Use of Therapeutic Model in Kinship Care

Bethany Community Support, Geelong

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Kinship Care Service 1300 557 611
History

Opened its doors in May 1868 as the Geelong Female Refuge to provide refuge and rehabilitation to the poor women of Geelong.

As political, social and economics trends changed over the past 140 years so too did the needs of the community. Over the years Bethany has responded to those changes and has provided services that have included:

- babies home
- adoption agency
- mothercraft training centre
- kindergarten
- day care service.

Today Bethany is

- a dynamic and diverse human services organisation employing over 100 staff
- with a over $7 million budget and services over 250,000 people living in Geelong and the Barwon Region
- an independent voluntary organisation with no political or religious affiliations.
- a significant presence in the Geelong community and the wider welfare sector
- has a strong history of commitment and provision of high quality and innovative services
- each year more than 6000 individuals and families experiencing difficulties in their lives access one or more of our services.

At Bethany the aim is always to build upon the strengths of individuals and communities in order to achieve both personal and social change.
Services

Bethany Community Support offers a broad range of high quality services to families and individuals. These services include:

- Barwon Child FIRST
- Barwon Victims Assistance and Counselling
- Children's Contact Service
- Parent Education and Support
- Family Violence After Hours Service
- Gamblers Help
- Homework Clubs
- Housing Services
- Innovations Family Services Casework
- Men and Family Relationships
- New Parent Infant Network Early Years (NEWPIN)
- Relationship Counselling
- Saver Plus
- Supporting Children After Separation
- Kinship Care Service
Kinship Care Service
Kinship Care

Kinship Care is the care provided by relatives or a member of a child’s social network when a child cannot live with their parents.

The Child Youth and Family Act, 2005 states in it’s Best Interests Principles:

“...the need to strengthen, preserve and promote positive relationships between child, parents, family members and persons significant to the child...the child being placed with an appropriate family member or other significant person before any other placement option is considered...”
Kinship Care

- Fastest growing form of out of home care in Australia
- Statistically there are over twice as many kinship placements as foster care placements
- Identified as a service gap
- Carers not receiving adequate support or recognition
Identified needs by Kinship Carers

- Information about services and how to access them e.g. court system, child protection system
- Referral and linking to support services
- Financial entitlements and difficulty accessing them, such as Centrelink payments
- Support to make decisions
- Respite care
- After hours help
- Peer support, mentoring and training
Impacts of Kinship Carers

- Potential role confusion, e.g. grandparents vs becoming parents again
- Some Carers feel an obligation to care for the children
- Sudden change of life plans e.g. retirement or travel
- Social relationships may change
- Financial situation changes
- Lack of space/room in the home
- Impact on physical and emotional health especially for some older Carers
- Changes in relationship dynamics within extended family
- Carers have felt alone and/or unsupported in their new role, facing new challenges
Benefits for children

- Remaining within the family unit
- Holding onto sense of identity and belonging
- Maintaining connections to culture
- Safety
- Stability - routine, less change
- Feeling loved and valued as part of the family
- Maintaining a sense of normality
Kinship Service Area

We service the Corangamite Shire, Colac Otway Shire, City of Greater Geelong, Surf Coast Shire and the Borough of Queenscliffe.
4 main components

- **Information and Advice** – referrals, calls from community
- **Support groups** - NUTS, etc.
- **Family Services** - private & statutory kinship care support
- **Placement Support** - statutory only, referred from Child Protection
1. Kinship Information, Advice and Referrals - (Private and Statutory)

- To provide relevant information and advice regarding community resources, i.e. funding, legal advice, financial entitlements
- Referrals to appropriate services targeted at private and statutory
- Single session(s) and brief (under 2 hours) support
- Sessions for children using art therapy techniques
- Advocacy and advice
- Linking to training and support groups for Carers
- Phone number: 1300 557 611
2. Support Groups - (Private and Statutory Carers)

- Support groups such as the NUTS (Nurture Until They Shine) group
- Training and information
- Guest speakers
- Activities to suit the individual group needs
- Christmas Party
3. Kinship Family Services - (Private and limited Statutory)

- Predominately private kinship care arrangement
- Referrals from families, organisations, schools, community members, Centrelink, Child First
- Provide short to medium term assistance (10hrs or 40 hrs)
- Develop family goals, family action plans, safety plans
- Advocacy and advice
- Family Group Conferencing
- Single Session Work – 1 to 3 ‘in person’ sessions to work on a particular issue or goal
4. Kinship Placement Support - (Statutory Only)

- Referral from DHS - Child Protection
- ¾ Case Management – 60% long term case management, 40% transitional case management – will move onto permanent care
- ¼ Placement Establishment – new arrangements where we support the carer while DHS retain case management
- Will work with Kinship Carers for up to three months after going to Permanent care, then they can access our Info & Advice and Family Services areas for support
- Linking in with specialist supports
- Facilitate Family Care Team Meetings and Family Group Conferencing.
Therapeutic Journey

Bethany received the tender to provide the service

They engaged a project manager to work part time to assist in setting up the program for six months. The project manager has many years experience in family services and out of home care, which the Kinship Care Programs are the first programs to combine both areas of service delivery

Senior Practitioners from the sector were recruited with extensive skills and experience which includes Circle Program – Therapeutic Foster Care, Therapeutic Residential Pilot Program, Art Therapy, Housing, Adoption, Family Services, Out of Home Care, Alternative Education, Training, Youth Justice, Mediation, Young People, Disabilities, Forgotten Australians, Trauma & Attachment and much more

The Program Manager had previously worked for DHS Child Protection as the Kinship Care Worker, Permanent Care Worker, High Risk Adolescent Worker, Community Based Child Protection Team Leader as well as Manager of Child FIRST.

Our line management and agency are very committed to the program

Our initial training program included being accredited Family Group Conference Conveners, Single Session Work, Trauma & Attachment, Assessment Tools and the Statewide roll out.
Therapeutic Journey

We need to be self aware, reflective, be able to regulate ourselves well and be emotionally available to our carers so they are better able to be emotionally available to the children in their care.
Supports for staff

Supervision – formally once per fortnight, informally – daily
Team case discussions
Team Meeting once a fortnight
Mauve Meeting once a month – reflective space
Orange Flag Meeting once a month – case discussion/direction
Lunch together
RDO once per month for full time workers
Debriefs after home visits
Team Days
Beginning & end of week upbrief and debrief – informal
Other organisation benefits such as EBA arrangements
Support Groups

Held monthly

Have at least two Bethany workers, because we want the carers to know we value them, if there is a new person to join the worker they are working with will attend with them for a few sessions.

Carers bring plate of nibbles to share.

Geelong one will be held at our agency – the carers requested this.

Colac group is currently held at the local CFA office once per month.

Geelong group – E.g. Strength cards, Christmas card making activity, we had a pamper session from The Body Shop, less formal in structure as this is the carers time and we will be led by their needs.

In the Colac group we will begin with the Community Meeting and also have a less formal structure.
If any member of our Support groups needs assistance we ensure we are available for them to assist in meeting their needs.

Currently scoping the feasibility of beginning a Children’s group to run with the school terms beginning in 2011.
Sanctuary Model

1. Community Meetings
2. Safety Plans
3. Flag Meetings
4. Re-enactment Triangle
1. Community Meetings

Community Meetings are held at the beginning of every meeting and Supervision

- How are you feeling today?
- What is your goal for today?
- Who can you ask for help?
- What’s your brag for the day?

How are you feeling today?
“Good” or “fine” isn’t a feeling

What is your goal for today?
Needs to be work related!

Who can you ask for help?

What’s your brag for the day?
Can be personal or work related

Bethany COMMUNITY SUPPORT Inc.
1. Community Meetings (continued)

- Individuals need to be committed to the purpose of a community meeting.
- The community meeting provides a space of about 5 minutes (could be longer for large groups) to check in with each other and let each other know where we are at.
- It is not designed to be a space for group therapy or debriefing. If a person brings up a hurt or difficulty, the facilitator or chair will let that person know they will check in with them at a later time.
1. Community Meeting (continued)

We found the community meeting to
• Be helpful
• Increase bonding
• Assist in creating safety within the group
• Help in gaining a greater understanding of group members
• Promote a sense of group belonging
• Let team members get to know each other
2. Safety Plans

All members of the team have one, reviewed twice per year in Supervision, can be updated very time, we also have a self care plan for work and a self care plan for home that sits with this.

A Safety Plan is a list of activities that a person can choose when feeling overwhelmed so they can avoid engaging in unsafe behaviour.

Domains of safety include: Physiological, Social, Physical, Moral.

Safety Plans keep people safe by assisting to self regulate their emotions.

Self Regulating Options: That you can do yourself, that are relational, that can be done anytime anywhere! Examples: breathing, counting backwards, prayer, massage one’s hand, read the paper, have a cuppa, have some chocolate, etc.

Aim: to take yourself out of the space and have a some space to regulate yourself.
3. Flag Meetings

**Red Flag** - Immediate Response Planning

**Green Flag** - Case Celebration

The Bethany Kinship Care Services have developed a further two flag meetings based on the philosophy of the Sanctuary Model to cater for staff group supervision and support.

**Orange Flag** (Case Direction)

**Mauve Flag** (Reflection)
4. Re-enactment Triangle

Traumatic reenactment is a replaying of a traumatic event in every day life.

This replaying is out of the person's awareness.

We cue each other to play roles in our personal dramas.

It's a language of our nonverbal minds.

We have our own histories, our stuff can sometimes interact with their stuff.

We have to be aware of our reactions because we can get pulled in unconsciously.

"Bethany Community Support Inc."
Therapeutic Journey

We believe that understanding why your child behaves in certain ways can increase a carer's inner strength, resilience, hope, coping abilities and belief in what they are doing is right.
Theoretical Underpinnings

Take Two – leaders in the state in working with children in out of home care and their carers as well as professionals in the sector

Dr Bruce Perry’s work on trauma and the brain and Dr Daniel Hughes work on Attachment inform our Therapeutic practice

Everyone in our team has a thorough understanding of these theories and practices
Kinship Carers told us ..... 

We surveyed our Kinship Carers on their greatest needs and what we could do to assist

Overwhelmingly they needed peer support – 2 groups, 1 in Colac and 1 in Geelong

Overwhelmingly they wanted answers quickly, help when asked for and someone to listen to them

In our first 3 – 4 months, we did some task based work but predominately we listened.

We listened to many powerful stories that contained grief, loss, sadness, anger, love and much more!
Education Sessions

2 this year (November) on

1. Attachment
2. Trauma

Carers have chosen the following topics for 2011
- Responding to children in Kinship Care - Attachment
- Responding to children in Kinship Care - Trauma & the Brain
- Behaviours & Strategies
- Andrew Fuller – 14 year old adolescent males
- Mental Health
- Grief & Loss
- Protective Behaviours
- Cyber Safety
- Sex Education
- Life Books
- Self Care
- Art & Craft

We have chosen to do one on Strength Cards to assist in developing an emotional language.
Strategies we utilise: The PACE principles of parenting as one strategy in working with kinship families to assist them to be able to provide therapeutic care practices in the carer role.

**PLAYFULNESS:** Planning times for 1:1 play and having playful moments so that the child has an experience of you, as their primary carer, taking joy in him/her.

**ACCEPTANCE:** Accepting the child’s thoughts and feelings and separating these from the behaviour if it is unacceptable. (Taking the stance that even though the child may have made a bad choice, they are doing the best that they can).

**CURIOSITY:** Being curious with the child. What does the child think is going on? Why does the child think they engage in a certain behaviour? Being CURIOS about the child’s Thoughts, Feelings, Wishes, & Intentions…

**EMPATHY:** Expressing your own feelings about the child’s experience to the child. Lots of Empathy!! Empathy can be MORE effective than praise when the child has a negative internal working model.
Therapeutic Responses

Strategies we will offer to Kinship Carers

1. 60 Second Rule
2. Time In
3. Structure & Supervision
4. Routine
5. Communication
6. Repetition
7. Natural Consequences
8. Boundaries
9. Safety
Therapeutic Responses

Strategies

It is important to look at what is behind the behaviour or what is underneath the behaviour.

You need to become a detective, you need to wonder, you need to think.

A child displays behaviour - often unknowingly - as their brain is telling them something's not right.

They are trying to tell you something is not okay in here, help me!

They often don’t have a language to tell us what is going on and often they don’t know anyway, so they act it out to show us and tell us.

Sometimes, particularly with adolescents they may “explode’ because they don’t know how else to express the utter chaos and confusion and swirling mass of anger, grief, sadness, loss, etc, so it just explodes out.

If they had a language they would say something like “I’m not okay here and I need some help and guidance even though I really don’t want to hear what you have to say.”
1. 60 Second Rule

30 Seconds to Reprimand
You get 30 seconds to let a child know their behaviour isn’t okay. Sometimes you may only get 10 seconds.

30 Seconds to Repair
You then get 30 seconds to make the child feel okay. If it is longer the child will move into Shame

Leave It
2. Time In

How does TIME IN work?

The adult takes the child into “Time In”
   The adult tries to intervene before the child is too aroused
   The goal is to keep the child out of trouble, rather than having to respond to trouble
   “I can see that sharing your toy is too hard for you right now, come sit close to me and I’ll let you know when you can have another go…”
   “I think you need to be close to me right now, come sit at the table and we can draw together”

Why? The child can’t calm him/herself down; the adult does this with them.
3. Structure & Supervision

The presence of the adult providing 24/7 supervision is a PRO-ACTIVE approach to parenting (rather than reactive) that MINIMISES the child’s opportunities to get themselves into trouble. This means that there will be FEWER times that you have to react to difficult & challenging behaviours because you are providing structure, providing one-to-one assistance, and intervening earlier when the child becomes disregulated.

Close proximity to the child:
- INCREASES the child’s sense of SAFETY
- REDUCES the child’s opportunities to experience FAILURE
- REDUCES the child’s level of anxiety, hyper-vigilance, anger & frustration

“I know it’s hard, but when you able to make choices and they’re successful choices, then we’ll try it and we’ll see”
“I’ll know when you’re ready and I’ll let you know”
“Right now you need to be near me; you need me to decide for you ‘cause it’s really hard for you to figure these things out all by yourself”
“Just rely on me; you won’t be in trouble, just follow the rules and you’ll be alright”
“I’m here to help you”
“I’m always here for you”
Other Strategies

4. Routine
Having a routine that is regular and the same each day creates safety.
Any changes in routine need to be planned and communicated clearly to the child so they can adjust to the new plan.

5. Communication
Clear, open, fair communication is vitally important.
Children who have experienced trauma have often experienced mass confusion so it is important to be clear and simple in your communication.

6. Repetition
A child's brain requires many repetitions to understand a message, a child who has experienced trauma requires hundreds of repetitions.
Other Strategies (continued)

7. Natural Consequences
Only use natural and logical consequences
E.g.: if a child throws food on the floor, they may need some help to clean it up and remake some food. It's not okay to say “No food” – they are trying to tell you something with their behaviour.

8. Boundaries
Have clear, firm, gentle, fair boundaries and stick to them, if you consistently change the boundaries this confuses a child's brain and then they perceive you as unsafe.
9. Safety

What is of utmost importance is creating a safe environment and having a warm loving relationship with a safe adult.

Safety leads to many things for a child

When a child feels safe and has an attachment they are able to develop, learn, grow, love, care, be healthy, have resilience, and many more benefits
Similarly to the opportunities afforded Foster Carers our aim is to support and educate our Kinship Carers

We aim to be available to meet their needs

We have high expectations on ourselves in our team to hear Kinship Carers needs, stories, hopes, dreams, wants, demands and respond appropriately

We feel it is an honour and a privilege to work with such wonderful people whom we admire greatly

We want to thank Kinship carers for the wonderful gifts you give the children in your care. You make an enormous difference!
# Therapeutic Journey

## Our Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melinda Harrington</td>
<td>Senior Family Services Case Worker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carlie Oliver</td>
<td>Senior Family Services Case Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Best</td>
<td>Senior Placement Services Case Worker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Claire Thompson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emma Templeton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louise Wilson</td>
<td>Team Leader Kinship Care Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lyrae Love</td>
<td>Manager Kinship &amp; Family Services</td>
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1300 557 611

Thank you for your time today....