Local Solutions To Local Problems

- Marita Delany and Kate Pratt
- Wednesday 26/11/2008
- Diversion and early intervention
Background

- Three year pilot program – June 2009
- Modelled on overseas community justice centres and the Victorian Specialist Courts experiences.
- Focusing on Therapeutic and Restorative approaches to justice.
The Broad Goals of The NJC

Lower the crime rate
Increase the participation of the community in the justice system
Increase offender accountability, improve justice outcomes by reducing breach rates
Improving the confidence of the community in the justice system
Service Delivery Principles of the NJC

- Proactive, responsive and timely justice
- Visible and accountable justice
- Holistic justice
- Community involvement in justice
- Innovation in justice
- Local opportunities
- Building on existing networks
- Continuity in staff and volunteers
- Collaborative/coordinated activities between agencies
Merging therapeutic jurisprudence with restorative justice principles

Using a 3 dimensional approach:

- Restoring the person to themselves
- Restoring the person to their immediate relationships
- Restoring the person to the community and preparing the community
Why the City of Yarra?

- The City of Yarra has a well established network of effective and mature service agencies
- The City of Yarra is responsive and involved in community activity
- The City of Yarra has the 2nd highest crime rate in Victoria
The Court

- One Magistrate
- Community representation on selection panel
- Magistrates Court
- VCAT
- VOCAT
- Childrens Court – criminal division
- Justice Officer
- Registry
Defendant resides in City of Yarra; or
Defendant is homeless but resides in short-term accommodation in the City of Yarra; or
Defendant is homeless and is alleged to have committed an offence in the City of Yarra; or
Defendant is a Koori person with a close connection to the City of Yarra and is alleged to have committed an offence in the City of Yarra.
Services on-site

- Victorian Legal Aid
- Fitzroy Community Legal Service
- The Brotherhood of St Laurence – employment, toys
- Carlton/Fitzroy Financial Counselling Inc
- Moreland CHC and Berry Street – Victims Support
- St Vincent’s Hospital – mental health
- North Yarra CHC – generalist counselling
- Salvation Army/VACRO/Court Network – volunteers and emergency relief and general support
Services on site cont’d

- Community Corrections
- Homeground – housing
- DOJ- Aboriginal Justice Worker, Court Justice Officer, Alcohol and Drug Case Manager, Dispute Settlement Centre – Mediation Coordinator, Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee
- Crime and Violence Prevention project worker
- Department of Human Services – Youth Justice
- Neighbourhood House
- Police Prosecutions
- Community Engagement
Client Services have a holistic approach to case management and service delivery and have the capacity to respond to

- Homelessness
- Drug and Alcohol use
- Mental Health
- And a range of other issues
Best practice administration of case management recognises the need for a high level of engagement and the active involvement of the wider community.
Client Services Practising Principles

241 Wellington Street, Collingwood, 3066

- Flexible, responsive and innovative case management and engagement practice - regardless of age e.g. outreach
- Working with local City of Yarra Service Providers to generate both a sustainable treatment plan and supportive referrals
- Collaborative work practices both internal and external to the NJC – e.g. Mental Health service
Client centred practice

Good old fashioned Case work

We work with defendants, victims, family members, individual help seekers and the community – aligned with the no wrong door principle

Secondary consultation

Effective and supportive transition from pre-sentence support to post sentence with either Community Corrections Victoria or the Short Sentence Support Program (a new NJC initiative)
So What Does This Look Like
The aim of this presentation is to increase the understanding of the inter-relations between the Neighbourhood Justice Centre and the community.

My current role: Casework /Counsellor, employed by North Yarra Community Health based at The Neighbourhood Justice Centre

4 days based at NJC, 1 day based NYCH

North Yarra has been based in the City of Yarra for over 139 years
Currently NYCH has four sites within the City if Yarra including services such as Needle syringe program, Dentist, Doctors, Physio’s and extensive allied health and various group opportunities.
I received a referral from the Legal Aid Lawyer based at the Neighbourhood Justice Centre.

Sam had been homeless for approximately 2 years and had recently been charged with stealing coins from the parking meters in our local area.
Case Study

- Sam’s presentation was dishevelled and had poor personal hygiene. During assessment, I noticed that Sam was doing a lot of self talking and could not keep his conversation fluid – this issue of assessment will be discussed soon.
- After a discussion with Sam’s lawyers it was established that Sam had no previous history with either the court or the police.
I supported “Sam “ in court that day. The magistrate recommended that “Sam” engage with myself and other services.

After court I accessed the psychologist based at the NJC, he assessed “Sam” and it was determined that he would be linked in with a GP from North Yarra Community Health for his immediate health and mental health needs.
In relation to housing I was able to secure crisis accommodation at a men's shelter approximately 10 minutes from the city.
Final outcome.............

Sam has stable accommodation at a Salvation Army supported accommodation hostel. There is a completed housing application pending.

Sam received a 12 month “Good Behaviour Bond”

He is engaged with CHOPS – homeless outreach team for people with mental health concerns.
Case Study

- He is compliant with medication through his engagement with both CHOPS and NYCH.
- He continues to walk around the “City of Yarra” during the day dropping into to different services for lunch.
- He comes every Wednesday for Lunch at the Neighbourhood Justice Centre for our “Community Lunch”.
- He continues to be engaged.
Children’s Play Area