

# Responding to children at risk

Cassandra Tinning- CARHU Clinical Services Coordinator



## Talking about child abuse trauma...

For many, this topic can trigger strong emotions, especially when talking about vulnerable people, such as children, who have experienced trauma or for those who have experienced trauma in their lives.

Please take a few minutes to consider what strategies you can use if you feel yourself becoming heightened or distressed today. This could include leaving the room for a glass of water, calling a friend afterwards or discussing your concerns with your supervisor.

## Aims

- Identify responsibilities according to the *Children and Young People Act 2008*
- Know who to report to & the process for reporting
- Know about CARHU:- how to engage with or refer to CARHU

# ACT Legislation

## The *Children and Young People Act* 2008

..defines a child as a person who is under 12 yrs. old & a young person as 12 yrs. old or older but not yet 18 yrs. old.

Provides for:

- Voluntary Reporting
- Prenatal Reporting
- Mandatory Reporting

# Who is a voluntary reporter?

Voluntary reports are defined in section 354 of *the Act* and apply when a person "believes or suspects that a child or young person:

- is being abused or
- is being neglected; or
- is at risk of abuse or neglect".

The voluntary reporter reports their beliefs and suspicions to Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS).

# **Prenatal reporting- anticipated abuse and neglect**

**(section 362)**

If a person believes or suspects that a child who may be born as a result of a pregnancy, may be in need of care and protection, a prenatal report *may* be made to Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS).

**\*\*\*You are required to make a report if you suspect or believe that siblings of the unborn child are at risk of abuse or neglect.**

# Mandatory Reporting

(sec 356)

The *Act* recognises that there are a number of professional groups who have a unique opportunity to identify abuse and more readily than other people.

These professional groups are 'mandated' to **report their belief on reasonable grounds** that a child or young person has experienced or is experiencing:

- non-accidental physical injury; or
- sexual abuse.

# Mandatory Reporting cont'd...

(sec 356)

*How do you form a belief?*

***The reporter is not required  
to prove that abuse has occurred.***



# Your Protection

The making of a report is not a breach of *confidence, professional etiquette or ethics* or a *rule of professional conduct* and *no civil or criminal liability is incurred*.

## ***In addition***

Your identity is protected by legislation however there are 2 exceptions.

Offences under the *CYP Act 2008*

*Maximum penalty: 50 penalty units or imprisonment for 6 months or both*

# Information Sharing

Chapter 25 of *CYP Act 2008* provides the legal framework for the sharing of information

- *What do you need to know?*
  - Sec 862 requests are sent to GP's and other professionals
  - You are able to share safety and wellbeing information with CPS
- If CPS provides you with information in relation to a child or young person, you become an ***information holder***

# Reporting process

- Mandated reporters are **individually** responsible for reporting abuse/neglect
- DISCUSS your concerns with your manager
- Contact Child and Youth Protection Services Centralised Intake Services on **1300 556 728** at the first available opportunity
- Document and file all known information in a confidential file

## Conduct outside the ACT (Section 346)

It does not matter where the abuse occurred (or is likely to occur), the report needs to be made to Child and Youth Protection Services in the ACT.



If you consider that  
there is an  
immediate or  
imminent threat to  
the child or young  
person call the  
**POLICE on 000**

# Child At Risk Health Unit (CARHU)...What we do...



## What is CARHU?

- CARHU works with children, young people and their families, who have experienced child abuse and neglect.
- Multidisciplinary health service employing Doctors, Paediatricians, Nurses, Social Workers , Psychologists and an administrative team
- **NOT a statutory program**



## Who Do We See?

- Children from birth to 18 years of age who have experienced abuse (physical, sexual, emotional and domestic violence) and/or neglect.
- Our clients can be:
  - From all socio-economic, cultural and ethnic groups
  - At home, in foster/ residential care or kinship care
- We work closely with the families and carers of these children.



## What are our services?

CARHU has three service pathways:

- Medical assessments, including forensic
- Out of Home Care Clinic and Health and Wellbeing Assessments
- Counselling – Intake service, concerns interviews and therapeutic intervention for children, young people and their families



## How to access CARHU services

- Anyone can call our intake number
  - 6244 2712
- The CARHU Intake service is a triage and consultation service. The goal is to assess calls to establish 'where to next' for the client or professional.
- Referrals for medical assessments accepted from:
  - Child and Youth Protection Services
  - Police



# The CARHU Therapy Team carries out the

- Intake Service
- Concerns Interviews
- Counselling Programs



## Key messages

- CARHU is a Health Service not a statutory body
- Remember your roles & responsibilities according to legislation
- Remember *you don't have to prove abuse* to report
- Look after yourself

Child and Youth Protection  
Services Centralised Intake  
Services **1300 556 728**

CARHU intake number  
**6244 2712**