

# ***“Supporting Young Parents”***

**Delivering a holistic response  
to meet the needs of homeless young parents**

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Making It Home  
Melbourne 28<sup>th</sup> October 2009

Central Hume Support Service  
Gateway Community Health



# *“Supporting Young Parents”*

A holistic response to the needs of homeless young parents

**In 2006 tenders were requested for a program delivering the components of best practice for homeless young parents**

(DHS 2006)

These included

- Holistic support starting in pregnancy & continuing post-natally.
- Supporting/promoting social inclusion and building of support networks.
- Development/delivery of programs with individual/group components.
- Linked to relevant youth specific programs, services and information.
- Providing personal support based on trust & continuity of relationships.
- Providing practical care such as transport, childcare
- Flexible service delivery responding to individual needs
- Addressing access issues in rural areas.
- Facilitate access to, and maintenance of, stable housing.

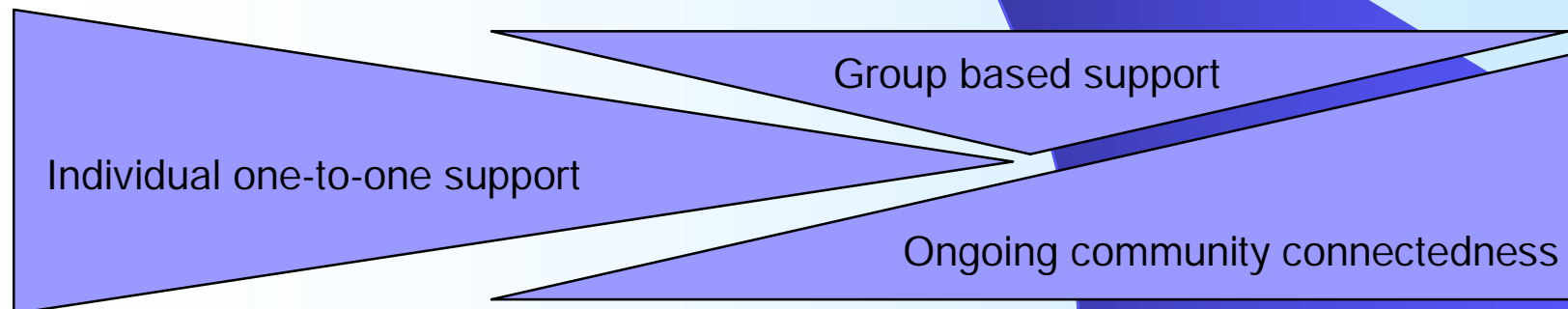
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**In response we developed “Supporting Young Parents” model**

Features of this model

- The model was developed around national and local evidence
- Delivery guided by the Social Model of Health (WHO) and the Ecological Model of Child Development (Bronfenbrenner)
- Partnership based delivery - a core partnership of Central Hume, Gateway and Rural Housing with extended support from the multi-sector Teen Pregnancy and Sexual Health Network
- Delivery is based on two-stages of support and ongoing connectedness



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## **Service delivery strategies**

- Individualised support leading to ongoing connections
- Flexible support that is tailored to meet individual needs
- Case management / case coordination
- Advocacy
- Skill and parenting development
- Positive relationships
- Living and Life skills training (one on one / group)
- Case conferencing
- Counselling / group work
- Thorough risk assessments
- Education / community development activities

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## **Group based support and community connectedness**

Support for young parents is through groups offered by the “Connecting Young Parents” program & Albury-Wodonga Teen Pregnancy Network

Group support is offered through

- Social groups – **an informal weekly catch up & chat with social activities**
- Activity groups – **for parents and children e.g. “Aqua Bubs” swimming**
- Learning groups – **informal learning e.g. “Baby Cues” – understanding your baby**
- Competency based programs – **pathways to education e.g. “Caring for Kids”**

Community connectedness is supported by

- Networks - **between services and between young parents – social connections**
- Partnerships – **services working together to provide groups and support**
- Pathways – **all programs aim to connect young parents with mainstream services**

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## **Specific aspects and programs that are a feature of what we do**

- Service information
  - Referrals, case management, case work, linking into the community
  - Young Women's Business
  - Young Parents Survival Guide for Pregnancy
- Caring for Kids
  - 8 week partnership program - TAFE, Mission Australia & Gateway
  - Competency based learning from Certificate III in Children's Services
- Emergency house
  - Emergency accommodation for pregnant or parenting young women
  - Capacity to stay up to 6 weeks and then reviewed, rental reference
- Cooking up a storm
  - 6 week program through CHSS, Rural Housing Network and Gateway
  - Addresses budgeting, cooking and home management issues

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## The young person’s perspective



**1-2-3 Presto**  
*Quick and easy cooking*

**A fun 6 week cooking program for young parents**

Does this describe you ....  
wanting to learn how to cook  
making food that is yummy & tasty  
cooking things your kids want to eat

If so then this 6 week course is for you

When : Friday 9th November  
from 10.30 to 1.30  
Where : St Stephens Kitchen  
Beechworth Rd, Wodonga  
Cost : Gold coin donation  
Lunch provided (you cook it)

For more info and to book  
call Ilena Young on 02 6022 8803

 Upper Hume Community Health Service

**Caring for Kids**

a course for  
young mothers or mothers to be



Are you interested in ...

- learning new skills while having fun?
- sharing your ideas and experiences?
- making friends and meeting other mothers?

Then this course is for you!

Based on 5 topics from Certificate III in Children's Services, you can learn about caring for babies and children; providing a safe and healthy environment; first aid for babies; and developing positive relationships with children.

You can then go on to study the rest of Certificate III in Children's Services, or you can move into other courses.

When: Mondays and Wednesdays from 10 am to 4 pm  
Starts: Monday 21<sup>st</sup> April for 8 weeks  
Where: Wodonga TAFE, 87 McKay St, West Wodonga  
Childcare will be available next door to your room  
also ... breakfast on Mondays & lunches on Wednesdays

For all enquiries please phone/text 0429 852 500  
or call Ilena on 02 6022 8888

 Upper Hume Community Health Service

 Wodonga TAFE

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## **What makes our work unique**

### **From a youth services perspective**

- The strong partnerships that we have developed are unique
- Strong, open and ongoing communication between those involved
- Provide a high level of support / targeted supported for young people
- Bridging the gap between homelessness services and health services
- Specialist support for pregnant / parenting young people within homelessness services

### **From a health services perspective**

- Creating holistic support for young people who are parenting
- Using housing needs and support to generate the initial relationship
- Offering individual/group support through an active multi-sector network

### **From a young parent’s perspective**

- Services that are flexible, responsive and offer ongoing connectedness
- Services that use their relationship to support your networks
- Ongoing connectedness and support for you whilst you raise your family

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## **Lessons learned – issues to discuss**

Single focussed attention to housing needs is likely to be a short-term fix  
By definition – more vulnerable clients will have more complex needs  
So ... sustainable housing depends on addressing multiple, complex needs

Young people who are parenting have a raft of additional factors  
They need multiple services to work together to meet these needs  
Young parents sit on the margins of everyone’s agenda – not core business  
Lack of recognition that young parents have specific needs

Lack of stable housing, especially in rural areas, for young parents  
No access to stable, secure, accessible and affordable housing impacts  
negatively on families and children, & will undermine everything else  
Easy to blame families and ignore the systemic factors exacerbating issues

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## **Final Thoughts**

- We need to remember that young people who are pregnant and / or parenting are still young people who are still moving through developmental milestones
- We need to recognise the strength of young people and the good job that they do. The majority of young people who are parenting have incredible resilience and resourcefulness.
- We need to invest in specialist, long term, individualised and group interventions for young people who are pregnant and/or parenting
- Making this investment will actively support intergenerational change
- Not making this investment risks increasing the vulnerability factors for these young people and their families