

# Core Activities of Family Work



## Sections Four and Five

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## Introduction to Section Four and Five

Congratulations on completing sections 1-3 of this training package. Sections four and five are extensions to the work you have already undertaken. The information provided in these sections may not apply to all participants and as such can be undertaken as an extension for further professional development.

**Sections Four and Five will include the following topics:**

### Section Four - Core Activities of Family Work:

- Boundaries in Family Work
- Working in partnership

### Section Five – Tools for Family Work

- Quality Improvement



## Core Family Work Activities

Family Work has a range of core activities. Primarily these include:

- Intake and Referral
- Case Management
- Home Visiting
- Assessment and Planning
- Parenting Programs
- Counselling
- Support Groups
- Playgroups
- Practical Assistance
- Advocacy



This section will focus on Case Management in the context of Family Work and will cover such foundational behaviours as boundaries with clients/families and the importance of working in partnership and developing partnerships within the sector.

### Case Management

The Case Management Society of Australia defines case management as *'a collaborative process of assessment, planning, facilitation and advocacy for options and services to meet an individual's health needs through communication and available resources to promote quality cost effective outcomes (CMSA 2004, p.6).'* Case management has seven specific functions in the process of case management, these include:

- Intake and referral
- Assessment
- Planning
- Implementation
- Monitoring
- Evaluation/review
- Closure

#### Further Reading related to Case Management:

SCARF (Supporting Children and Responding to Families) is a guided practice case management model with clear standards and expectations for Family Support services working with vulnerable families and children. <http://www.pdc.org.au/scarf/>

Practice Guidelines: Women and Children's Family Violence Counselling and Support Programs.  
[http://dhs.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/581256/practice-guidelines-women-and-children-fv-counsell-support.pdf](http://dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/581256/practice-guidelines-women-and-children-fv-counsell-support.pdf) accessed March 2015

Evidence Informed Practice in Intensive Family Support Programs: Are we there yet? Marie Iannos and Greg Antcliff (Australian Institute of Family Studies). Audio Recording of a webinar and slides available at the following link: <https://www3.aifs.gov.au/cfca/events/evidence-informed-practice-intensive-family-support-programs-are-we-there-yet> accessed March 2015

## Boundaries in Practice

Boundaries are incredibly important when working with people. Boundaries define where one person's responsibility ends and another person's responsibility begins.

Boundaries in family work can be difficult and sometimes family workers forget to define their boundaries and end up taking on more responsibility than is required.



### Poor boundaries:

Poor boundaries can make you feel:

- Confused about your role or helpless because you can't fix it
- Angry or resentful when the person does not behave as you think they should
- Frustrated from becoming too involved with the family and unsure as to how you can pull back
- Exhausted, drained and responsible

**The incidence of burnout is increased when your boundaries are not defined.**

### Good boundaries:

Good boundaries can make you feel:

- Energised
- Like you are empowering families to take responsibility for their own decisions, actions and consequences
- That both yourself and the families you work with understand your role and responsibilities and theirs' in the process
- Happy and safe

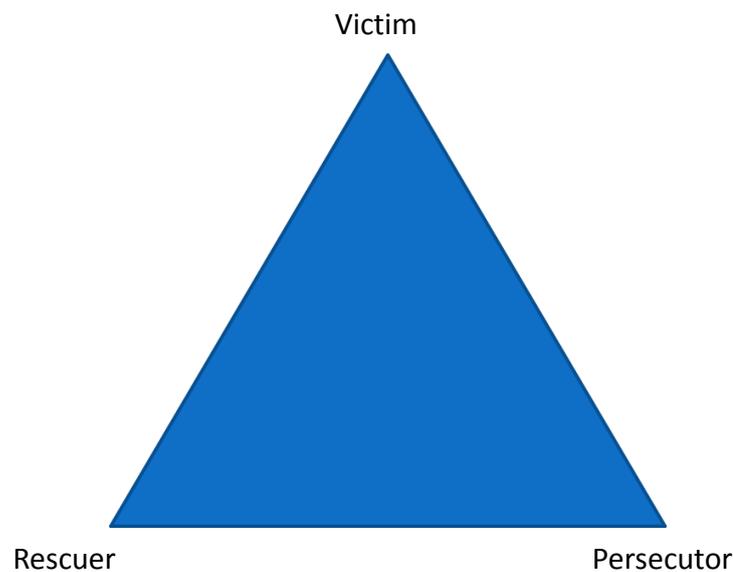
### Boundaries assist.....

- Families to take responsibility of their own life

- Families to make their own decisions
- Families to take responsibility for the consequences of those decisions

## Drama Triangle

The basic concept behind the 'Drama Triangle' developed by Steven Karpman is the connection between responsibility and power and their relationship to boundaries. The triangle was originally developed as a therapeutic tool in transactional analysis, however it is a powerful demonstration of transactions that occur within relationships with people. It clearly demonstrates the importance of boundaries within relationships, particularly professional ones.



### Definitions of the roles:

**Rescuer:** this is someone who seeks to 'rescue' those whom they see as being vulnerable. The traits of a Rescuer are that they often do more than 50% of the work and may offer help that is 'unasked' for rather than finding out how the other person wants to be supported. In doing so many times the Rescuer can end up feeling 'hard done by' and resentful. The Rescuer often does not take responsibility for themselves, but rather takes responsibility for the perceived victim whom they rescue.

**Victim:** is usually someone who is feeling overwhelmed by their own sense of vulnerability, inadequacy or powerlessness and does not take responsibility for themselves and therefore looks for the Rescuer to look after them. At some point the victim will feel let down by the Rescuer or feel overwhelmed and even persecuted by them. When this occurs they move to the Persecutor role. They will however still feel like the Victim.

**Persecutor:** is often unaware of their own power. The power here however is negative and destructive. This is the position taken often when the Rescuer might try to set boundaries in the relationship or will seek to blame the Rescuer when things are not going their way.

**Example:**

Ruth, a worker in the local family support centre, has been to the local shopping centre to pick up one of her children. On the way home, Ruth notices Janet – one of her clients- who is standing at a bus stop with two children. It is pouring with rain so Ruth (thinks.. ‘poor Janet waiting in the rain) and offers Janet a lift home (Rescuer). During the conversation in the car, Ruth discloses personal information and tells Janet that she picks up her child every Thursday after work.

From then on, Ruth sees Janet at the bus stop with her shopping late every Thursday afternoon. Janet waves to Ruth and Ruth always gives Janet a lift (I’d be embarrassed not to – thinks Ruth). In conversation, Janet talks about the difficulties of being a single mum and what a wonderful person Ruth is and how she couldn’t do without her.

After a while, Janet stops seeing the arrangement as a favour. She behaves as though it is an obligation of Ruth’s and even complains when Ruth is late.

The situation discussed in the example above is an example of a drama triangle, many of you will be familiar with scenarios such as this one, if not in your own practice in one of the people you have worked with at some stage.

**Drama triangles can start at any point:**

- A person can behave as a Victim to attract a Rescuer (Ruth) – or a Rescuer can perceive a Victim, by rescuing them or create a Victim.
- If the Rescuer tries to pull back or start to set boundaries then the Victim can become the Persecutor – starting to criticise, cajole or sulk (Janet chastising Ruth for being late)
- The Rescuer could shift their role and become the Victim – feeling resentful or powerless

**How to reverse the situation:**

The Rescuer needs to take responsibility for her/himself, connect with their power and acknowledge their own vulnerability.

The Victim needs to own their vulnerability and take responsibility for themselves and recognise that they have power and are able to use it positively in a relationship.

The Persecutor needs to initially own their power, rather than be afraid of it or use it negatively.

**Think and respond!**

Consider Ruth and Janet’s example above, answer the following questions:

**How can roles and responsibilities be utilised to assist Family Workers in situations such as these?**

**What roles/responsibilities do you think would have been in place in Ruth’s organisation to help her to set and keep boundaries?**

**What could Ruth have done differently?**

**What do you do in your practice to ensure that you set and keep professional boundaries? And why is this important?**

## Your Turn!

Think of a situation where you know you have been a Rescuer, Victim, or Persecutor, this might even be a personal situation but if possible try to use a work situation.

**Using that situation, ask yourself the following questions.**

**What am I not doing?**

**Am I allowing the other person to take responsibility for themselves and their actions?**

**Have I agreed to more than I want to do? Am I doing more than half the work?**

**What boundaries do I need to set up?**

**What action do I need to take to make sure that I deal with this in the best possible way so that it has the best possible outcome?**

**Further Reading:**

O’Leary, P., Tsui, M., Ruch, G. (2012) ‘The boundaries of the social work relationship revisited: towards a connected, inclusive and dynamic conceptualisation.’ *British Journal of Social Work* (2012) 1-19. [http://www.griffith.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/464161/Patrick\\_-Boundaries-of-the-SW-Relationship.pdf](http://www.griffith.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/464161/Patrick_-Boundaries-of-the-SW-Relationship.pdf) accessed March 2015

## In Summary!

### Boundaries help.....

- Define what we are responsible for and what our client is responsible for
- Provide a framework where we empower families to work collaboratively making informed decisions
- Families become less emotionally dependant on the family worker.
- Families to share with the worker a common understanding of the purpose and goals of their work.
- Families to be less likely to become emotionally dependant on the family worker.
- Families to share with the worker a common understanding of the purpose and goals of their work.



## Working in Partnership

Organisations need to link and collaborate to achieve best outcomes for individuals, organisations and communities.

It is becoming increasingly more important for organisations to work in partnership in order to demonstrate sustainability and how they are contributing to the community wellbeing in which they work.



## How can organisations work in partnership with their stakeholders in the community?

There are a number of strategies that you can use to work in partnership with your stakeholders, the more connected you are to the community in which you work the better your networks are and the more resourced you and your organisation is for the families you work with.

Knowing the region or community in which your service operates is key to identifying services that your clients might require. When you commence in a new role it is important to gain a good understanding of what community resources are available for your client group.

### Strategies to increase partnership opportunities

- Participate in forums and associations
- Collaborate with other organisations and review arrangements regularly
- Interagency meetings
- Shared training
- Learning groups
- Memorandum of understanding
- Written agreements
- Development of a common outcome

**How would you identify the interagency groups or partnerships which you and your organisation should be participating in?**

**What interagency meetings are you or your organisation currently involved in?**

**What groups or partnerships should your organisation be considering for the future? And why?**

**What action are you going to take to increase opportunities for partnership?**

# Tools for Family Work

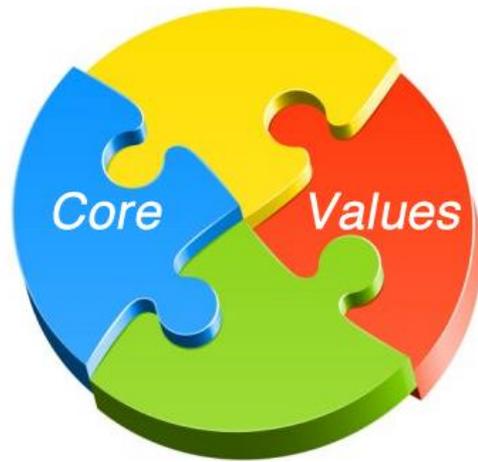


## Section 5

## Quality Improvement in Family Work

Family support services that are committed to quality improvement practices provide high quality services to families and children. They are able to articulate and demonstrate the outcomes of their clients and how they are better off.

Organisations are required to demonstrate on-going quality improvement practices.



## Quality Services

**What would a quality service look like?**

**Does your organisation engage in quality improvement activities? What do these look like?**

**How do you know if families you have worked with are better off? (for example: change in situation, circumstance, behaviour, attitude, skills and knowledge)**

## Quality Improvement Activities

There are many activities that organisations can undertake when participating in quality improvement, you will have mentioned some or all of these above. Some quality improvement activities include:

- Be aware of the population and service outcomes of your organisation and how you make a contribution to those outcomes**
- Clear program goals and continuous evaluation and quality improvement are crucial for program success**
- Collect relevant data**
- Regularly evaluate programs and modify strategies to improve**
- Participating in ongoing reflection and discussions about the outcomes and quality of service for families.**
- Engage in reviews**
- Project planning and evaluation is a collaborative, ongoing process that involves staff, families, management and the wider community**
- Stakeholders are included in the process of evaluation**
- Clear procedures exist to ensure that all data and feedback collected within the project is reviewed as part of the evaluation process**
- Gain knowledge and understanding about Results Based Accountability™**

### Further Reading:

Results Based Accountability Framework™ <http://resultsleadership.org/>

<http://raguide.org/>

## Tool kit of resources for Family Work

Access to tools to do your work is critically important for a resourced family worker. The following list of resources is not extensive or exclusive and is to provide a tool kit that you can use in your work.

Conferences and workshops for professional development are crucial to your practice development and currency overtime. FamS host practice forums on a regular basis which FamS members can access for free, or at a minimal cost for non-members. For information on these you can contact FamS at:

[info@nswfamilyservices.asn.au](mailto:info@nswfamilyservices.asn.au).



## Resource Tool Kit

- FamS [www.nswfamilyservices.asn.au](http://www.nswfamilyservices.asn.au)
- RBA [www.resultsleadership.org](http://www.resultsleadership.org)
- SCARF [www.pdc.org.au](http://www.pdc.org.au)
- Australian Institute of Family Studies <http://www.aifs.gov.au/>
- Family and Community Services <http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/>
- St Lukes Innovative Resources [www.innovativeresources.org.au](http://www.innovativeresources.org.au)
- Healthy Start [www.healthystart.org.au](http://www.healthystart.org.au)

# Congratulations!

**You have completed  
the  
Principles in Practice  
Practice Guide**



We hope you found this guide useful to your work.

To assist us to improve this training package can you please complete the survey at the link provided:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X95Q5PQ>