

Media release
8 June 2010

Understanding the behaviours of traumatised children in care

Working with traumatised and abused children can be challenging, even for highly skilled workers, carers, teachers and therapists.

A free seminar being held in Gippsland tomorrow (9 June 2010), will provide local carers with insights into recognising maladaptive social behaviours in the children in their care, along with practical skills to address them.

Melbourne-based consultant psychologist and psychotherapist Gregory Nicolau will present the seminar.

Mr Nicolau said there was a science involved in caring and responding to children who are dealing with physical and emotional stress.

He said behaviours that can appear difficult or angry are often the tell-tale signs of abuse or stress, even if the child or young person is not able to talk about how they are feeling.

"There are approaches that work with these kids but success is dependent upon adults understanding the real reasons behind their behaviour and tailoring their interventions accordingly," he said.

"The practice of successful care requires more than love or good intent. There is a science involved."

The Centre's Foster Care policy and project leader Josh Fergeus said meeting the learning needs of foster carers and providing them with strategies to cope with difficult or angry young people was as important as addressing the problems the young people were dealing with.

"Our carers need to take care of themselves and their own emotional wellbeing if they want to continue being strong, compassionate, healthy carers, having strategies to work with difficult behaviours can help them with that," he said.

"Caring for children with challenging behaviours can be extremely difficult. Not knowing where a child has come from and what they've experienced makes it very hard to help them respond to the world around them in a more positive way. These



sorts of opportunities help carers gain insight into the reasons for these behaviours, which in turn helps them to help these kids.”

The *Mad, Bad or Sad? The Practice of Care* seminar is hosted by the Foster Care Association of Victoria, along with Quantum Support Services, Anglicare, Berry St, Salvation Army, Kilmany UnitingCare, Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative and Prime Focus Consulting, with support from the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare.

The seminar will be held from 9.30am to 4.30pm the Australian Italian Club, 499-501 Princes Drive, Morwell, on Wednesday 9 June 2010.

Interviews and photo opportunities can be organised with Gregory Nicolau, local foster carers and foster care recruitment and placement workers.

For media enquiries or to arrange an interview:

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