



# Shelter Tas

## Workforce Development Program 2018-23 Evaluation Report

### ***Nurturing connection and growth in children and young people affected by trauma***

*April 2019*

#### **Background**

*Workforce Development Program 2018-23*

Shelter Tas has a 5-year funding agreement with the Department of Communities Tasmania (Housing Tasmania) for the Workforce Development Program (WDP) 2018-2023. The purpose of the WDP is to *facilitate specialist professional development and training activities that: continue to build workforce capacity of the housing and homelessness sector; respond to new and emerging sector issues and support Tasmanians who are experiencing, or who are at risk of homelessness.*

Shelter Tas is developing, promoting and evaluating a schedule of specialist quality training in line with the following priorities:

- Priority 1 - Increasing the skills and competencies of the SHS workforce
- Priority 2 - Increasing the accessibility of training and professional development to the whole of the sector.

#### **Consultation**

Consultation with the housing and homelessness sector (through the WDP Reference Group) is integral to the success of the WDP, and is a continuous process throughout the 5 years.

Shelter Tas members have reported a significant need for further training in working with children and young people who have experienced trauma. Shelter Tas worked with Jessie Carson (Hobart Women's Shelter Child Therapeutic Worker) to develop a tailored half day training session for housing and homelessness sector workers in Hobart and Launceston.

#### **Training Overview**

Experiences of trauma can influence how children learn, grow and develop. It can affect a child's self-image and the ways in which they relate to others and express themselves.

This interactive three-hour workshop was grounded in interpersonal neurobiology and based on principles of child-centred play therapy. It explored the neurobiological impacts of trauma. Housing and homelessness workers learned simple and practical therapeutic skills to strengthen child-parent relationships and build children's emotional regulation, impulse control and internal motivation.

## About the trainer

Jessie Carson is mental health accredited Occupational Therapist and a registered play therapist, currently holding a position at The Hobart Women's Shelter as a Child Therapeutic Worker. She holds a Bachelor Degree in Occupational Therapy, a Post Graduate Diploma in Play Therapy and is currently completing a Master's Degree in Play Therapy. Jessie has worked in various mainstream schools, specialist schools, and early childhood intervention services, as well as hospital and community health settings.

## Evaluation

Training session:	<b><i>Nurturing connection and growth in children and young people affected by trauma</i></b>
Facilitator:	Jessie Carson Child Therapeutic Worker – Hobart Women's Shelter Mental health accredited Occupational Therapist Registered play therapist
Date:	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 9 <sup>th</sup> April 2019
Region:	South (Hobart) and North (Launceston)
Overview:	Topics covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The neurobiological impacts of trauma</li><li>• How safe and consistent relationships drive healing and growth</li><li>• Three simple and practical play therapy techniques to increase positive relational exchanges</li></ul>
Resources:	Printed handouts and participants received follow up emails with Jessie's contact details for any further questions.
Participants:	35
Evaluations completed:	32
Overall rating:	94% rated this training good/excellent overall 100% would recommend this training to others 100% felt ready to apply what they learned to their work

## Priority 1 - Increasing the skills and competencies of the SHS workforce

Over 81% of participants reported improvement in their knowledge of working with children and young people affected by trauma.

100% would recommend this training to others.

100% felt ready to apply what they learned to their work.

## Priority 2 - Increasing the accessibility of training and professional development to the whole of the sector

Participants:	35
Organisations/programs:	13
Regions:	North, North West, South
Type:	Specialist Homelessness Services

Participants from across Tasmania were able to attend, coming from a diverse range of member services and organisations. Training was open to Specialist Homelessness Services and Community Housing Providers.

Annie Kenney  
Anglicare  
CatholicCare  
Colony 47  
Colville Place

Hobart City Mission  
Housing Connect  
Huon Domestic Violence Service  
Jireh House

Magnolia Place LWS  
Mara House  
Salvation Army  
Youth Futures Inc.

## Comments

*“Good mix of slides, group work, role play and discussion. Jessie was very engaging and knowledgeable”*

*“Brilliant! Jessie was very knowledgeable in the area of trauma & presented the content in a way that makes it easy to apply to multiple groups”*

*“The presentation & detail were wonderful. I particularly appreciated the easy delivery & activities”*

*“Really great to have handouts to take home. Well presented & easy to follow and understand”*

Comments from participants were positive, with good feedback on both the training topic and facilitator. Many participants liked the shorter 3 hour format.

When asked *“What further resources, support or training would assist you to apply what you have learned today?”* participants identified further training in the area of children/young people and trauma, resources such as books or videos for their workplaces, and training in engaging parents/caregivers.

Participants in Hobart received handouts to take home, however several asked for links to papers, authors and other resources. This feedback was taken into account for the subsequent Launceston session, and all participants received follow up emails with Jessie’s contact details for any further questions.

## Recommendations

### Topic

Shelter Tas members have reported a significant need for further training in working with children and young people who have experienced trauma. Feedback from participants indicates a strong desire for more training in this area, with particular focus on teenagers and trauma, mental health and behaviour. This will be raised with the Reference Group to discuss further at the 2020 planning meeting.

### Provider

Feedback for Jessie was all positive, praising her extensive knowledge and expertise when tailoring the course to the participants, taking into account their roles across a range of different services, and incorporating participant feedback from the first session to the second. Finding a trainer that was local

and embedded in the Tasmanian Specialist Homelessness Services also added to the quality of the delivery.

### Delivery and Future Training

The half-day training delivered a comprehensive mix of presentation slides, group work, role play and discussion. No particular running time will suit all participants in such a diverse sector, therefore we recommend continuing with a range of different length training sessions throughout the Workforce Development Program.

### Administration

As with previous Workforce Development Project training, registrations were limited to 2 per organisation/program. This was intended to give as many services as possible the opportunity to send staff, and not have any one organisation dominate the session. However, registration numbers remained low until shortly before the closing date, while some services had a waiting list of workers who wanted to attend. For the next training session, the Reference Group agreed to trial keeping the limit of 2 per organisation/program initially, then removing the limit approximately half way through the registration period. This process is intended to balance the needs of a diverse sector, and will be reviewed by the Reference Group for further improvement.