

## Next Step Child Under 12 Pre-Assessment Information Sheet

### What does the program involve?

The Next Step Child Under 12 Service provides evidence based psychological treatment to children under 12 years of age and their families, where the child's primary presenting problem is depression, one of the anxiety disorders (e.g. separation, social, general, phobias, PTSD, OCD etc), school refusal or grief and loss. The primary intervention provided is age-appropriate cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and intervention involves the parents/carers. CBT is a structured, active and collaborative evidence based talking therapy that focuses on how thoughts, beliefs and attitudes affect your feelings and behaviour.

The clinician will work with you and your child to help change any unhelpful thinking patterns and behaviours that are causing or maintaining the current difficulties. Treatment usually involves practical exercises and experiments worked on with the clinician and as homework between sessions. It is important that the child's parent/carer (person with parental responsibility) attends sessions with the child, as the caregiver is very important to the child's mental health and will need to be appropriately involved in treatment.

The initial session is always with the parent/carer alone without the child present. This enables the clinician to develop a thorough understanding of the current difficulties from your perspective before meeting the child. It is likely that some future sessions are just with the parents, some will be joint with parent and child, while others will be just with the child (depending on age).

At the first session the clinician will discuss your concerns and perspective on your child. Depending on age, the child is typically met at the second appointment. After initial assessment, the clinician will have been able to assess the mental health concerns for your child and determined if your child is best suited to individual or group treatment, or referred elsewhere if this program is not the right one for you and your child.

### What does the program provide?

The program provides regular, free, individual, family or group sessions with a trained mental health professional. You will typically work with the same clinicians, at the same location for the duration of your involvement with the program. The number of sessions available is dependent on need and can be up to 16 sessions. In order to gain the most benefit from this program, you will need to attend sessions (up to 50mins in length) regularly, i.e. weekly.

### How long will I be waiting?

Like many health services, the Next Step Child Under 12 service experiences high demand from time to time, which can result in waiting periods. Our Intake team will have advised you of the current approximate waiting time when booking your initial appointment.

### Where is the service offered?

The Next Step Child Under 12 service is delivered by CatholicCare at various locations across Canberra's north and south. We make every effort to meet your location requirements. CatholicCare is the service provider but the program is not affiliated with the Catholic Church nor does the program include any religious or spiritual elements, it is an evidence based psychological program.

### Attendance

Once an appointment has been booked, we will assume you are able to attend. If something comes up and the appointment no longer suits, please ensure you give us as much notice as possible to enable rescheduling. Please consider that frequent cancellations can disrupt your child's progress and gains in therapy and can lead to increased wait times for others. If your circumstances change and you no longer need to access the service, please let us know as soon as possible.

### Additional support?

Please continue to regularly see your GP for support while waiting to access the service.

Below are online information and support services you may find helpful:

- beyondblue Healthy Families <https://healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au>
- Head to Health - <https://headtohealth.gov.au/>

If you or your child are experiencing a crisis or are at immediate risk of self-harm or suicide, please contact the **ACT Mental Health Crisis Assessment Team (24 hrs) 1800 629 354 or dial 000.**

### Alternate Phone Contacts

Kids Help Line (24 hrs) 1800 55 1800

Suicide Call Back Service (24 hrs) 1300 659 467

Lifeline (24hrs) 13 11 14

Parentline (Mon – Fri 9am -5pm) free telephone counselling service - 02 6287 3833

Beyondblue (24 hrs) 1300 22 4636

### Next Step Contact

If you would like further information, please call 02 6287 8090 (Monday to Friday) 8:30am-5:00pm.