

“Thank you for all your advice and information. I have taken a lot of it on board and my clients have benefitted greatly.”

*Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team member, NSW.*

“Thank you so much for this wonderful resource. Your website by the way is terrific.”

*MindMatters State Officer*

“Thanks so much for the links. The information they provide is brilliant and exactly what we are looking for.”

*Project Manager, Child Protection Team*

“The COPMI website is fantastic and contains so much useful information.”

*Partner of a father with bi-polar disorder.*

## CURRENT RESOURCES



**Principles and Actions for Services and People Working with Children of Parents with a Mental Illness**



**The Best For Me and My Baby**



**Family Talk**

Hard copies can be ordered on the website ([www.copmi.net.au](http://www.copmi.net.au)) by completing a *Resource Materials Order Form*. All COPMI resource materials are also available electronically from this website.

**New resources will be launched in Oct 2009**

## AICAFMHA

*Promoting mental health for young Australians*

AICAFMHA was formed by and for mental health workers and consumers of mental health services and incorporated in 2000.

The association's primary aim is to actively promote the mental health and well-being of infants, children, young people and their families.

The association grew from beginnings at the inaugural Child and Adolescent Mental Health Conference held in Adelaide in 1995. It is managed by a Board of Directors with national representation.

Further information about AICAFMHA, its activities, services and coming events can be found at [www.aicafmha.net.au](http://www.aicafmha.net.au) or by contacting:

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## COPMI

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**Children Of  
Parents with a  
Mental Illness  
National Initiative**

**COPMI**



[www.copmi.net.au](http://www.copmi.net.au)

## BACKGROUND

The Australian Children Of Parents with a Mental Illness (COPMI) national initiative is being undertaken by AICAFMHA\* with funding provided by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

The initiative began in 2002 with a comprehensive national consultation that included parents, young people, mental health workers and other health, education, justice and welfare service providers.

Based on the consultation, expert opinion and relevant literature, a key document *Principles and Actions for Services and People Working with Children of Parents with Mental Illness* was developed and resource materials (eg booklets and a website) were developed, trial tested and released.

In the second phase (mid 2004-2007) the initiative worked to increase awareness and uptake of the COPMI good practice guidelines among individuals and services working with children of parents with a mental illness and their families. It also promoted and supported education and training of health and other relevant workforces regarding the COPMI resources and increased awareness of the availability of resource materials appropriate for children and family members affected by parental mental illness.

\* Australian Infant Child Adolescent and Family Mental Health Association Ltd (pronounced 'ay-kaf-ma').

## COPMI NATIONAL INITIATIVE AIMS and OBJECTIVES

Not all children of parents with a mental illness will experience difficulties as a result of their parent's ill health. However a combination of genetic inheritance and a range of factors often associated with mentally ill adults can increase risks to their children's well-being.

### Aim

The overall aim of the Australian COPMI initiative is to promote better mental health outcomes for children of parents with a mental health problem or disorder.

### Objectives

The objectives of the current phase of the initiative (2008 - mid 2010) are:

- To increase the availability of information for workers and families about:
  - the promotion of factors to enhance children's resilience
  - the reduction of risk factors for children, and
  - resources to assist children and families in relation to families where a parent has a mental illness.
- To increase access to quality workforce development resources for people working with children and families affected by a parent's mental illness.
- To increase access by 'copmi' program planners and facilitators to
  - knowledge, skills and evaluation personnel regarding relevant research literature and evaluation methods, models and techniques
  - information regarding the efficacy of programs, services and/or approaches.

## KEY PROCESSES

The COPMI national initiative will utilise three key processes to achieve its objectives.

### Communication

The communication strategy promotes improved mental health and well-being outcomes for children of parents with a mental illness. It also promotes the COPMI national initiative as the key national resource for the development and support of programs that work with children and their families in Australia, who have a parent with a mental illness.

### Consumer and Carer Participation

AICAFMHA is committed to participation in the initiative by parents with mental illness, their families and carers (including young people). Structures have been put in place that are flexible and dynamic to ensure that this approach enables participation at a range of levels. For example, some participants may wish to provide advice on resource development whilst others may wish to participate as peer researchers.

### Evidence Based

The COPMI national initiative will actively seek out relevant quality evidence in relation to its work, including expert opinion. The national COPMI Reference Group guides and advises the initiative and a number of consultation groups (including academics, those working in the field and consumers and carers) will advise key outcome areas (e.g. workforce development).