

CIVIC CRECHE ENQUIRY

COUNSELLING SUPPORT CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

This report is based on work undertaken by Gen CROSSEN from 25 May 1992 to December 1992, covering a seven month employment period.

CLIENT GROUP CONTACTS

The non-prosecution families who present to the Police creche enquiry team, Specialist Services, Department of Social Welfare or the Christchurch City Council for information and assistance as a consequence of the Police enquiry into allegations of sexual abuse by staff members at the Civic Creche are all contacted.

Initial contact is made via a letter or telephone call to assess the needs of the family. On request a home visit is made to fully assess the client's needs.

Over the period stated some 100 and 20 families have been followed up.

Clients are given general information on sexual abuse, including what sexual abuse is, an acceptance that abuse does and can occur in society, indicators of sexual abuse, ways of handling a disclosure, what can be done if a child has been sexually abused, the needs of a sexually abused child, the grief process, the healing process, appropriate therapy plus therapists in Christchurch, funding available for therapy/counselling and "keeping children safe" information.

If a diagnostic interview is requested by parents, this is arranged with Specialist Services staff, DSW. To date 11.6... interview have been undertaken (these include prosecution families).

Children are referred to therapy if necessary. The following child therapists in Christchurch are seeing clients in relation to sexual abuse allegations:

- Sara CRANE
- Hildegard CORBETT
- Sue DICK
- Brenda SCARR
- Wendy ROSE
- Elaine ALISON
- Nancy PERRIMAN
- Sharon DURANT
- Gayle TAUKIRI
- Karen DAWSON

If clients live outside Christchurch then appropriate therapists are sought for these children in their home town.

The vast majority of child counselling is funded by ACC, however, the City Council has funded some families. This is greatly appreciated by these families.

To date some 40 children have been referred for counselling.

Parents are offered private individual counselling for themselves. A large number of families have taken up this option. The contract with families regarding counselling was set for three initial sessions, followed by more sessions, if necessary, by arrangement with Martin MAGUIRE. It came to notice that some families have over extended their counselling allocation without consultation with Martin. In view of this counselling sessions will discontinue at the end of 1992 and be re-negotiated next year with the Council.

The families have found this counselling option extremely important and useful and wish to thank the Christchurch City Council for making these resources available.

Ongoing social work contact is maintained with all families on request and as required. Extended family members are also contacted on request.

Approximately 40 families are visited on a regular basis with the remaining families having not requested further follow-up. However, these families are still kept up to date with information and contacted by telephone periodically to check on how things are going for them.

Although I am officially on leave over the Christmas break and January, I have told parents I am available at home should they need anything so as to ensure cover and continuity.

### **SUPPORT GROUPS**

The following support groups have been established and have operated since August:

- Women's Daytime Support Group facilitated by Roma FINLAY
- Women's Evening Support Group facilitated by Judith KOULFF
- Couples Support Group facilitated by Sue DICK and Howard PILGRIM (this was a six session support group designed especially for couples)
- Men's Support Group facilitated by Walter LOGEMAN
- Extended Families and Significant Friends Support Group facilitated by Vicki SMITH (this support group held six sessions)

Reports from facilitators pending.

Families have found these support groups very important. Generally they have all been well attended with numbers increasing over time.

Support groups are now winding down for 1992 and it is hoped that, should resources become available, they will re-commence in February 1993 at least during the court process.

Over the Christmas break and January 1993 an informal support group will be held at 20 Aylmer Street, Sommerfield, on Monday morning 10.00 am-12 noon.

### LIAISON MEETINGS

Liaison meetings are held with the following people:

- The Christchurch Police creche enquiry team
- Specialist Services, DSW
- Child therapists
- Martin MAGUIRE, Christchurch City Council
- Jan GALLANDERS, prosecution families support social worker

### EDUCATION AND LIAISON

On request, general sexual abuse education and liaison meetings have been held with schools, kindergartens and child care groups.

### COURT PROCESS

The depositions hearing into allegations of sexual abuse against children who attended the Civic Creche began at the Tribunal Room, Christchurch District Court before Judge ANDERSON on 2 November 1992. Twenty prosecution families are involved in this process. It was initially envisaged that this hearing would last five weeks, however, it is now expected to take longer and will continue early 1993. Should the judge decide that there is enough evidence to hold the case over for trial this will take place following completion of the deposition hearing in 1993.

From the non prosecution client group possibly six women will be called to give evidence. It is envisaged that I will be called to give evidence and am, therefore, unable to attend court to support the families wishing to attend the court process. A court support roster system has been established to ensure those people who attend court are supported. I have

been given dispensation by Chris LANGE, Crown Solicitor, to attend court on those occasions when my clients are giving individual evidence.

In my assessment families both prosecution and non prosecution are coping very well, under the circumstances, with the stress and demands of the court process.

### SUPERVISION

Regular fortnightly supervision is undertaken with Helen CAMPBELL. Report from her pending.

### IN CONCLUSION

In my assessment social work support for families involved in the Civic Creche enquiry has been essential. These families have experienced a tragic crisis in their lives that under normal circumstances would never have been remotely envisaged. The events that have allegedly occurred have destroyed their confidence in their own judgement, their faith in other trusted people and in the system generally. Social work support has, I believe, helped in the healing process for these families.

Families have found support invaluable, it has given them the opportunity to address this crisis, assess their needs and seek referral to appropriate resources.

I recommend that, should resources be available, ongoing social work support be extended next year during the court process.



Gen Crossen  
Social Worker  
Civic Creche Enquiry