



COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

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Permanent
Care and
Adoptive
Families



EVENTS

Click & Connect
Wed 22/2/23

Share & Connect
Thurs 2/3/23

Flexi-Funding

ADDITIONAL COSTS OF CARE

Better Futures

INDEPENDENCE, EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT

Helpine

REFERRALS, ADVOCACY

CAP

CARER ASSISTANCE



Youtube - Independence and Interdependence in Relationship Based Care



Jenna Bollinger is a trauma informed psychologist who has worked with young people who have experienced early childhood trauma.

Jenna recently shared some insights in an article with Philip Mendes from Monash Lens on how to create smoother transitions when young people leave care and the importance of offering extended support beyond 18 or 21.

Jenna reminds us that engagement and connection and love relationships need to continue for life in a meaningful way. That may involve going out of the way to pick your "adult" child up for a family dinner, ensuring they continue to feel truly connected after leaving care.

Jenna reminds us that trauma impacts the capacity to learn and that can mean learning to be independent and having interdependence may take longer, which in turn delays readiness for things like university, so advocating for entitlements and resources is equally important.

Listen to the recording or read the transcript [here](#).

"Delivering trauma informed services that empower"

News - Priorities in AIFS Research Studies

The Australian Institute of Family Studies conducted a review of supports for foster, kinship and permanent carers. Some of the key facts may be of interest:

- carers are likely to be female and in their early 50s, not in paid work and with no post secondary education, with kinship carers tending to be older, on lower incomes and in poorer health than foster carers
- entry into permanent care was motivated by starting a family or by altruistic ideas to give back, which then moves to reducing government intervention and increasing permanency of the bond
- kinship carers often receive less support than foster carers despite having fewer resources, with lack of knowledge and lack of time to attend training or appointments commonly identified
- key actions include developing national guidance or standards, review carer payments for adequacy, consistency and accessibility. See the report [here](#)
- the DFFH Care Support Help Desk which arose out of the 2022-23 budget is tailored to support kinship carers with child support involvement and can help track vital documents or assist with queries about the care allowance for children in care. Find out more [here](#) about the DFFH Care Support Help Desk

News - Three Step Parenting

Ever heard of the three step approach to parenting named ACT?

Acknowledge, Connect, Teach. Its an easy three step process to remember. Imagine your child is struggling to get their shoes tied for school. How might you Acknowledge, Connect and Teach?

Acknowledge: You might acknowledge by saying "you look like you are a bit frustrated with tying your laces quickly in the mornings".

Connect: Maybe you say something like "I'm not at my best in the mornings either" as you gently sit down beside them perhaps rubbing their back or placing a reassuring hand on their shoulder.

Teach: Look for something they can do and focus on a positive or a strength. For example, "I noticed that you did the first part to the bow really easily - over time the second part will get easier too. Why don't you make the first part of the bow and I will do the second part together with you?"

Find out more [here](#) about ACT parenting..



"Improving the lived experience of young people"

Events - Click & Connect



TOPIC: TEACHER INTERVIEWS AND SHARING THE CHILD'S STORY

DATE: Wednesday 22 February 12:00 midday until 1:00pm with hosts Liz & Sonia

TOPIC: Teacher interviews and knowing what to share about your child can be challenging. So how do you maintain a sense of belonging and share what is necessary to best support your child? With the collective wisdom in the room lets support each other and reflect on what we can learn!

HOMEWORK: If you like to read, you may want to look at our powerpoint presentation on this topic from 2021. See the link on Click and Connect to past meeting topics and find the topic "Sharing the Childs Story". Pages 5 and 6 have some good advice and there are links to resources and a draft letter too. See [here](#)

REGISTER: [here](#) via Zoom Link

FORMAT: Click and Connect provides a supportive social space that allows natural conversations to flow to ensure you are honoured as experts of your families and lives, while having the expertise of a PCA Adviser on hand for additional professional support. Meetings begin with a brief overview of the topic by a PCA Families Adviser before opening up to the group to share experiences, thoughts and ideas. You are welcome to attend as often as you like, whether that's just once or regularly. Pre-registration is required via our Zoom link.

News - Relaxation Techniques

The Black Dog Institute offers us other ideas for relaxation techniques, from imagining twisted ropes untwisting to cold wind becoming warm and soft. Find your preferred technique! Read more [here](#).



Quick relaxation techniques

Science.
Compassion.
Action.

Different relaxation techniques appeal to different people. Please try out each technique and rate it out of 10, then choose the one(s) that suit you best.

Whole body tension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tense everything in your whole body, stay with that tension. Hold it for up to 10 seconds. Be sure to stop if you experience any pain. Slowly release the tension and very gradually feel it leave your body. Repeat three times. 	Score out of 10
Imagine air as a cloud <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open your imagination and focus on your breathing. As your breathing becomes calm and regular, imagine that the air comes to you as a cloud. It fills you and goes out. You may imagine the cloud to be a particular colour. 	Score out of 10
Pick a spot <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With your head level and body relaxed, pick a spot to focus on (eyes open point). When ready, count five breaths backward. With each breath allow your eyes to close gradually. Concentrate on each breath. When you get to one, your eyes will be closed. Focus on the feelings of relaxation. 	Score out of 10
Counting ten breaths back <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow yourself to feel passive and indifferent, counting each breath slowly from 10 to one. With each count, allow yourself to feel heavier and more relaxed. With each exhale, allow the tension to leave your body. 	Score out of 10
Transformations: pick one that works or make up your own <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you think of images like... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tightly twisted ropes Feel of cold, harsh wind Hard, cold wax Tense, red muscles Imagine... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The twisted ropes untwisting The cold wind becoming warm and soft The wax softens and melts The red muscles soften or lighten to pink 	Score out of 10
Affirmations: pick one that works or make up your own <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you think of images like... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let the tension flow away... I am calm and relaxed and ready for anything... The discomfort will pass, let it go... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relax the jaw, lower the shoulders... 	Score out of 10

Source: black dog institute

Carer Assistance Program

The CAP (Carer Assistance Program) offers therapeutic support by an experienced counsellor, aimed at supporting and improving the mental health and wellbeing of parents and carers (including adoption). A range of issues can impact physical and psychological health and can be overwhelming.

This service offers a self referral mechanism for support. To access the counselling service, simply fill out the form available [here](#).

Note: Counsellor Nic will be on leave in March so appointments may be made with Tonya at CAP if urgent . Appointments with Nic will be offered again from 21 March.



Better Futures and Home Stretch

The Victorian Government has provided funding to support young people on a permanent care order who turn 15 years and 9 months to get the support they need as they get older. Better Futures also offers Home Stretch, which supports young people to remain living with you after 18 or to move to other housing, like private rental. This support is available until 21 years of age via payment of an allowance. The purpose of Better Futures is to help your young person transition to independence. What that looks like will differ for each young person. We know that some of young peoples past experiences may make them reluctant to engage with the Better Futures providers. We encourage you to talk through with them the benefits of at least engaging to find out what the program is and what it might offer them, so they can make an informed decision. To access these programs, or find out more, either you or your young person can contact PCA Families on 03 9020 1833 (option 3). PCA Families assesses eligibility for the program and connect the young people with a Better Futures provider.

DFFH Flexible Funding

If your child or young person is on a Permanent Care Order or you receive the DFFH Care Allowance and they have a Family Court Order or Adoption Order, they are entitled to DFFH Flexible Funding to meet the costs of goods and services they need not covered by the care allowance, or another funding source (eg Medicare, NDIS). Flexible funds can be used for therapeutic, educational or medical services, build skills interest or attachments, support birth family contact and cultural identity, respite, medication, vehicle modifications. For more details on what the funds can be used for see [here](#). Claims should be more than \$100 per invoice and generally paid by PCA Families directly to the supplier. To ensure funds are distributed fairly and equitably and are appropriate and safe for your child, we ask for supporting documentation that services are trauma informed and that both goods and services are recommended by a professional who knows your child or young person.

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