

Practice-level elements

Staff working within mental health and addiction services will need to recognise and pay attention to the specific family and whānau situation of all service users and to identify and pay attention to the needs of the children of service users. These practice-level elements are outlined below.

Phase I: Essential elements

Conversations about children, parenting, and family and whānau are routine

At entry into the service and routinely during service use, service users who are parents are asked about their children, their wider family and whānau, and any strengths or vulnerabilities in relation to their parenting. Staff within services feel confident and competent to have these conversations.

Service users are linked to local parenting and family and whānau support services when needed

Service users who are parents are provided with information about and, when necessary, linked to local services that provide parenting or family and whānau support appropriate to their specific needs. Staff have easy access to up-to-date information about local parenting and family and whānau support services.

Family-inclusive appointments are made when appropriate

Families and whānau (including children) are included in appointments with staff – as and when appropriate to the needs of the service user and the family and whānau. Staff within services feel confident and competent to involve families and whānau (including children) in appointments when appropriate.

Family care plans are developed as appropriate

Service users who may from time to time be temporarily unable to care for their children can develop and maintain a family care plan that outlines information about their children's day-to-day needs and their wishes about care for the children while they are temporarily unable to provide this care. Staff feel confident and competent to work in partnership with service users to develop these plans.

Focused support is provided for pregnant and postpartum women

Staff pay particular attention to the needs of pregnant and postpartum service users. These women, their partners, and their family and whānau have access to:

- Coordinated care planning across the health services that they are using, mental health and addiction, maternity and child health services
- Advice and support regarding safe use of prescribed medications during pregnancy and breastfeeding
- Advice and support regarding use of alcohol and other drugs during pregnancy and breastfeeding
- Opportunities to talk about their pregnancy/infant and the impact on their health and wellbeing including any strengths or vulnerabilities in relation to the pregnancy, their developing relationship with their infant and their infant's development
- Access to advice, information, assessment, and services from specialist perinatal and infant mental health clinicians as required.

Staff feel confident and competent to talk about children and parenting

Service users who are parents access services in which staff feel confident and competent to talk with them about their strengths and vulnerabilities in relation to their children and their parenting. Staff in the service have all received:

- Basic-level training on family- and whānau-focused practice, such as the Australian COPMI, Keeping Children in Mind and Child Aware training
- Family violence intervention training (Violence Intervention Programme Training)
- Orientation processes that ensure they are aware of and familiar with care and protection policies
- Orientation processes that ensure they are aware of and familiar with policies outlining responsibilities and requirements in relation to cross-service and cross-sector information sharing.

Phase II: Best-practice elements

Family- and whānau-focused practice is embedded in all aspects of service delivery

Service users access services in which family- and whānau-focused practice is systematically embedded in all aspects of service delivery, including the following.

At the service user's entry to the service, staff:

- Consider family and whānau circumstances and needs as part of the triage/prioritisation processes

- Identify and document all dependent children, their date of birth and gender
- Identify family and whānau strengths and vulnerabilities – including any care and protection issues
- Identify existing family and whānau supports, natural community supports and services accessed via other agencies.

During the service user's engagement with the service, staff:

- Identify specific family- and whānau-focused goals within personal plans
- Develop family care plans
- Link service users to natural community support for parents and families and whānau as and when needed
- Link service users to more specialised family and parenting support programme as and when needed
- Link service users and their family and whānau to more specialised assessment and treatment programme such as ICAYMH services or perinatal mental health and addiction services when needed.

When the service user is transitioning from the service, staff:

- Include family and whānau in transition planning meetings and transition plans.

Evidence-based programme that support parenting and child wellbeing are available in all adult mental health and addiction services

Service users who are parents can access evidence-based COPMIA programme, such as Let's Talk,¹ through all adult mental health and addiction services.

¹ Let's Talk About the Children (Let's Talk) is a brief, evidence-based method developed by COPMI Australia (2015). It trains professionals to have a structured discussion with parents who experience

mental illness (or mental health problems) about parenting and their child's needs. It aims to make this conversation a routine part of the partnership between parents and professionals.



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Specialised evidence-based programme is available for the most vulnerable children and their families and whānau

At a local or regional level, the most vulnerable children, and their families and whānau can access specialised programme that are specific to their needs, including:

- Age and developmentally appropriate psycho-education programme
- Parenting support programme tailored to the needs of parents who use mental health and addiction services
- Relapse support programme
- Resilience skills training for children and parents
- Family therapy
- ICAMH (Infant Child and Adolescent Mental Health) and perinatal mental health and addiction services.

Specialised programmes are in place to address the needs of pregnant women and infants

Service users who are pregnant or have infants can access comprehensive perinatal mental health and addiction services, including both maternal mental health and infant mental

health expertise. These services are delivered in line with the guidance outlined in *Healthy Beginnings: Developing perinatal and infant mental health services in New Zealand* (Ministry of Health 2012a).

The mental health and addiction sector workforce is confident and competent to address the needs of children of parents with mental health and/or addiction issues

Service users who are parents meet a workforce that has had comprehensive training and support to work in a family- and whānau-focused way. Staff are confident and competent to address the needs of children of parents with mental health and/or addiction issues. Training includes:

- Basic-level training for all staff
- Advance training for some or all the staff (depending on the nature and size of the service)
- Specific training programme for staff working in specialised programme for children of parents with mental health and/or addiction issues and their family and whānau.



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