



University of South Australia

Australian Centre for Child
Protection

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AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR CHILD PROTECTION

Research Seminar – 4th May, 2006

“Evaluation of an innovative program to enhance intersectoral collaboration between mental health and child protection services: The Mental Health Liaison Project.”

Presenters: Fiona Arney, Carole Zufferey, Ruth Lange

This presentation includes the results of a process evaluation of the Mental Health Liaison Project (MHLP), an innovative project for parents experiencing mental health difficulties who are also clients of child protection services. The MHLP takes a multidisciplinary approach to “fast-track” referral for parents experiencing mental health difficulties, to help them continue to care safely for their children. The MHLP sites an experienced Mental Health Nurse within the intake and assessment team of a district office of Children, Youth and Family Services (CYFS) in South Australia.

The evaluation examined views of staff and clients about what worked well, and what could be done differently, when including a mental health worker with child protection services. Results from interviews with workers from child protection and mental health services, and with parents, showed overwhelming support for the project. This presentation describes the features that were seen to enhance or limit intersectoral collaboration, and will include details of some of the specific capacity-building activities that were a feature of the project.

The seminar will provide an opportunity to speak with the project evaluators and with the Mental Health Nurse at the centre of the MHLP.

Biographical details

Dr Fiona Arney is the Senior Research Fellow at the Australian Centre for Child Protection, University of South Australia. She has extensive research experience in the fields of parenting and child and adolescent mental health. Her current work includes research into strategies to prevent and effectively respond to child abuse and neglect, and strengths-based approaches to working with families experiencing adversity.

Carole Zufferey is in the final stages of her PhD with the School of Social Work and Social Policy, University of South Australia, specialising in the area of social work and homelessness. She has been a social work practitioner for over 15 years in diverse areas such as child protection, aged care, disability, mental health and homelessness. She is currently teaching in the School of Social Work and Social Policy in the area of human service provision and involved in research projects in the areas of mental health, child protection and homelessness. She has been working with the Australian Centre for Child Protection since 2005.



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Ruth Lange has been working as a Clinical Nurse Consultant, Mental Health at Aberfoyle Park CYFS on the Mental Health Liaison Project since April 2005. She has been working mainly in mental health for 17 years both in inpatient and community settings. Ruth is also working with COPMI (Children of Parents with a Mental Illness) in developing an interagency training package between child protection, mental health and other community services. Prior to that Ruth worked in paediatric nursing both here and overseas. Ruth gained a Master of Business Administration Degree in 2000.

Date and time: Thursday, 4th May, 2006, 4.00pm-5.30pm (drinks and nibbles afterwards).

Location: C7-08, Centennial Building, University of South Australia, City East Campus, Frome Road, Adelaide.

RSVP: For catering purposes, please contact Elizabeth Oram at the Australian Centre for Child Protection on (08) 8302 4030 or email elizabeth.oram@unisa.edu.au by Monday 1st May, 2006.

Contact Officer: For further information about the seminar contact Dr Fiona Arney at the Australian Centre for Child Protection on (08) 8302 4172 or email fiona.arney@unisa.edu.au

Please distribute this invitation to other interested people in your organisation/networks.