



Melbourne Citymission
Building Inclusive Communities



Homeless Teenagers Parenting Children: More than just housing

Young And Pregnant, Parenting Program
Lorraine Flannery

Definition of Homelessness

- The Council for Homeless Persons Victoria (CHP) defines homelessness as,
"Someone without a conventional home, lacking the economic and social supports that a home normally affords. Often cut off from the support of relatives and friends, few independent resources ... no immediate means and, ... little prospect of self-support."



Definition of Health by World Health Organization

- “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity....is one of fundamental rights of every human being... and is dependant upon the fullest cooperation of individuals and States. Government have a responsibility for the health of their peoples which can be fulfilled only by the provision of adequate health and social measures.”



Melbourne Citymission YAPP

- Funded by Commonwealth & State
- Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)

Children, Youth, Adult & Family

Disability

Employment, Education & Training

Homelessness – YAPP

Aged Care

Palliative Care



Victoria

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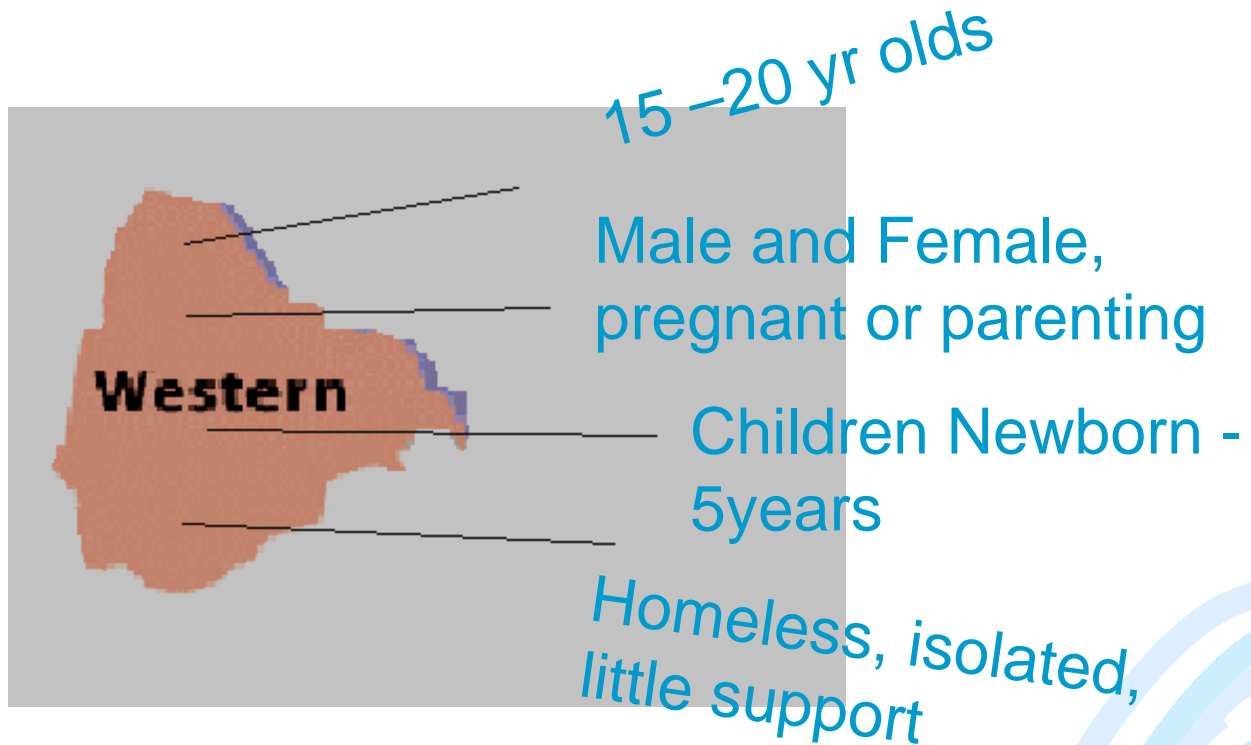
Melbourne Metropolitan DHS Regions

Rich cultural mix

Anglo Aust.
Asian,
Horn of Africa

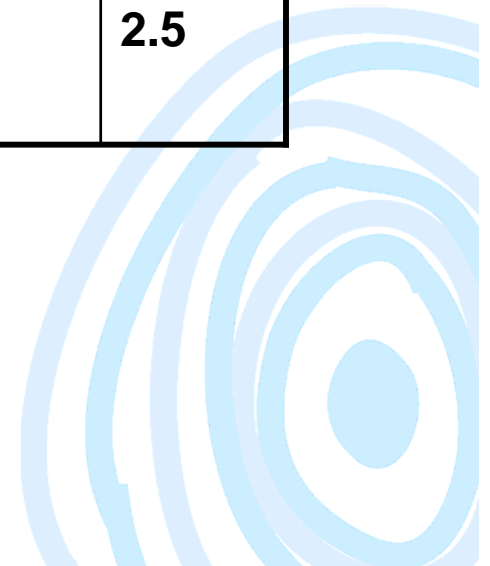


YAPP Clients



Crude Birth Rates 2001 – 2002, Teenage Confinements

5 Local Council Areas	Total Mother			Total Mother		
	Confines	<20yrs of age	% of total	Confines	<20yrs of age	% of total
	2001			2002		
TOTAL	8010	213	2.7	8103	204	2.5



Homeless Issues Teenage Parents; Male and Female

- Impact on both generations – parents & child
- Disassociation from support networks
- Series of refuge experiences
- Homeless peer group
- Drug & alcohol issues
- Behavioural problems
- Mental illness
- Forensic/correctional backgrounds

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Developmental Issues for Teenage Parents; Male and Female

- Physical change
- Sexual curiosity/identity/activity
- Self Acceptance and confidence
- Changing relationships with others-Adult expectations
- Conflict with and questioning parents/authority
- Understanding consequences of their actions
- Attachment & responsibility to child
- Positive Role Models for guidance
- Lack of understanding



Health Issues for Homeless Young Teenage Parents; Male & Female

Social Connectedness

- Emotional loss of family, friends, schools, community

Mental Health Issues

- Physical, Sexual & Emotional Abuse

Physical Growth

- Diet and Exercise
- Tobacco, Drugs and Alcohol



Young Pregnant & Parenting Women

Physical Issues

- Body changes through pregnancy
- Diet and Exercise
- Contending with the decision to modify or cease D&A consumption

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Young Pregnant & Parenting Women

Mental Health Issues

- Lost youth & freedom
- Extra responsibilities that some are not ready for
- Cut off from familiar people to support them
- Post Natal distress/depression
- Attachment to their babies

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Young Pregnant Women

Social Issues

- Unfamiliar surroundings
- Cut off from familiar people
- Lack of money and material goods for baby
- Government Assistance
- Child Care
- Learning to budget

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Health Issues for Children Newborn to 5 years who have experienced homelessness

Physical

- Not eating or sleeping (no routine established)
- Failure to thrive
- Delays in physical growth and development
- Lacking in energy

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Health Issues for Children Newborn to 5 years who have experienced homelessness

Mental

- Unsettled and unhappy
- Fears night terrors
- Extreme behaviors ranging from aggressiveness to shyness
- Rocking, head banging

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Health Issues for Children Newborn to 5 years who have experienced homelessness

Social

- Not responsive when played with or talked to by others
- No smiles
- Constantly alert (hyper vigilance)
- Excessive fear of strangers
- Very clingy to family adults
- Withdrawal from new people and experiences
- Or attention seeking behaviors and in extreme cases overt sexual behavior.



Positive role modelling

- Positively support good options and decision making
- Be interested in their child's achievements
- Take time even if time is limited to understand their life history
- Be realistic and honest if something can't be done don't sugar coat it and assist
- The truth can be dealt with.

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Persistence & Patience

- Go back again if you are told to get lost, they may have had a bad day.
- Put limitations on what is achievable and what time that you have available to work with them.
- On the one hand you do not want to give up on them but you also need to show them what respect looks like.



Teaching life skills

- Pay rent & utility bills
- Maintain diaries
- Make appointments and keep them
- Use alarm clocks
- Be aware of their own gut feelings, learn to listen to themselves and their babies
- Teach them boundary setting
- To have fun and try new things

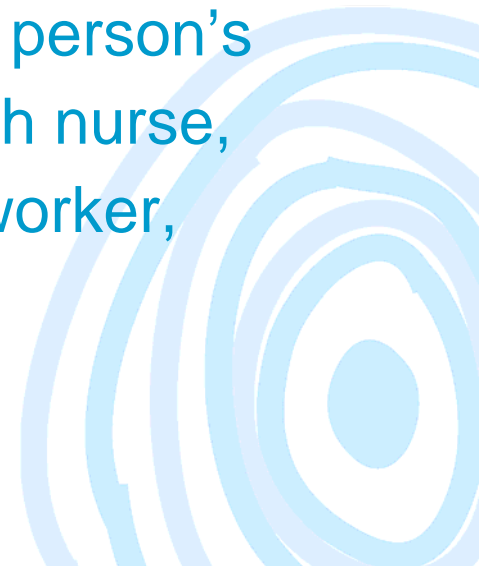
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Go beyond the norm

- Attend first/2nd appointment
Assist with finding parent groups
- Help find/assist with respite care, child care, education, part time work, baby goods.
- Form collaborative partners with the young person's support people, Like Maternal & Child Health nurse, Dept. Human Services, Drug and Alcohol worker, Mental Health support

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Creative counselling

- Coffee shops,
- In the car between destinations
- Walking with the pram
- In parks
- Their homes
- Shopping
- MacDonald's
- Office appointments

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Success of YAPP program

Results of stable housing

- Cooperative relationship b/t SAAP services to combat homelessness & bring about stability which inturn promotes a healthy life style
- Connected into community services & support self-sufficiency
- Options; Private rental or Office of Housing properties
- “Bridging” the gap b/t supported and independent living



Success of YAPP program

Health & wellbeing of young parents & children

- Promote safe and secure housing
- Promote Social support & Community Connection
- Promote physical and mental safety
- Assist in restoration of self sufficiency and respect
- Assist in the healthy attachment between parent and child

