



COMMUNITY AROUND THE CHILD

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Community Around the Child; Team Acknowledgement

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OVERVIEW

1. General relevance
2. Community around the Child project
3. Findings to date
4. Future directions



HIGH RATES OF CRIMINALISATION

- It is well established that young people living in OOHC are at an increased risk of being involved in the criminal justice system.
- A report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare⁴ noted that in 2014-15, young people who were in OOHC were 20 times more likely to be under youth justice supervision compared to young people of the same age who did not have an experience of OOHC.
- Moreover Wise and Egger in 2007⁵ found that 21% of 11-17 year olds living in OOHC in Victoria had been cautioned or charged by police in the previous six months.

4. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2016) Young People in Child Protection and Under Youth Justice Supervision 2014-15, Data linkage series no. 22. Cat. No. CSI 2

5. Canberra, p. 10 4. Wise, S. & Egger, S. (2007) The Looking After Children Outcomes Data Project: Final Report, Australian Institute of Family Studies, p 15



WHAT DO THESE YOUNG PEOPLE NEED?

- Service system re-framing of the behaviours displayed as symptoms of complex trauma requiring therapeutic intervention and not punishment.
- While some challenging behaviours in residential services may meet the threshold of criminal behaviour, it appears that there is a large proportion of behaviours which do not reach such a threshold, yet Police are still called upon to assist.
- A collaborative commitment is necessary across agencies to divert young people in OOHC from unnecessary contact with the criminal justice system.
- For the formal paid support system around these children to recognize that the children are effectively being raised by the system and consider each interaction as a parenting response.



COMMUNITY AROUND THE CHILD PROJECT

- The *Community Around the Child Project* was developed as a way to ensure that the Care Team for the young person (i.e., residential staff, key workers, case managers) and members of Victoria Police were able to support young people during times of distress and minimise injury to self, others and property damage.
- The project is part of the **Building Resilience in Children and Young People Initiative** which consists of 3 projects and is a collaborative approach between the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Justice and Regulation and Victoria Police. The initiative is having a demonstrated impact on the children living in OOHC residential homes, in Inner Eastern Melbourne.
- The other two projects focus on:
 - The delivery of Therapeutic Life Story Work
 - Linguistic and language skills assessment and support strategies



AIM:

The broader implication of this initiative was to reduce the high levels of criminalisation and contact with the criminal justice system that young people in residential OOHC experience by:

1. Reduce the frequency of police involvement for young people living in residential OOHC services
2. Promote alternate and appropriate means to managing the young person, other than criminal charges
3. Promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of young people living in residential services, by improving relationships, communication and information sharing between local police and residential services.
4. Promote safety in the community by reducing levels of offending.



INITIATIVE RELEVANCE

1. Physical Assaults and threats against staff
2. Property damage to staff personal belongings/vehicles
3. Property damage to unit
4. Child v child assault
5. Drug possession
6. Missing person
7. Offending in the community

► ***Note if any of these examples are serious in nature they are escalated immediately to Police*



LEARNING TOGETHER IN ORDER TO BETTER SUPPORT THE YOUNG PERSON

- Care Team members, residential workers and local Victoria Police the Inner Eastern Melbourne Area received intensive training regarding the initiative and trauma informed care.
- The residential staff were encouraged to consider the question below before they made a call out to the Police;

➔ ***If this event happened in your home, would the police be called?***

- The idea being that this question would trigger a reflective and empathetic action, potentially reducing the number of call outs to the Police
- The initiative for residential staff stresses that contact with police should only be made when is absolutely necessary



A BETTER WAY OF RESPONDING:

Building Resilience in Children and Young People Initiative; supporting children in residential care during times of crisis

Young Person's Profile On a Page

This profile is a brief snapshot about the young person and has been developed with the child and their care team to support the young person's responses to incidents at a residential care home. The information in the document will enable the care team and Victoria Police to support the young person feel safe and reduce their anxiety by better understanding the young person, their trauma history which results in the behaviours displayed.

Agency Contact Details for this document:	
Young person's name:	
DOB/Age:	
CP Order:	
CP Case Manager:	
Permanency objective:	
Aboriginal/ATSI?:	
Other cultural background?:	
Mental Health? If so please specify:	
Disability? If so, please specify:	
Medical issue? If so, please specify:	
Substance Use? If so, please specify:	

Profile on a page: Ideally the Police member is presented with this document upon their arrival to the house so they can be informed about their course of action – and what might work best with that particular young person (e.g., avoiding their triggers)

Brief history including reasons for placement in out-of-home care:

Please record information in succinct dot points.

Behaviours of Concern, Triggers and Best Responses

Describe the young person's usual behaviour when they are in crisis.

BEHAVIOUR OF CONCERN & TRIGGERS:	HOW DOES THIS PLAY OUT:	TRY THE FOLLOWING:

Discussion Topics to Help Divert the YP attention (eg: sport, movies, music, etc)



A COLLABORATIVE WAY OF WORKING:

Issue	HOME		VICTORIA POLICE		Care Team Response
	Response	Documentation and Police Liaison	Response	Documentation and Home Liaison	
Physical assaults & threats against staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure safety of self and other young people involved in the incident and present in the home. 2. Support young person during incident based on the strategies identified in their Positive Behaviour Support Plan (BSP). 3. Contact the (agency related snr position) relay incident, effectiveness of BSP and seek advice on next steps. 4. Follow agency Practice Instructions on Physical Assaults and Threats <u>Against Staff</u>. <p>Note – It will be the victim's choice regarding the pursuing of charges which is informed by agency policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone (<i>designated police station</i>) report incident and obtain member details to be recorded on the Incident Report. • Seek police member's email address and Scan and email Incident Report to police member with a cc to (<i>names of designated sergeants</i>) • Complete DHHS Incident Report • Process Incident Report according to DHHS guidelines; this will also trigger a copy to be sent to departmental Care Team members. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Designated Police Station</i> member determines nature of response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate; or • Refer to Youth Resource Officer to visit house and follow-up with the child. 2. Receive DHHS Incident Report from house staff member by email 3. Discuss circumstances of incident and outcome of BSP implementation with (agency related snr position) within 48 business hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete relevant LEDRmk2 report. • Return Notice to Victim (L1) to (agency related snr position) by email • Based on discussion with (agency related snr position) exercise discretion regarding prosecution. • Contact the victim and determine requested course of action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review incident at next Care Team meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Determine follow-up support to young person and ◦ Any changes that may be required to the child's BSP. ◦ House representative to forward updated BSP to Police. ◦ CM to forward updated BSP to DHHS <u>After Hours</u> Service.



FINDINGS TO DATE – Missing Persons data Victoria

(provided by Victoria Police Corporate Statistics)

- During the 2017/2018 year there was a 10% increase in all missing person incidents in Victoria (15,673 up from 14,205) when compared to the previous financial year.
- Of the 21 Victoria Police Divisions only 4 divisions had decreases
 - Inner East 201
 - Gippsland 22
 - Melbourne & Yarra 109
 - Warrnambool 1



FINDINGS TO DATE - Inner Eastern Melbourne (IEM) Area Missing Person data

(provided by Victoria Police Corporate Statistics)

- ▶ In the Inner Eastern Melbourne Area there are 4 LGAs.
- ▶ 3 out of 4 experienced decreases in missing person incidents.
- ▶ Boroondara where the increase occurred has no Residential Care Homes.

	2016/2017	2017/2018
Boroondara	161	262
Manningham	154	135
Monash	638	406
Whitehorse	433	382



FINDINGS TO DATE - Missing Persons from Residential Care Locations IEM Area

(provided by Victoria Police Corporate Statistics)

	Number of Missing Persons
2016/2017	241
2017/2018	181





FINDINGS TO DATE – Police CAD data for residential care home in the IEM Area

(provided by Victoria Police Corporate Statistics)

- ▶ 2016/2017 – 642
- ▶ 2017/2018 – 606



FINDINGS TO DATE – young people:

- ▶ In order to protect the privacy of the young people who are engaged in this initiative, the findings below are based on illustrative examples aggregated across four young people.
- ▶ At baseline, it is clear that the young people within these houses exhibit;
 1. Dysregulated behaviors
 2. High rates of property damage
 3. High rates of criminal activity
- ▶ 6 months after the commencement of the initiative;
 1. Reduction in property damage
 2. Reduced criminal activity
 - 2/4 of the young people have turned themselves into Police
 - A young person recounted to their key worker that they saw a car that had its keys in the ignition and they did not steal it – in which they stated they would have (before the initiative)
 3. Reduced Police call-outs to these houses



FINDINGS TO DATE – partners:

- ▶ The members of Victoria Police have participated in a number of workshops. After the first workshop, an evaluation was taken regarding their thoughts and opinions of both the initiative and the workshop and here are some examples.
- “I think it is creating a ground work toward change – we need to keep going!”
- “Great to see different agencies coming together would like to see it continue”
- “More joint training – perhaps formalizing this training more fully”
- “We need to identify solutions for working together – to identify best practice. Need to understand each agencies limitations and capabilities in terms of the response they are able to provide”
- “By the time the young person is of our hands and by the time it comes to our attention it is too late for the young person. It needs an integrated approach from Police, DHHS, and resi care”
- “These workshops every 6 months would be good”



FINDINGS TO DATE – Comments:

- The data suggest some change has happened in the Residential Care Homes in the Inner Eastern Melbourne Area over the financial year ending 2017/2018.
- While encouraging further evaluation is required to understand the relationship between the Building Resilience Program (including Community Around the Child) and reductions in missing persons and police calls for service.



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

1. Continue monitoring the initial rollout of the initiative and related procedures
2. A Program Logic is being developed to support implementation of the initiative across other Areas.
3. A Request for Quote will be administered to evaluate the initiative.
4. Develop a report that details the findings obtained from the evaluation





Thank you/Questions