



The Village News

A CAFS newsletter with news for grandparents, carers, relatives or friends caring for children.

Message from Pauline

Team Leader Kinship Care

Hello everyone and I wish you all a Happy Spring Time season. Isn't it nice to get outside with the children and enjoy the sunshine.

Margaret Cooper has joined the Kinship Care Team. Welcome Margaret to Kinship, she has settled in very well and brings with her a wealth of experience and expertise to our dedicated team to support you all.



We have been inundated once again with clothing donations from Ballarat Quilters and Darley CWA. These clothes are made available through the Kinship Team and also at the Kinship morning teas, in Ballarat and Bacchus Marsh. They are great quality clothes ranging in all shapes and sizes.

For those Kinship Carers who have children under 5 in their care there is "Our Generations Playgroup" located in Ballarat & Bacchus Marsh. The Ballarat group is on Tuesday mornings at 11am and Bacchus Marsh in on Mondays from 10am (flyers included). The City of Ballarat & Moorabool Shire Council has embraced this initiative particularly for grandparents and their grandchildren. It would be great to see a few of you there.

SAVE THIS DATE:

2011 Kinship Care Forum will be held on **Monday 28th November 2011**. The forum this year is focussed on **YOU**. The flyer is also attached with the newsletter. We are considering hiring a bus to take as many of you down to Melbourne - so please consider this opportunity. This is a great opportunity for government agencies to hear and learn about **YOUR** unique needs and issues. Please let us know if you are interested.

Thankyou once again one and all for the extraordinary work you do with the children and young people in your care.

Warm Regards

Pauline

CAFS— Kinship Care

Issue 4

Newsletter Date:
19th September,
2011

Inside this issue:

Message from Pauline Sulli-	1
Family Services	2
Community Legal Centre	3
"Bullying"	4
Supported Playgroup	10-11
Kinship Morning Tea	12
Useful websites	15

Family Services—Kinship Care

Did you know that there was a Family Service worker in the Kinship program?

What does this mean for you?

The role of the Family Service worker has been developed to provide support to people who have found themselves providing care to a child of a relative. This maybe a "formal" arrangement where the Department of Human Services - Child Protection have become involved or it maybe an "informal" arrangement that has been made between you and the child's carer/s.

The Family Services worker is able to offer an ear should you feel the need or desire to talk about what is happening for you. The Family Service worker is able to give practical suggestions about general issues you may be facing and offer resources which explain some of the things you or the child in your care will be experiencing. This could be in the form of fact sheets, books, discussions or listening to your concerns.

Children act in many and varied ways as a result of experiencing past trauma. There are various ways that they may show this and, working with a Family Services worker may help you to understand the behaviours and to respond in a helpful manner.

For example: **At any age children may experience sleep problems resulting in regular waking through the night.**

- It can be difficult to manage this as you are also experiencing the sleep disturbance due to waking with the child and may feel tired with your resistances lowered.
- You may then feel more inclined to react more harshly than you might ordinarily.
- The Family Services Worker would be able to assist you with strategies to help the child to relax prior to going to bed.
- These may include; Age appropriate ways to talk to the child about the situation that might be waking them up; You may be able to develop some strategies to help the child to wind down prior to bed time, like reading with them, getting them to take a bath, cuddling up on the couch and watching a TV program.

The worker may be able to help you to use the skills you already have when the situations make it hard to remember them.

The Family Services Worker is able to speak with services that are involved with the child/ren either with you or on your behalf such as kindergartens, primary and secondary schools and support you and your family in getting the best possible outcomes for the child/ren in your families care.

If you feel you would benefit from some support or assistance with the difficulties you are experiencing feel free to call and ask for a referral to the Family Services Worker in the Kinship program by contacting 5337 - 3333.



Central Highlands Community Legal Centre

Striving for Community Justice

Central Highlands Community Legal Centre

Central Highlands Community Legal Centre Inc is an independent community organisation that provides free and confidential legal advice, referral, casework and information workshops to people who live, work and study in the Central Highlands Region.

The Centre is a generalist service, which means we provide legal advice on a range of legal topics such as Family Law, Credit and Debt, Motor Vehicle Accidents, Neighbourhood Disputes, Fines, Consumer Complaints, Estate Matters, Guardianship and Police Matters. The Centre also provides a Duty Lawyer Service at Ballarat Magistrates' Court within the Family Violence Division.

Apart from providing legal advice on many legal issues the Centre's Community Lawyers are also available to draft Simple Wills and Powers of Attorney at no cost. A will is a legal document which sets out the wishes of a person for the distribution of his or her property upon their death. It is important that these wishes are your own personal wishes, and not made at the request or insistence of others. A Will provides peace of mind for client's and family members.

Contact Us

15 Dawson Street North, Ballarat

Ph: 5331 5999

Freecall: 1800 466 488

Fax: 5331 8239



IS your child being "Bullied?"

by Sue Anderson



Is Your Child Being Bullied?

Sue Anderson is a Ballarat based specialist children's coach who has empowered hundreds of children affected by bullying since 2006.

She currently coaches children, carers and teachers affected by bullying.

"Each week I get calls from distraught carers/parents. The most common statement I hear is *we don't know what to do to help our child*". Other common statements include:

- "Am I over reacting?"
- "I just want my child to be happy".
- "Is my child doing something to cause this"?
- "I want to protect my child - but am I being over protective?"
- "Is this normal? - Why does my child seem to attract bullies?"
- "I am so angry, frustrated....."
- "This has been going on for far too long" (sometimes years).

How would you know if your child is being bullied?

Many children experience bullying during their childhood years. While some children are able to deal with the bullying, others are greatly affected. Around thirty percent of children being bullied tell no-one. Would your child tell you? Would you know what to say, or how to react?

Possible signs your child is being bullied:

- Not wanting to go to school.
- Withdrawing - not wanting to socialize.
- Increased sickness.
- Emotional outbursts.

IS your child being “Bullied?” article cont:

Not wanting to go to school:

This is probably the most common symptom of bullying that I see. Children will start making lots of excuses to not go to school to avoid their bully. Or some children will wag a particular class because their bully is in it. While avoiding their bully for the short term may seem like a solution to some children, eventually the situation becomes too difficult for the child. Many children I coach want to go to school, they just don't want to come face to face with their bully.

Withdrawing:

Children who are being bullied will often spend lunch time and recess trying to hang around or near teachers, or avoid going into the school yard at all. To be seen alone at recess or lunch time can be difficult for some children, as this makes them more of a target. Having friends is vitally important, as bullies tend to pick on “loners”. Having good social skills (or even ordinary social skills) is vital to decreasing your child's likelihood of being bullied.

Increased Sickness:

Teenagers who are being bullied have described being on “*Full Alert*” at school. This means they are vigilant about where their bully is at all times, as well as super conscious of how they are seen by other students. As you can imagine, this creates a lot of tension in the body, and the resulting stress can have a negative impact on the health of the child. Many children who are being bullied come home from school exhausted, even if they were not bullied of that particular day.

Increased Emotional Outbursts at home:

For some children, keeping it together at school is important. As one student described to me “*I don't want my bully to see that he is getting to me*”. They don't want to show any emotions at school. But in the safety of the home, it's a different story. One student told me “*I bottle it all up at school and come home and pick a fight with my Mum so I can get it all out*”.

IS your child being "Bullied?"

Bullying - What can carers / Carers do?

If your child tells you they are being bullied you can be of great support to them. The first thing you can do is listen. I mean truly *listen*. Many students have told me that their carers / carers get angry, jump to conclusions, tell them what to do, go directly to the school, and try to "solve" it. Of course the carer's intentions are to protect their child, but often this knee jerk reaction can make things worse for the child who is being bullied.

What children have told me over the years is that in the first instance, they just want their carers / carers to listen to them, believe them, and just "be" with them. Just hold the space and understand them, without judging them, or telling them what to think or do.

As one teenage girl shares:

"When I told my Mum about the bullying she went straight to the school. She wanted to "fix" it. But she didn't ask me what I wanted, or what I thought would help. After that the bullying got a lot worse. I did want her to go to the school, but not straight away. I had to go to the principal and tell her what was going on, and I wasn't ready. I would have rather done that later, after I felt a bit stronger".

Cyber Bullying:

While there are many types of bullying, one of the more recent forms of bullying is "Cyber Bullying". Cyber bullying is when children (yes, even very young children) use technology such as mobile phones and the internet (Facebook, other social media) to bully each other. This is usually done through nasty, hurtful disrespectful comments being posted about the target by the bully.

As a carer, you have a responsibility to monitor your child's involvement in Cyber land. For example, if your child has a mobile phone, talk to them about limiting who knows their mobile number. If your child has a Facebook account, ensure you are monitoring what they are posting, and how much time they are spending interacting with other account holders. Do you know their password? There are many websites that give plenty of information for carers and children regarding cyber safety.

How Carers / Carers can help:

Sometimes carers I talk to feel very powerless in what they can do to help their bullied child. They may even doubt themselves and their carering skills. I've had some Mums blame themselves for the fact that their child is being bullied at school.

IS your child being “Bullied?”

Things Not to Say:

The following list are things that children have told me drives them crazy, and really do not help!

- “You just need to get some more self esteem /self confidence”.
- “Just ignore them and they will go away”.
- “Why don’t you just close your Facebook account?”
- “What are you doing to cause this?”
- “You just need to stand up for yourself....”
- “Toughen up princess.....”
- “That’s nothing. When I was at school.....”

Tips for Carers: Yes you can make a difference!

There are many ways in which carers can support their child if they are being affected by bullying. Here is a brief list:



Rapport, Rapport, Rapport.....

It might sound a little weird to think about building rapport with your own child, but it works. A simple start is to match their posture, voice and use their exact words. This is really useful if you want to *listen* to what they have to say about their bullying experience.

Listen, I mean *really* listen.....

Get yourself out of the way! To truly listen, try entering the world of your child. Leave your judgments at the front door and listen for *their* meanings, *their* understandings and *their* map of the world. You might be surprised by what you learn when you don't assume that their meanings are the same as yours.

IS your child being "Bullied?"

Use Questions rather than "tell".

A quick way to shut down a conversation with a child is to start telling them what they "should", "need to", "have to" or "must" do. For example, compare "You should just ignore her" and "What if you chose to ignore her?"

As a general rule, avoid the question "Why". Asking "why" can often take the conversation straight into the content (or the often very long story of he said, she said....."). Instead ask "What", "How" open ended questions.

Give your child permission to not know the answer. If you think your child is saying "I don't know" as a way of blocking the conversation, go back to rapport, rapport, rapport.

Empowering Language

If you can, notice the language you are using when you are talking about bullying. For example, instead of telling your child ".....(bully's name) *makes* you scared". Try "When(bully's name) says that, how do you *choose* to respond?" By doing this, you are letting your child know that they have the power to choose how they respond to the bully's behaviour, not that the bully has the power to *make* them feel something.

Your Map of the World:

For some carers, their own childhood experience of bullying has a strong impact on how they respond to their child being bullied. Recently a Mum said to me "I feel like I am being bullied all over again". She was talking about her little girl being bullied. Another Mum said "I don't want my child to go through what I went through. I left school at fifteen because of bullying". Be aware and notice if you are bringing your emotions, memories, meanings to your child's situation, and ask if this is resourceful. "Is this helping my child? Is this about me or my child?"

Physical Bullying

As a general guideline, I believe that any physical bullying should be reported to the school immediately. Physical bullying or threats to safety are not something I would "wait and see" if it can be sorted out between the students. Record the incidents, report the incidents and ask the school what immediate actions they are going to take to resolve this situation.

IS your child being “Bullied?”

What if my Child is a Bully?

Now for something SHOCKING.

I believe part of the solution to the bullying problem *is to empower the bullies so that they don't have to bully anymore*. Empower the bullies so that they get their sense of personal power from themselves; they don't have to try to intimidate others to feel powerful.

I have been fortunate enough to have coached a number of bullies. It's interesting that I usually end up coaching these students in the same way I coach their targets; self esteem, sense of personal powers, communication skills, beliefs and their identity. Social skills also seems to be commonly lacking in bullies. Some bullies simply do not know how to interact normally with their peers.

Some bullies get stuck with the label of being a bully, and can't shake it, no matter how hard they try. Other bullies I have coached consider their behaviour as “normal” and don't understand the impact their behaviour is having on others. With these students I do a lot of self awareness and “other awareness” or developing empathy. And of course some children are being bullied and bullying simultaneously.

My approach is that bullies need as much support, love and encouragement as the targets of the bullying. I believe behaviour is learnt, and can be changed by exploring the higher thinking patterns and beliefs that are holding the bullying behaviour in place.

For more information about coaching for bullies or bullied.....

Contact www.good2qr8.com.au or info@good2qr8.com.au or 0417 052 739.

Our Generations Playgroup



CITY OF
BALLARAT

A playgroup for grandcarers
and their grandchildren

**Held weekly, Each
Tuesday from
11am, at the
Eureka Family
Resource Centre,
507 Humphrey
St,
Ballarat**



For further information, contact Julie or Meghan, City of Ballarat,
Playgroup Coordinators on 5320 5682

**Playgroup
for Grandparents and Carers of young children
with full time care of children**

Starting Monday 1st August in Bacchus Marsh
and every Monday at 10.00 am during school terms.



Playgroup Offers

- **New friendships and support from other carers/grandparents**
- **Creative play activities for children**
- **Ideas to extend children's development at home**
- **Guest speakers, parenting tips and community information & events**

For More Information

Lisa Trott-Kelly
Supported Playgroup & Parents Groups Coordinator
Moorabool Shire Council 5366 7100



Kinship Care Morning Tea

Every month Kinship Care run a morning tea in Ballarat & Bacchus Marsh.

This is a chance for carers: Grandparents, Aunts, Uncles, friends (who care for children when their parents are unable too), to get together and have a cuppa and talk about what's happening for them

You can expect:

- A safe place to speak openly.
- What you say is kept confidential.
- To gain information on a number of topics including—Centrelink, Grandparents Victoria.
- To know what is available to you in your community and importantly to have

A GREAT CUPPA & MORNING TEA

Support Group	Ballarat Wednesdays: 10am – 12noon	Guest Speakers
Venue	601 Sherrard Street Black Hill opposite the kinder and entrance just near the pedestrian crossing.	
September	21st	Central Highlands Community Legal Centre
October	19th	Sue Anderson—Bullying
November	23rd	CASA—How to talk about sexual matters with children.
December	14 th	Pampering-Christmas Break up

Support Group	Bacchus Marsh Tuesdays: 10am- 12noon	Guest Speakers
Venue	Darley Neighbourhood House 33 Jonathon Drive Darley	
October	11 th	Relationships Australia—What is relationship counselling? Why is it important?
November	8 th	Anne McLeish—Director Grandparents Victoria
December	6 th	TBA

For more information contact the Information and Advice worker on:

03 5337 3333

PATHWAYS FOUNDATION PRESENTS



A FREE TALK ON Raising Teenagers

**AT BACCHUS MARSH SECONDARY COLLEGE
DRAMA HALL**

TUESDAY THE 11TH OF OCTOBER AT 7 -9pm

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

JOHN WELFORD 5341 7645

MICHELLE O'BRIEN—Reconnect CAFS—5367 9900

PATHWAYS FOUNDATION

A FREE TALK ON Raising Teenagers

Raising Teenagers School and Community talks: Information cont....

The Pathways Foundation is a registered harm prevention charity that is dedicated to assisting teenagers make a healthy, safe and timely transition from boy to young man and from girl to young woman. They have been running Rites of Passage programs since 1995 and from this experience they understand the needs of boys and girls as they grow towards adulthood. We share what we have learned with parents at our Raising Teenagers talks.

Obviously parents/carers play a huge role in either assisting their child's transition into young adulthood. They support parents/carers whilst they are on the bridge of adolescence with their young people by providing **Raising Teenagers Talks** and by raising the public awareness of the fundamental role that Rites of Passage play in helping teenagers grow up emotionally.

This talk is a stand alone program that provides practical and useful tools that parents can adopt into their parenting practices. Our **Raising Teenagers Talk** has been given in schools throughout Australia for the past 5 years. In fact, last year we gave this talk to over 2,500 parents.

The talk is most relevant for parents of Year 6 - 9 students however the information in the talk is relevant to the wider community.

For more information contact the Pathways National Office by phoning 1300 850 766 for more information or by emailing <mailto:admin@pathwaysfoundation.org.au>

Why the Village?

In 1996 Hilary Clinton made famous the ancient African Proverb "It takes a village to raise a child"

The proverb is from Igbo and Yoruba regions of Nigeria and the basic meaning is that raising a child is a communal effort. It is to be taken to mean that the responsibility lies not only with the carers, but also with the extended family and in some cases the community.

The Village was chosen to be the name of the Newsletter because Kinship Care reflects the notion of The Village. This being grandcarers, aunts, uncles, friends, kindergartens, schools, maternal health, local GP, sporting clubs, its whoever is involved in providing a nurturing, caring environment that supports a child to reach their full potential.

The aim of The Village is to provide information about what is available to you out in the community, carering ideas, information about government changes as well as useful contact phone numbers and website.

If you would like to contribute any articles please contact us in Kinship Care.

Cherie Salmon

Kinship Care

Information & Advice Worker

csalmon@cafs.org.au

(03) 5337 3333

CAFS—Kinship Care

Ballarat Office
Lubrook House
115 Lydiard Street North
Ballarat

Phone: 03 5337-3333

Fax: 03 5332-1724

E-mail: csalmon@cafs.org.au

Useful websites

www.annabelkarmel.com

(Mother, baby & child nutrition, including tips & recipes)

www.babycentre.com.au

Website aim at supporting carers and new babies as well as caring for toddlers

www.mothersite.com.au

Forum to discuss any carering topics

www.kidspot.com.au

Kidspot Australia is all about simplifying the journey that is carering. Covering topic such as carering, food & activities for kids.

www.mychild.gov.au

mychild.gov.au website is Australia's online child care portal. On this website you will find information on different types of child care and how to get assistance with the cost of child care.

www.childhood.org.au

Australian Childhood Foundation

www.cwav.asn.au

Centre for Excellence in Child & Family Welfare

www.raisingchildren.net.au

Carering resource from birth—teen

www.playgroup.org.au

To find your local playgroup, activity idea for children 0-6years

www.centrelink.gov.au

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Comprehensive online health information & advice or to find your local health provider

www.create.org.au

Free activities for children who are in out-of-home care.

CAFS (Child & Family Services Ballarat) is a community service organization providing support and service to children, young people, individuals and families from locations in Ballarat, Ararat, Daylesford and Bacchus Marsh. For more details on CAFS its history

