

# **Bendigo Education Plan - Student Wellbeing Project 2008**

## **Connect Central in Schools (CCIS) Pilot Project**

### **Project Overview and Guidelines**

#### **Introduction**

The Connect Central in Schools (CCIS) Case Management Support project seeks to deliver the Student Wellbeing Pathways Project 2008 identified within the Bendigo Education Plan; it will do this by providing intensive case management services through Connect Central. The Connect Central Case Management Staff aims to support a small cohort of students whom BEP year 7-10 Secondary schools identify as “at risk” to be part of this pilot.

#### **Time Frame**

Funding is available to support this pilot until the end of 2008, however if successful outcomes are established advocacy around the extension of the program would occur.

#### **Basis for Implementation of Pilot**

CCIS is supported by an MOU signed by all BEP Principals, the Regional Director of DEECD, the CEO of St. Lukes Anglicare, and Chair of the Connect Central Committee of Management.

Intensive case management provided would seek to:

- Base work on the shared value of respect;
- Adopt a “restorative practice/strength based” practice framework for the work being undertaken; (below)
- Ensure a strong partnership and shared understanding model is in place with key school based staff, and other support staff from community agencies;
- Improve engagement and retention of students who are experiencing high rates of absenteeism or deemed to be at risk of high rates of suspension or expulsion;
- Develop individual learning plans (ILP) for each student who is case managed, that is agreed to by the individual student, their family, and school (including individual teaching staff);
- Ensuring monitoring and evaluation of the pilot program is carried out in order to measure effectiveness of strategy.

## **Guidelines and Principles of CCIS**

- The focus of CCIS is to retain the student being supported within their existing school.
  - A potential participant in the program can only be referred to the program by a nominated delegate of a BEP school.
  - In making referrals schools must have a willingness to work with the CCIS case worker to consider and adopt flexible solutions and programming options for the student within the program.
  - Referrals may be refused on the basis of an existing support mechanisms and processes already in place providing assistance to the student, this seeks to ensure that over-servicing of a student will not occur.
  - No more than two referrals will be accepted per week, with a maximum of 25 students participating in the program for the year.
  - A school must have willingness for key staff to participate in the development of individual learning plans, and organized case meetings as part of the implementation of the plan.
  - A school based support person will need to be assigned to each student.
  - Students referred must be experiencing multiple barriers (three or more) which inhibit the successful completion of their education within their school. The identified student is likely to need supported intervention from services found outside the school environment.
- Schools are encouraged to make use of the student at risk mapping tool, and cross reference to appropriate staff within school when giving consideration of referral of a student, e.g welfare, year level coordinator, leadership team member.

## **Student Intake**

The key person coordinating the case management of the CCIS pilot is:

Sophie Rose  
Connect Central  
Ph: 5441 1444  
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email: [s.rose@stlukes.org.au](mailto:s.rose@stlukes.org.au)

Sophie will undertake the majority of the case management to be carried out, some support will be provided through the Connect Central case management team.

## **Strengths Based Practice**

The use of Strength Based practice within the CCIS program is considered integral to a client's success and retention within their school as Strengths-Based Practice assesses the inherent strengths of a client or family, then builds on them, and also uses peoples' personal strengths to aid in recovery and empowerment.

### **Strength base practice also:**

- Emphasises people's ability to be their own agents of change by creating conditions that enable them to control and direct the process of change;
- creates conditions that enable people to identify, value and mobilise their strengths and capacities in the process of change;
- provides and mobilises resources in a way that complements people's existing strengths and resources as opposed to compensating for their deficits;
- acknowledges and addresses power imbalances between workers and those they work with;
- seeks to identify and address social, personal, cultural and structural constraints to people's growth and liberation; and
- recognises and acts to address dynamics inherent in organisational practices and structures that are incongruent with socially just practice.

### **Strength Based practice emphasis has a set of underlying beliefs:**

- All people have strengths and capacities.
- People can change;
- People change and grow from their strengths and capacities;
- People are the experts on their own situation;
- The problem is the problem; the person is not the problem;
- Problems can blind people from noticing and appreciating their strengths and their capacity to find solutions;
- When people appreciate their strengths they are free to learn and grow.

One of the central characteristics of a strengths approach is its emphasis on strengths and the power that the recognition and appreciation of strengths has for change and growth. People are constantly interpreting and making sense of their experience. When we notice and appreciate our strengths we are able to learn and grow. Therefore Strength Based is a relevant and dynamic theory to be used within the CCIS pilot.

### **A process for strengths-based practice**

The change process in strengths-based practice as an idealised form involves six steps or stages of consultation, conversation and action.

These are:

1. listening to people's stories, exploring the context and the meaning they give to their experience, and identifying the core issues (including constraints);
2. developing a picture of the future and establishing concrete goals through an exploration of interests and aspirations;
3. exploring and identifying strengths and 'exceptions' to the problems or challenges people face;
4. identifying additional resources that can help people reach their goals;
5. mobilising the strengths and resources through a plan of action towards the goals;
6. reviewing and evaluating progress and change.

This process is not meant to be prescriptive. It is a framework that uses points of reference for guiding conversation, reflection and action. It is meant to be used flexibly in response to people's sharing and learning. It is a description of the stages and processes that take place over time.

## Restorative Practices in Schools

### Restorative Values

The values base of a restorative approach draws inspiration from many sources but includes the following elements:

- Mutual respect and appreciation
- A belief in peoples ability to resolve their own problems given time, support and a chance to tell their story
- Acceptance of diversity
- An inclusive approach to problem solving, so that the feelings needs and views of everyone in a given community are taken into account
- A congruence between beliefs and actions- 'walk the talk'.

(Hopkins 2004; 44)

### Process in schools



### Skills and values

The skills required to engage in these processes and interventions include:

- Remaining impartial and non-judgemental
- Respecting the perspective of all involved
- Actively and empathetically listening
- Developing rapport amongst participants
- Empowering participants to come up with solutions rather than suggesting or imposing ideas

- Creative questioning
- Warmth, Compassion, Patience

These skills are informed by an intention- namely to respect the underlying ethos that encompasses the values of respect, openness, empowerment, inclusion, tolerance, integrity and congruence.

(Hopkins 2004; 38)

draft for consideration

### CCIS Referral process

