

Family

Family dynamics often have a strong influence on the way young people see themselves, others and the world, and influence their relationships, behaviours and their wellbeing. The use of the term 'family' may include:

- Biological parent/s, adoptive parent/s, stepparent/s, siblings, extended relatives;
- Those providing care eg. foster parents; and/or
- Those identified by young people as significant providers of care and/or support.

Sometimes workers focus on the young person in isolation and regard the young person's family as the cause of all the young person's problems. Workers need to remember they are only involved with a young person for a small portion of their lives. More enduring connections with family should be explored and supported to optimise a young person's development.¹⁴

In this section you will find:

- Information on 'Family-Aware Youth Work Practice';
- Some family services; and,
- Resources including more services, information and a date for your diary.

Note: All of the service profiles in *The Big Red Book* include information on their work with families.

The following sections also contain resources for families: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander; Alcohol and Other Drug; Counselling; Disability; Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer and/or Questioning; Peak Body; Mental Health; Young Carers; Young Parents; Young People in Care; Youth Centres and Youth Support and Youth Support in Secondary Schools.

Ways of Working

'Family-Aware' Youth Work Practice

The following information is an excerpt from 'Family-Aware Youth Work Practice' from the Jesuit Social Services, Strong Bonds Project.

The use of the term 'family-aware' highlights the need to consider the role of family in a young person's life. The young person remains the central person in a family-aware approach, and it is not suggested that a youth worker become a family work expert. This approach looks at how workers can work better with young people by recognising and facilitating ongoing family connections. The principles of family-aware youth practice are outlined below and can be accessed at: <http://strongbonds.jss.org.au/workers/professional/familyaware.htm>

¹⁴ Strong Bonds (Nov 2007) Understanding Families – Family Dynamics, Family-Aware Youth Work Practice, and, Working With Young People. Jesuit Social Services.

Principles of Family-Aware Youth Work Practice

1. Physical and psychological safety for young people and their family members takes priority.

Family-aware youth work practice recognises that under certain circumstances, the family home is an unsafe environment for a young person. It also recognises that a young person's behaviour may place family members at risk. In these situations the need for protection from certain individuals or situations should not be at the expense of maintaining other positive family relationships.

2. Early developmental experiences, including attachment relationships and traumatic events, have a significant influence on young people's ongoing development.

A young person's behaviour needs to be recognised by workers, families and the young person as communicating past experience and current needs. Understanding and addressing the function of current behaviour and how it relates to a young person's needs is a more effective long-term strategy for enhancing a young person's health and wellbeing.

3. There are key protective factors in the family domain that help to promote a young person's health and wellbeing that need to be considered within the context of effective youth work.

A warm relationship with at least one parent or other family member is integral to a young person's development and functioning. Strengths-based practice is a positive and empowering way to assess individuals and families and to promote change. Families have a unique set of strengths and values, and building on these strengths assists families to develop the capacity to create positive changes.

4. Relationships between family members and a young person need to be considered within the scope of age-appropriate developmental behaviour.

Adolescence is a developmental stage where conflict is common between young people and their families, particularly parents. A critical aspect of identity development in adolescence is the need for a secure base from which young people can explore new identities.

5. Workers have an important but relatively brief role in the lives of young people and families, and have a responsibility to identify and/or facilitate more enduring relationships.

Youth workers need to genuinely care about young people, but also have clear professional boundaries around their work. These boundaries include a shared understanding of the time-limited and professionally-bound nature of a youth worker's role. It is important that more enduring relationships beyond the young person/worker relationship are highlighted.

6. Family-aware practice communicates the message that families can and should be part of the solution in most circumstances.

Historically, the focus of youth work on the rights of young people has often meant family has been seen as irrelevant or the cause of a young person's predicament. Resilience research highlights the benefits of connectedness between young people and their families. There's a growing realisation that concentrating only on the young person is an ineffective method for producing lasting change. Workers can support families to understand the stages of adolescent development and the tasks associated with each stage.

7. The right to privacy and confidentiality must be treated with the utmost respect for both families and young people, while recognising that communication between young people and their families is an important component of connectedness.

Young people have the legal right to privacy and confidentiality when working with community services and may provide verbal or written consent for a worker to obtain/release information from/to other people, including family members.

8. A family's cultural background is a valuable aspect of its identity, and cultural sensitivity and understanding are crucial when working with young people and their families.

It's a worker's responsibility to explore and gain understanding and to take a stance of respect towards families' experiences. Different issues may arise for young people in newly arrived families, as these young people are often exposed to different social norms and expectations in Australia than those that accord with their families cultural or religious traditions. It is important to gain an understanding of the attitudes and beliefs of all family members in these situations and to be sensitive to cultural issues and family traditions.

Services

Family and Adolescent Counselling Services (FACES)

Provides individual and joint counselling sessions, as well as family therapy.

Phone	(02) 6162 6100
Mailing Address	PO Box 3167, Manuka ACT 2601
Email	counselling@centacare-canberra.org
Website	www.centacare-canberra.org
Location	Cnr Hicks & Nuyts Sts, Red Hill
Parent Organisation	Centacare

Who Can Access:

<i>Gender</i>	Females and males
<i>Age</i>	10 - 21
<i>Young people under the influence</i>	No
<i>Income required</i>	No
<i>Disability access</i>	Yes
<i>Children of clients</i>	Yes
How to Access	By phone, 9am - 5pm, Monday - Friday. No referral necessary.
Programs	Provides counselling, information and referrals.

Other Families Fees are based on a sliding scale.
Specifically designed to work with families.

Family Counselling Service

Provides counselling service for young people and families.

Phone	(02) 6248 6118
Mailing Address	PO Box 83, Curtin ACT 2605
Email	intake@rfact.org.au
Website	www.rfact.org.au
Location	Cnr of Pialligo & Fairbairn Ave, Pialligo
Parent Organisation	Richmond Fellowship ACT

Who Can Access:

<i>Gender</i>	Females and males
<i>Age</i>	Young people 12 – 25 years, and their parents, family members and carers
<i>Young people under the influence</i>	Yes
<i>Income required</i>	No
<i>Disability access</i>	Yes
<i>Children of clients</i>	Case by case basis

How to Access By phone and email, 9am - 5pm, Monday - Friday.
Young people and families can self refer. Referral forms are available on the website.

Programs Provides competency based counselling and support on a wide range of issues for individual young people and / or families.

Other Families Works with young people with mental health issues.
Specifically designed to work with families.

Navigate (formerly Supporting Families with Adolescents)

Provides outreach counselling service for young people and their families.

Phone	(02) 6258 5933
Mailing Address	24 Scattergood PI, Spence ACT 2615
Email	navigate@ywca-canberra.org.au
Website	www.ywca-canberra.org.au
Location	Boyland CI, Spence, ACT
Parent Organisation	YWCA

Who Can Access:

<i>Gender</i>	Females and males
<i>Age</i>	Young people aged 12 – 18 years and their families (parents, siblings, extended family and carers).
<i>Young people under the influence</i>	Yes
<i>Income required</i>	No
<i>Disability access</i>	Yes
<i>Children of clients</i>	Yes

How to Access	By phone and email, 9am – 5pm, Monday - Friday. A referral is required. Young people and families can self-refer.
Programs	Provide individual and family counselling, case management and brokerage. Access to respite options can be brokered and co-ordinated. Currently offer two groups: a 6-week support and discussion group for parents of teenagers and GirlsAlive, a 6-week program for young women and risky behaviours (this includes a therapeutic weekend).
Families	Specifically designed for young people and their families. Can work with young people and other family members independently at their request.

Reconnect

Provides outreach support for young people and families.

Phone	(02) 6163 7600
Mailing Address	PO Box 3167, Manuka ACT 2601
Email	reconnect@centacare-canberra.org
Website	www.centacare-canberra.org
Location	127 Phillip Ave, Watson
Parent Organisation	Centacare

Who Can Access:

<i>Gender</i>	Females and males
<i>Age</i>	12 – 18, and parents of young people
<i>Young People Under the Influence</i>	Yes
<i>Income required</i>	No
<i>Disability access</i>	Yes
<i>Children of clients</i>	Yes

How to Access	By phone and email, 9am - 5pm, Monday - Friday. No referral necessary.
Programs	Provides outreach support for families with young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Outreach worker for parents, and a separate outreach youth worker for the young person. Provides assistance with family mediation, linking in with community support from Centrelink, Housing, Legal Aid, Health, Employment and Education. Assistance with building relationships between young people and their families.
Families	Specifically designed for young people and their families.

The following services also provide family programs:

- Barnardos Parenting Outreach Program (Young Parents)
- CYCLOPS (Young Carers)
- CYCLOPS Litmus Program (Young Carers)
- DIRECTIONS ACT (Alcohol and Other Drug)

- ☐ headspace ACT (Mental Health)
- ☐ Learning for Life Program (Youth Support)
- ☐ Menslink (Youth Support)
- ☐ Open Family Australia (Youth Support)
- ☐ Ted Noffs Foundation ACT (Alcohol and Other Drug)
- ☐ Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Services (Health and Sexual Health)
- ☐ See also the Youth Centres section

More Information

More services

Canberra Family Support Service

Centacare Canberra

Supports families with children up to 12 years old experiencing difficulties.

Phone: (02) 6162 6100

Email: CFSS@centacare-canberra.org

Web: www.centacare-canberra.org

Communities@Work Family Support Unit

Provides a range of services for families and individuals in the Tuggeranong and Weston Creek region. Programs include Family and Individual Support, Women's Housing Program, Behaviour Management, Emergency Relief, Community Education and Personal Skill Development.

Phone: (02) 6293 6500

Web: www.commsatwork.org/services/families/

Conflict Resolution Service

Provides dispute advice, mediation, community education, training and referrals.

Phone: (02) 6162 4050

Email: mediation@crs.org.au

Web: www.crs.org.au

Drugs in the Family

Offers information, advice and support for parents, family members and close friends of people using drugs.

Phone: (02) 6257 3043

Family and Adolescent Network

A quarterly forum with a strong clinical focus for counsellors, therapists, youth workers and other professionals in the ACT and surrounding region who work with young people and their families.

Phone: (02) 6258 5933

Email: sandra.mcgowan@ywca-canberra.org.au

Family Assistance Office

Administers Child Care Benefit (CCB) and the Family Tax Benefit through Centrelink and Medicare Offices.

Phone: 13 61 50

TTY: 1800 810 586

Web: www.familyassist.gov.au

Family Court Mediation Service

Provides counselling on relationship problems including residence and contact arrangements for children.

Phone: (02) 6267 0511

Email: canberra@familycourt.gov.au

Web: www.familycourt.gov.au

Family Relationship Centre and Advice Line

A source of information and confidential advice for families at all stages of their life.

Phone: 1800 050 321

Email: info@canberrafrfc.org

Web: www.familyrelationships.gov.au

Family Relationships Services Australia

Connects individuals and families to organisations based on needs.

Phone: 02 6162 1811

Email: admin@frsa.org.au

Web: www.frsa.org.au

Northside Community Service

Provides case management, information, advocacy and referral to families in the Inner North.

Phone: (02) 6257 2255

Email: headoffice@northside.asn.au

More Information**Australian Institute of Family Studies**

Provides a comprehensive list of resources to those working in family studies research and policy.

Web: www.aifs.gov.au

Bursting the Bubble

Aims to help and support young people who have problems at home.

Web: www.burstingthebubble.com

Developing Practice: The Child, Youth and Family Work Journal

Association of Children's Welfare Agencies (ACWA)

A family work focused journal available online.

Web: www.acwa.asn.au/developing_practice.php

Early Childhood Support

A list of Internet resources guiding family support work.

Web: www.rch.org.au/ecconnections/parents/index.cfm?doc_id=5946#fam_support

Their 'For Professionals' section is also useful:

Web: www.rch.org.au/ecconnections/pro/index.cfm?doc_id=1249

National Youth Survey 2008: Key and Emerging Issues

Mission Australia

Identifies and clarifies the key and emerging issues of young people.

Web: www.missionaustralia.com.au/document-downloads/cat_view/67-youth-surveys

NSW Family Services

Has a number of publications to assist with the planning, management and delivery of Family Services, including management publications, family support videos and DVDs.

Web:

www.nswfamilyservices.asn.au/Main/Publications/MAIN_Publications.htm

Resourceful Adolescent Program (RAP)

An experiential, resilience-building program that has been designed to promote positive coping abilities in the face of stressful circumstances.

Phone: (02) 6296 8250

Email: jenny.ward@tcs.act.edu.au

Snapshots of Australian Families with Adolescents

Australian Institute of Family Studies

A fact sheet that provides information about families with children aged 12 – 18 years.

Web: www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/snapshots/adolescents/adolescents.html

Strong Bonds

Jesuit Social Services

Offers useful information for youth workers related to working with young people and their families.

Web: <http://strongbonds.jss.org.au/workers/default.htm>

<h3>Dates for Your Diary</h3>

15 May International Day of Families

Provides an opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families as well as to promote appropriate action.

Web: www.un.org/esa/socdev/family