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Strengthening Families
Strengthening NSW

History of Family Support Program

Rime of the Ancient Mariner, Coleridge

Rhyme of the Ancient Family Worker

Teresa Findlay Barnes



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Family Support

- ❑ is it a new idea?
- ❑ it takes a village to raise a child
- ❑ when did governments start to fund social services?



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Christianity



- ❑ In 300AD *PARTIALLY* funded orphanages, hospitals aged services etc.
- ❑ Nice to know we still carry on the fine old Roman Empire tradition of partially funded services



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Christianity

Christianity

- ❑ Devolved delivery of services to the Christian Church. This continued in Western society until the 18th Century
- ❑ Giving to charity was considered a mark of one's piety
- ❑ Level of social control inherent in structured system



Poor Laws

- ❑ Sorted poor in to categories:
 - Able-bodied poor
 - Impotent poor
 - Idle poor

- ❑ Centrelink does this for us today



Practice of Working with Families

- ❑ Had it's beginning in the 1800's in England, Europe and USA
- ❑ Charity Organisation Society in UK
- ❑ Settlement Houses in USA
- ❑ Over time, it looked at addressing causes of poverty
- ❑ Recognised the need for emotional as well as practical and financial support



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Charity Aid Society UK

Charity Aid Society UK

- ❑ Established to increase cooperation amongst charities
- ❑ Outcome to keep families together and out of the poorhouse
- ❑ Local committees found financial help wasn't enough to get families through a crisis
- ❑ Developed other agencies e.g. Labour exchange
- ❑ Still exist as *Family Action in UK*



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Social Casework & Advocacy

Social casework and advocacy

This early work identified:

- ❑ need for training of volunteers
- ❑ address family environment
- ❑ hygiene/health/housing
- ❑ address the causes of poverty
- ❑ employment/education
- ❑ urging policy shifts on government



Service Development

- ❑ These same movements and organisation were also developing in the USA through the Settlement House Program
- ❑ European countries were also designing similar approaches
- ❑ Australia was, of course doing the same through it's large established religious and charitable organisations



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Child Protection Movement

Child Protection Movement

- ❑ Alister Lamont and Leah Bromfield – A History of Child Protection, AIFS October 2010
- ❑ First wave 1870's
- ❑ New York case where child, Mary McCormack was supported by SPCA as a “human animal”
- ❑ Carer was jailed and the first NSPCC was formed



Child Protection Societies

- ❑ NCPCC was formed in USA, Dec. 1874
- ❑ Liverpool SPCC was formed in 1883 by businessman Thomas Agnew, followed by London SPCC in 1884
- ❑ In 1889, the first Child Protection laws 'Children's Charter' was passed
- ❑ Australia followed these trends



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Family Support in Australia

Family Support in Australia

- ❑ WHY?
- ❑ Dramatic changes to society
- ❑ Commission of Inquiry into Poverty 1975
- ❑ Consistent series of inquiries and reviews supported and recommended
 - Identified needs of families adequate income, housing, education, recreation, legal protection and healthcare



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Child Protection

1960's

Child Protection 1960's

- ❑ Bromfield and Lamont
- ❑ The 2nd wave of Child Protection
- ❑ Henry Kempe research
 - “Battered Child Syndrome”



Royal Commission

- ❑ Royal Commission on Human Relationships in 1977 by Chief Justice Elizabeth Evatt
- ❑ Arnott and Deveson identified that families and individuals needed to have:
 - An element of Social and emotional wellbeing
 - Ability to form stable and caring relationships with others
 - Connections to the Larger Community



Early Research

- ❑ All Our Children: The American Family Under Pressure (*Keniston 1977*)
 - All families in today's complex society need help in raising children, caring for family members and coping with stressful events at some point in time: family self-sufficiency is a false myth



Early Research that informed development of FSSP

- ❑ ***The Ecology of Human Development*** (Bronfenbrenner 1979)
 - Influence of the family and institutions and environment that surround the family
- ❑ ***To empower people: The role of mediating structures in public policy*** (Berger and Neuhaus 1977)
 - Influence of mediating structures such as Church or neighbourhood on a families ability to provide nurturance to it's members
- ❑ ***Family Systems Theory*** (Minuchin 1974)
 - Build on families existing structure communication patterns to facilitate change



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Commonwealth Family Support

Commonwealth Family Support Programme 1978

- ❑ Established in Commonwealth Office of Child Care as Family Support Services Scheme
- ❑ Provision of funds for community based services for families with young children who were experiencing stress or crisis and helping to develop a natural network of support, referral and self help services
- ❑ It was seen as provision of funds for personal welfare service aspects of family support as different to other supports i.e. income health education etc.



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Family Support Programme 1978

Family Support Programme 1978

- ❑ Would support and compliment existing welfare structures
- ❑ Provide a stimulus to innovative thinking especially as alternatives to institutional and substitute care for children
- ❑ To develop a range of services to support families in their responsibilities in the rearing and development of children



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Who we were

Who we were...

- Homemakers
- Family aides
- Home support workers
- Family support workers
- Commonwealth funding
- State funding
- Home care funding



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Positions Vacant

Sydney Morning Herald, 1982 - listed between “Factory hand” and “Fashion”...

The Mount Druitt Home Support Service which operates under the management of Blacktown Home Help Services invites ladies 30-45 years of age with caring, tolerant personalities to work with families in areas such as childcare, household management, organisation, budgeting and nutrition as a Family Support Worker

Applicants need have no professional qualifications but must have a telephone and a car and be available to work 15hrs/wk flexible.

Apply in writing - Pay \$6.02 per hour



Early Years

- Services developed independently and often had different social issues as their underpinning philosophy
 - Eradication of Poverty
 - Women's movement
 - Community development
 - Child protection
 - Domestic violence



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Early Family Support Services

Early Family Support Services

- ❑ Home care Service of NSW established as Emergency Housekeeping Services during World War II, as well as Wanslea Family Services in Perth
- ❑ Dorothy Scott writes that in 1974, the Children's Protection Society Victoria established first Parent aide programs or what came to be known as FSS's



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Family Support in NSW

Family Support in NSW

- ❑ So, what are we doing?
- ❑ It wasn't just about support, it was about *change*
- ❑ Support seemed to be about practical issues; home management, budgeting, basic communication skills and knowing where to refer
- ❑ Support???



Training

- ❑ Practical household management
- ❑ Budget counselling
- ❑ Communication skills
- ❑ Community resources for families
- ❑ Looking at workers motivation
- ❑ Boundary setting
- ❑ Two weeks 'in-house'



Policy Group

- ❑ Meeting as a Group
- ❑ Focus on funding and training needs
- ❑ Conferences were twice yearly
- ❑ Cross fertilisation of ideas and skills
- ❑ Funded in 1987 by Marion Gledhill. 21 plus 15hrs admin
- ❑ NSW Family Support Services Association
- ❑ FamS



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Influences on our work

Influences on our work

- ❑ Newcastle Family Support Service
 - Empowerment of Families through encouraging families to participate in all levels of the Service

- ❑ Family Therapy/Family Systems



Referrals

- Lack of self-esteem
- Financial difficulties
- Social and geographic isolation
- Family household chaos (neglect)
- Parenting skills
- Intellectual disabilities
- New baby/sick parent/disability
- Relationship breakdown



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1988

1988

- At the COAG meeting, the Commonwealth withdrew tied grants the Family Support Scheme, leaving State to decide how best to continue those programs...

...Thank you Mr Keating and Mr Greiner



Family Support Work

- ❑ Generally work outside formal settings
- ❑ Clients are often marginalised or demoralised by poverty and violence
- ❑ Starting where the family is
- ❑ Developing respectful relationships
- ❑ Setting goals
- ❑ Offering practical help
- ❑ Development of positive trusting relationships with families essential



Family Work

- ❑ In 'Promoting Family Change' Bronwyn Elliott with Louise Mulroney and Di O'Neill describes Family Work in depth
- ❑ Can be described practice that addresses issues affecting the functioning of the family and the relationship between family members
- ❑ Recognises that all families exist within and are affected by their context
- ❑ Family work attends to the internal as well as external i.e. access to resources information etc.



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Family Support

Family Support

- ❑ Style of practice is informal
- ❑ Work can be done in homes or in the car travelling to appointments
- ❑ Pace of work is unpredictable
- ❑ Responding to crisis as well as planned sessions



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Where did we fit?

Where did we fit?

- On the Child and Family Wellbeing Continuum, we were able to work across all aspects from community development, to intensive work with families where children were considered to be ‘at risk’



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Keeping Them Safe

Keeping Them Safe

- ❑ Keeping Them Safe
- ❑ EIPP
- ❑ New models



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Advertisement 2012

Horizons advertisement in 2012

Case Worker

We seek an experienced person with case management and planning skills to provide family support living in the Wyong Shire.

You will be required to provide home visiting services, facilitate groups and programs and liaise with local service providers.

The position is four days per week and applicants will need to address the following selection criteria



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Advertisement 2012

Case Worker, Horizons advertisement 7th May 2012

We seek an experienced person with case management and planning skills to provide family support in the Wyong Shire.

You will be required to provide home visiting services, facilitate groups and programs and liaise with local service providers. The position is four days per week and applicants will need to address the following selection criteria:

- Relevant tertiary qualifications and or relevant work experience
- Demonstrated experience and ability to engage with, consult and support vulnerable families with complex needs that include appropriate and timely intervention strategies
- Ability to work collaboratively and in a professional manner with other agencies to ensure that families receive support that is well coordinated and linked with the service system

Other requirements included (edited for space): Team player, respect, commitment to improving practice

My thanks to Horizons for placing this ad when I needed one!



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Child Wellbeing or Child Protection?

Child Wellbeing or Child Protection?

Prof. Marian Berry...

“If you are talking child wellbeing - think family”

- Are we still able to be child and family focused?
- Should we become Child and Family (Support) Services?
- FamS becomes CAFamS?!