



Children of Parents With a Mental Illness

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FOCUS ON CHILDREN & MENTAL ILLNESS

Children of Parents With a Mental Illness (COPMI) will use The Mental Health Services Conference (TheMHS Conference) to focus on children and parental mental illness including the launch of a new 'tips' section on their website and promotion of new research which finds out more about children living with grandparents in response to family situations such as parental drug abuse, mental illness and family violence.

The collaborative study by Curtin University of Technology and Wanslea Family Services in Perth shows why children and young people who live with their grandparents often feel life is better than when living with their parents.

"This is the first time we have looked at this growing social issue from the child's perspective - through their young eyes - our study shows most children like living with their grandparents and the associated feelings of safety, security, love, care and protection after the traumatic lives most have lived so far," said Curtin University School of Psychology's Professor David Hay.

"These children need help to enjoy happy and fulfilling childhoods and become healthy, resilient individuals, and their grandparents need more support too" said Professor Hay.

Adelaide-based grandfather, Don has experienced the challenges of living and caring for someone who has a mental illness. Don's daughter has a mental illness and he is involved in the care of his grandchildren.

"This conference is a great opportunity to highlight the issue of children and grandparents and the resources, including the new "tips" section that are available through our website www.copmi.net.au" said Phil Robinson, Chair COPMI Reference Group.

COPMI is a national project promoting better outcomes for children with a parent with a mental illness. COPMI's website provides information for the people who care for these kids – health professionals, social workers, neighbours, teachers, and coaches and contains downloadable booklets for family and friends. The information raises awareness, and helps people identify and respond to children and their families.

The Mental Health Services Conference (TheMHS Conference) runs from the 30 August – 2 September at the Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide.

More information on COPMI at www.copmi.net.au

Media: Interviews available with Professor David Hay, Don (Grandfather), Phil Robinson, Chair COPMI Reference Group, Elizabeth Fudge, COPMI Project Manager. Contact COPMI Media Contact Matt Clear, Councillor of Hootville Communications: 0403 229 094 or matt@hootville.com

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The national Children Of Parents with a Mental Illness (COPMI) initiative is being undertaken by the Australian Infant Child Adolescent and Family Mental Health Association (AICAFMHA) for the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.