

ANNUAL REPORT

2023 – 2024



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.



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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

MELISSA HALEY

As I look back at this past year, I am proud to share how CRS has experienced significant growth, strategic refinements, and notable accomplishments. Across 2023-2024, we strengthened our commitment to accessible, impactful dispute resolution and family support services, setting the stage for even greater community impact. Partnering with community-based organisations, that bring specialised expertise, has allowed us to expand access to multidisciplinary services for those in need. To make this vision a reality, we built new partnerships and strengthened existing ones, amplifying our reach and impact in the Canberra community.

Conflict is inevitable; however, as individuals, we have the power to decide how we allow conflict to impact our lives. Not everyone has had the opportunity to develop the skills required to manage conflict, which may be due to a variety of reasons, such as disengagement from educational settings, family or community disconnection, homelessness, childhood, and adult trauma and more.

This is where CRS plays a vital role in supporting the Canberra community. Our services and programs provide the knowledge, skills, and practical tools to navigate conflict, helping individuals preserve, reunify, and restore relationships.



Saved the community over \$1.5 million in youth homelessness costs in 2023-24, with more young people now engaged in education and the community, reducing youth justice involvement."

Our Children, Youth, and Family Programs provide essential support for families and young people facing challenges, achieving strong outcomes in family reunification, preservation, and restoration. Across our Family Support, Safe and Connected Youth, and Family Connections programs, we saw significant success, including a high percentage of young people remaining at home and connected to family.

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Our Development Program, through tailored workshops, addressed key areas such as communication, emotional regulation, and high-conflict management, contributing to healthier workplace environments. The Better Connections initiative at the Alexander Maconochie Centre and our High Conflict Resolution Workshop for the ACT Magistrates Court further highlighted our commitment to innovative and inclusive development solutions. We successfully completed the We Can Training Program, empowering Canberrans with essential communication and negotiation skills to support their return to the workforce.



100% of Young People had improved connection to their family and 83% Young People experienced reduced occurrences of conflict at home.



Our Alternate Dispute Resolution services such as family dispute resolution, workplace mediation and general mediation made a substantial impact this year, assisting over 500 community members with a remarkable 92% resolution rate. By providing mediation and support across families, community, and workplace settings, CRS strengthened the ties and addressed a wide range of disputes.



We maintained a 92% overall resolution rate in our ADR Services. 93% ADR clients felt “heard, understood and respected”

The successful delivery of our services and their significant impact is a direct result of the vital support we receive. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our partners and supporters, a specific acknowledgment to Monarch Building Solutions Facilities Management (MBSFM), IKEA Canberra and Rotary Club of Canberra, whose commitment and collaboration have been instrumental in expanding our services and impact this year. A special thank you to our Board Chair, Mirjana Wilson and all Board Directors for their continued guidance and leadership, which has driven CRS’s success and innovation.

I also extend my deepest gratitude to the dedicated CRS staff whose passion, resilience, and commitment to service excellence have been the driving force behind every success this year. Their unwavering support and expertise have made a lasting impact on the lives of those we serve.

As we look ahead, CRS remains committed to providing accessible, effective support through innovative services and responsive programs. With renewed strategic direction and community collaboration, CRS is well-prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the coming year.



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

MIRJANA WILSON

As a Not-For-Profit (For Purpose) nationally accredited dispute resolution service we have enjoyed a very successful 2023-2024 year with supporting families, workplaces and the community to prevent, manage and resolve conflict.

With a highly committed Board and an exceptional CEO, the Conflict Resolution Service (CRS) has continued its pathway to once again being in a solid financial position, increased and consolidated programs of operations and developed and sustained a highly skilled staff team to deliver on the strategic and operational goals.

In the last 12 months we said goodbye to board directors, Louisa Osbourne and Samantha McDonald. On behalf of the whole Board, I would like to thank them both for their contributions to CRS governance activities. Louisa, who contributed in the often challenging area of being the Board's secretary, deserves a special mention. We welcomed new board director Jane Diedricks, with a leadership of legal, commercial and workplace relation/human resource background, bringing a much-valued skillset to our Board.

As CRS evolves and expands the programs that it delivers in the community the Board has specifically looked at what governance and strategic financial frameworks are relevant and necessary for a growing organisation. Financial reporting systems have also been enhanced and given the Board confidence that we can accurately assess our viability and sustainability.

It is appropriate for me to mention that much of what has been achieved this year would not have been possible if CRS was not so well led by our CEO Melissa Haley. A highly respected professional, both internally at CRS and externally amongst the many and varied stakeholders that the organisation engages with. On behalf of the Board, I extend our utmost thanks and congratulations to her.

The Board is very much looking forward to what the 2024-2025 year will bring as we continue to explore opportunities and work to meet the needs of our community.



MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER

YUSHI ZHANG

CRS has witnessed another remarkable year of financial growth and stability, in line with our mission to serve the community and address emerging needs. I am pleased to report that for the fiscal year 2023/24, CRS achieved a surplus of \$37,215, a steady increase from the \$13,374 recorded in the previous financial year. This performance highlights our commitment to financial stewardship, efficient resource management and strategic program delivery.

Total revenue for FY23/24 was \$3.23 million, an increase from \$2.81 million the previous year. This growth was primarily driven by two newly awarded grants, the Family Connections and the WeCan, which allowed us to expand our services and enhance program delivery.

We have continued our prudent cost management approach, ensuring support for these new programs without compromising operational efficiency. This balanced approach has contributed to our favourable surplus for the year. CRS's financial position remains robust. Total assets reached \$1.37 million as of June 30, 2024, up from \$1.19 million in the previous financial year, reflecting steady asset growth.

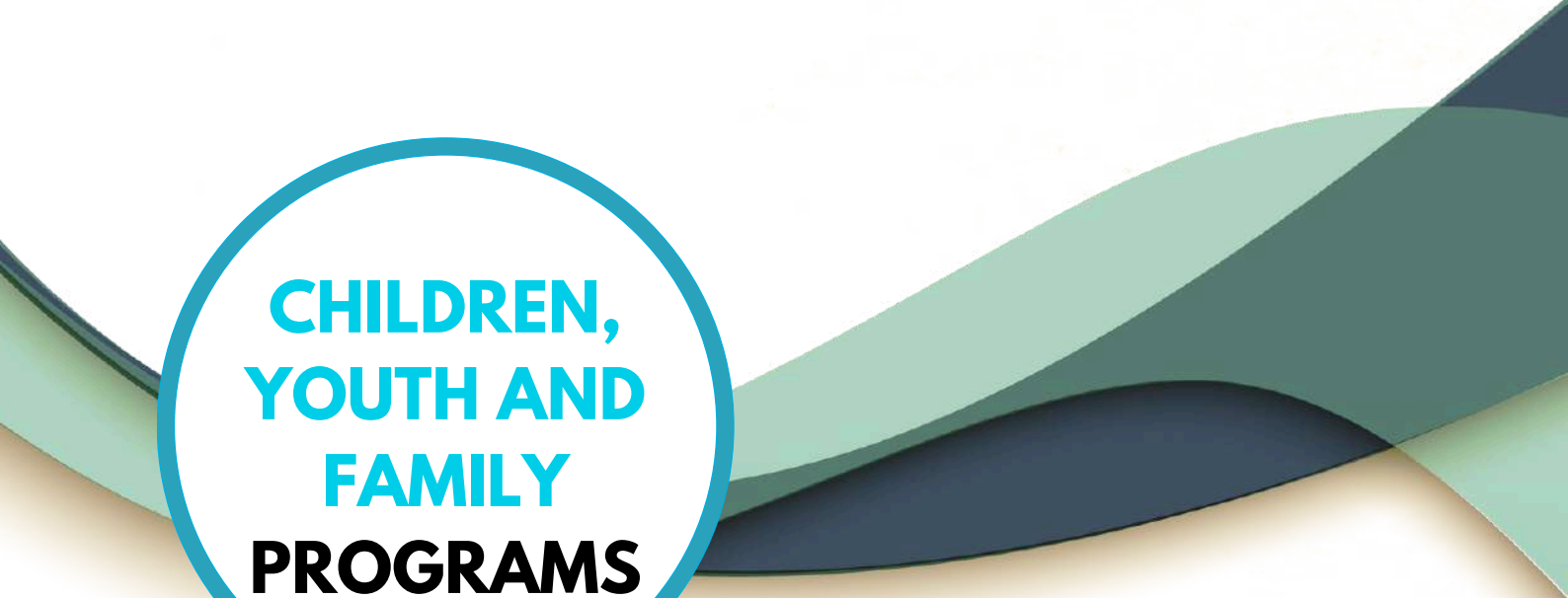


Total revenue for FY23/24 was \$3.23 million, an increase from \$2.81 million the previous year. CRS's financial position remains robust.



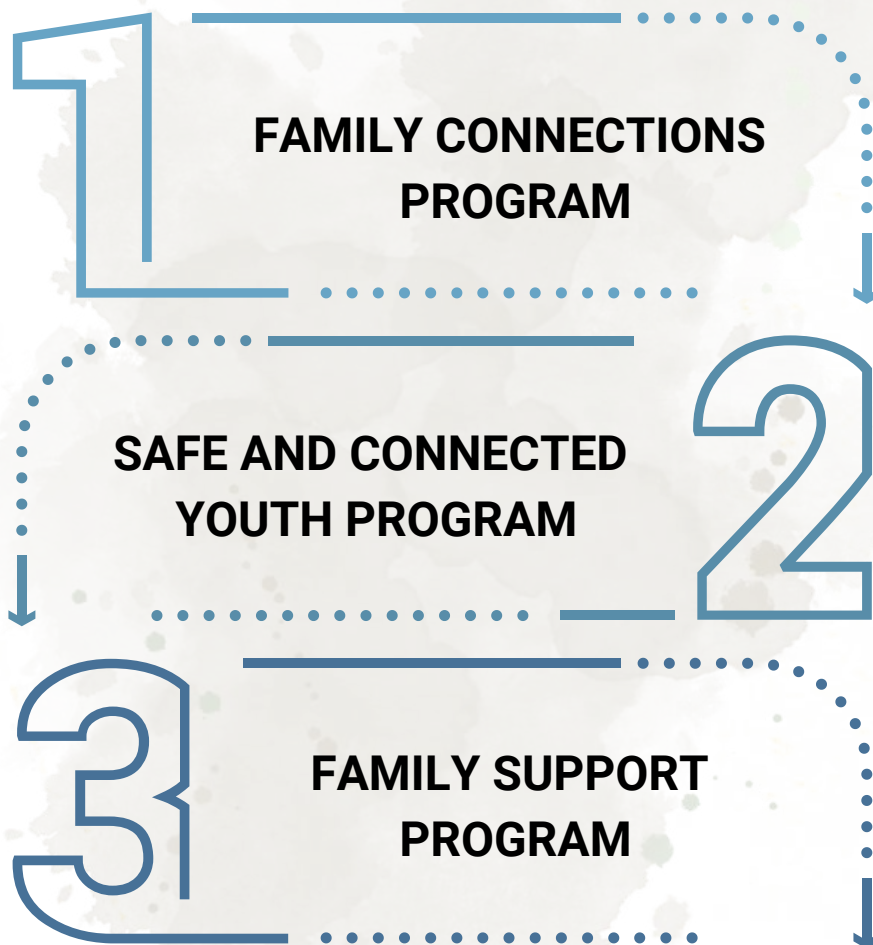
Additionally, our cash position remains strong, with a balance of \$754,896, up from \$468,616 in FY22/23. This healthy cash reserve underpins our ability to respond flexibly to community needs and maintain service continuity.

I extend my sincere gratitude to our CEO, dedicated staff, supportive partners and fellow board members for their unwavering commitment to CRS's mission and values. I am optimistic about CRS's financial future and look forward to our continued journey of growth, service, and impact within the community.



CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY PROGRAMS

Our Children, Youth, and Family Services division remains central to CRS's mission, supporting young people and their families through evidence-based, impactful programs.



FAMILY CONNECTIONS PROGRAM



Family
Connections



The Family Connections Program provides Young People and their families to address family conflict, enhance wellbeing and reduce the risk of youth homelessness through preservation and family reunification with a focus on supporting multi cultural families. The Program is delivered in partnership with the **Multicultural Hub (mHub)** to offer culturally safe support to young people aged 15-24 and their families.

Accessibility and **Inclusivity** are a cornerstone of the Family Connections Program which specialises in being culturally safe and responsive to the unique culture identities and values of each individual and family. The Program provides **Intensive Case Management Support** and either **Family Counselling** or **Family Coaching and Mediation** all aimed at fostering stronger family relationships and enhancing overall family well-being.

"Thank you for helping us reach a place of real communication and understanding – it means so much to us."

~ Parent

"For the first time, I understand why my culture is a big part of who I am – it gives me strength and helps me see myself more clearly."

~ Young Person
(Age - 16 yrs)

FAMILY CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

67%

of Young People reported a stronger connection to their culture



100%

of Young People had improved connection to their family

83%

Young People experienced reduced occurrences of conflict at home

"It was a relief & comfort as a parent to recognise that her challenges have meaning, and we were grateful for the support, guidance, and space to gain insight and understanding."

~ Parent

"We've seen genuine growth in the way we communicate, and Dad has been able to reconnect with our young person in a meaningful way."

~ Parent

“In the tapestry of human connections, conflicts are inevitable threads. Yet, it’s in the art of resolution that we weave a fabric of understanding, unity, and shared victories.”



CASE STUDY

Fostering Family Harmony Through Culturally Inclusive Support



Following a challenging family incident, Adam, Helen, and their son Cameran were referred to the Family Connections Program. Initially hesitant, Cameran agreed to engage after learning the program would focus on his needs and goals. The program's culturally safe and inclusive approach played a key role in fostering trust with the family, recognising Adam and Helen's parenting values were shaped by their cultural backgrounds. This understanding helped bridge perspectives, enhancing the family's sense of connection and mutual respect.

Cameran worked with his Therapeutic Case Manager on emotional regulation, safety planning, and conflict management strategies. His Therapeutic Case Manager also connected him to youth-friendly mental health services, providing ongoing support for his personal growth and mental health needs. These interventions empowered Cameran to take charge of his goals, including exploring apprenticeship options, while building stability in both his home and school environments.

Adam engaged in sessions on adolescent development and values exploration, helping him understand Cameran's behaviour in a broader context. These insights fostered empathy and encouraged calmer conversations. Helen focused on co-regulation techniques and boundary-setting, enabling her to navigate conflicts without escalating tensions. Through family mediation sessions, all members practiced respectful communication and conflict resolution, with each family member's voice respected and valued.

The program's tailored support has strengthened the Hodzic family's dynamics, with Adam and Helen feeling better equipped to handle challenges and Cameran reporting a renewed sense of being heard. As a result, family conflicts have decreased, and constructive communication has improved, setting a positive foundation for the family's ongoing journey together through the program.

Note: Names have been changed to protect individuals' privacy.

CASE STUDY

Strengthening Family Bonds Through Culturally Responsive Support



Ifeoma was 17 when she first engaged with the Family Connections Program after approaching staff following a psychoeducation presentation at a local college. She sought support to manage ongoing conflicts at home, particularly with her father, Adewale, and her mother, Nkem. Strained family dynamics, cultural tensions, and recent crises had intensified challenges at home, and Ifeoma often felt responsible for mediating family conflicts and communication. Ifeoma expressed a strong desire to strengthen her relationship with her father, though cultural expectations around her independence complicated family interactions.

The Family Connections Program provided culturally safe, inclusive support that respected the family's values and identity, fostering trust within their dynamic. Initially, Adewale and Nkem were hesitant to engage, but the Family Counsellor's culturally responsive approach helped create a collaborative environment.

Ifeoma's comprehensive case plan focused on her emotional well-being, addressing her AOD use, and strengthening her family relationships. Parenting coaching sessions with Adewale and Nkem highlighted effective communication strategies, culturally attuned conflict resolution, and an understanding of adolescent development.

These sessions provided psychoeducation to help them recognise how family dynamics affected Ifeoma's well-being, incorporating a trauma-informed and culturally sensitive approach that respected family identity while supporting resilience.

Recognising the importance of cultural identity and community connection, the Therapeutic Case Manager supported the family's participation in local cultural events. These activities strengthened their ties and service navigation within Canberra's multicultural community, enhancing their sense of belonging and shared values. This culturally supportive approach contributed to a broader network of social and emotional support for Ifeoma and her family.

Since returning home, Ifeoma and her parents have experienced a reduction in household tensions and improved communication. With the support of the Family Connections Program, Adewale and Nkem feel better equipped to manage family dynamics, respecting both their cultural values and Ifeoma's personal needs. Ifeoma, meanwhile, feels increasingly understood and supported, with each family member's voice valued. Their engagement in the program has enabled them to build a healthier family dynamic grounded in mutual respect and understanding.

Note: Names have been changed to protect individuals' privacy.

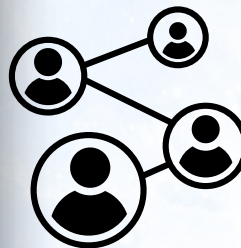
SAFE AND CONNECTED YOUTH PROGRAM (SACY)

SACY focuses on strengthening family relationships and improving family functioning to reduce youth homelessness. The program is specifically designed to address conflicts within families that could potentially lead to homelessness among young people aged 8 to 15 years, and young people who are already experiencing homelessness. SACY has demonstrated its critical role in fostering Family Reunification through Outreach Supports and engagement in its Therapeutic Accommodation, Ruby's House.

Many of the young people who are referred to the Safe and Connected Youth Program are in need of a circuit breaker from conflict at home in order to begin therapeutic interventions, or are transient in the community, often staying in unsafe places or are at risk of engaging in unsafe activities. Rubys House provides an alternative option for these young people to have a safe and supportive place to stay whilst working towards their family reunification goals.

"Thank you for sticking with us through the ups and downs, it didn't feel like anything was working until we started working with you".

~ Carer



100%
**young people
remained connected
to family**

"It's great to have someone who actually listens to me and doesn't just judge me when I get overwhelmed"

~ Young Person
(Age - 15 yrs)

SAFE AND CONNECTED YOUTH PROGRAM (SACY)

A unique aspect of this program is how it supports continuous family connection whilst a young person stays at Rubys, through key practices such as Family Dinners, movie nights with Siblings and Community Celebrations.

91%

young people were able to return or remain living with family

This program delivers intensive therapeutic support to families through trauma-informed interventions, mediation preparation sessions, communication and conflict coaching, family mediation, family counselling, and therapeutic case management. Therapeutic Case Managers, Mediators and Counsellors work with the whole family using tailored approaches to resolving family conflict and improving family functioning.

In the past year, the Safe and Connected Youth Program has continued to work with a large number of families to support their preservation and reunification, both through its Therapeutic Accommodation and Outreach Services.

"You've supported me to have some conversations with my grandparents that I never thought I could have. It helped me understand them and understand my identity and most importantly my mum. I think we've built more connection in the last few months than we've had since I was in primary school"

~ Young Person (Age - 15 yrs)

"I was really thinking that my daughter wouldn't engage but you must be doing something right, even though she won't come home at the moment, it's a relief to know she's working with you." ~ Carer

"Having a bit of space at Rubys and the support of all the staff has helped me to see situations differently. If I was still around mum all the time, I don't think we'd be able to talk about this stuff without a big fight."

~ Young Person (Age - 12 yrs)

"I appreciate the skill and care from the program. Conflict has significantly decreased since commencing engagement and I thank the team for their consistent support."

~ Carer

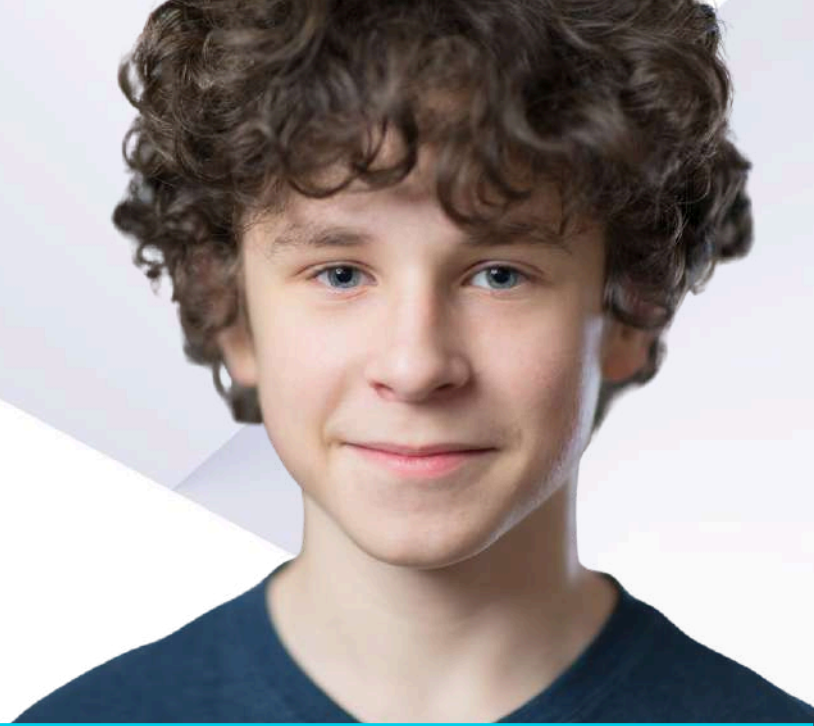


Family relationships can be challenging, but with the right support, healing is possible.





James's Story



James was 12 years old when his mother Heather self-referred her family to the Safe and Connected Youth Program due to escalating behavioural issues at home and in school. James had recently been diagnosed with ADHD and anxiety and Heather felt there wasn't much support for him at school.

Initially, James's difficulties manifested in intense verbal and physical outbursts, which had begun to impact his younger sister, Sammy. Heather, experiencing the strain of single parenting and her own traumatic past, was committed to changing this dynamic.

The family was quickly integrated into the program with a focus on creating a supportive and non-judgmental environment. James stayed at Ruby's House as a circuit breaker which allowed him to participate in tailored supports where he engaged in activities that combined life skills with therapeutic strategies, fostering both self-reliance and emotional growth. Concurrently, Heather attended counselling sessions aimed at enhancing her parenting skills and understanding of James's needs. After a few months James and Heather participated in Family Counselling to build their communication and strategies for conflict management at home.

A setback occurred when Heather experienced a significant health complication. At the wishes of the Family, the program staff maintained their support by adapting their approach to the family's changed circumstances, ensuring that their progress continued.

After Heather's recovery, the family re-engaged with the program more intensively. James resumed his stays at Ruby's House, where he not only continued his counselling but also participated in practical life skills sessions. Throughout the program, the Therapeutic Case Manager played a pivotal role in coordinating with James's school to integrate the strategies he learned into his school environment, enhancing his ability to manage his behaviour both in academic settings and at home.

As a result of their sustained engagement with the Safe and Connected Youth Program, James and Heather reported a significant reduction in conflicts. James's behaviour at school improved, and he was sent home less frequently, demonstrating enhanced ability to manage conflicts and emotions. James now lives back at home with Heather and they both continue to work with their Family Counsellor and Therapeutic Case Manager to further develop their conflict management skills, marking substantial progress towards a more stable and supportive family environment.

Note: Names have been changed to protect individuals' privacy.



Rosie's Story



Rosie was referred to the Safe and Connected Youth Program when she was 14 years old. Rosie had been navigating life through abandoned properties and couch surfing around Canberra when Child Protection Services referred her to the Program. Rosie had left home after a number of escalated incidents which made her siblings feel unsafe. Rosie's entry into the program marked a critical turning point in addressing her complex mental health presentations, which included self-harming behaviours and substance abuse amidst significant childhood trauma.

Upon joining the program, Rosie stayed at Ruby's House providing her with safe accommodation and a circuit breaker from the chaotic lifestyle she had been living. This setting enabled her to engage with therapeutic support tailored to her needs. The therapeutic framework included individual sessions focusing on trauma-informed care and emotional regulation, complemented by group activities that cultivated life and social skills. Rosie's mother Annie, who was highly stressed by the family dynamics, was integrated into the program to receive support that would allow her to feel confident having Rosie back home.

This included dedicated sessions on conflict resolution, setting effective boundaries, and managing her own stress and fatigue from the ongoing family dynamics. As Rosie's therapeutic engagement progressed, noticeable changes emerged. She began to replace her initial defiance and mistrust with goal-oriented discussions about her future, reflecting a newfound hope and commitment to personal growth. Regular school attendance resumed, and discussions about further education and employment began to form part of her regular planning with her Therapeutic Case Manager.

Rosie and Annie participated in Family Mediation Sessions, which were pivotal in repairing their relationship. Facilitated by a Family Mediator, these sessions provided a safe space for both to express their feelings and concerns openly. Through supported conversations, they worked on understanding each other's perspectives and emotional triggers, focusing on respectful communication and perspective-taking.

The collaborative efforts of the program's staff, along with the external support from community-based services and educational institutions, played a crucial role in supporting the family's journey towards reunification and recovery. Rosie's relationship with her mother Annie strengthened significantly, leading to a successful full-time return to her family home, where the severity and frequency of conflicts had significantly reduced. Both Rosie and Annie continued to engage in post-exit support, ensuring the sustainability of their progress and the ongoing strengthening of their relationship.

Note: Names have been changed to protect individuals' privacy.

FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Family Support Program (FSP) is Conflict Resolution Service's flagship initiative, dedicated to providing comprehensive support to families and young individuals facing youth homelessness due to family conflict.

For over 20 years, the program has been a cornerstone of our community engagement, operating with a robust, evidence-based approach that places the family unit at the core of its interventions. FSP offers a wide range of services, including individual intake sessions, communication coaching, informal facilitated conversations, and family mediation.

A critical component of the program is the provision of individual coaching sessions, which cater to the unique needs of each participant. For young individuals, this includes strategies for coping, expressing emotions, and developing conflict resolution and communication skills.

"As a parent it was more helpful than counselling, because I have a voice, and can learn what's actually going on for my daughter from her."

~ Mother of Young Person



100%

young people remained connected to family

"I am so appreciative of the opportunity to try to sort through things with mum."

~ Young Person (Age:19 yrs)

FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Meanwhile, parents receive guidance on parenting styles, adolescent development, and non-violent communication, ensuring a holistic approach to resolving family conflicts.

Over the past year, the Family Support Program has undertaken significant service improvements in response to emerging challenges and client feedback. Notably, in response to client feedback calling for clearer communication and earlier mediation, the program has adjusted its processes to offer family meetings and mediation sessions at an earlier stage, improving the timeliness and effectiveness of conflict resolution.

To further enhance accessibility, FSP introduced online coaching and case management sessions, overcoming barriers such as full-time work, social anxiety, and ill-health, and significantly increasing family engagement. The program has also prioritised earlier collaboration with referrers and other involved services to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive support system from the outset.

"The engagement from practitioner really helped me, especially with my PTSD diagnosis. Her approach to listing things that I needed to talk about, then grouping them to help me to prioritise what I wanted to discuss in the session was useful and helped organise me. One of the most useful things we talked about in sessions was getting me to ask myself what I can control and influence. She has a calm, friendly, non-judgemental approach. Very warm, human and genuine which I appreciated".

~ Mother of Young Person



90%
**young people
remained at home**

**"I appreciate the work and
patience you show to my mum
as she is not easy"**

~ Young Person (Age:16 yrs)

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION SERVICES

Conflict Resolution Service continues to provide Canberrans with high-level, professional mediation services for a range of matters including:

- **Family Dispute Resolution** – Property and Financial Settlements & Care Arrangements for children/Parenting Plans
- **Family Restorative Sessions** – when family relationships break down
- **Workplace Mediation**
- **Personal Protection Orders** referred by the ACT Magistrates Court
- **Community Disputes** – including Police referrals

100%

of court mediation feedback reported clients felt “heard, understood and respected”

91%

ADR clients reported positive overall outcomes

FDR
(Court)
Matter

“I just thought the process was awesome, the mediator I spoke to was very patient, very helpful and very easy to talk to openly with.”

~ ML

“The mediator was friendly and professional. She talked as through the process, and we felt at ease.”

~ BS

Community
mediation

“Having CRS in the room with some clear ground rules on behaviour and focus helped us get through that initial discussion.”

~ EW

Family
Restorative
Session

ACT MAGISTRATES COURT

Conflict Resolution Service works with the ACT Magistrates Court to provide mediation services to the Canberra community for matters involving **Personal Protection Orders (PPO) and Family Violence Orders (FVO)**. During the 2023-2024 period, CRS received 51 case referrals and supported 123 community members by offering an opportunity to discuss issues causing conflict through a facilitated mediation session.

Mediation allowed parties to talk about the things that had happened and provided an opportunity to explore and negotiate a way forward together instead of the outcome being decided in a final hearing. The resolution rate for **Court referred mediations** during this period was **86%**.

CRS are proud to continue its delivery of this funded program for people experiencing conflict in situations where the dispute has escalated to involve Court proceedings. Our mediation service provides private and confidential discussions to understand the issues of each matter so we can respond on a case-by-case basis. We strive to provide the best service and seek to continuously improve our delivery to ensure it meets the changing needs of our community.

“

During the 2023-2024 period, CRS received 51 case referrals and supported 123 community members by offering an opportunity to discuss issues causing conflict



**CASE
STUDY****Community Mediation****Client
Feedback****Party A**

"The mediator was amazing! She was kind, respectful and professional. She made me feel comfortable and secure in the agreements being made. She truly cares and wants to find an outcome for all parties. I was so happy with how she made a difficult situation so much easier by her mannerisms and wisdom. I cannot fault her judgement or her handling of my situation. Thank you so so much"

Party B

"The service was very good and our mediator highly professional, supportive and well-informed."

Lauren contacted CRS when communication with her neighbours, Gail and Tony started to deteriorate over a fence and boundary dispute. They both lived on a block which had been subdivided years prior. The fence in sections required replacement which commenced a disagreement over a property boundary.

Both parties had attempted to retrieve plans from ACT Planning, and engaged the services of a surveyor, but with discrepancies in the reports, neither party could agree or determine a true boundary line.

CRS facilitated a mediation session to address the neighbours concerns over past miscommunications over the boundary dispute which had escalated over the past year. Having a facilitated and structured conversation supported both parties to have a productive conversation with renewed understanding of their situations and miscommunications. Parties displayed goodwill and willingness to move forward and come to an amicable agreement.

Lauren, Gail and Tony agreed to install the fence on the boundary as indicated in the surveyor's report and negotiated the high, material and cost split of the fence. They also made agreements on how to communicate with each other if any future issues were to arise to ensure tension between them did not escalate again. Lauren, Gail and Tony thanked each other for their active participation in the process and looked forward to having a neighbourly relationship moving forward.

Note: Names have been changed to protect individuals' privacy.

**CASE
STUDY****Magistrates Court Mediation****Client
Feedback****Party A**

Party A (Applicant)
"It worked and solved our issue".

Party B

Party B (Respondent)
"I was thoroughly pleased by the outcome facilitated by the mediator. Their impeccable communication, coupled with their promptness and kindness, made the experience really easy. I commend the mediator for her warmth and efficiency throughout the process"

Daniel was attending a community event with his family, as he had done every year prior. He was enjoying the festivities until a fight broke out near the music stand resulting in some of the live music equipment being damaged. A verbal and physical altercation followed between Daniel and the two music operators Jay, and his brother-in-law Evan. Daniel accused Jay and Evan of physically attacking him even though he was not the one who damaged the equipment. Jay and Evan maintained there was no physical violence, but heavy verbal threats and yelling occurred between them. Daniel subsequently applied for a Personal Protection Order (PPO) against Jay and Evan. Jay returned a PPO on Daniel and the matter was referred to CRS for mediation.

Both parties had individual intake sessions with the mediator to discuss what had happened and their goals for mediation. The mediator identified the common ground between the parties as Daniel, Jay and Evan all expressed a desire to feel safe and move forward as they would continue to see each other at future community events. Daniel, Jay and Evan expressed the adverse impact the orders were having on their day-to-day lives, including the impact the order was having on their employment and the stress it was causing.

During the mediation, Daniel, Jay and Evan were able to have a facilitated conversation which gave them the opportunity to discuss the altercation and acknowledge the impact their behaviours had on each other. The acknowledgement allowed parties to understand each other's perspectives and highlighted the goals they had in common.

As a result of the mediation, Daniel chose to discontinue the PPOs against Jay and Evan. Jay decided to discontinue the order against Daniel and their final hearing was vacated. By reaching an amicable agreement in mediation, Daniel Jay and Evan avoided court proceedings and were able to remain feeling safe and connected to their community.

Note: Names have been changed to protect individuals' privacy.

CASE
STUDY

School Friendship Breakdown



Outcome

Emily and Sophie were referred to CRS by the ACT Magistrates Court following an Interim PPO Emily had taken against Sophie. Emily described having experienced ongoing bullying and harassment throughout the school year from Sophie which had resulted in her feeling unsafe. Emily made her application for a PPO as she claimed Sophie helped plan and film Emily being physically assaulted at school. Mediation was subsequently offered to each party, to provide an open and safe space for Emily and Sophie to discuss the relationship breakdown. Both parties voluntarily agreed to engage in the mediation process.

During initial discussions, it was identified that Emily and Sophie had been close friends since Primary School, however in High School shifting relational dynamics had resulted in a change in their friendship. Following this, Emily expressed that she felt as though a toxic environment had evolved in their friendship group. Emily communicated that she felt targeted, bullied and harassed at school and online by Sophie. When Emily tried to change friendship groups, conflict then escalated to an incident at school whereby Emily was physically assaulted by a group of peers.

CRS facilitated a mediation session, which provided Emily and Sophie with the opportunity to express their feelings and thoughts about their relationship and the incident. As the Mediator built on the facilitated discussion, both parties were able to communicate and clarify details of the incident at school in which Emily was physically assaulted. Sophie explained to Emily that she did not film the incident and was not directly involved in the planning of the physical assault. Sophie apologised for how the bullying had adversely impacted Emily's emotional wellbeing and for not getting a teacher involved when the incident occurred, which Emily accepted.

Emily and Sophie acknowledged that their long-term friendship would not be able to go back to the way it was but agreed that their existing relationship would be as 'classmates'. Emily and Sophie determined that they could remain at the same school and in the same classes for their continuing High School years.

Emily also chose to discontinue the Interim PPO against Sophie. Whilst this avoided the time and cost of proceeding to a final hearing at Court, Emily was able to make this decision because both parties were able to have a constructive, supported and open conversation together. They also agreed to provide a copy of their outcome statement of the mediation to the school so they could be supported in following through with agreements discussed.

Note: Names have been changed to protect individuals' privacy.



CRS Training Programs

CRS Training program provides a comprehensive range of training programs designed to equip professionals and organisations with essential conflict management skills. Understanding that unresolved conflicts can lead to decreased productivity, strained relationships, and a negative work environment, CRS offers specialised training streams tailored to address these challenges.

Our **Basic Conflict Resolution Skills Training** focuses on providing participants with the tools needed to effectively manage conflicts involving clients or customers, contributing to improved service satisfaction and employee well-being.

The advanced Conflict Resolution Skills Training stream is designed to enhance the conflict resolution and negotiation skills of individuals supporting more effective team dynamics and organisational cohesion.

CRS also offers customised training programs that can be adapted to meet the specific needs of different organisations. These programs aim to address targeted areas for improvement in conflict resolution, helping teams develop the skills necessary to manage and resolve conflicts constructively.

By providing training in areas such as communication, emotional regulation, and mediation, CRS supports the development of a more harmonious and productive workplace environment.

What do our clients say?

Mediation Training

"The training was intense and interesting. The practice and interaction part was something that set it apart from other training that I attended. I must say that the environment and the atmosphere were conducive to learning. Each participant felt part of the process."

"Fantastic facilitators who really knew the material and were able to adapt and deliver for the groups level of understanding of the material."

High Conflict Resolution Workshop

"The topics were easy to follow and relate to. Both presenters were concise and delivered the course in easy-to-understand language. Thank you for coming into AMC. We appreciate your time and I feel that many of the women have learned a lot & have been made aware of how to feel respected in a conversation for both sides".

Better Connections group at
Women's Correctional Centre, AMC



Work Education Communication & Negotiation Training Program

Adult Community Education JobTrainer Grants Program is a jointly funded initiative of the ACT and Australian Governments.

In 2023, CRS launched the Work Education Communication & Negotiation (WECAN) Program, an innovative online initiative designed to support Canberrans returning to the workforce. The program was developed in response to the increasing demand for job seekers to possess not only technical skills but also essential communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution abilities. As competition in the job market continues to grow, the program aimed to provide participants with the core competencies necessary for long-term employability and success in the workplace.

The WECAN Program offered a flexible, self-paced online learning environment where participants explored a range of vital skills, including communication, negotiation, collaboration, and conflict resolution. By completing the course, participants earned a certificate of completion, strengthening their job applications by demonstrating mastery of these key workplace competencies.



Boosted confidence
to obtain & maintain long-term employment opportunities for career success.



Cooperation and communication
methods to build and improve workplace relationships.



Conflict resolution skills to resolve workplace conflict and help prevent future problems.



Negotiation skills to maximise chance of closing deals and bargaining with clients.



Collaboration skills to work towards team solutions for success.

Thank You

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