

# Case Study: Youth and Family Support – Ben and Jayde

---

Ben is 15 years old and lives with his mother Jayde. Ben was 5 when his parents separated due to family violence perpetrated by Ben's father, which included verbal and physical abuse. Since his parent's separation Ben has had minimal contact with his father, seeing him once a year. Prior to and during her separation with Ben's father, Jayde was supported by a local family violence service. Jayde states that she has had mostly positive relationship with her son since the separation from his father 10 years ago and since that time she has been a single parent.

Jayde is a 49-year old living with a history of alcohol addiction since the age of 14. Due to her long-term alcohol abuse Jayde has alcoholic liver disease and is currently on a waitlist for a liver transplant. A strict condition of being on the waitlist is that she must abstain from alcohol entirely however Jayde has advised her Alcohol & Other Drugs (AOD) worker that she has had an occasional drink. Due to her liver disease, Jaye is unable to work and is confined to the house except to attend medical appointments. Jayde's confinement has meant that Ben has had to take on more responsibilities in the home. Ben has become the main carer for Jayde and sees himself as the head of the household and, at times, can be very demanding to get his own way. When Ben is angry, he yells and throws things at her.

Ben has a record of poor school attendance and was referred by the school to Child Youth and Mental Health Service (CYMHS) for his aggressive behavior while at school. The school also made a referral to Child FIRST and the family has engaged with Joel, from a Youth and Family Support Program over the past few months. It is noted that Ben's engagement with Joel has been inconsistent.

At the start of Year 10, Ben has been participating in a pre-VCAL program and expressed interest in cooking. To support this interest Ben's school lined up work experience for Ben as a kitchen hand at a café at the local plaza. From this work Ben got an after-school job at the café earning some money and enjoying a bit of financial independence. Following a physical altercation between Ben and some other boys after work at the plaza, Ben was charged with assault and placed on a community order. When the café found out about the assault, Ben lost his job.

Jayde says that since Ben lost his job at the café, he is often out all night, drinking with his friends, and sleeps for most of the day. There have been several incidents of Ben screaming at Jayde demanding money and when she doesn't give in to him Ben has begun threatening that he will smash Jayde's phone or other belongings. Jayde is unsure whether Ben would do it but says that now that her illness has progressed, she doesn't have the energy to argue.

## You are Joel, Youth and Family Support Program worker...

**Question:** Can Joel make an information request?

*Answer*

A Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) information sharing request could be made by Joel as the Youth and Family Support Program he works for is prescribed under the CISS and FVISS as an Information Sharing entity (ISE). Joel can make an information sharing request for the purpose of:

- managing risk and safety of a child
- to promote the wellbeing and safety of a child
- family violence assessment or family violence protection.

**Question:** Who can Joel make an information sharing request to and why?

*Answer*

Joel can request information from any ISE prescribed under the information sharing schemes who may hold risk or wellbeing relevant information. Given the circumstances in this case Joel could request information from the following services:

**Victoria Police** for information about any charges laid against Ben

**Children's Court** for information about Ben's court order

**Child Youth Mental Health Service (CYMHS)** for information about Ben's attendance and response to counselling

**Specialist Family Violence Counselling and Support** Service for a secondary consultation for information to help inform Jayde's intermediate risk assessment, to seek information about ongoing support for Jayde, and to seek information about adolescents who use violence in the home.

Information obtained by Joel can be disclosed to Jayde to manage risk to her safety. Information can be shared with Ben to support his wellbeing. When considering sharing information with Jayde and Ben, Joel needs to consider if it is appropriate, safe or reasonable.

**Question: Can Joel pro-actively share information?**

*Answer*

Joel can proactively share information with the following services:

**Child Youth and Mental Health Service (CYMHS)** if Joel is concerned about Ben and Jayde's inconsistent engagement with the service and to ensure CYMHS is aware of Ben's recent community order and loss of employment (consent is not required from Ben or Jayde if there is a wellbeing or safety issue, however good practice suggests Joel would share with the consent of Jayde and the views and wishes of Ben – if reasonable and safe to seek his views and wishes)

**Alcohol & Other Drugs Service (AOD)** if Joel is concerned about Jayde's drinking and its impact on Ben's wellbeing

**Ben's school** – Under Phase Two implementation, schools are prescribed as ISEs. Schools can request and share information under the Information Sharing Schemes. Joel is not required to seek consent from anyone due to risks to Ben's wellbeing and safety when pro-actively sharing information. However, it is recommended that Joel seeks and takes into account the views and wishes of Ben and other relevant family members (Jayde) if appropriate, safe and reasonable to do so.

**Specialist Family Violence Counselling and Support Service** to make a referral for Jayde as a victim survivor of adolescent family violence. Joel would need the consent of Jayde to make this referral.

Youth Drug and Alcohol Specialist Service for a de-identified secondary consultation relating to Ben's behaviour or to make a warm referral for Ben. Joel needs Ben's consent for to make the referral.

**Question: Who should Joel seek consent from?**

*Answer*

Joel is required to seek consent when requesting or sharing information about Jayde, an adult victim survivor. No consent is required from Jayde in seeking information about her or her son Ben where there is a serious threat of harm to their safety or wellbeing. When requesting or sharing information about Ben, Joel should seek the views and wishes of Ben (if safe, reasonable and appropriate to do so).

**Question: What record keeping responsibilities does Jane have?**

*Answer*

Record keeping for information sharing requires that the date of the request, the information requested, the ISE making the request, the purpose for information sharing and whether consent was obtained or the views and wishes of children were sought as part of the process for making an information sharing request or pro-actively sharing information.

All workers engaging with the CISS and FVISS should have sound working knowledge of their organisation's own record keeping policies. For additional information workers can refer to the State Government website for more information [www.vic.gov.au/tips-information-sharing-record-keeping](http://www.vic.gov.au/tips-information-sharing-record-keeping)