


Talking with young people

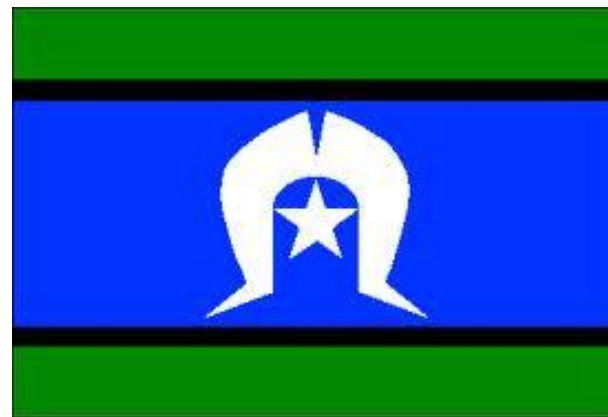
For out-of-home care (OOHC) providers
in the context of COVID-19

Module Four: Talking with young people
about family & community, trauma,
suicidality and hope



The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live, and recognises their continuing connection to land, water and community.

The Centre pays our respects to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander elders: past, present and emerging. We acknowledge sovereignty of this land was never ceded.



Housekeeping

- Oliver Tsorbaris from the Centre who is moderating this session
- Please contribute to the session by asking questions through chat or Q & A
- There are four polls during the session where you will be asked to share your responses
- The information you receive today should be used as a guide only

Overview

The following presentation contains the last of four modules. Each module provides guidance and suggestions for carers of children and young people in OOHC (between the ages of 10 – 18 years) during a crisis.

References are provided at the end of this presentation.

The modules

Module One: How young people may be impacted by COVID-19.

Module Two: Intersectionality and additional considerations in working with young people.

Module Three: Responding to behaviours of concern.

Module Four: Talking with young people about family and community, trauma, suicidality and hope.

Module Four

Talking with young people about family and community, trauma, suicidality and hope



Learning outcomes

At the end of Module Four, participants will understand:

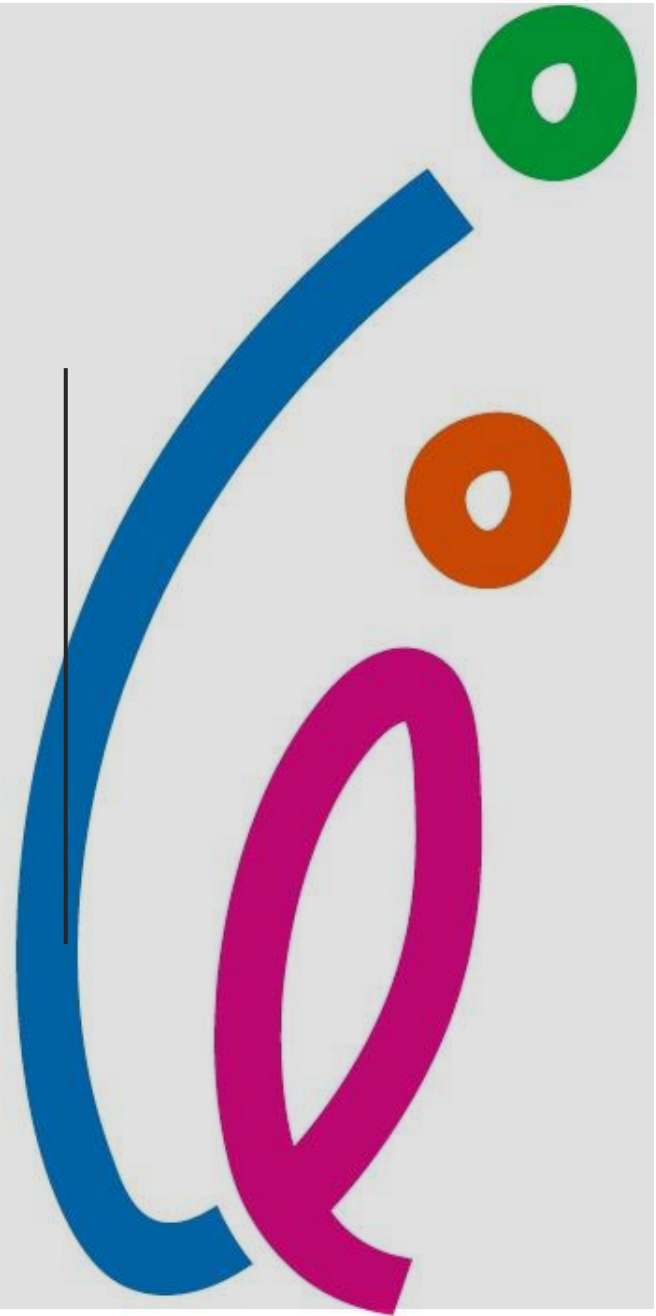
- What specific concerns young people may have about family, friends or community members.
- How the experiences of poor attachment and/or trauma will impact on young people.
- How young people may be at higher risk of self-harm and/or suicide.
- How to respond if a young person self-harms or is suicidal.

Discussion

- How many carers have dealt with young people's concerns about 'family'?

Poll 1

**What are the most
difficult questions in
relation to 'family'
you have had to
deal with?**



Talking to young people about 'family'

Young people may have concerns about family. These may include:

- Can I still have contact with my family?
- What happens if a family member gets infected?
- Could my family member infect me? Could I infect them?
- Will my family member lose their job? How might that affect me?
- How will I know if my family members are okay?
- Could my family member die?
- What happens if they need to go to hospital?

Discussion

- Which of the young people I support might be more vulnerable because of their family situation?
- Which of the young people I work with might be most worried about the impact on self and/or family? How can I decrease this worry?
- What resources can I use to support young people to maintain family and community connection in these times of isolation?

Common questions and helpful responses

What will happen if (family or community member) gets the virus?

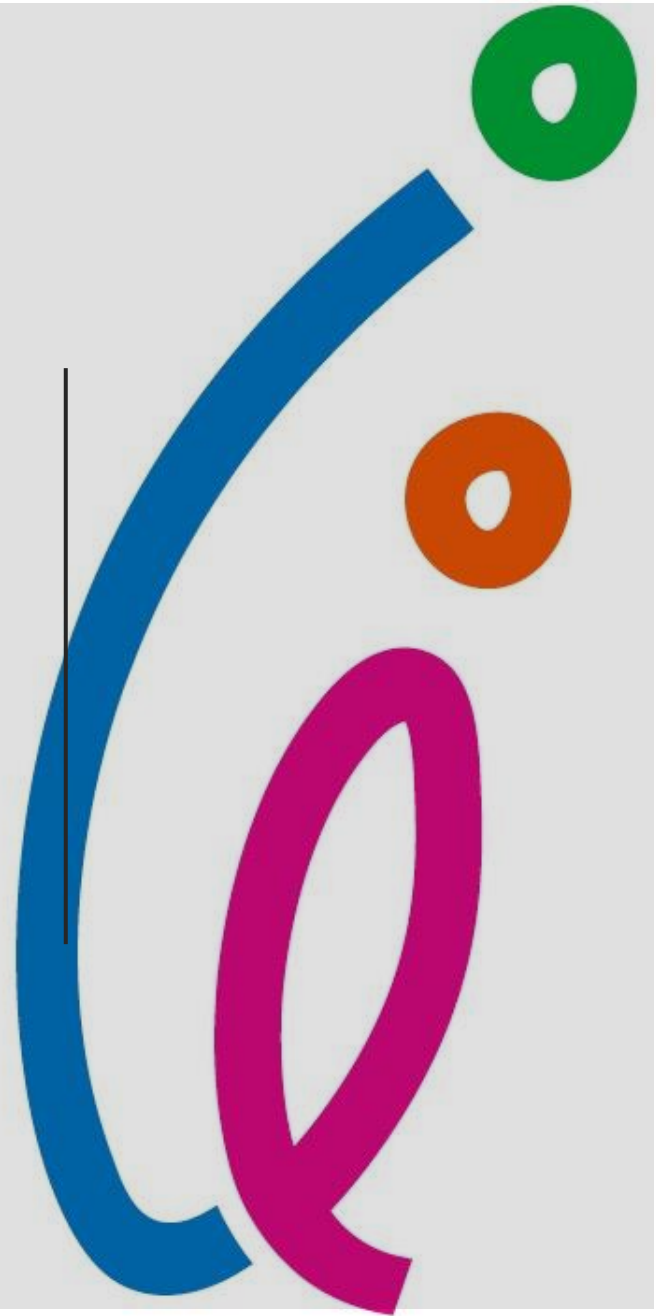
- You sound worried about X? That's pretty normal when people are getting sick. If that happens they will need to self isolate. That means staying at home and not having contact with anyone for 14 days. That might be really hard for you and them. If that happens we can look at how you can continue to communicate. Lots of people use social media to do that. That way you can still talk to them. We'll make sure we keep you updated about their situation and recovery.
- In some situations people need to go to hospital to get the right care. If that happens we will let you know and we will work out with you the best way to keep you up to date. It's important to know that most people recover and hardly anyone has died in Australia.

Common questions and helpful responses

Why can't I play sport, go on outings, see my family ?

- We know the virus is really infectious and can be spread through coughing and sneezing and contact with other people. The virus can live on surfaces like table tops or clothes for many days. That's why the government has put regulations in place to stop people socialising, except online.
- It must be really hard not to be able to do XXX. We can think about what other things you can do while the new regulations are in place.
- I know it's important to you that you have visits/access with XXX. It's hard that this has to stop for awhile. Let's talk about how you can communicate with them in other ways.

Poll 2
**Which young
people may be
more vulnerable to
negative impacts
as a result of the
virus?**



Attachment and trauma

Many young people in care will have attachment issues and have experienced trauma.

In the context of COVID – 19 this may mean young people are more prone to:

- Anxiety & depression - including rumination and obsession
- Catastrophising – dwelling on the negative impacts
- Hiding or ‘acting out’ their feelings
- Expressing feelings and emotions through unsafe behaviours and behaviours of concern

The role of carers

The most important relationship a young person will have is with their carer.

Their carer will provide support, stability, comfort and security in these difficult times.

Carers need to balance their protective, nurturing role with explaining and taking actions to ensure young people, and community are safe.

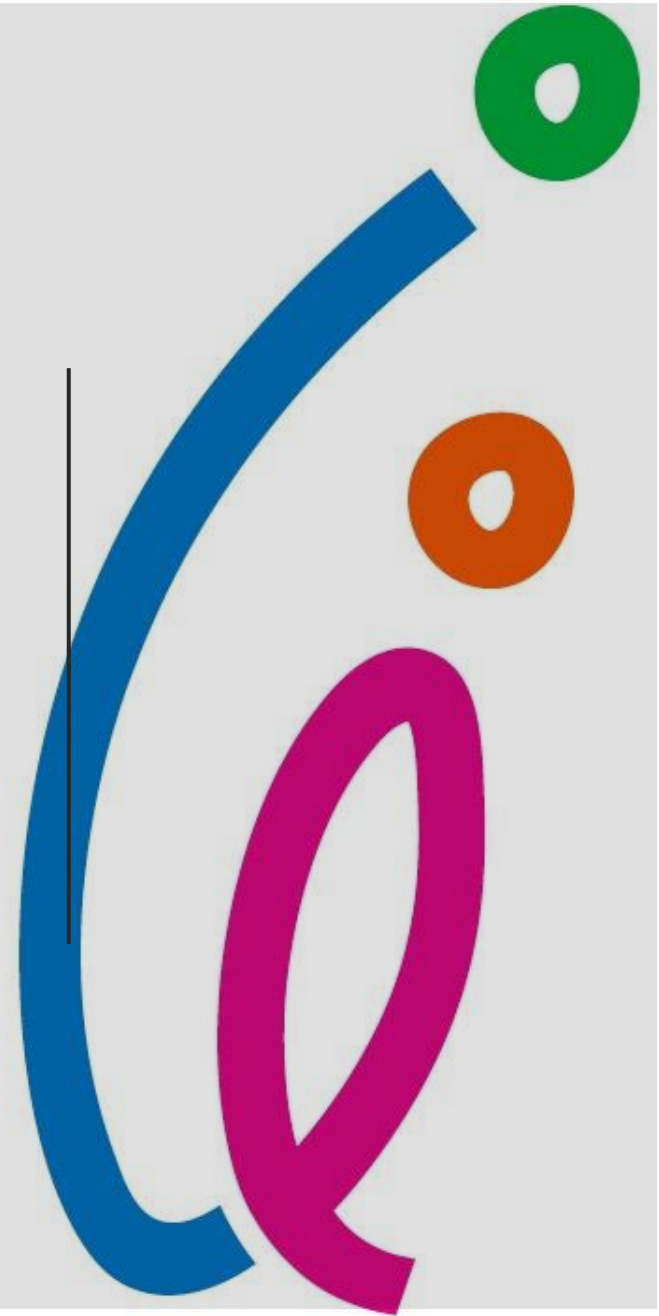
Attachment and trauma

Remember the principles of trauma informed practice and apply these to talking about the virus:

- ‘What’s happened to you’, not ‘what’s wrong with you?’
- Non- judgmental
- Curious
- Respectful
- Non-blaming
- Accounts for relational disruptions eg not being able to see a partner or ‘family’ or peers

Poll 3

**Who has been
concerned about
increased risk of
self-harm in young
people**

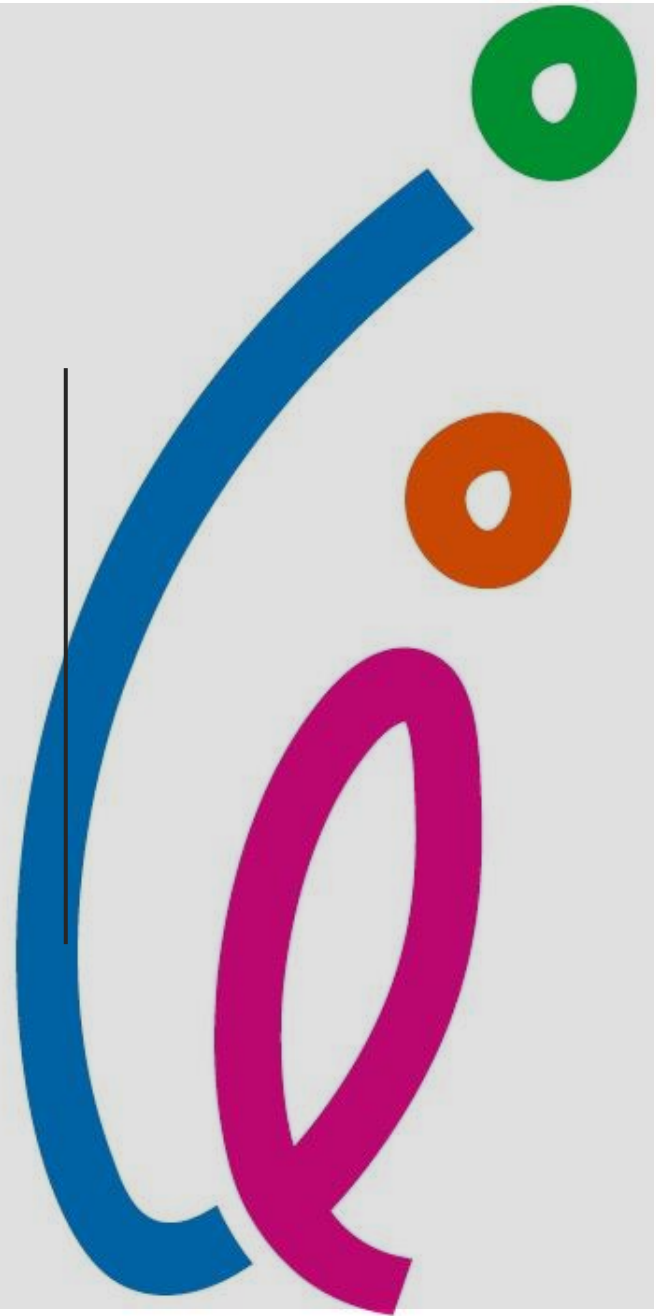


Self-harm

- Young people who self-harm may do so to relieve stress and overwhelming feelings.
- It is important to monitor the mental health of young people closely.
- Talk to young people about their feelings in relation to the virus and how to manage these feelings in a safe way.
- Give young people opportunities to talk, individually and collectively.
- Give young people opportunities to process difficult emotions in a safe way.

Poll 4

**Who has been
concerned about
increased risk of
suicidality in young
people?**



Suicidality

- Young people who have experienced trauma can be at greater risk of suicide, particularly with additional stresses.
- Increase in stress, anxiety and depression can lead to suicidal thoughts and actions.
- Existing protocols and practices to reduce the risk of self-harm and suicidality should be followed.

Discussion

- Which young people may be more vulnerable to suicidal ideation? How can I best assess this? How can I mitigate this?

Suicidality

- You may need to ask a young person about the degree of their feeling including 'Does the way you are feeling make you want to hurt or harm yourself?'
- Your agency will have guidance on doing a suicide risk assessment and how to respond. If you are concerned about a young person speak to your supervisor as soon as possible.

Hopefulness and resilience

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azftoaZLLeo>
- Emphasising hopefulness is highly important.
- You can point out the positive messages and innovative projects going on across the world and in Victoria. These may include choirs, performances, arts projects and social messaging.
- You can use intersectionality to celebrate difference and in turn resilience
- Young people may feel more empowered if they can be involved in activities that help others, including family and community. Be creative!

Resilience

Consider what you can do to help build resilience.

- Yoga, mindfulness, meditation and exercise can really make a difference
- Support to Aboriginal young people needs to emphasize historical resilience and connection to culture and country as resilience building
- Acknowledging self efficacy builds resilience and stands in opposition to the influence of Shame

Hopefulness

Remember there are positive messages we can give young people to sustain them during these difficult times. These include:

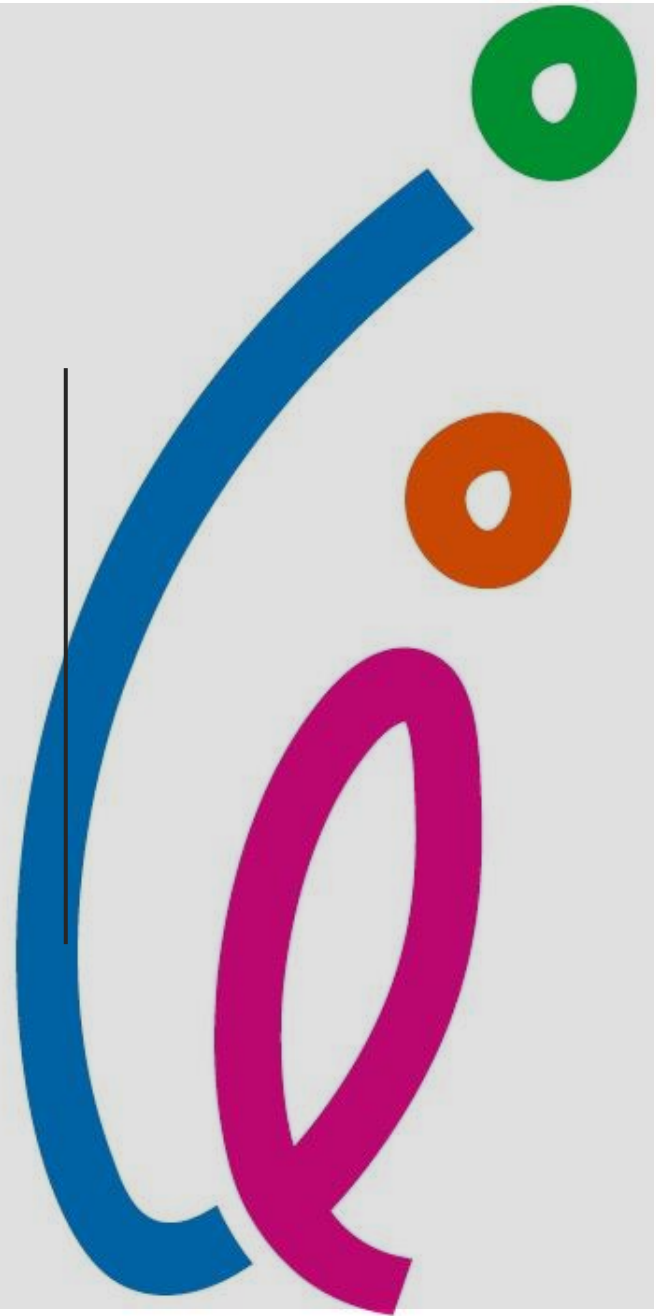
- I care for you. I am doing everything possible to protect you.
- The current situation will end. Things are improving every day.
- The government is doing everything possible to prevent and respond.
- People are getting help.
- Your feelings matter.

Discussion

- How can I work individually, and with colleagues to instil a sense of hope and optimism despite the challenges of coping with the virus?

Poll 5

**What have
carers done to
instill a sense of
hopefulness?**



Resources

- <https://childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publication/chidrens-guide-to-coronavirus>
- <https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/supporting-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>
- <https://headspace.org.au/young-people/how-to-cope-with-stress-related-to-covid-19>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azftoaZLLeo>

Thank you

Questions?