Mental Health for the Young and their Families

MHYF Vic Newsletter No. 67 October 2019

This edition

60th Anniversary celebration of the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

MHYFVic Annual General Meeting 2019

Notes from the Department of Community Child Health at Royal Children's Hospital.

Notes from 'Emerging Minds'

History Corner 1954

MHYFVic Forum

60th Anniversary of the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

How are we doing?

On 20 November, 1989, the Convention of the Rights of the Child was adopted by the UN General Assembly. On 20 November, 2019, we will have the opportunity to celebrate thirty years of the Convention and sixty years of the Declaration and can take the opportunity to measure our success.

MHYFVic will host a forum on Wednesday 20th November at 1.30pm in the Ella Latham Lecture Theatre of the Royal Children's Hospital to consider how we are shaping up in relation to the principles of the Convention.

There will be presentations on a variety of topics, including legal rights in Australia, bio-ethics, infants, indigenous children, and out-of-home care. Responses will be given by Liana Buchanan, the Commissioner for Children, and the Honourable Justice Nicholson, former Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia.

It promises to be a really fascinating day and it's **FREE.**

All you have to do is book through :

https://www.trybooking.com/BFSGW

Some more notes on this historic Convention are presented later in this newsletter in "History Corner 1954".

MHYFVic AGM

The MHYFVic Annual General Meeting was held on Thursday 22nd August 2019. Herewith is the President's report and a brief note on the after-dinner presentation.

President's report to AGM

Good evening and welcome, with a special welcome to our guest speakers, Chris Lewis and Ross Mortimer from Merri Community Health.

I would like to begin by noting the passing of one of MHYF Vic's greatest friends, Chris Smale. He died earlier this year after a series of serious illnesses. We honour his contribution to MHYF Vic, which included an address on how to lobby government at our AGM of 2012. Chris also wrote and amended MHYF Vic's constitution. We also honour his contribution to Victorian society through his work as a public servant, government advisor,

and commercial barrister. We honour his wife and his family: our thoughts have been with Suzie, Sarina, and Lucas, for many weeks.

The year just past might have been our busiest and most productive in our twenty-year history. There has been great productivity on out Best Practice Atlas, especially by Dr Allan Mawdsley who has been turning projects into policies and procedures designed to get best practice into consultation rooms. Please visit the website and see what has been produced and consider offering contributions from your specialty. Tonight's address comes out of Allan's diligence in asking questions about how the work of those in the Alcohol and Other Drugs sector intersects with the work of those in child and family mental health practice. Hopefully, we will have material to add to the Atlas out of tonight.

Possibly you will know much of what I have to say as most of it has been reported in our Newsletter, which is another thing for which we thank Allan Mawdsley.

MHYF Vic presented two major professional forums in 2019. The first was the tenth Winston Rickards Memorial Oration in March. The second was as daylong seminar on attachment theory and its application our work. The WRMO has continued to break new ground and the ground this year was that of education. The Orator, Professor Field Rickards, set the tone and framed the discussion, before two of his colleagues presented on the overlap of educational practice with meeting the mental health needs of students. The night was well attended by educators, which broadened our area of influence. We also had several past Orators attend, including Professor Allan Fels, who felt that attending the WRMO would prepare him well for his role as Royal Commissioner with the inquiry into the state's mental health system.

The second was our first venture into professional development for some time with our Attachment seminar; which was very well received. The only source of criticism was that we were not detailed enough about how to apply the theory in daily practice, rather than an overview of applications to infant psychiatry, children in out-of-home-care, and to the process of adolescent psychotherapy. This criticism was welcomed as we hope that it encouraged those seeking more in-depth knowledge would take the opportunity for further research, supervision, and practice innovation. We can also report a healthy boost to MHYF Vic's funds. We hope to run a seminar each year in May and would welcome suggestions for topics of interest to the field.

Another outcome from the seminar was an overview of where professionals felt mental health services were failing consumers and carers. This was extremely timely as MHYF Vic was well underway preparing their submission to the Royal Commission. Important issues for professionals were thus incorporated in the submission; this was an unexpected and very welcome additional outcome.

A copy of the MHYF Vic submission to the RCVMHS is available for viewing tonight and the document is available on the website, as are the WRMO addresses and soon, we hope, transcripts from the attachment seminar.

Our submission, some 34,000 words long, is close to comprehensive. I was very pleased with the work that we turned out in a short period and our committee was very active in their contributions to the writing and the polishing of the submission. We have seen contributions from Orygen, from AOD experts, and from others, and these all support the general thrust of our contribution. We need an overhaul of the system that moves away from crisis monitoring of the most affected adults to a system that is integrated and

family-focussed, taking a developmental approach to understanding mental health presentations and to providing timely, consumer-oriented responses and treatment. We identified topics for special consideration:

a….Prevention services
b….Improved access with family engagement
c….Services for aboriginal family mental health
d….Services for children in out-of-home care
e….Early intervention services for mother and infants
f….Services for elderly people and their families
g….Services for substance users with mental health needs
h….Services for anti-social youth and adults (including adult ADHD)
i….Services for those who self-harm.

MHYF Vic has members attend conferences interstate and overseas most years, but this year was a little quieter, but Jo Grimwade presented at the 7th International ADHD conference in Lisbon, Portugal, as did one of our presenters at the Attachment seminar Marell Lynch of Take Two (Berrystreet). Marell presented on the presentation of ADHD and the problems of distinguishing this from the effects of early childhood trauma in out-of-home-care children. Jo presented on his model of response for adults with ADHD. This was important in another way as it showed the importance of a family/developmental approach to all mental health problems and the need for intervention using five components for comprehensive mental health treatment. This presentation provided the underpinning for the MHYF Vic Royal Commission submission.

Throughout the year our project groups have been working away; none more active than the Aboriginal mental health working group. We hope to be getting nearer to a formulation of how services can support the work of VAHS with children and families but remain keen for this project to continue. Suzie and Kaye have been resolute in their work.

There is one more event yet to be organized for this year, the Universal Children's Day event on 20 November. The first Universal Children's Day was held in 1959. The Declaration of Children's Rights was on 20 November 1989. The proposed topic is: "Universal Children's Day: 30 years since the UN's Declaration of Children's Rights."

As usual there are many to thank, and as usual most thanks are due to Allan and Suzie for the mountain of work that they do for us and for the various other community organizations to which they contribute.

Secondly, there is the two-headed team of Kaye and Anne and their management of the treasury and the mailing list!

Next are special thanks to Celia, our immediate past Secretary, and to Cecilia who took up the challenge late last year and is extremely efficient at getting the minutes out!

Then there is our continuing Vice-President, Jenny, who provides the venue for our meetings and commentaries on our constant stream of documents.

We have some Committee members without portfolio, Miriam, Sarina, and Kylie. They often have other commitments but are very responsive to requests for overview of documents. This is such an important function to keep our levels of quality where we hope they should be.

We need also to thank several other volunteers who helped with the WRMO and the Attachment seminar; unfortunately, I do not recall their names, but I do recall their contribution. We thank you for volunteering

time and effort to make our events occur with a minimum of fuss.

We thank our members and we thank all of you here tonight. We invite you to contribute in ways that best present your expertise and interest. We are especially interested in contributions to the Atlas.

Shortly we will hear from our guest speakers from the Tracks program at Merri Community Health.
Jo Grimwade
President

Not working in silos:

Working with young people with mental health and AOD issues.

Ross Mortimer and Chris Lewis gave an account of the work done in their youth substance abuse program, especially in school-based outreach activities. Crucial elements included quick response, credibility, continuity of care and minimal formality. The constantly changing rules of bureaucracy and financing made stability of the service difficult to maintain. However, despite this, the service has survived for two decades and is highly valued by those who know it.

Notes from Department of Community Child Health at Royal Children's Hospital.

Making children's mental health a priority

Science tells us that the foundations of mental and emotional health are built in early life. It is also estimated that approximately half of adult mental health problems begin before age 14. Despite this, children's mental health has remained relatively neglected from a policy and resource perspective.

Children's mental health on the national agenda

A recent government announcement signifies a shift towards better mental health for Australian children and families.

The Hon Greg Hunt, Australian Minister for Health, has announced the Government's Long Term National Health Plan to support the mental and physical health of Australians.

The National Health Plan includes a 2030 mental health vision and commits to the development of a new Mental Health Strategy for children under 12 years of age.

Children's Mental Health Strategy

The strategy recognises the role of children's early experiences and environments in shaping mental health and lifelong wellbeing.

The Centre's Professor Oberklaid will lead a working group to develop the new Children's Mental Health Strategy alongside Professor Middeldorp, conjoint Professor of Child and Youth Psychiatry at the Child Health Research Centre and Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service.

Professor Oberklaid is committed to a strategy that recognises the full spectrum of children's mental health and addresses issues in the service system.

"This is a great opportunity to broaden our thinking about children's mental health, focusing not only on the treatment of established problems but also on population, prevention and early intervention approaches. We also hope to provide stronger support for parents and universal service providers, identify gaps in the current service system and address issues of access and equity."

Read our Policy Brief – Child Mental Health: A Time for Innovation

Notes from 'Emerging Minds'

Introducing a new suite of Family and Domestic Violence resources

We have just released two new family and domestic violence (FDV) e-learning courses for practitioners working in adult-focused services with clients experiencing adversity. The courses provide practitioners with foundational understandings of the effects of FDV on children. They are suited to anyone who wants to know more about FDV, or who may be noticing their adult clients talking to them about their – and their children's – experiences of violence.

Start with the foundation course to gain an understanding of the nature and prevalence of FDV in Australia, recognise its impact on children and understand the importance of identifying and responding to issues of FDV to prevent long-term harm.

Move on to the core course to learn more about supporting families in the context of FDV by using the PERCS Conversation Guide and principles of parent engagement.

Emerging Minds Newsletter July 2019

Resources supporting Trans and Gender Diverse Children.

Creating a safe space for a child to explore their gender identity will contribute to positive mental health outcomes - but how do practitioners provide that support? Alongside author Susanne Prosser, we have produced a suite of resources to help.

Supporting trans and gender diverse children and their families practice paper

Creating a welcoming and safe organisation for trans and gender diverse children and their families: A checklist for allied health services

Supporting trans or gender diverse children and their families with gender affirmation: A guide for GPs and paediatricians

Trans and gender diverse support referral matrix.

Emerging Minds August newsletter includes a suite of resources supporting Trans and Gender Diverse Children. These can be accessed through their website emergingminds.com.au

HISTORY CORNER, 1954

The United Nations General Assembly declared on 14 December, 1954, that there should be a day on the international calendar that promoted and celebrated the health and welfare of children. On 20 November, 1959, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child was made and, became the date for Universal Children's Day.

Thirty years later, on 20 November, 1989, the Convention of the Rights of the Child was adopted by the UN General Assembly. On 20 November, 2019, we will have the opportunity to celebrate thirty years of the Convention and sixty years of the Declaration and can take the opportunity to measure our success.
In Australia, the custom has been to commemorate this day as part of the annual Children's Week which falls in the fourth week of October.

What is contained in the **Declaration of the Rights of the Child**?

The Preamble to the Declaration of the Rights of the Child highlights children's need for special care and protection, "including

appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth."

The Declaration of the Rights of the Child lays down ten principles:

- 1. The right to equality, without distinction on account of race, religion or national origin.
- 2. The right to special protection for the child's physical, mental and social development.
- 3. The right to a name and a nationality.
- 4. The right to adequate nutrition, housing and medical services.
- 5. The right to special education and treatment when a child is physically or mentally handicapped.
- 6. The right to understanding and love by parents and society.
- 7. The right to recreational activities and free education.
- 8. The right to be among the first to receive relief in all circumstances.
- 9. The right to protection against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation.
- 10. The right to be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, and universal brotherhood.

These are the rights, but these needed clear statements of how such principles would be administered and made accountable. That is the gap that the Convention sought to fill.

What is contained in the **Convention on the Rights of the Child**?

There are 54 Articles in three Parts and a preamble, so the complete document is to be found on our website. Part II concerns internal accountability procedures with States. Part II concerns accountability to the UN. The key sections in Part I are as follows:

From the Preamble:

Recalling that, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations has proclaimed that childhood is entitled to special care and assistance,

Convinced that the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community,

Recognizing that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding,

Considering that the child should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society, and brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity,

Article 1

For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Article 2

1. States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected

against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.

Article 3

1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

Article 5

States Parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents or, where applicable, the members of the extended family or community as provided for by local custom, legal guardians or other persons legally responsible for the child, to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognized in the present Convention.

Article 6

1. States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life.

2. States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.

Article 7

1. The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and. as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.

Article 8

1. States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognized by law without unlawful interference.

Article 9

1. States Parties shall ensure that a child shall not be separated from his or her parents against their will, except when competent authorities subject to judicial review determine, in accordance with applicable law and procedures, that such separation is necessary for the best interests of the child. Such determination may be necessary in a particular case such as one involving abuse or neglect of the child by the parents, or one where the parents are living separately and a decision must be made as to the child's place of residence.

2. In any proceedings pursuant to paragraph 1 of the present article, all interested parties shall be given an opportunity to participate in the proceedings and make their views known.

3. States Parties shall respect the right of the child who is separated from one or both parents to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis, except if it is contrary to the child's best interests.

4. Where such separation results from any action initiated by a State Party, such as the detention, imprisonment, exile, deportation or death (including death arising from any cause while the person is in the custody of the State) of one or both parents or of the child, that State Party shall, upon request, provide the parents, the child or, if appropriate, another member of the family with the essential information concerning the whereabouts of the absent member(s) of the family unless the provision of the information would be detrimental to the well-being of the child. States Parties shall further ensure that the submission of such a request shall of itself entail no adverse consequences for the person(s) concerned.

Article 10

1. In accordance with the obligation of States Parties under article 9, paragraph 1, applications by a child or his or her parents to enter or leave a State Party for the purpose of family reunification shall be dealt with by States Parties in a positive, humane and expeditious manner. States Parties shall further ensure that the submission of such a request shall entail no adverse consequences for the applicants and for the members of their family.

Article 11

1. States Parties shall take measures to combat the illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad.

Article 13

1. The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.

Article 14

1. States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Article 16

1. No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation.

2. The child has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 19

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

Article 22

1. States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and procedures shall, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the present Convention and in other international human rights or humanitarian instruments to which the said States are Parties.

Article 23

1. States Parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.

Article 24

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. States Parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services.

Article 27

1. States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

2. The parent(s) or others responsible for the child have the primary responsibility to

secure, within their abilities and financial capacities, the conditions of living necessary for the child's development.

Article 28

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;

b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;

c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;

d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;

e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

Article 30

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

Article 31

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

Article 32

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

Article 34

States Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse**.**

Article 37

States Parties shall ensure that:

a) No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age.

Article 40

1. States Parties recognize the right of every child alleged as, accused of, or recognized as having infringed the penal law to be treated in a manner consistent with the promotion of the child's sense of dignity and worth, which reinforces the child's respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of others and which takes into account the child's age and the desirability of promoting the child's reintegration and the child's assuming a constructive role in society.

This a very long and clear list of Articles, which all have a number of parts. I wonder if you think Australia meets these criteria? Article 9 seems relevant to refugee children, as does Article 22. …

Looking forward to seeing you at the celebration of Universal Children's Day.

Jo Grimwade

2019 MHYF Vic Committee

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MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Our mail address is PO Box 206, Parkville, Vic 3052. If you prefer to pay your $50 sub by Direct Funds Transfer, the BSB is 033 090 A/C Number 315188 with your name in the Reference tab. It would be appreciated if you could also send a confirmatory email to admin@mhyfvic.org