The Family Wellbeing Clinic

A complimentary service to maternal & child health
Snapshot of Ballarat
(population 87,000)

- Population 87,000 (2004)
- Birth rate 1,140 p.a.
- 10,130 children 0-8 years (11.3%)
- Teenage births 15-19 years, 31.4 per thousand (19.0 per 1000 Victoria)
- 25.4% one parent families (Victoria 19.4%)
Snapshot of Ballarat
(population 87,000)

- 7.2% were born overseas
  (Victoria 23.3%)
- Approximately 832 people
  (1%) are of ATSI.
- Third quarter 2005,
  unemployment rate was 7.5%
  compared to 5.5% for Victoria
  as a whole.
- 2 hospitals, 2 universities,
  service town to surrounding
  agricultural environment,
City of Ballarat MCH Service

- **NGO’s fund**
- Day Stay
- PASDAS
- MCHN in foster care position
- IFS

This document is managed by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria (as of 27 August 2007)
History of Family Wellbeing Clinic

- Set up in 1996 with funding from DHS
- Initial Enhanced Maternal & Child Health
- Evaluated by RMIT and funding became available for the Enhanced Home Visiting programs across the State
- Funded 2 days a week
- Set up as a “one stop shop” maternal and child health service to provide extra support for families with special needs
Family Wellbeing clinic

- Postnatal depression
- Domestic violence
- Substance abuse
- Mental illness
Funding

- Included a component in education for a Graduate Diploma in Mental Health nursing at University of Ballarat
- Ongoing supervision: monthly sessions with a psychologist
Off and running….

- Credentials established (previously co-ordinated a program called Early parenting In Home Support service)
- Written referrals
- Phone referrals
- Chart of referrals (past 2 yrs)
- Waiting list
- Secondary consultations with colleagues
MCHN’s use EPDS at 6 weeks and 6 months

- A screening tool and the basis of a conversation starter
- Physical health check list at 4mths and 8 months
- How to detect the anxiety? “the worried well”
A day in the life of……..

- Phone calls, follow ups
- Initial phone contact
- Encouraged to write own story eg how felt when found out pregnant, birth, coming.
- 50 minute consultations
- Number of visits between 2-10
- IRIS
- 5 clients a day
Engaging vulnerable clients

- Good listening
- Sense of humour
- Knowing my subject
- Centre is welcoming and childproofed
- Toddlers
- Kindness
- MCH is a known & trusted service
When Mum falls over……

- Who is supporting the mother?
- Who is holding the baby?
- And the toddler?
- And dad?
PND group

- 3 closed groups year
- 8-10 weeks each
- Plus couples evenings
- Collaborative process with male facilitator
- Must have childcare available preferably on site
- Co-facilitation
Cost & Fundraising

- Rooms free
- Fundraising as each group costs approximately $1000
- On-site childcare
- This year started without money in the bank - “a leap of faith”
- Funding from Ballarat South Rotary and the CWA and Springfest
Common themes

- Unresolved grief
- Bad birth experiences
- Family issues/family businesses
- Relationship issues
- Poor mother daughter relationships
- Partnered with the youngest or only son
- Sick or prem baby
- International relationships
- Relocation to Ballarat
Benefits of the service

- Secondary consultations/advice to colleagues
- Non stigmatising
- Parent has time to explore her feelings
- Focus is on the mother
- Free of charge
- Short waiting list
- Availability of PND group
- Relieves pressure on stressed staff in generic service
Excellence in Nursing Award

- A thrill to be short listed, especially as I choose to continue hands on work
- Many of the finalists were community based projects
- I would encourage managers to nominate MCH nurses & innovative programs
- There is also a category for nurse managers
New project

- Group for parents of prem and sick babies
- This is a group with high needs, possibly PTSD
- The worries continue for years