


Child and Family Sensitive Practice: an AOD case study

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Children, Communities, Connections Conference 2012



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Presenters





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Child abuse and neglect Problem 1 – prevalence

- * In 2010-2011 Australian child protection services:
 - * received more than 160,000 notifications.
 - * almost 40,000 were substantiated
 - * nearly 38, 000 children in out-of-home care (a decline of 7% since 2006-2007).
- * Indigenous children are significantly over-represented in:
 - * notifications (X 8)
 - * substantiations (X 9)
 - * placements in out-of-home care (X 10) (AIHW 2011).





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Problem 2 - impact

- * Abuse and neglect may cause long term, devastating impacts on children including:
 - * developmental delay
 - * relationship, physical health, behavioural and educational difficulties
 - * serious lifelong mental health issues including problematic AOD use.





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Problem 3 – costs

- * Child abuse and neglect is a serious problem in Australia costing in the vicinity of \$2.8 billion in intervention programs.
- * Estimated expenditure on child abuse prevention across all government departments in 2007–08 was approximately \$1.16 billion.









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Problem 4 – client complexity

The most common presenting problems of parents involved with child protection services are:

- * alcohol and other drug use
- * mental health issues
- * family violence
- * homelessness.

Many present with more than one problem and so have more than one worker/service.





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Problem 5 – systems issues

Historically child protection services once only responded to reports of serious physical abuse.

Now they address:

- * physical, sexual and emotional abuse
- * neglect
- * domestic violence.

The extended responsibilities of the child protection system have caused increased demand (Bromfield & Holzer 2008).

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Problem 6 – systems issues

Relationships between adult specialist services and health, education and social services have been described as inadequate in many child protection and child death reviews.

Adult services that address parental problems have traditionally not:

- * been aware of whether the adults using their services have children
- * taken into consideration their clients' parental role and the needs of children.

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Problem 7 – silos

Program and practice silos create barriers:

- ❖ Ethical (information sharing, disclosure, notification)
- ❖ Conceptual (client, patient, victim, risk)
- ❖ Professional (values)
- ❖ Organisational e.g.
 - ❖ Client = child, adult, family, community
 - ❖ Single input services based on categorical funding

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Responding to the problems

Multi-pronged workforce development approach needed

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The policy framework

...as a health system is more than hospitals so too a system for the protection of children is more than statutory child protection services.

COAG (2009)

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National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020


- * endorsed by COAG
- * substantially enhances collaboration between:
 - * the Australian government
 - * State and Territory governments
 - * non-government organisations (NGOs)
- * puts children at the centre of the service system.
- * increases expectation that adult-focussed services will support their clients to meet the needs of children in their care.
- * links to other sectoral strategies (e.g., AOD, MH).


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Child and Family Sensitive Practice

Aims:

- * reduce the number of families in which child protection intervention is required
- * increase parenting capacity leading to a decrease in child abuse and neglect
- * children and parents receive the right service at the right time to meet their needs.









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Key Elements

- * expand child-focused services that are 'parent sensitive'
- * broaden adult-focused services that are 'child sensitive'
- * stronger collaboration between 'child' and 'adult' services working with families with multiple and complex needs

(O'Donnell et al, 2008).





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Comprises

- * strategies in adult-focused services to ensure clients' children receive appropriate support
- * extending the capacity of all services to integrate work with child and family services
- * both individual and family treatment approaches
- * changes in:
 - * workforce practices
 - * workplace policies
 - * systems and services
 - * across the organisation.





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Requires

- * whole of and inter-governmental collaboration
- * population-based responses
- * integrated primary, secondary and tertiary prevention strategies
- * ecological, evidence-informed, family centred and relationship-based service delivery models.
- * a redefinition of practitioners' roles to enable child and family sensitive practice to become part of their core role.

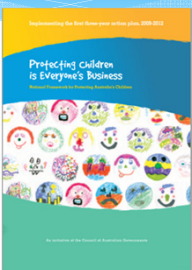








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Protecting and Nurturing Children: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children

- * The National Framework is a commitment to shared responsibility – child protection is everyone's responsibility.
- * What does "child protection is everyone's responsibility" mean for your work?











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The Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Sector: A Case Illustration

Many AOD services are moving to a family sensitive policy and practice framework because parental AOD use:

- * is an important contributory factor in child abuse and neglect notifications
- * is a factor in 50-80% of substantiated cases
- * often coexists with other risk factors (e.g., domestic violence, mental illness).





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Child and Family Sensitive Practice in the AOD sector

In 2010 NCETA conducted a survey of AOD workers (N=271) to identify the :

- * current level of child and family sensitive practice
- * facilitators and inhibitors to implementation.

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Current Work Practices

	Yes	No	Some-times	Don't know
Interventions are tailored to family needs	43%	13%	42%	2%
Strengthening parent-child relationships form part of the treatment goal	43%	16%	39%	2%
Often see and speak to clients' children	24%	38%	37%	1%
Collaborate with children's services as needed	72%	4%	20%	4%

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Child and Family Sensitive Practice in the AOD sector

Organisational barriers identified included:

- * inadequate access to relevant resources, strategies, education and training
- * insufficient intra-agency linkages
- * limited information exchange
- * undefined treatment plans/goals
- * competing priorities.

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AOD Sector Recommendations

- * expand education and training aimed at building AOD workforce capacity
- * develop organisational checklist(s) to ensure child and family sensitive policies and procedures are in place
- * regularly review organisational procedures
- * include parenting roles/responsibilities in assessment tools
- * ensure clinical supervision captures the needs of children.

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Annie: A Case Study

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Annie case study: Activity 1

- * After viewing the story of Annie, Rosie and Brian spend some time personally reflecting on the story.
- * Identify one thing from the story that jumped out at you. Why?
- * Form into small groups and Nominate a person to be your recorder/spokesperson.
- * Spend five minutes sharing the 'one thing' in your group.
- * Explore how different people identified different things:
 - * was this related to their field of practice?
 - * did a lot of people pick up on the one issue e.g. need to notify, lack of parental support, substance use?

Feedback to the whole group.

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Activity 2

In small groups (pairs, three, fours) please discuss the following?

- * What are your concerns for Annie in the short term?
- * Why are these issues of concern?
- * What impact do you think these concerns would or could have for Annie's: health, well being, social and or physical development?
- * What are your concerns for Annie in the long term?
- * Why are these issues of concern?
- * What impact do you think these concerns would or could have Annie's: health, well being, social and or physical development?

Feedback to the whole group.



Activity 3

For this exercise you are a worker undertaking a home visit with Rosie and Annie. Brian is not at home. You have an established relationship with Rosie (the mother) who is your primary client. You have the same knowledge as the Child Care worker in the video.

- * Will you raise your concerns about Annie with Rosie?
- * How will you do this?
- * You ask Rosie how Annie is and Rosie tells you Annie is good at taking care of herself and often makes her own breakfast and lunch.
- * How would you respond?
- * Do you bring Brian the father into the conversation. How and when might you do that?
- * What resources from your organisation could you bring to bear to support this family?
- * Who may you need to work with to support this family?

Feedback to the whole group.



Prevention and reduction of abuse and neglect

Is not simple and requires systemic changes including:

- * Ongoing policy changes at all levels
- * Improved collaboration between organisations
- * A skilled workforce of service professionals who practice in a range of disciplines, both child and adult focussed who have the:
 - * skills to identify where support is needed and
 - * ability to work with other professionals to support the provision of effective and responsive services to their clients in the context of their family situation.



The challenge of ending child abuse is the challenge of breaking the link between adults' problems and children's pain.

(UNICEF, A League Table of Child Maltreatment Deaths in Rich Nations, 2003)



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