



NSW Parenting Program for Mental Health

Fourteen per cent of children and adolescents aged 4-17 years have mental health problems and these problems are found in all age and gender groups*. Approximately 10 to 15 per cent of preschool aged children have mild to moderate behavioural problems, with similar rates (10 to 15 per cent) of children experiencing moderate to severe problems**. Problems that develop in early childhood tend to persist, with 31 per cent of children with aggressive tendencies at age 5 still being classified as aggressive at age 14***. Mental health problems are expensive, with children experiencing conduct problems or disorders costing 3.5 - 10 times as much as a child with no problems****.

Parenting programs promoting attachment and a warm, positive relationship between parents and children, combined with skills training in consistent behaviour management techniques, have been found to have a role in preventing the development of mental health problems and disorders****. A population based approach to parenting interventions which makes parenting programs available across the community can be effective in reducing the overall incidence of problems*****.

The NSW Parenting Program for Mental Health provides statewide coordination to assist Area Health Services to implement and evaluate evidence based parenting programs. This includes the provision of accredited training with a current focus on the *Triple P* (Positive Parenting Program) developed by the University of Queensland. Between September 2000 and November 2002, almost 1,200 workers from NSW Health and other agencies were trained in the *Triple P* program by the NSW Parenting Program for Mental Health.

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In 2001, 1877 parents/caregivers accessed Triple P groups across NSW; 649 in the period January – June, this number increasing to 1228 for the period July – December. Many other parents received one-to-one Primary Care Triple consultations.

In August 2002 a “Train-the Trainer” in the TIPS in Parenting package was conducted. This training will allow participants to train workers to deliver this package at a local level to increase access to the training for workers across NSW. TIPS in Parenting is a reflective,

discussion based group program for parents, which aims to increase their confidence in the parenting role.

The NSW Parenting Program for Mental Health has also prepared the (Draft) NSW Parenting Partnerships – A framework for mental health service involvement in promotion, prevention and early intervention through parenting initiatives. This document provides a framework for mental health involvement in parenting initiatives under the structure provided by Families First. This framework was circulated for comment during February and March 2002, and the comments received have been incorporated into the document.

For more information, contact Angela White, Coordinator, NSW Parenting Program for Mental Health, tel: (02) 9840 3062

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***** Sanders M, (1999). Triple P – Positive Parenting Program: Towards an Empirically Validated Multilevel Parenting and Family Support Strategy for the Prevention of Behaviour and Emotional Problems in Children. Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review, 2(2), 71-90

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