

Session 6: Navigating high emotions

Key Messages: The ways that conflict between significant adults is managed can make a huge difference to children's experience of separation. Strong conflicts can often involve strong emotions. A greater understanding of the underlying feelings leading to anger, aggression, blame and dismissal, can assist us to make positive choices in our ways of behaving when strong emotions are present. This can contribute to better outcomes, and positive role models, for our children.

Session 7: Staying on Track

Key Messages: Choosing our own behaviours, attitudes and approaches to difficulties we encounter can help us to 'be our best' and stay true to our own intentions in situations with others. There are many ways that we can build skills in reflecting on and evaluating our own thinking, feelings and behaviour. We can use these skills to create greater choice in the ways that we behave in relationships with other caregivers and with the wider world, for the benefit of our children.

Session 8: Looking toward the future

Key Messages: When children experience a caregiver who is focussed on re-building family life in ways that reflect the best interests of the child, the lives of all family members can be improved. We can use our learnings and experiences to reflect and take action toward a future that reflects our hopes and dreams for our children.



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Family is Forever Program



Supporting separated families and others who care for children, when conflict is impacting on the children in their lives.





Research shows it is not separation itself that is harmful to children, but ongoing parental conflict. As a matter of fact, children will be impacted by conflict between anyone caring for them. Conflict can affect the emotional and psychological development and well-being of children.

The Family is Forever program has been designed to support parents and others caring for children, to focus on the needs of the children in their lives during times of separation or relationship conflict. It provides family members with an opportunity to reflect on their own situation, identify existing strengths and resources, and explore new ways of doing things.

The program can be completed within 16 hrs and a variety of formats and delivery options are available. Program staff are available to support participants throughout the group program and in the provision of individual counselling sessions as needed.

Session Outline

Session 1: Focusing on the Children

Key Messages: Family conflict can affect children in many ways. The ways that caregivers conduct their communications with each other can be understood as a parenting choice. Whatever the choices of other caregivers, parents can support their children to navigate separation by making child-focussed choices throughout the separation process and into the future.

Session 2: Knowledge of Self, Family and Community

Key Messages: Our life experiences are influenced by many things, including our past and present relationships. Building awareness about ourselves and the dynamics of our past familial and social interconnections can help us to navigate new roles and relationships in ways that benefit our children.

SESSION 3: Understanding Our Own Grief and Making Room for Change

Key Messages: Grief is a response to loss and influences all aspects of our lives. The experience of grief differs according to many things including

personality, lived experience, cultural heritage and family structure. The ways we move and work with our grief can help our children work through theirs.

Session 4: Children's Experience of Parental/ Caregiver Separation

Key Messages: Grief and other feelings about conflict and separation can affect children deeply, and children may express this in many different ways. Awareness of children's needs and the ways that they may express their experiences can help us to support them. Wherever possible, children need loving, connected relationships to continue with each significant relationship.

Session 5: Communication Skills and Choices

Key Messages: Communicating with other caregivers in respectful and effective ways can greatly benefit our children. We can learn how to build communication skills, and to build awareness of our own communication styles. This can give us greater choice in navigating communications with others and can support effective communication, particularly with our children's other caregivers.