a safe arrangement.
- Refer for accommodation, where necessary, with the goal of facilitating return home as soon as possible, where safe.

#### Resources

- Youth accommodation services, including SAAP Services for young people listed at: Infoexchange Service Seeker site. Key in youth housing and the relevant state.  
<http://www.serviceseeker.com.au/>
- Reconnect' <http://www.gatewayreconnect.org/>



### Issue

- Parents/Family want support and/or to be involved in supporting their adolescent.

#### Intervention

- Offer information about your service and other relevant issues.
- Decide whether you are able to offer family counselling services and if this is appropriate in this case.
- Refer them to the resources for families on the Strong Bonds website
- Refer them to alternative individual or family counselling services as appropriate.

#### Resources

- Strong Bonds Help Sheets for Parents on this website.
- Family Relationship Issues
- See National Child Protection Clearinghouse List of Counselling Services for Parents & Children across Australia  
<http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/nchhelp.html>
- Oz Child Family Services, Victoria  
<http://www.ozchild.com.au/svc-familyservices.php>  
Tel: (03) 9695 2200
- Southern Family Life, Victoria  
[http://www.sfl.org.au/family\\_counselling.html](http://www.sfl.org.au/family_counselling.html)  
Tel: (03) 9598 2133
- Relationships Australia  
<http://www.relationships.com.au/>  
Tel: 1300364277
- Drug Issues
- Family Drug Help  
24 hour phone counselling service for family members. Website has useful resources. Service also provide support groups and newsletters.  
Ph: 1300 660068  
[www.familydrughelp.sharc.org.au](http://www.familydrughelp.sharc.org.au)
- Directline  
24 hour counselling and referral line for people with drug and alcohol problems and those affected such as family.  
Ph: 1800 888 236

**Resources** (continued)

- Drug Issues (continued)
- Australian Drug Foundation  
For information on drugs, dealing with a family member, and treatment services.  
[www.adf.org.au](http://www.adf.org.au)  
(DrugInfo> Alcohol&DrugInfo>DrugInfo>Browse by Drug OR Browse by people OR Treatment)  
(DrugInfo>Support& Links)
- Victorian Government  
<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/drugs/help.htm>
- Mental Health Issues
- Arafemi  
Resources for relatives and friends of the emotionally and mentally ill  
[www.arafemi.org.au](http://www.arafemi.org.au)
- Mental Illness Fellowship  
[www.mifellowship.org](http://www.mifellowship.org)  
( Go to >Education>Families and Friends)
- Lifeline  
Ph: 131114
- Crisis Line  
Ph: 1800 019 116  
24 hour telephone support services



**Strong Bonds**

Jesuit Social Services  
PO Box 1141  
Collingwood Victoria 3066

Tel (03) 9415 8700  
Email [info@strongbonds.jss.org.au](mailto:info@strongbonds.jss.org.au)  
Web [www.strongbonds.jss.org.au](http://www.strongbonds.jss.org.au)