

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

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Flexi-Funding

ADDITIONAL COSTS OF CARE

Better Futures

INDEPENDENCE, EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT

Helpine

REFERRALS, ADVOCACY

CAP

CARER ASSISTANCE

Permanent
Care and
Adoptive
Families



EVENTS

Click & Connect
Wed 22/2/23

Share & Connect
Thurs 2/3/23



News - Meet the Team

Recently we have implemented some changes to our internal structures to better support the needs of the organisation. So what has changed? We have introduced an additional program leader into the structure. So who are they?

Paula Westhead joins us from Emerge Women and Children's Support Network and heads up our Flexible Funding team. More about Paula in future editions!

Liz Powell who many of you would know as a PCA Advisor and relief Team Leader, having worked with PCA Families for 8 years, now heads up our Helpline, Better Futures and Peer Support programs. Liz worked for 25 years as a nurse/midwife before retraining as a counsellor in trauma, loss and bereavement intervention and psychotherapy.

Liz also has lived experience in completing her family through international adoption. Liz is looking forward to delving into ways to improve service delivery and the lives of our parents and carers.



Helpline - Anita Wall, Mary Filippone, Ray Carroll and Merle Shap are our Advocacy and Support Advisors and Tish McClean-Neil our Client Services Officer for Helpline. The team offer personal support, advice, information and resourcing for all families who are supporting young people through permanent care and adoption. They understand the needs of children who have suffered early childhood trauma and the pressure and strain this can bring to the families supporting them.



"Delivering trauma informed services that empower"

Better Futures - Anita Wall and Mary Filippone are our Advocacy and Support Advisors and Tish MCClean-Neil our Client Services Officer for Better Futures. Mary, Anita and Tish bring a wealth of experience in working with young people eligible for Better Futures support as they transition into adulthood. Their role includes the important initial connection and education regarding the program together with identification and referral to relevant service providers (and there are many!).

Peer Support - Liz Powell leads the program with staff members Deborah Hunt (Office Manager) and Sonia Wagner (Marketing) supporting, arranging or attending our peer support meetings, bringing with them a variety of lived experience. Our volunteers Benoit Seligmann, Mary Natoli, Caroline Buchanan and Jacinta Foster-Raimondo continue to offer us insight into parents and carers needs and support the operations of the evening peer support sessions.

To learn more about our staff see our Meet The Team page [here](#).



Events - Click & Connect

TOPIC: TEACHER INTERVIEWS AND SHARING THE CHILD'S STORY

DATE: Wednesday 22 February 12:00 midday until 1:00pm with hosts Liz & Sonia

TOPIC: Teacher interviews and knowing what to share about your child can be challenging. So how do you maintain a sense of belonging and share what is necessary to best support your child? With the collective wisdom in the room lets support each other and reflect on what we can learn!

HOMEWORK: If you like to read, you may want to look at our powerpoint presentation on this topic from 2021. See the link on Click and Connect to past meeting topics and find the topic "Sharing the Childs Story". Pages 5 and 6 have some good advice and there are links to resources and a draft letter too. See [here](#)

REGISTER: [here](#) via Zoom Link

FORMAT: Click and Connect provides a supportive social space that allows natural conversations to flow to ensure you are honoured as experts of your families and lives, while having the expertise of a PCA Advocacy and Support Adviser on hand for additional professional support. Meetings begin with a brief overview of the topic by a PCA Families Adviser before opening up to the group to share experiences, thoughts and ideas. You are welcome to attend as often as you like, whether that's just once or regularly.



"Improving the lived experience of young people"

News - The Importance of Sleep!

During sleep the sympathetic nervous system (which controls fight flight freeze responses) gets a chance to relax and the circadian system combined with sleep exert a strong regulatory influence on immune functions, allowing your body to fight inflammation, infection and trauma. Sleep affects so many brain and body functions, the more the better! Find out more [here](#).

Helpline

PCA Families Helpline is a free, independent and confidential service, offering short term support, practical information, advocacy and referrals to other services. Our approach is child-centred, family-focussed and trauma-informed. Our caring and supportive advisors have extensive experience working with families. Several advisors also have first hand lived experience of permanent care or adoption. Parenting children who have experienced trauma, grief, loss, attachment issues, abuse and/or neglect can be difficult, and many children and their families require additional support to recover, heal and thrive. We understand that systems can be tricky to navigate, and that sometimes you need to speak to someone who 'gets it' to help you plan a way forward. That support can vary from supporting you to become a new parent or carer to improving family dynamics, communication, mental health, behaviours, attachment, identity and belonging, or navigating government departments or schools. More [here](#).

Carer Assistance Program

The CAP (Carer Assistance Program) is a partnership between PCA Families and Foster Care Association Victoria which offers therapeutic support by an experienced counsellor, aimed at supporting and improving the mental health and wellbeing of parents and carers (including adoption). A range of issues can impact physical and psychological health and can be overwhelming. To access the counselling service, simply fill out the self referral form available [here](#).

Better Futures and Home Stretch

The Victorian Government offer funding to support young people on a permanent care order who turn 15 years and 9 months to get the support they need as they get older. Better Futures also offers Home Stretch, which supports young people to remain living with you after 18 or to move to other housing, like private rental. This support is available until 21 years of age via payment of an allowance. Better Futures is here to help your young person transition to independence. What that looks like will differ for each young person. We know that some of young peoples past experiences may make them reluctant to engage with the Better Futures providers. We encourage you to talk through with them the benefits of at least engaging to find out what the program is and what it might offer them, so they can make an informed decision. Either you or your young person can find out more by contacting PCA Families on 03 9020 1833 (option 3). PCA Families assesses eligibility for the program and connect the young people with a Better Futures provider.

DFFH Flexible Funding

If your child or young person is on a Permanent Care Order or you receive the DFFH Care Allowance and they have a Family Court Order or Adoption Order, they are entitled to DFFH Flexible Funding to meet the costs of goods and services they need not covered by the care allowance, or another funding source (eg Medicare, NDIS). Flexible funds can be used for therapeutic, educational or medical services, build skills interest or attachments, support birth family contact and cultural identity, respite, medication and more (see [here](#)). Claims should be more than \$100 per invoice and generally paid by PCA Families directly to the supplier. To ensure funds are distributed fairly and equitably and are appropriate and safe for your child, we ask for supporting documentation that services are trauma informed and that both goods and services are recommended by a professional who knows your child or young person.

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