

Group Work FAQs & Important Information for Referring Agencies

CatholicCare Diocese of Wollongong's Families and Communities Program wishes to provide all our clients with a trauma informed service. The safety of our clients and staff is our main priority. Below is important information for you to consider before referring a client to our service.

Referral Process:

- Clients will undertake a thorough intake assessment when enrolling in our program.
- If a client outlines any of the following they may be assessed as unsuitable for the service or group at that time, in this situation we will offer alternative support/referral:
 - An identified and untreated mental health condition
 - An untreated alcohol/drug use issue
 - The client is currently in crisis
- Through the intake process we will be able to identify the service or group most suited to the client's current situation and needs. Based on this assessment, our service suggestion may differ from the referral made, such as a suggestion for a client to enroll and complete a particular group prior to commencing any others. E.g. My Kids and Me – children who have been removed from parent's care, completed prior to 123 Magic – managing children's challenging behavior. While we will make the recommendation, we will not refuse service if our recommendation is not chosen by the client (if it is safe and suitable to continue).
- Clients may only enroll in a group if they are able to commit to attending the group in full. Clients are informed and agree to committing to all sessions when completing their intake. We understand circumstances beyond the client's control do occur, where possible we are able to consider options in supporting the client to complete the group. This is dependent on many factors including availability of staff and resources.
- To ensure we are maintaining a trauma informed approach. Clients can only attend a certain number of groups per term. Depending on the type and duration of the group, clients may only be eligible to attend 1 group within that term. The maximum for any client is 2 per term.
- A minimum number of clients may be required to proceed with the group. We endeavor to provide the clients with at least 48hrs notice, should the group be cancelled. The clients may rebook into the next scheduled group, an alternative group, be placed on the waiting list or we can provide support and/or referral to something more suitable.
- Catholic Care has a maximum number of clients per group. Once this number is reached clients will be booked into the next scheduled group, an alternative group if suitable, or placed on the waiting list.
- Once intake is complete and the client is booked in, the client receives confirmation of enrolment via email; this includes a link to our client group work FAQs, client's rights, and responsibilities, online requirements, and other important information.

- One to two weeks prior to the group commencing clients will receive a pre-engagement phone call by a group facilitator, giving the clients an opportunity to ask any questions, raise concerns or advise they will no longer be attending (one attempt to make contact and a message will be left if possible). If the client is attending an online group, resources may not be sent until attendance has been confirmed.
- The day prior to the group commencing a text message reminder will be sent to clients.
- If a client does not attend the first session, or drops out prior to the completion of the group, they will be placed on the waiting list and will be called prior to the next term to reengage and reschedule, or we can provide support and/or referral to something more suitable.

As a client progresses through a group, it may become evident that it is not an appropriate or a safe space for the client, other members of the group or staff. Facilitators will have a discussion with the client and see if there is a way to support the client through the group. Alternatively, the facilitator will recommend the client withdraw from the group, seek alternative appropriate support and re-book into the group when suitable to do so.

Group guidelines are established in the first session of the group to ensure the safety of everyone involved. If the guidelines are not followed, facilitators will discuss this in private with the client; if issues persist, facilitators may ask the client to leave the group. They will then need to be reassessed prior to rescheduling or enrolling in another group.

Release of Information:

We require client consent to release information such as confirming their booking or attendance to our service and/or group.

We can provide clients with confirmation letters in the following instances:

- Group unsuitability letter
- Confirmation of enrolment
- Partial completion letters
- Waiting list confirmation

While we can confirm attendance to a program, due to the structure of group learning we are, unfortunately not able to assess or comment on individual learning and participation. We instead encourage clients to share, as needed, the knowledge they have successfully acquired from their attendance.

Childcare:

We understand childcare can be a barrier to accessing services. Unfortunately, we do not currently offer childcare and due to the content and discussions of most groups, it is not safe for the parent, child, or other group members for the child to attend the group. If childcare is a barrier for your client, we encourage them to call and discuss available options with our intake team.

Contributions:

All our groups have varied contribution rates. Concession options are available, along with Work Development Orders (conditions may apply). If a contribution is associated with the group, clients must pay a minimum \$5 deposit to secure their booking.

Please note if indicated that a referral agency is covering the payment, an invoice will be raised at the time of booking.

Counselling Services:

Catholic Care's affordable counselling service provides support to children, adults, couples, and families experiencing:

- Family Law counselling
- grief and loss
- family & relationship difficulties
- trauma
- stress/anxiety/depression
- changes in personal or family situations
- pregnancy loss

Our skilled and compassionate counsellors are qualified professionals experienced in couple, family, and individual counselling.

Collaboration:

We are interested in collaborating with other services to ensure the best outcomes for our clients. Our team can present and discuss any of the above information or offer a short presentation on the groups/services we offer. We can also offer fee for service or outreach groups to you and your clients, either at your venue or an alternative location. Including delivery of Mental Health First Aid, Mental Health First Aid Refresher or Youth Mental Health First Aid.

For further information on our Group work or Counselling services:

We invite you to visit our website to find further information and details of the services and groups we offer, our information [can be found on our website.](#)

Please follow us on Facebook and Instagram, by searching CatholicCare Wollongong.

We look forward to working with you and your clients. If you wish to discuss or have any questions about the above information, please contact our intake team on **1800 967 894**.