



Waitakere Children and Family Violence Project

DRAFT Strategic Plan for a Professional Collaboration on Children Exposed to Family Violence 2014 - 2018

Responding creatively and collaboratively to children and young people exposed to family violence in West Auckland

Our vision

That all children and young people (C&YP) exposed to family violence in West Auckland are recognised and supported in becoming safe and learning to cope with and recover from any trauma and/or disruption to their childhood that the violence has caused.

Our mission

To ensure that all those working with C&YP in West Auckland are aware of the range of difficulties faced by those exposed to family violence, are empowered to respond to them appropriately and to operate through child-focused collaboration amongst services.

Children and young people exposed to family violence

It is thought that one quarter of all New Zealand C&YP witness violence in some form in their homes and/or families and for many this is a common occurrence. It is also now understood that many will suffer lasting symptoms of traumatic stress and/or loss of self-esteem, which will impact on their ability to study, make friends or participate enjoyably in society. Some may be or appear to be more resilient or less affected. It could safely be said that all would benefit from information and support.

Responding to children and young people exposed to family violence

Children and young people's testimony suggests that it takes only one understanding adult to make a difference to their ability to cope with violence. However, it has become evident that, while Police now identify children present or resident at FV incidents¹, only a minority of these receive any sort of direct response². Whether Police, community agencies, health professionals, schools or the Courts, few services are equipped to enquire of children and young people whether they have been exposed to violence or to respond appropriately to their disclosures. Few are trauma-informed or able to help children with the effects of trauma.

Objectives

A strong collaboration	A responsive workforce	A range of services
There will be a strong collaboration of agencies and schools exchanging ideas, knowledge and referral information to ensure that no child is left trying to cope alone.	All those working with C&YP exposed to FV will know how to recognise symptoms, initiate discussion and offer support and follow up.	The FV sector will have identified and filled gaps in services so that there is a good range of evidence-based programmes to meet all needs.

¹ Estimated by Police to be only one fifth of actual domestic violence incidents

² Apart from a brief conversation with a Police person and receiving a Jack card in West Auckland after callout to a FV incident

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Our five key priorities are

Leadership	Children are paramount	Collaboration	Early Intervention	Safety and accountability
Coordination that advocates for C&YP while listening to, sharing, informing and involving collaboration members.	A strong understanding that C&YP, as the most vulnerable, come first and need a rapid and appropriate response.	Agencies and schools as engaged members of the network, working together to share ideas and resources, cross-referring and celebrating differences between them.	Understanding that the sooner a child receives support, the less damage is done and the better the recovery	Confidentiality and respect for all parties, whether young or adult, individuals, families, agencies or schools.

Focus

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generating interest and energy Speaking up and speaking out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising C&YP's rights, particularly under UNCROC A strengths-based approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration, coordination and partnership An innovative and can-do ethos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing support well before a situation reaches CYF's intervention thresholds Promoting and handling disclosure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being mindful of difference and sensitivities Cultural safety
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Some potential collaborative activities

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining excellent and fair communications between all stakeholders Speaking out for C&YP exposed to FV at local and national levels. Reaching out to and sharing information with all disciplines and the whole community. Researching new and innovative ideas and practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening to children and young people about their needs, what works and what doesn't work for them. Recognising 'bad/mad/sad' behavioural as a possible indicator of trauma. Reducing the stigma and shame of FV, enabling C&YP to disclose and discuss their experiences. Helping those working with adults to promote C&YP's needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring full use of all existing resources and maximising their usefulness to C&YP. Finding creative solutions to resolve any blockages to a quality collaborative response e.g. information-sharing, improving referral pathways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training on the signs of exposure to FV, trauma, resiliency, C&YP's needs and useful responses for all those working with C&YP in West Auckland. Evaluation and support of existing and instigation of new programmes, tools and other responses to ensure a wide range of effective responses across West Auckland. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening to each other. Recognition of the commitment to partnership embedded in Te Tiriti. Cultural responses developed by the specific culture (with collaborative support). Discipline responses developed by the specific discipline (with collaborative support).
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