

2006

# Reconnecting Families Program: training phase evaluation report

Eric van Beurden

Sallie Newell  
*Southern Cross University*

Denise Hughes

Anthony Franks

Chris Binge

*See next page for additional authors*

---

## Publication details

van Beurden, E, Newell, S, Hughes, D, Franks, A, Binge, C & Lloyd, D 2006, *Reconnecting Families Program: training phase evaluation report*, prepared for Health Promotion, Population Health, Planning & Performance, North Coast Area Health Service, Lismore.

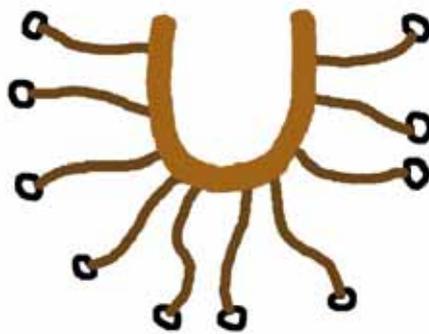
ePublications@SCU is an electronic repository administered by Southern Cross University Library. Its goal is to capture and preserve the intellectual output of Southern Cross University authors and researchers, and to increase visibility and impact through open access to researchers around the world. For further information please contact [epubs@scu.edu.au](mailto:epubs@scu.edu.au).

---

**Authors**

Eric van Beurden, Sallie Newell, Denise Hughes, Anthony Franks, Chris Binge, and Donna Lloyd

# Reconnecting Families Program



## Training Phase Evaluation Report

January 2006

### **AUTHORS**

Eric van Beurden  
Sallie Newell  
Denise Hughes  
Anthony Franks  
Chris Binge  
Donna Lloyd

Health Promotion - NCAHS  
Health Promotion - NCAHS  
Health Promotion - NCAHS  
Health Promotion - NCAHS  
Malanee Bugilmah - IFBS  
Health Promotion - NCAHS

NSW Health Department

This work may be reproduced in whole or part for study or training purposes subject to the inclusion of an acknowledgement of the source. It should not be used for commercial purposes.

Suggested citation:

Van Beurden E, Newell S, Hughes D, Franks A, Binge C, Lloyd D. *Reconnecting Families Program: Training Phase Evaluation Report*. Prepared for Health Promotion, Population Health, Planning & Performance, North Coast Area Health Service, January 2006.

ISBN:0 7347 3894 3

SHP No: (HP) 060007

For further information please contact:

Health Promotion Unit

Population Health, Planning & Performance Directorate

North Coast Area Health Service

PO Box 498 Lismore NSW 2480

*Phone:* 02 6620 7500

*Fax:* 02 6622 2151

*Email:* [lmcp@ncahs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:lmcp@ncahs.nsw.gov.au)

Date: January 2006

PLEASE NOTE: When reading the word Aboriginal in this document, it refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

# Reconnecting Families Program

**Training Phase Evaluation Report**

**January 2006**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We, the authors, would like to acknowledge and thank the following people and organisations for their support with developing, implementing and evaluating the Reconnecting Families Training Program:

- The North Coast Area Health Service's Population Health, Planning and Performance Management Directorate and Health Promotion Unit for support and funding.
- Rossi Lyons (Families First) for being instrumental in establishing and actively participating in the Reconnecting Families partnership.
- Evelyn Robinson and Kylie Coldwell for providing valuable feedback during the developmental phase.
- The many Aboriginal Elders, organisations, communities and individuals – for their input and support, particularly during the formative and development stages of this program, and of the Health Promotion Unit's broader ECHIDNA (Empowering Communities Holistically In Determining Needs (for) Aboriginal People) Team.
- Greg Telford and the Rekindling The Spirit team – for contributing their expertise and facilities to promote and run the program.
- The many other organisations who generously shared their time and resource materials to help with developing the program.
- Malcolm Hunt (Rekindling The Spirit) for contributing his time, expertise and support to the program's Reference Group.
- The program participants – for their active and open contribution to the program sessions and their thoughtful and sincere feedback throughout the various evaluation processes.
- Lyndy McPhee (Health Promotion Unit) – for her advice, proof reading, design and layout.

# CONTENTS

<b>Summary</b> .....	<b>1</b>
▶ Program process .....	1
▶ Program impact .....	2
▶ Felt and expected outcomes .....	2
▶ Conclusions and recommendations .....	3
<b>Background</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>What is the Reconnecting Families Program?</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Why was it developed?</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>What are the key principles?</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>How is it related to the Koori Fathering Program?</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>What criteria were used to select participants?</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>What does this evaluation cover?</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Methods</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>How did the Reconnecting Families Training Program operate?</b> .....	<b>8</b>
▶ Content.....	8
▶ Implementation, staffing and participants.....	8
<b>How was the Reconnecting Families Training Program evaluated?</b> .....	<b>9</b>
▶ Types of information collected.....	9
▶ How information was collected.....	9
▶ How information was analysed.....	10
<b>Results</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Summary of the data collected</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Reconnecting Families Training Program workers' characteristics</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Training program process</b> .....	<b>13</b>
▶ Facilitators' feedback.....	13
▶ Workers' survey feedback.....	14
▶ Workers' video feedback.....	16
<b>Program Impact on workers</b> .....	<b>18</b>
▶ Understanding and confidence.....	18
▶ Knowledge about stages of child development.....	21
▶ Knowledge about managing children's behaviour.....	22
▶ Knowledge about communication .....	23
<b>Felt and expected-outcomes for workers</b> .....	<b>24</b>
▶ As parents .....	24
▶ In relationships with children .....	26
▶ In relationships with partners.....	28
▶ In working with Aboriginal families .....	29
▶ In other areas of workers' lives.....	30
▶ Planned delivery of workers' first RFP in the community .....	31
<b>Discussion of Results</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>Recommendations</b> .....	<b>35</b>

<b>References</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>Appendices</b> .....	<b>37</b>
Appendix A: Brief Overview of Reconnecting Families Program Sessions .....	37
Appendix B: Expression of Interest .....	39
Appendix C: Demographics & Attendance Log Form.....	45
Appendix D: Facilitator Training Feedback Form .....	46
Appendix E: Worker Training Feedback Form .....	48
Appendix F: Worker Video Interview Protocols .....	50
Appendix G: Worker Video Interview Responses.....	52

## TABLES

Table 1: Age and gender of workers .....	11
Table 2. Details of workers attending RFP training.....	12
Table 3. Perceived quality of the workshop. ....	15
Table 4. Perceived helpfulness of the workshop. ....	16
Table 5. Perceived level of understanding and confidence. Mean pre and post score out of 10. .....	18

## FIGURES

Figure 1: Pre and post self-ratings of workers' knowledge of child development. ....	18
Figure 2: Pre and post self-ratings of workers' knowledge of ways to manage difficult behaviour in children.....	19
Figure 3: Pre and post self-ratings of workers' communication skills with adults.....	19
Figure 4: Pre and post self-ratings of workers' communication skills with children.....	20
Figure 5: Pre and post self-ratings of workers' confidence working with aboriginal parents on their parenting needs. ....	20
Figure 6: Pre and post self-ratings of workers' confidence delivering a parenting course in their community.....	21
Figure 7. Workers' knowledge of stages of child development.....	21
Figure 8. Workers' knowledge of good child management practices.....	22
Figure 9. Workers' knowledge of good communication practices.....	23
Figure 10: Pre and post self-ratings of workers' parenting. ....	25
Figure 11: Pre and post self-ratings of workers' relationships with their children .....	27
Figure 12: Pre and post self-ratings of workers' relationship with their partner. ....	28

# SUMMARY

The Reconnecting Families Program (RFP) was developed in response to demand from local Aboriginal organisations to improve the health of their communities. Family function was a stated priority and specific requests were made for training around parenting skills and relationships. The literature reinforced this by highlighting the importance of quality early childhood experiences as a prerequisite for physical and mental wellbeing throughout life.

The 15-week course offers Aboriginal men and women, their partners and children a new beginning by supporting parents to:

- improve their understanding of children's development and needs;
- understand and accept the responsibility of parenthood;
- improve their communication skills;
- understand the importance of showing affection;
- learn and practise effective, positive discipline strategies;
- develop more positive relationships with their children; and
- develop more positive relationships with their partners, or ex-partners.

The program will be rolled out within Aboriginal communities by a team of trained workers. To this end, an initial 4-day training phase was developed to equip workers from relevant professions to deliver the full 15-week course to groups of participants that they themselves would organise.

Evaluation of this training phase entailed measuring indicators of program process and impact plus felt or expected outcomes for workers. It was based on a range of data sources including: a worker expression-of-interest form; an attendance log; written surveys of the workshop facilitators and of the participant workers; and pre and post video interviews of the workers by the facilitators.

## ► Program process

The training program was conducted by 2 Aboriginal men and attended by 9 female and 3 male workers. Both facilitators felt that the workshop met its aims well in all topic areas including: building better relationships; communication; knowledge of child development; techniques in managing children's behaviour; self reflection and connecting; and sharing responsibility. Facilitators felt that the group: "really grasped the concepts of building better relationships and sharing responsibility", and "came away with a very clear understanding of the importance of communication in relationships".

Workers, on average, rated all but one of the measured aspects of the workshop very highly (>8/10) including the facilitators': willingness to share their own experiences; willingness to address the issues raised; knowledge and understanding on the topic; ability to understand 'where you're coming from'; provision of appropriate and useful resources; and coverage of the



main issues facing Aboriginal families. Most of the workers said that all parts of the workshop had been useful and the most-liked aspects were: openness, honesty, communication and bonding between group members. They mentioned a wide range of pertinent things learned from the workshop and felt more confident in teaching the topics within their communities.

One facilitator and 3 workers felt the workshop was too brief. Some workers were not entirely comfortable with how the issues of sexual abuse and domestic violence had been dealt with but provided positive suggestions for improvement, including approaching these issues indirectly. They also suggested more role-play practice in the safety of the training environment, before going to the community.

All workers rated the helpfulness of the workshop highly (>3/4) on all counts including: knowing ways to support Aboriginal families in their parenting; knowing ways to help support Aboriginal families to improve their relationships; learning ways to improve their own relationships; feeling able to share their own experiences in a group setting; understanding the issues facing Aboriginal families; feeling confident that they can support Aboriginal families in their parenting; feeling confident that they can support Aboriginal families to improve their relationships; and learning ways to improve their own parenting.

## ► Program impact

On average, the perceived level of relevant knowledge, communication skills and confidence among workers was moderate to high (>5/10) both pre and post workshop, on all items. There was a 9% increase in workers' rating for: 'confidence in delivering a parenting course in the worker's local community' (though not significant).

There was some increase in awareness of the major stages of child development from pre to post interview and a shift in stated views of child management techniques from what one should not do, to what one should do. Also, there were a number of aspects of child management that were mentioned only after the 4-day workshop including: that some forms have detrimental effects; the importance of actions based on love not duty; and the need to give children direction. Worker responses regarding the meaning of communication were wide ranging and covered both form and principles. However, a number of specific issues and techniques to improve communication were first mentioned in the post workshop interviews. These included: the need to observe; the importance of laughing and happy times; and the importance of "communicating that I love them".

## ► Felt and expected outcomes

The influence of the workshop on changes in self-perceptions varied among participants making it difficult to draw general conclusions. In some cases it made them aware that they were actually doing better than they originally thought, while in other instances it made them realise how much room there was for improvement.



There appeared to be a downward shift in how workers descriptively rated themselves in their role as parents. At baseline interviews all workers felt their parenting was good or very good. After the workshop there was more recognition of potential to improve, with only 3 describing their parenting as good or very good. All workers were positive about how the course might improve their parenting. Comments included: “made me aware of areas I need to work on”; ways on how to overcome the barriers of my childhood”; and “built my self esteem and confidence.”

Workers’ perceptions of their relationships with their children also appeared to shift downwards, possibly with the realisation of how they could improve. Most workers were very certain that the course would improve these relationships, saying such things as: “It opened my eyes to what other things I can do with my kids” and “Big change to how I raise my kids.” Workers’ perceptions of their relationships with their partners showed little consistent change from initially high ratings, although there was some individual movement up or down. Most were very positive about how the course might improve these relationships saying such things as: “Highlights what I need to keep doing and what I don’t do” and “Made me realise how important it is to express my feelings to others”.

When asked at the post interview if and how the training would help their work with Aboriginal families, there was an equal split between those saying “yes” or “a lot” and those saying “I think it will” or “I hope it will”. Workers were generally positive about how the course might improve their work, with comments such as: “Walking out with heaps more than I had”. However, some apprehension was expressed in comments like: “Hope I can get parents to understand” and “Don’t want to get people off side”. All workers were very positive about how the course might improve other aspects of their lives, as expressed by comments such as: “Can be applied in lots of areas” and “They are life skills and can open doors. They’re building blocks”.

## ► Conclusions and recommendations

The training phase of The Reconnecting Families Program appears to have been highly successful in terms of giving workers valuable skills, information, personal insight and confidence, to help conduct a ‘Phase 2’ rollout of the 15-week program within their communities. If the initial rollout proves successful then this mode of delivery should be expanded.

One of the important aspects of the evaluation was feedback regarding possible improvements to program format, content and delivery. There were a number of requests for practice or role-play as a way of preparing workers to actually deliver their own programs within the community. When this is considered in the light of concerns expressed about confronting aspects of the program, such as domestic violence and sexual abuse, it would seem that more training, including role play, might be required before workers will feel confident addressing these key issues when they deliver their own programs.

With the response to the Reconnecting Families Program (RFP) training workshop being so overwhelmingly positive, there would appear to be a real need to maintain the strong



momentum that the course achieved. Specific recommendations of this evaluation are as follows:

- The RFP model has great positive potential for Aboriginal families and if the rollout of the program by the newly trained facilitators is successful, then this mode of delivery should be expanded.
- Facilitators should provide follow-up in-service for existing workers and ongoing supervision and support.
- If initial rollout proves successful then more training workshops should be conducted.
- Future training workshops could:
  - be longer (eg 2 x 3 days);
  - include more practice role play for workers as facilitators;
  - explore how language might be more suited to the audience;
  - explore how issues of sexual abuse and domestic violence might be approached in a less confronting way; and
  - possibly try a combination of female and male facilitators.
- The RFP model could be adapted for delivery for younger Aboriginal people, possibly within the school context to train people before they become parents/carers.



# BACKGROUND

## What is the Reconnecting Families Program?

The Reconnecting Families Program, is a locally-developed, 15-week course offering Aboriginal men and women, their partners and children a new beginning by supporting parents to:

- improve their understanding of children's development and needs;
- understand and accept the responsibility of parenthood;
- improve their communication skills;
- understand the importance of showing affection;
- learn and practise effective, positive discipline strategies;
- develop more positive relationships with their children; and
- develop more positive relationships with their partners, or ex-partners.

The background and principles for establishing such a program have been detailed in previous reports on the Rekindling the Spirit Program and the Koori Fathering Program (KFP) <sup>1,2</sup>. A brief outline follows:

## Why was it developed?

The Reconnecting Families Program was developed as an ongoing response to a demand from local Aboriginal organisations in 1999, for Northern Rivers Area Health Service to take steps to improve the health of local Aboriginal communities. Subsequent consultations identified improving family function as a priority <sup>3</sup> and there were specific requests for training around parenting skills and relationships. The literature reinforced this by highlighting the influence of quality early childhood experiences on physical and mental wellbeing throughout life <sup>3-6</sup>. It indicated the undermining effect of colonisation on traditional parental roles, linked this with family and community dysfunction and identified programs which have a parent, child and family focus as a way of breaking the cycle <sup>7,8</sup>.

## What are the key principles?

The literature identified the need for parenting programs to incorporate certain issues and adopt certain principles <sup>9-12</sup>. These included a focus on:

- traditional approaches involving community elders and directed at the whole extended family;
- positive role and relationships models with male support to nurture instincts and develop parenting skills;
- a safe environment to explore boundaries, the inner self and the importance of being a parent;



- healing the emotional pain of transgenerational trauma and dealing with the complexity of related issues including discrimination, low self-esteem, limited education and employment opportunities;
- addressing psychosocial wellbeing;
- coming from the heart, not just theory with emphasis on empowerment, support and encouragement;
- having a positive message, being preventive and developing general life skills;
- starting prenatally and addressing issues such as nutrition and child development; and
- being well-structured, of high quality, with well-trained staff and sustainable.

## How is it related to the Koori Fathering Program?

The Reconnecting Families Program represents a refinement and adaptation of the former Koori Fathering Program (KFP), which was developed specifically to address needs identified by and for Aboriginal men. An evaluation of a pilot KFP showed high participant satisfaction with program content and coordination <sup>2</sup>. It also revealed that those who completed the 15-week program improved their knowledge and understanding of parenting, communicating and relating and also reported consequent improvements in relationships with their children and partners <sup>2</sup>. Attendees also reported an increase in perceived support for, and confidence in, facing future challenges in the areas of parenting and relationship development. Because of these positive results the format and content of the KFP was used as a starting point from which to develop the new RFP <sup>2</sup>.

## What criteria were used to select participants?

The RFP training workshop primarily used an experiential learning model rather than a didactic model. The facilitators were highly experienced group workers and had an extensive knowledge and understanding of the issues covered. The role they assumed was that of 'participant mentor' rather than 'objective teacher', sharing their own personal experiences with the other participants. Workers who undertook the training to become facilitators, also did so as actual participants in a shortened workshop containing all the sessions and challenges of the full course. They, therefore, experienced first hand what participants in their own subsequent 15-week RFP courses might face and feel. Furthermore, they experienced the benefits and insights of being part of a supportive group learning process.

To maximise the chances of establishing an initial core of trained RFP facilitators, fully equipped and supported to conduct the planned RFP rollout, a number of criteria were used to help select would-be attendees. Though not all criteria were considered essential, those considered were that the trainees:

- were already working with local Aboriginal communities;
- were geographically based to allow the potential for RFP team to pair workers up for subsequent RFP rollout ;
- felt a cultural obligation to support community;



- understood the relevance of supporting parents and raising children in their current work;
- had prior training in parenting skills and family work;
- had prior training in child development;
- had experience in group facilitation;
- could see a potential benefit of RFP to their current work;
- were happy to explore their own feelings in a group situation;
- were committed to running at least two 15-week programs by mid 2006;
- has established relationships with a relevant client base;
- could see a potential benefit of RFP to their own parenting/caring and relationships perceived a need to improve skills in these areas; and
- had full, ongoing support from their managing organisations to attend the training and run two programs by mid 2006.

## What does this evaluation cover?

The findings presented in this report stem from the first of two phases of the Reconnecting Families Program. These phases are:

1. A 4-day 'Train-the-Trainers' workshop. This workshop targeted working professionals in the area of Aboriginal child care, early development and child and family health and trained them to deliver the full 15-week course to subsequent groups of participants that they themselves would organise as part of their own work.
2. The workers' subsequent 15-week programs with participants that they themselves recruited (not part of this report).



# METHODS

## How did the Reconnecting Families Training Program operate?

### ► Content

The aim of the Phase 1 training workshop was to train participants to deliver the 15-week program content by simulating the 15-week program in a shorter timeframe. The rationale was that, by going through the program as workers, they would develop a good understanding of both the program content and the way in which it was to be delivered. As a lived experience, they would also come to understand the challenges that they and their future participants might have to deal with during and following each course they coordinated.

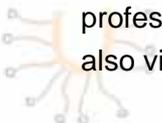
The full program consists of 15 consecutive weekly sessions as follows (Appendix A):

- Session 1: Introduction to Reconnecting Families and pre-workshop video interview.
- Session 2: What Is Communication?
- Session 3: Communication Maintenance.
- Session 4: What Is Discipline?
- Session 5: Building Relationships.
- Session 6: Review of Sessions 2-5.
- Session 7: Self-Reflection & Connecting.
- Session 8: Sharing Responsibility.
- Session 9: Showing Affection.
- Session 10: Review of Sessions 7-9.
- Session 11: Child Development.
- Session 12: Sexual Health & Pregnancy.
- Session 13: Hunters & Gatherers.
- Session 14: Review of Sessions 11-13.
- Session 15: Post-workshop video interview with workers.

### ► Implementation, staffing and participants

The Training Phase of the Reconnecting Families Program was run from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> May 2005. It was conducted at Toonumbar Waters Retreat, west of Kyogle, as a residential workshop, to allow extensive informal reflection and discussion. Transport to and from the training was provided free of charge, where necessary.

The program was co-facilitated by the two facilitators from the Koori Fathering Program. As they were parents, they also acted as participants, sharing their own experiences and feelings along with the workers. Program trainees were recruited via an Expression of Interest from professional Aboriginal workers in the fields of Aboriginal child, family or community health and also via other community representatives (Appendix B). Workers themselves each had various



prior experience in the fields of child development, parenting or family relationships, through their work or through being parents. As part of their expression of interest, each worker was required to make a commitment to conduct two 15-week workshops of half a day per week, within their own area, following their own training; one by December 2005 and a second by June 2006.

## How was the Reconnecting Families Training Program evaluated?

### ► Types of information collected

As this was the first Train-the-Trainer program for the Reconnecting Families Program, we were interested in monitoring a wide range of indicators:

- **Process indicators**  
To explore how well the workshop was implemented and attended and how satisfied workers and facilitators were with it.
- **Impact indicators**  
To explore the workshop's perceived impact on workers' knowledge and attitudes about parenting.
- **Indicators of felt or expected-outcomes**  
To explore the worker's felt or expected changes in their parenting skills and practices, relationships, work with Aboriginal communities and other aspects of their lives.

### ► How information was collected

Five main sets of information were collected:

- **Expression of Interest form** - written application form to attend. (Appendix B)  
This included questions to gauge workers' perceived level of understanding of topics to be covered in the training.
- **Attendance log** – written log completed at each session. (Appendix C)  
Facilitators recorded attendance at each session, reasons for leaving the program and workers' basic demographic and family information.
- **Facilitator survey** – written surveys completed at the end of the program. (Appendix D)  
Facilitators answered questions about the delivery of the workshop, in terms of the aims of the program; about their expectations of the program; the perceived outcomes/benefits of facilitating the program; the perceived outcomes/benefits for those attending the program; and their views/suggestions regarding the ongoing implementation of the program.



- **Workers' satisfaction survey** – written surveys completed at the end of the program. (Appendix E)

Workers reported on their satisfaction with various components of the program, rated the facilitators' performance and how helpful the program was (4 and 10 point scales respectively).

- **Workers' video interview** – interviews with workers were videotaped at the beginning and end of the program to detect changes in their responses associated with their participation. (Appendix F)

Workers answered questions about their knowledge and experiences of parenting; their perceptions about the nature and quality of their relationships (with their partners and children); their understanding of child development stages, discipline techniques and communication skills; the perceived outcomes/benefits of attending; and their views/suggestions regarding the ongoing RFP.

## ■ How information was analysed

Analysis of written data was primarily qualitative with main themes being extracted and discussed in the context of the respondent group being interviewed and the particular questions being posed. This analysis was supported by simple quantitative counts and frequencies (for demographics and attendance, ratings and categorised responses). A paired t test was used to compare pre and post ratings for some questions. Where relevant, pre to post comparisons were conducted regarding changes to the range of responses or changes in counts of particular responses. In the case of video interview questions about knowledge and attitudes, the teaching/learning aims of the relevant sessions were used to extract only the data relevant to those aims, for subsequent graphing of results (see shaded categories in Appendix G).



# RESULTS

## Summary of the data collected

- **Expression of Interest form** – From each of 12 participant workers.
- **Attendance log** – Completed for each session covered, for each worker.
- **Facilitator survey** – Two facilitators completed surveys at the end of the program.
- **Participant satisfaction survey** – Twelve workers completed surveys at the end of the program.
- **Participant video interview** – Pre interviews and post interviews with 12 workers.

## Reconnecting Families Training Program workers' characteristics

The training program was conducted 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> May 2005 by two male facilitators who:

- were aged between 34 and 45 years;
- had 3 or 4 children each, with ages ranging from 5 to 27 years;
- were currently living with their partners; and
- had been involved with Rekindling The Spirit and Koori Fathering Program for between 7 and 10 years.

The 12 participant workers including:

- 9 women and 3 men;
- who were aged between 20 and 69 years; and
- had between 0 and 7 children each, whose ages ranged from 2 to 48 years (Table 1).

Table 1: Age and gender of workers.

Age group	Gender		
	Women	Men	Total
20s	1	1	2
30s	4		4
40s	2	1	3
50s	1	1	2
60s	1		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>

All selected workers met most of the predetermined selection criteria and details are summarised in Table 2. The proximity of workers to each other provided opportunities for most trained workers to subsequently work in pairs when rolling out the RFP within the community.



In their expressions of interest, applicant workers expressed a strong willingness and commitment to be involved and mentioned a wide range of relevant training needs and potential benefits. There was universal commitment from employers to ongoing organisational support.

Table 2. Details of workers attending RFP training.

Criterion	n	Details
Currently working in Aboriginal community	12	Tweed, Byron Bay, Ballina, Alstonville, Wardell, Cabbage Tree Island, Lismore, Goonellabah, Gundurimbah, Evans Head, Coraki, Casino, Tabulam, Mulli Mulli, Maclean, Yamba.
Have cultural obligation to broader Aboriginal community	7	
Relevance of supporting parents and raising children	12	all rated scale at 10/10
Training in parenting/family skills.	11	
Training in child development	6	
Prior group facilitation	9	
Potential help in current work	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strategies, knowledge, insight, confidence to help others</li> <li>▪ Help to plan and facilitate own programs</li> <li>▪ Cultural framework to deliver appropriate/respectful programs</li> <li>▪ Integrate information into existing group work</li> <li>▪ Securing employment</li> <li>▪ Help build rapport in community</li> </ul>
Willing to explore own feelings in group	12	
Prepared to run two RFP groups by June 2006	12	
Potential help in parenting/caring	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New skills</li> <li>▪ Handling situations</li> <li>▪ Reminder of which strategies to use</li> <li>▪ Child's viewpoint</li> <li>▪ Encourage emotional stability</li> <li>▪ Understand child development</li> <li>▪ How others manage parenting</li> <li>▪ More confidence</li> <li>▪ Options for caring and nurturing</li> <li>▪ Strengthen beneficial attitudes in child rearing</li> </ul>
Need for more skills	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication</li> <li>▪ Handling situations</li> <li>▪ Child development toddlers</li> <li>▪ Managing difficult behaviours</li> <li>▪ Dealing with difficult children</li> <li>▪ Engaging parents</li> <li>▪ Listening</li> <li>▪ Understanding what child really wants</li> <li>▪ Discipline</li> <li>▪ Strategies to support adolescents become independent</li> <li>▪ Establishing routines</li> </ul>
Have strong ongoing organisational support	12	



# Training program process

## ► Facilitators' feedback

### Expectations

Both facilitators thought that the workshop would help workers **with their own parenting**. One thought that this would occur because the course would help them reflect on their work and also on themselves as parents and then workers. The other thought that it would improve their understanding of themselves.

Both facilitators expected that participation would also help workers **with their own relationships**. One thought that this would be facilitated by better understanding of their roles and responsibilities as partners. The other thought it would help them strengthen their relationships with partners, children and other extended family members, mainly by improving their communication skills with their own families and community.

The facilitators both felt that the workshop would help workers **with their work with Aboriginal families** by heightening their awareness of facets of parenting, relationships and communication.

In commenting on the potential for the workshop to benefit **other areas of workers' lives** one facilitator stated that it could take "some time to unlearn old behaviours and relearn positive ones".

### How well the workshop met its aims

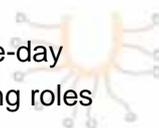
The facilitators' main expectation was that they connected with workers in a meaningful way and both believed that this expectation was met completely.

They also believed that the workshop met its aims either fairly well or very well on all counts including: building better relationships, communication, knowledge of child development, techniques in managing children's behaviour, self reflection and connecting, and sharing responsibility. One said that the group "really grasped the concepts of building better relationships and sharing responsibility and came away with a very clear understanding of the importance of communication in relationships". This facilitator also reflected that knowledge of child development "really needs fleshing out in our community". He also commented that the session on self-reflection and connecting was particularly interesting and "brought up a lot for people".

Both facilitators felt that connecting and reconnecting families was a vital way forward for Aboriginal people with one stating that: "It creates more positive men and women of the next generation".

### Suggested improvements to workshop

One facilitator suggested that the workshop might be longer in future with either two three-day blocks or one 5-day block. He also suggested that workers could do more of the facilitating roles



during the workshop sessions. The other stated that the workshop would change and grow as the participants do, saying: “It needs to maintain its flexibility as a living and breathing process”.

## **D Workers’ survey feedback**

### **What was liked most?**

The main items mentioned were openness, honesty, communication and bonding between group members. There was a general appreciation of the atmosphere of fun, caring and non-judgmental trust that was generated within the group. Two workers attributed this to the facilitators developing a relaxed and encouraging atmosphere. Other aspects that were liked were: the sharing of personal information, the opportunity to hear opposing viewpoints, the broad coverage of the program, the overall challenge and the relevance of information.

### **What was liked least?**

While most workers reported liking all aspects of the program, the most common aspect that was least liked was the perceived limited duration of the workshop. One participant said they would have liked more on culture. One was upset by a know-it-all in the group and another by the playful putdowns between facilitators.

### **What was most useful?**

Half of the workers said that everything was useful. Specific aspects included: “rich, owned experiences”, discussions, breakout groups and rotations in sessions, the “well organised resource book” and useful training in group running techniques. Specific sections mentioned as most useful were: communication and discipline.

### **What was the main thing learnt?**

There was a wide range in responses to this item. Personal aspects included: “the need to work through your own issues first”, “relating is the key to a happy life”, “reconnecting with feelings”, “able to discuss in greater depth” and “men do have an important role”. Specific knowledge/skill items included: how to set appropriate boundaries, aspects of discipline, how to be a better partner or parent, importance of communication in families, importance of whole community and importance of social, emotional and physical aspects of relationships.

### **Suggested Improvements**

There were few suggestions for improvement. Three said that the time was too short. Two workers requested more role-play and two suggested approaches in some sessions could be more creative. One asked for simplified wording. Another asked for more on domestic violence and anger management. One suggested a short video be made on the philosophy behind the workshop and also that the workshop be adapted for high schools. They also suggested facilitators wear name badges and a RFP T-shirt be designed for participants and Jarjums saying: “My family are connected – I’m loved”. Two expressed the need for a female facilitator and one suggested a quick game of volleyball at check-in to boost energy levels.



## Perceived quality of workshop

Workers rated most aspects of the workshop very highly on most criteria with all but one aspect returning a mean rating score of 8/10 or greater (Table 3). Items related to the facilitators' qualities were rated most highly with all four items scoring mean ratings greater than 9/10. In fact only 5 of the total of 108 ratings (12 workers rating 9 items) were ratings of less than 6 out of 10. Of these, only one represented a less than "OK" (5/10) rating and this concerned inadequate length of workshop, the lowest rating item overall.

Table 3. Perceived quality of the workshop.

Item	Mean Score out of 10
Facilitators' willingness to share their own experiences	9.83
Facilitators' willingness to listen to and address the issues raised	9.58
Facilitators' knowledge and understanding on the topic	9.25
Facilitators' ability to understand where you're coming from	9.25
Providing appropriate resources	8.75
Providing useful resources	8.67
Covering the main issues facing Aboriginal families	8.17
Length of the workshop	7.00
Overall quality of workshop	9.33

## Perceived helpfulness of the workshop

Worker's ratings indicated that they generally considered the workshop very helpful on all counts with mean ratings for all items greater than 3.3 out of a possible 4. (Table 4) The two items that scored most highly on average were: 'Knowing ways to support Aboriginal families in their parenting' and 'Knowing ways to help support Aboriginal families to improve their relationships'. Of a total of 96 individual ratings (12 workers rating 8 items) 90 were ratings of either 3 ('helped a fair bit') or 4 ('helped lots'). The remaining 6 lower ratings were still 2 ('helped a little') out of 4. They were: 'Understanding the issues facing Aboriginal families', 'Knowing ways to help support Aboriginal families to improve their relationships', 'Feeling confident that I can support Aboriginal families to improve their relationships' and 'Feeling able to share my own experiences in a group setting'.



Table 4. Perceived helpfulness of the workshop.

Item	Mean Score out of 4
Knowing ways to support Aboriginal families in their parenting	3.67
Knowing ways to help support Aboriginal families to improve their relationships	3.55
Learning ways to improve my own relationships	3.50
Feeling able to share my own experiences in a group setting	3.50
Understanding the issues facing Aboriginal families	3.42
Feeling confident re supporting Aboriginal families in their parenting	3.42
Feeling confident re supporting Aboriginal families to improve their relationships	3.33
Learning ways to improve my own parenting	3.33

### Other comments

By far the majority of other comments were very positive in terms of how the workshop was conducted and the effect it had on them as workers. Among these comments were:

- “The skills that I’ve learnt will better me on my current levels”, “great to see men participating and raising awareness”.
- “I’d like to thank ....the facilitators...for their great effort...I am privileged to have been a participant”.
- “Made me realise how important it is to share your own stories in a group like this before speaking to community”.
- “Really enjoyed the workshop. Excellent presentation”.

As would be expected, some fear was expressed by workers considering the challenges they faced in practising what they had learned in their own communities:

- “I am delighted but scared of how I deliver a package and the effects it may have on their life”.
- “As with any program, the success or not, will depend on participation and support within the community”.

### Workers’ video feedback

When asked in the video interviews for suggestions about how the workshop could be improved, 7 of the 12 workers suggested things they would like to see more or less of in future training workshops (see Appendix G- Feedback About the Training, for detailed responses):

- more time overall;
- more role-plays;
- more creative ways of presenting topics;
- more about love;
- more on how to deliver RFP in a culturally-appropriate way; and
- less jargon more friendly language.



There was a wide range of feedback on various aspects of the program. This included feedback concerning:

1. The overall program:

- Generally very positive comments from most workers.
- That RFP was a “good challenge”.
- How much was learned.
- The excellent quality of the information.
- The need for such a program in preschools and high schools.

2. The group:

- Felt part of a team.
- Trust in facilitators. “Big risk coming here”.
- Great openness and respect.
- Got a lot of understanding from others’ stories.
- Comfortable sharing deep secrets.

3. Length:

- Time too short for amount to learn.
- Four day block a long time away from family.

4. Facilitation:

- Good facilitation/well set up/flowed well/down to earth.
- Non judgmental/safe.
- Huge job especially being first training round.
- Great having two males.
- Maybe good also with a female.

5. Sexual abuse / ‘feelings’ section:

- Discomfort with openness with this topic.
- Need prior warning/caught off guard.
- Need to broaden the ‘feeling section’ to be less confronting.
- Not appropriate to confront in parenting course unless brought up.

6. Domestic violence:

- Need to discuss “without being too negative”.
- Need not to only victimise men.

7. Other:

- Didn’t realise influence of own parents on their parenting.
- “Put a few ghosts to rest”.
- “Cant wait to get out there with new information”.
- Very positive about Aboriginal workers making a difference.



# Program Impact on workers

## Understanding and confidence

The perceived level of understanding and confidence both prior to the workshop and at the end of the workshop was mostly high on all items with mean rating scores all above 6 out of a possible 10 and 138 of the 144 ratings (12 workers x 6 items x 2 occasions) being 5 ('average understanding') or greater (Figures. 1 to 6). The highest ratings were for 'Communication skills with adults' and 'Confidence in delivering a parenting course in your local community'. The lowest rated items were 'Knowledge of child development' and 'Knowledge of ways to manage difficult behaviour in children'. The greatest change in mean rating was a 0.6 improvement in confidence in delivering a parenting course in the worker's local community but none of the differences were statistically significant (paired  $p > 0.05$ ). Table 5 below shows the mean ratings for each item pre and post workshop and Figures 1 to 6 show individual changes.

Table 5. Perceived level of understanding and confidence. Mean pre and post score out of 10.

Item	Pre	Post	T	p(T)
a) Knowledge of child development	7.21	7.17	-0.08	0.94
b) Knowledge of ways to manage difficult behaviour in children	6.88	7.17	0.48	0.64
c) Communication skills with adults	8.29	8.17	-0.43	0.67
d) Communications skills with children	8.17	7.67	-1.21	0.25
e) Confidence in working with Aboriginal parents around their parenting needs	7.25	7.33	0.15	0.88
f) Confidence in delivering a parenting course in your local community	7.17	7.83	1.66	0.12

Figure 1: Pre and post self-ratings of workers' knowledge of child development.

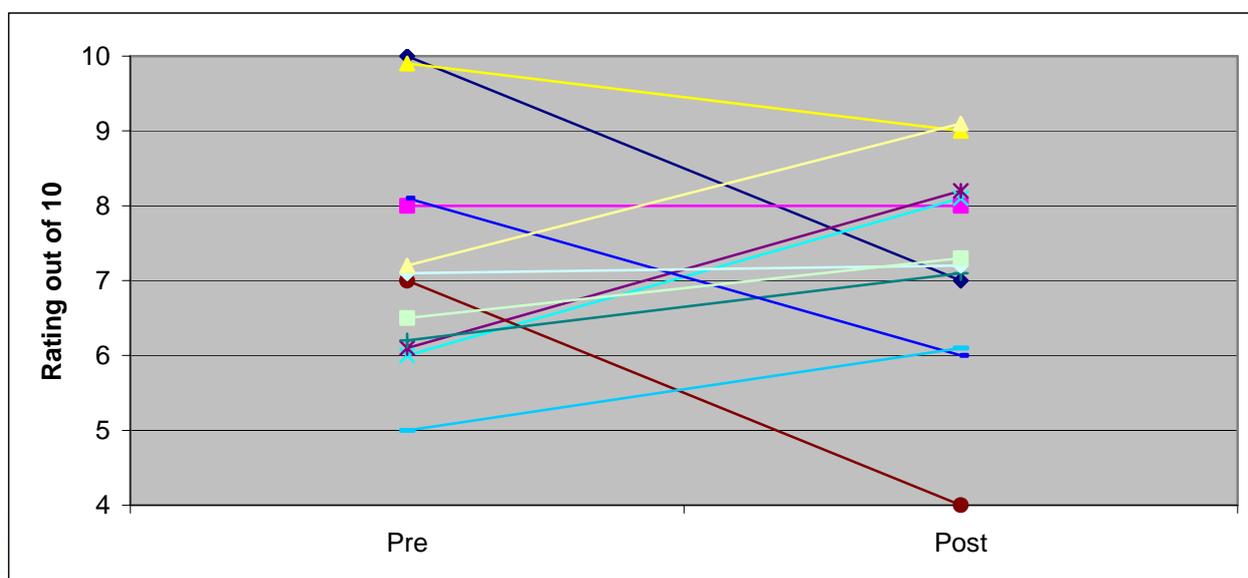


Figure 2: Pre and post self-ratings of workers' knowledge of ways to manage difficult behaviour in children.

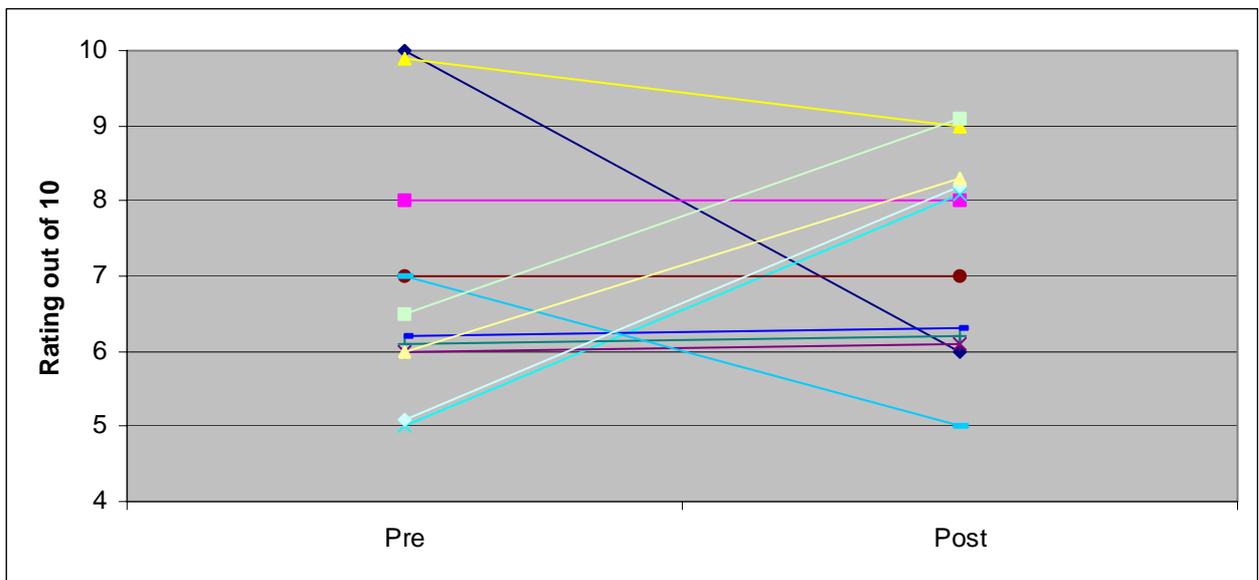


Figure 4: Pre and post self-ratings of workers' communication skills with children.

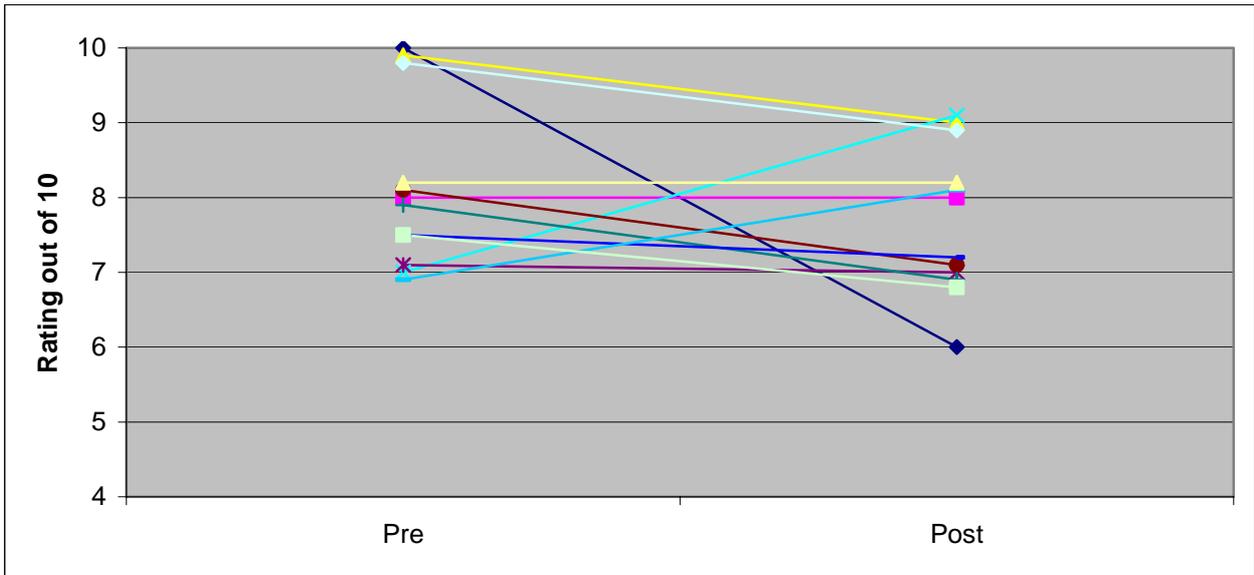


Figure 5: Pre and post self-ratings of workers' confidence working with aboriginal parents on their parenting needs.

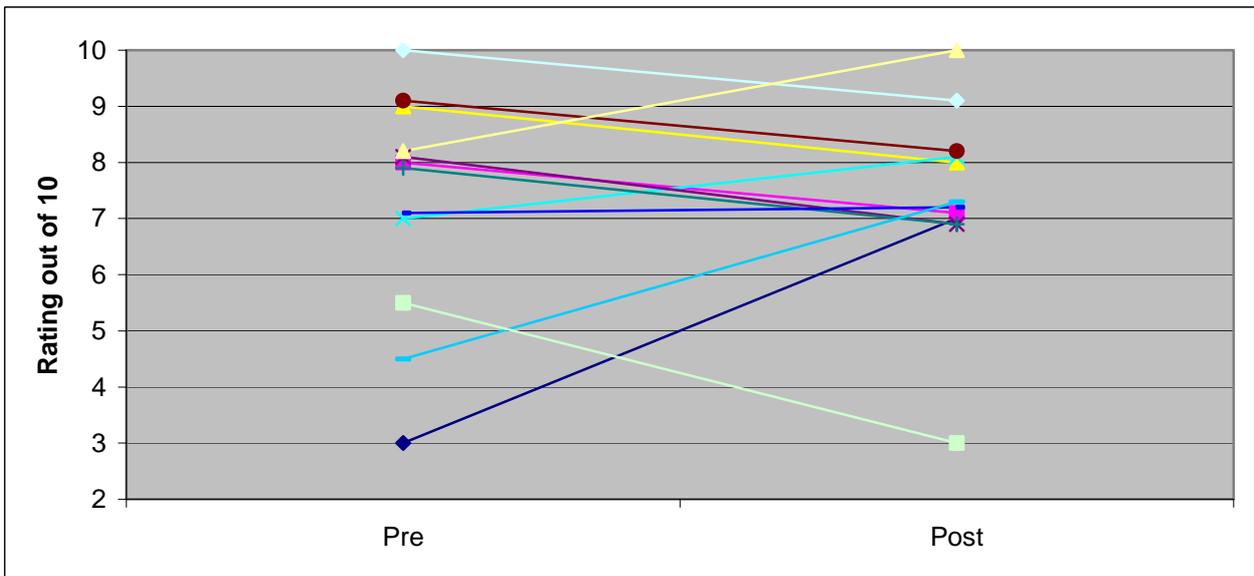
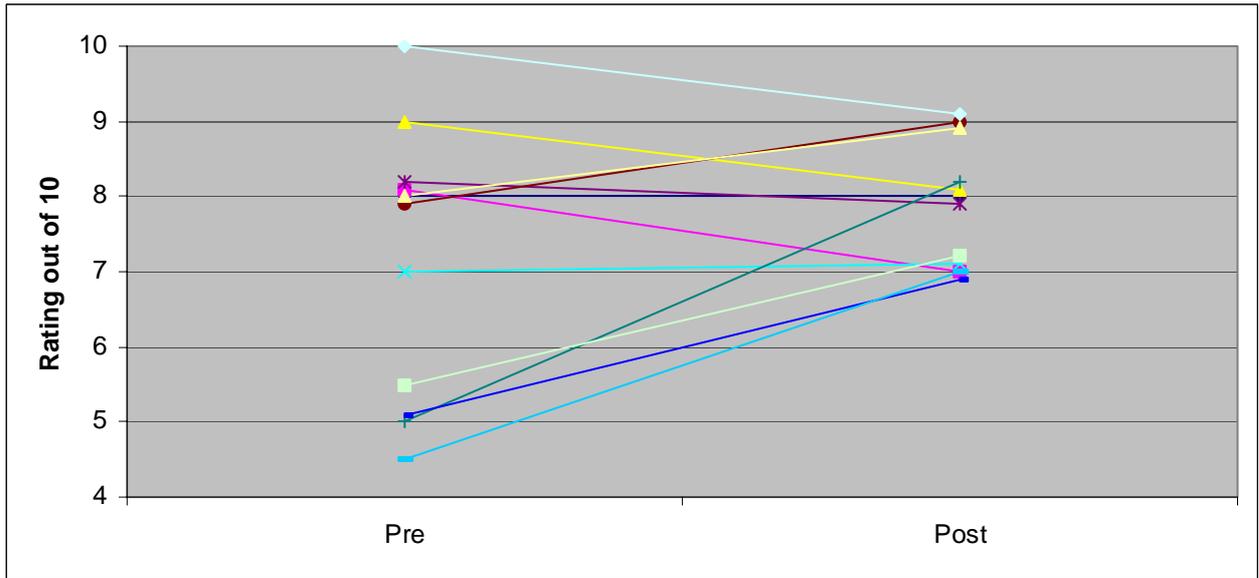


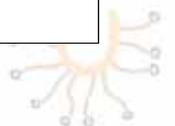
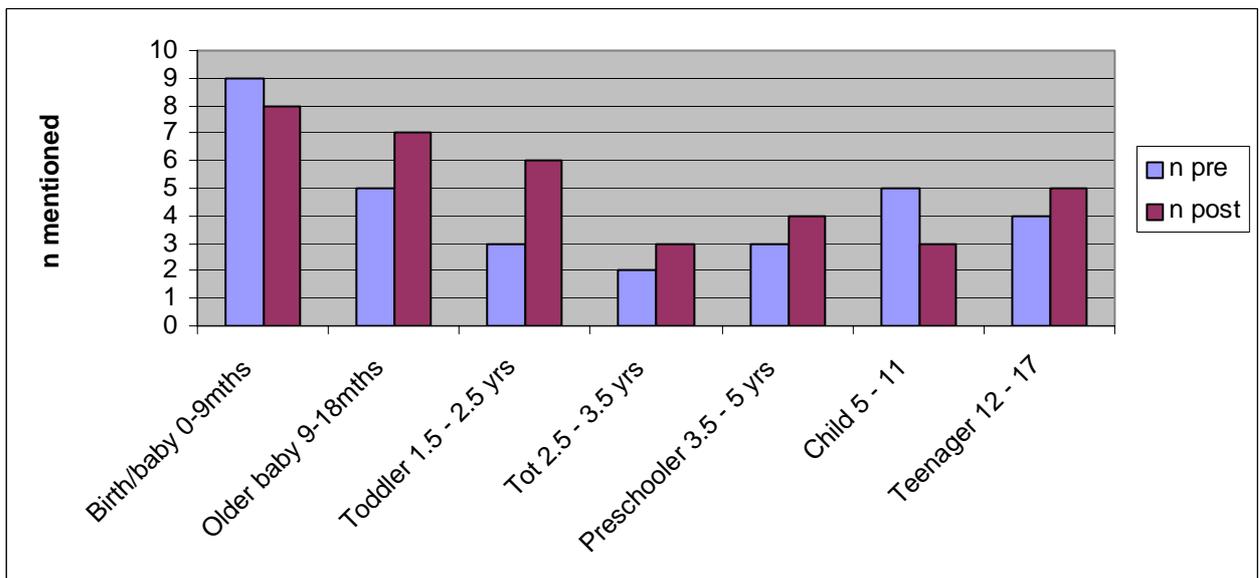
Figure 6: Pre and post self-ratings of workers' confidence delivering a parenting course in their community.



### Knowledge about stages of child development

This was addressed primarily by the question: 'What can you tell me about child development – the stages a child goes through as it grows up?' There was a wide range of responses to this question both at the pre and post interviews. (see Appendix G for detailed responses) This was not surprising considering that many of the workers were already professionals in child and family health. The main aspect of this question concerned the actual stages of child development and there was some indication of a more comprehensive awareness of all these stages at post interview. Figure. 7 shows how many of the 12 workers mentioned each of the stages at pre and post interview.

Figure 7. Workers' knowledge of stages of child development.

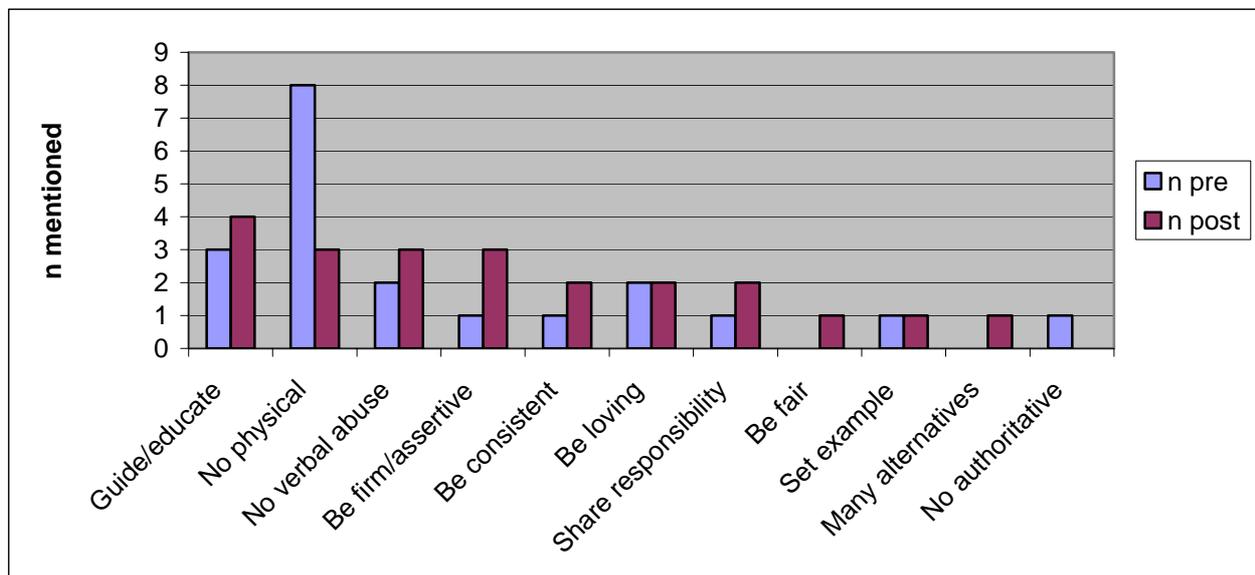


Other responses to this question included descriptions of various child behaviours, particularly in the pre-program interviews. This included general behaviours such as breastfeeding, smiling, weening, eye contact; learning milestones such as to sit up, to crawl, to walk, to feed themselves, and emotional aspects such as self esteem, own identity, establishing independence. In the post-program responses there seemed to be a shift in focus away from types of development, with the majority of responses being concentrated around the actual stages discussed in the workshop sessions. The change represented a concentration of workers' responses around stages discussed in the workshop sessions, from 28% of responses initially to 42% after the workshop.

## Knowledge about managing children's behaviour

This was addressed primarily by the question: 'What can you tell me about different ways of discipline, or managing children's behaviour?' (see Appendix G for detailed responses) At the pre program interview there was already high awareness of the inappropriateness of physical punishment and this was actually mentioned by fewer of the 12 workers at the end of their 4-day workshop. However, at the post interviews, more workers mentioned: the need to be assertive, the need for good communication and the fact that there are many ways of managing a child, compared to the pre workshop interviews. Figure. 8 shows how many of the 12 workers mentioned each principle of good child management at pre and post interview.

Figure 8. Workers' knowledge of good child management practices.



While at pre there appeared to be a general focus on what one should not do in managing children, at post the focus had shifted somewhat to what one should do. Also, there were a number of aspects of child management that were only mentioned after the 4-day workshop. These included:

- that some forms have detrimental affects;
- awareness of a need to review approaches to discipline;
- the importance of working towards actions based on love not duty; and
- the need to give children direction in life.



There was a narrowing in focus of responses towards principles emphasised in the sessions from pre to post interview. While at pre only 25% of responses focused on these important principles, this had increased to 47% of responses at post interview.

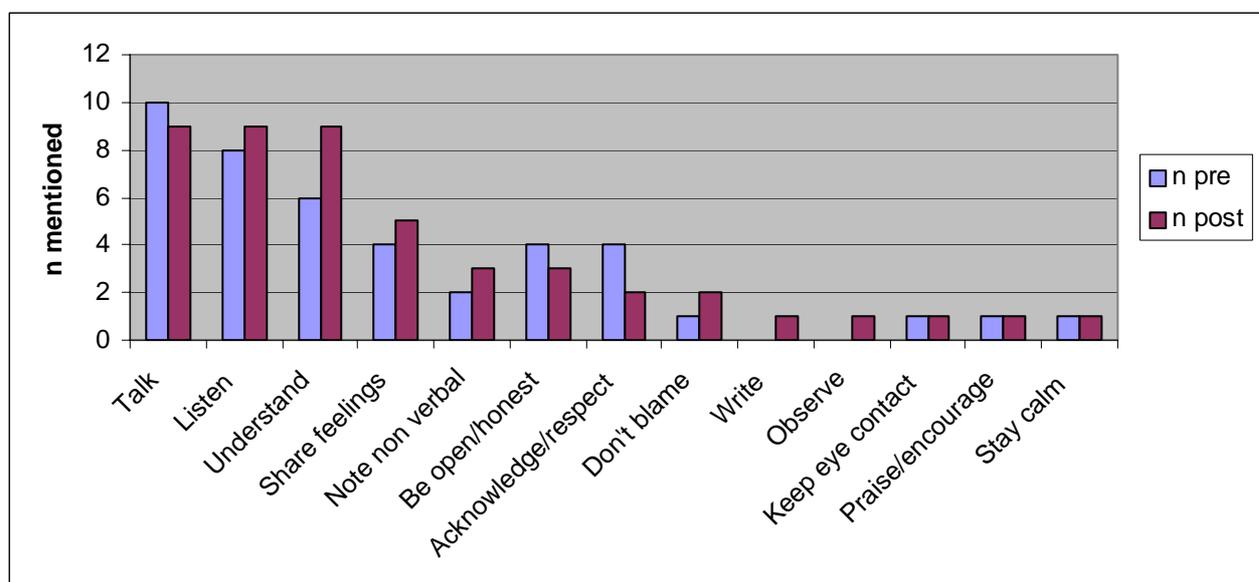
## Knowledge about communication

This was addressed primarily by the question: ‘What can you tell me about communication – what does it mean to you?’ (see Appendix G for detailed responses). Again there was a wide range of responses covering many aspects of communication including forms and principles of communication. The main themes among the responses were similar at the pre and post interviews – that communication involves:

- talking;
- listening to what the other person is saying;
- understanding what the other person is communicating;
- sharing your own feelings or views;
- being aware of non verbal signals;
- being open and honest; and
- respecting/acknowledging the other person.

Figure. 9 shows how many of the 12 workers mentioned each principle of good communication at pre and post interview.

Figure 9. Workers’ knowledge of good communication practices.



However, some more specific issues and techniques to improve communication that were mentioned first at the post workshop interview included:

- importance of laughing and happy times;
- important to “communicate that I love them”;
- written communication;



- watch / observe;
- communication important in relationships with family members;
- appropriate communication;
- culturally appropriate communication; and
- “Communication to me is just life. If there wasn’t any you wouldn’t be able to learn or know”.

## Felt and expected-outcomes for workers

### ► As parents

#### Participant video interview

There was a distinct shift in responses between the pre and post interviews when workers were asked to rate themselves (qualitatively) in their role as mother or father. At the pre interviews all twelve rated their parenting (one as an auntie) as good to very good, making various comments about variations including:

- “I have a lot to learn/can improve/some areas need work” (3); and
- “I’m really trying / improved (ing)” (3)

At the post interviews there was more recognition that there may be potential to improve and also that, on reflection, they had done ‘a good job’. Only 3 described their parenting simply as good or very good and there was more reflection on the potential to improve and also on the quality of their parenting in the light of what they had learnt in RFP. The main qualifiers were:

- “I have a lot to learn/can improve/some areas need work” (8); and
- “Relief that I have done OK/better than I thought/best I could” (6)

A wide range of other observations and comments were made prior to the course regarding workers’ parenting including:

- “I have tried to be what my father wasn’t”;
- “For discipline I would rate myself low/might have been too strict”; and
- “Try and put myself in their shoes/respect their feelings”.

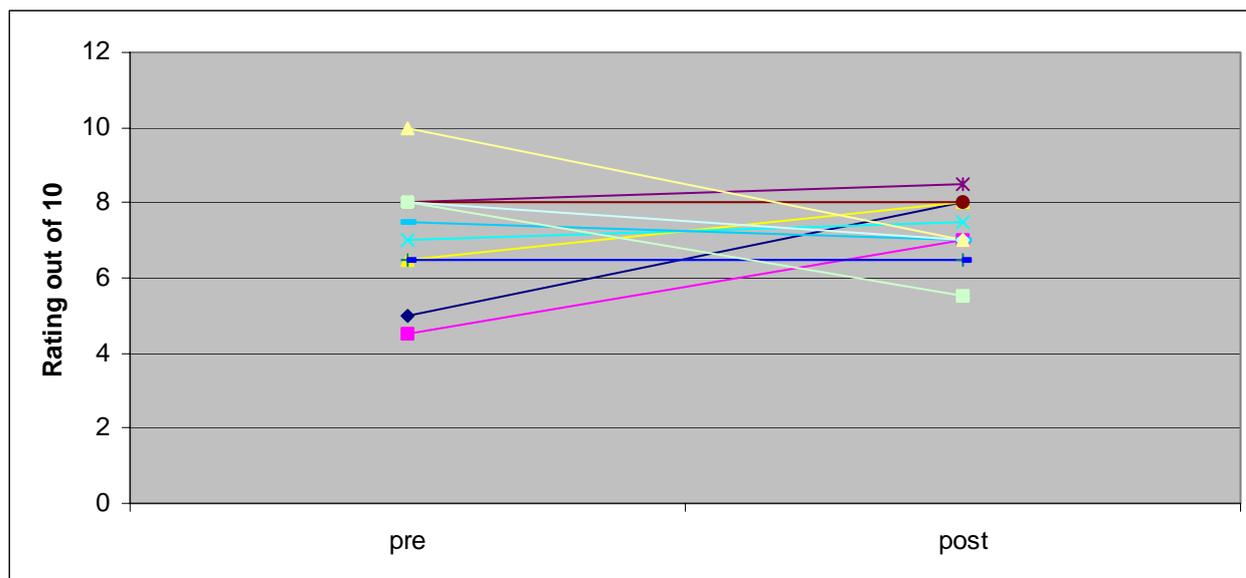
After the course other things mentioned included:

- “Not a consistent parent”; and
- “Parenting quality fluctuates depending on circumstances – low in hard times, higher in good times”.

When asked prior to the course to rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 10, the responses ranged from 4-5 to 10 with a mean of 7.1 indicating a generally high self-perception as a parent. At post interviews the range had compressed slightly from 5-5 to 8-5 with a mean of 7.3. There was some individual movement up (n=5) and down (n=4) with a maximum change of 3 points in either direction (Figure.10).



Figure 10: Pre and post self-ratings of workers' parenting.



When asked at the post interview if and how RFP would help with their parenting, all who answered (11/12) said it had already helped with how they felt about it, with most adding qualifiers such as “a lot” or “definitely”.

The ways that they said it would help, were predominantly in terms of acquiring new parenting skills focussed on:

- discipline such as;
  - o new alternatives
  - o understanding of realistic consequences
  - o developing a focus on the positive
  - o target the behaviour not the child
  - o being consistent
- being supportive;
- being patient;
- reflecting; and
- getting in touch with their feelings

All workers were excited in different ways by the course. Some about the potential of what they had learnt saying such things as: “Made me aware of areas I need to work on”, “Other ways on how to overcome the barriers of my childhood.” Others commented on the changes that the course had made to them already saying such things as: “This course made me feel good about my mothering” or “Built my self esteem and confidence ...the rest will just come”.

### Facilitator survey

Both facilitators thought that the workshop would help workers with their own parenting. One thought that this would occur because the course would help them reflect on their work and also on themselves as parents and then workers. The other thought that it would improve their understanding of themselves.



## ► In relationships with children

### Participant video interview

There appeared to be some shifting downwards in workers' qualitative perceptions of their relationships with their children between pre and post interviews. At pre interviews most relationships (8/13) were described in such terms as 'excellent' or 'really well' and the remainder (5/13) as 'good' or 'well'. At the post interviews fewer (5/12) were described as 'excellent' or 'really well' and more (6/12) as 'good' or 'well' with one being described as 'OK'.

Qualifying comments at pre interview included:

- "Improving/really trying/wanting to know them better/know more";
- "Dependent on age";
- "Feel I understand my kids well"; and
- "Never know anyone totally".

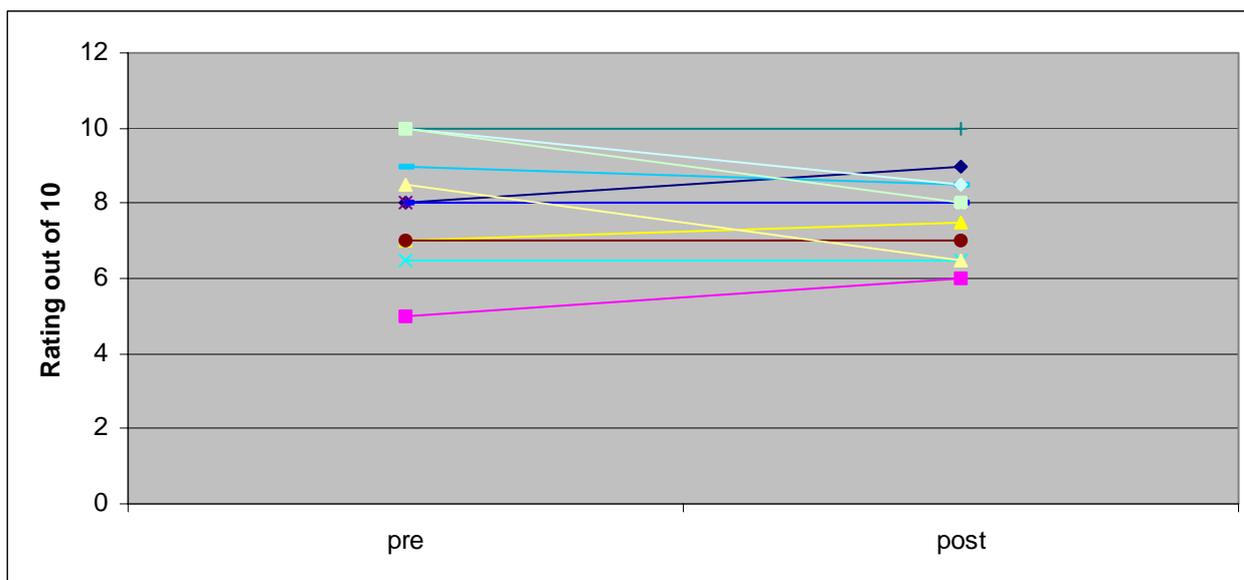
At post interview additional comments included:

- "Good trust and bond with kids";
- "We have a 6<sup>th</sup> sense with each other/know child well enough to know when something wrong";
- "Kids need privacy";
- "Asking if they are happy"; and
- "Feel I know them a lot better as a result of the course"

When asked prior to the course to rate their relationships with their children on a scale of 1 to 10 pre program, the responses ranged from 5 to 10 with a mean of 8.1 indicating a generally high perception of how good the relationships with their children were. At post interviews the range was similar (6.5 to 8.5 with a mean of 7.8). There was some individual movement up (n=3) and down (n=4) with a maximum change of 1 points up and 2 down (Figure. 11).



Figure 11: Pre and post self-ratings of workers' relationships with their children  
(average rating, if more than one relationship with child rated).



When asked at the post interview if and how RFP would help with their parenting, there was a range of positive responses about relating to children. They included:

- “Building stronger relations”;
- “Responding to their need for affection”;
- “Improving communication”;
- “Knowing them better”;
- “Being a good role model”;
- “Spending more quality time”; and
- “Telling them you love them”

Most workers were very certain that the course would improve relationships with their children saying such things as: “It opened my eyes to what other things I can do with my kids” and “It will help me with the grandkids.” Other indication that workers had benefited included statements such as: “Big change to how I raise my kids” or “We tell our kids that we love them but we don’t tell them enough”.

### Facilitator survey

Both facilitators expected that participation would help workers with their own relationships generally with one saying he thought that it would help them strengthen their relationships with children by improving their communication skills.



## ■ In relationships with partners

In qualitative terms there was no change in workers' perceptions of relationships with partners, with 4 out of the 7 who have partners, rating their relationships as 'very good' or 'excellent' at both pre and post interview (and 3 and 2 rating them as 'good/pretty good').

Qualifiers at pre interviews included:

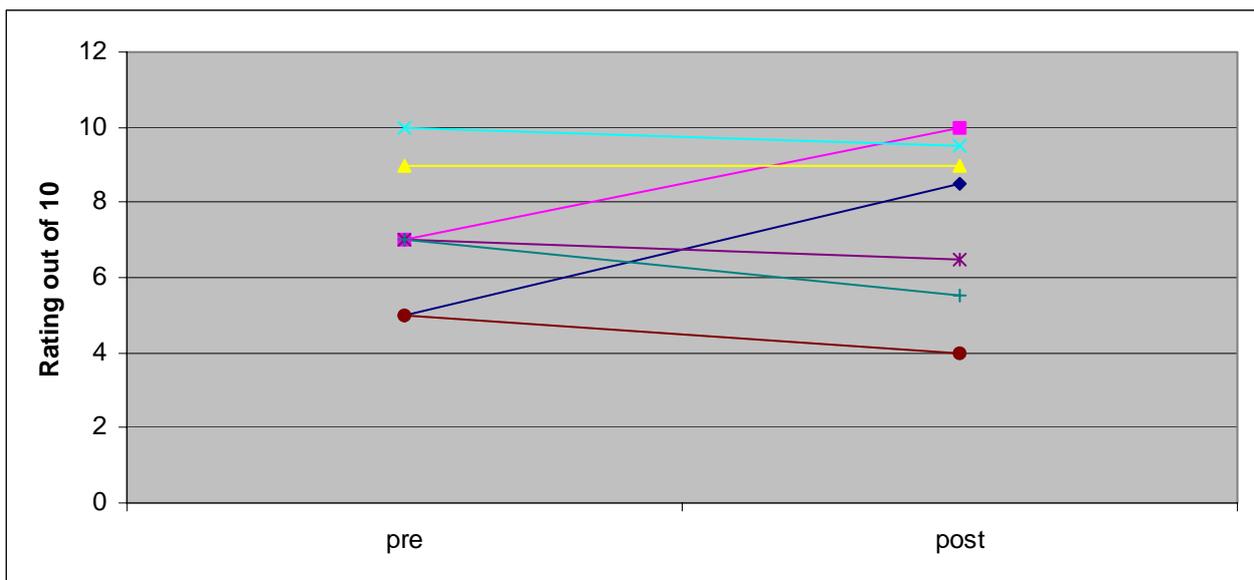
- "Connected on big things, not so much on small things";
- "Need to work on it";
- "Need to become friends";
- "Earlier years more rocky" and
- "Intimacy could be better but can rely that he's there for us".

At the post interviews additional qualifiers included:

- "Not as well as I'd like to";
- "After course I'd rate it higher/after hearing other stories I'd rate him as 10"; and
- "Better off being honest and saying what you feel rather than closing up".

When asked prior to the course to rate their relationships on a scale of 1 to 10 pre program, the responses for the 7 workers that had partners, ranged from 5 to 10 with a mean of 7.1 indicating a generally high perception of how good the relationships with their partners were. At post interviews the range was similar (4 to 10 with a mean of 7.6). There was some individual movement up (n=2) and down (n=4) with a maximum change of 3.5 points up and 1.5 down (Figure. 12).

Figure 12: Pre and post self-ratings of workers' relationship with their partner.



When asked at the post interview if and how RFP would help with their own relationships, all said that it would with 8 saying it would do so to a great extent. Comments regarding what relationships it might affect and how this might happen, concerned:

- Partners, specifically about:
  - o building stronger relations/more comfortable/supportive/sharing;
  - o improving communication and trust;
  - o stopping mind games;
  - o listening more;
  - o understanding of partner; and
  - o commitment/help one another to become a family.
  
- Other relationships. Specifically about better relating to:
  - o people generally/extended family;
  - o parents;
  - o siblings; and also
  - o being a better grandparent/auntie/uncle; and
  - o a better role model for family/friends/community

Workers were very positive about how the course might improve relationships saying such things as: “Highlights what I need to keep doing and what I don’t do” and “Made me realise how important it is to express my feelings to others.”

### **Facilitator survey**

Both facilitators expected that participation would also help workers with their own relationships. One thought that this would be facilitated by better understanding their roles and responsibilities as partners. The other thought it would help them strengthen their relationships with partners mainly by improving their communication skills.

## **► In working with Aboriginal families**

### **Participant video interview**

When workers were asked at the post interview if and how the training would help them work with Aboriginal families, 5 said “yes” or “a lot” with another 5 saying they “hope it will” or “think it will”. Comments were wide ranging covering the following aspects:

- Communication, including understanding:
  - o other perspectives;
  - o body language;
  - o difficulty of expressing how they feel; and
  - o the importance of teaching them to look at the children’s perspective.
  
- Understanding themselves, specifically about:
  - o sharing their own feelings/experiences;
  - o understanding they don’t have all the answers;



- o knowing their own needs, especially for support;
  - o needing to deal with their own issues and not letting them affect the programs they run; and
  - o confidence working with families.
- Families, specifically about:
    - o families working with families;
    - o variation in fathers issues;
    - o their need for help and support;
    - o engaging with parents re relationships/trust/respect; and
    - o planning strategies to work with families.

Workers were generally positive about how the course might improve their work with comments such as: “Walking out with heaps more than I had” but there was still some apprehension in comments like: “Hope I can get parents to understand” and “Don’t want to get people off side”.

### **Facilitator survey**

The facilitators both felt that the workshop would help workers with their work with Aboriginal families by heightening their awareness of facets of parenting, relationships and communication.

## **■ In other areas of workers’ lives**

### **Participant video interview**

When asked at the post interview if and how the training would help workers in other areas of their lives, all said “yes”, “a lot” or commented on how it had already helped with how they felt about this aspect. Once again, comments were wide ranging in this instance covering:

- Understanding, including:
  - o self/more self esteem;
  - o other sex;
  - o how participant was parented and its effects; and
  - o the need to deal with personal issues.
- Communication, including:
  - o with partner;
  - o with own and other children; and
  - o sharing own experiences.
- Responsibilities including:
  - o making them more responsible people;
  - o being a better role model/teacher; and
  - o understanding their impact on children.



Workers were positive about how the course might improve many aspects of their lives as expressed by comments such as: “Can be applied in lots of areas – communication, trust to bond” and “They are life skills and can open doors...They’re building blocks.”

### **Facilitator survey**

In commenting on the potential for the workshop to benefit other areas of workers’ lives one facilitator said that it could take “some time to unlearn old behaviours and relearn positive ones”.

### **► Planned delivery of workers’ first RFP in the community**

At the time of this evaluation (January 2006) the planned delivery by the trained workers, of their first 15-week programs within the community, had not yet taken place. This was mainly due to staff changes within the Area Health Service that resulted in a key support person for the Reconnecting Families Program, taking on another role. Recruitment for his vacated position is to be finalised in the first quarter of 2006 so the rollout phase is now scheduled for mid 2006.



# DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

In view of the above results, the training phase of The Reconnecting Families Training Program appears to have been successful in terms of giving workers valuable skills, information, personal insight and confidence to help conduct a 'Phase 2' rollout within their communities.

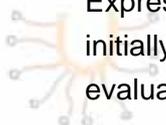
The findings are somewhat tentative because of the small sample size and the possibility that workers' states of mind changed from pre to post workshop interview as they became more comfortable with the facilitators and the interview process. Notwithstanding these possible influences and accepting that the training was set up as a pilot, some valuable insights have been gained with respect to future RFP trainings.

The facilitators felt that workers had benefited greatly from their involvement and that the workshop had met all its objectives in terms of improving participant knowledge and skills relating to: building better relationships, communication, knowledge of child development, techniques in managing children's behaviour, self reflection and connecting, and sharing responsibility.

Workers were very satisfied with most aspects of the program's delivery including the resources, the content and the facilitation. They felt that the workshop had improved their feelings about their own parenting and their understanding of children and partners. They were also very positive about how much the program had helped them in terms of the issues facing Aboriginal families, ways of supporting these families and confidence that they could provide such support.

While workers' own reflections on the degree of learning that had occurred were very positive there were difficulties in measuring such changes objectively via the 'knowledge questions'. An interview format consisting of open-ended questions was selected as the most acceptable procedure for the pre and post evaluations however it did place limitations on gauging the impact of such a brief program on the knowledge of workers who are already professionals in their field. Furthermore, when comparing pre and post program responses of individual workers, it became apparent that prior to the workshop some were nervous and felt pressure to show what they knew (eg that corporal punishment is ineffective), while after the workshop this pressure had dissipated and they were more interested in providing positive feedback rather than stating what had become almost 'background knowledge'. Nevertheless, the fact that the group at follow-up displayed a wide range of knowledge that was relevant to the specific information presented during the course (and not mentioned in the baseline interviews) reflects highly on the program as a good teaching and learning model.

The same applies to the perceived knowledge, skills and confidence questions asked in the Expression of Interest and again at the final evaluation. It appears that some workers may have initially given themselves high scores and then gave themselves lower scores at the post evaluation, possibly when they realised the extent of what they needed to know or be able to



do. Conversely, others initially returned low scores and then increased them possibly either because of their learning from the workshop or maybe because of their realisation that they already knew more than they initially thought they did.

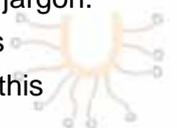
Responses summarised under 'outcomes', such as how RFP had helped workers with their own parenting, relationships, their work and other areas of their lives, are obviously expressions either of perceived internal changes in outlook or attitude or projections of how workers expected that the RFP experience would influence things when they returned to their normal lives. Clearly some workers experienced deep shifts in how they viewed key aspects of their lives and such responses were numerous and covered a wide range of almost entirely positive changes. This too reflects highly on the training workshop as a potentially effective way of improving aspects of participant's lives that they consider important.

Another important aspect of the evaluation, was feedback regarding possible improvements to program format, content and delivery. For the most part this feedback was of the "don't change a thing" and "just keep doing more of the same" variety. However, it is worthwhile reflecting on the few suggestions for improvement that workers and facilitators put forward.

There were a number of requests for practice or role-play as a way of preparing workers to actually deliver their own programs within the community. When this is considered in the light of concerns expressed about confronting aspects of the program such as domestic violence and sexual abuse, it would seem that considerable work including role play might be required before workers will feel confident addressing these key issues when they deliver their own programs. Such concerns, if not attended to, could be the main barrier to future roll out of RFP. One solution might be to conduct a follow-up in-service with workers involving role-play as a core component. One suggestion from the evaluation was that "participants could present a module and ask for questions just like a real facilitator would".

The tentativeness expressed by some workers regarding their ability to make RFP 'work' in their own communities probably also relates to the time constraints of a 4-day workshop with such a full program. While workers are professionals in this area, their feedback indicated that the workshop raised many personal issues and that much of their energy may have been focussed on these issues. Under such circumstances it is perhaps optimistic to expect workers to also absorb a large amount of new knowledge and also techniques for delivering each component of the program, from such a short workshop. Obviously the decision to run the workshop for 4-days was carefully thought through and the fact that at least one participant said it was difficult to be away from family for 4 days straight, suggests that it might be difficult to find a better compromise. One of the facilitators suggested the alternative of two 3-day workshops and this might be considered as an appropriate format for a follow-up in-service. However consideration should be given to the effect of being away from normal work and families for this length of time.

There were a number of suggestions that certain words used in the course were seen as jargon. It was not clear whether workers saw this as a problem for their own understanding, or as potentially creating a barrier in their future workshops within their communities. However this



point should possibly be considered from both viewpoints and, as one participant suggested, RFP might “tailor wording to suit the group and culture.”

As professionals, a number of workers recognised the huge potential of conducting programs like RFP in other contexts including high schools and preschools. This, and the suggestion that “dads” might be trained to run them, could well be the basis of a future RFP strategy.

Another matter regarding gender was that of RFP facilitators. Almost every participant was extremely positive about how well the course was facilitated and at least one commented that it was “good having two men facilitating”. However some did raise the possibility of including a female facilitator and this could be piloted in a future RFP training workshops.

Perhaps the greatest concern for workers was the confrontation and challenge they experienced during the sessions where sexual abuse was discussed. A number thought that the feelings that are dealt with in session 7 on ‘Self-Reflection & Connecting’ should not have been directly related to sexual abuse. Comments such as: “Talk about feelings of guilt, shame, fear should be a lot broader not just directed at sexual abuse” and “Guilt could come from telling lies or stealing and then lead on, in a subtle way, to ‘I feel guilt or shame from sexual abuse etc’” indicate that workers thought a less direct approach might be more acceptable to both themselves and participants in their own future groups. This needs to be explored further in planning the rollout phase of RFP within the community.

Dealing with the topic of domestic violence within the sessions may also need further consideration if workers are to confidently do so in their own future courses. The suggestion was that groups: “Need some talk on domestic violence without being too negative” and “Balance it between the men and women not just blaming the men. Women are also guilty of domestic violence”. While domestic violence is most commonly perpetrated by men, such comments suggest that workers feel they will not get the message through to their own groups unless the workshop strategy is modified.

The RFP team has since redesigned the 15-week program to take into account workers’ suggested changes. This should mean that when they deliver their first programs they can be more confident, knowing their perceived barriers have been attended to.

At this stage it is not possible to evaluate the effectiveness of different combinations of participants and facilitators in terms of gender, age and family structure. However, worker feedback suggests that this may be useful and it is hoped that further training programs and subsequent rollout within the community will provide sufficient data to enable such comparisons to be made. This, in turn, will help the RFP team to determine what combinations work best and whether specialised courses are required (eg single gender courses followed by a course for both partners together).



With the response to the RFP training workshop being so overwhelmingly positive but with some lingering lack of participant confidence around certain issues, there would appear to be a

need for ongoing input of facilitators' time and some further resources for follow-up sessions and supervision. However, if the results of this 4-day workshop are any indication then the potential for 15-week RFP courses to create positive change within Aboriginal communities is enormous.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations have emerged directly from the evaluation findings:

- RFP model has a great positive potential for Aboriginal families and if the rollout of the program by the newly trained facilitators is successful, then this mode of delivery should be expanded.
- Facilitators should provide follow-up in-service workshops for existing workers and ongoing supervision and support.
- If subsequent programs conducted by the workers' within their own communities prove successful then more training workshops should be conducted.
- Future training workshops could:
  - o be longer, possibly structured as 2 x 3 days;
  - o include more practice role play for workers as facilitators;
  - o explore how language might be more suited to the audience;
  - o possibly try a female/male facilitator combination; and
  - o explore how issues of sexual abuse and domestic violence might be approached in a less confronting way.
- The RFP model might be adapted for delivery for younger Aboriginal people possibly within the school context.
- The evaluation of the RFP rollout should include indicators that enable the team to examine what combinations of facilitators and participants provide the best outcomes for participants. These indicators may include: mix of facilitator and participant genders and ages, presence of partner in the group, if living with children, if living with partner.



# REFERENCES

1. Rekindling the Spirit Advisory Group. Rekindling the Spirit: Strategic and Funding Plan 2004 - 2009. Lismore: Rekindling the Spirit; 2004.
2. Newell S, Franks A, Lloyd D, Telford G, Binge C. Koori Fathering Program: Pilot Phase Evaluation Report. Lismore: Health Promotion Unit, North Coast Area Health Service; 2006.
3. Franks A, Smith-Lloyd D, Newell S, Dietrich U. Self-Determination Background Paper. Aboriginal Health Promotion Project. Lismore: Health Promotion Unit Division of Population Health Northern Rivers Area Health Service; 2001.
4. Northern Rivers Health Equity Working Group. Northern Rivers Equity Profile (Phase 1). Lismore: Northern Rivers Area Health Service; 2003.
5. Lloyd D, Newell S, Dietrich U. Health Equity: A Review of the Literature. Lismore: Health Promotion Unit, Population Health & Planning Directorate, Northern Rivers Area Health Service; 2004.
6. Karoly LA, Greenwood PW, Everingham SS, et al. Investing in Our Children: What We Know and Don't Know About the Costs and Benefits of Early Childhood Interventions. Santa Monica: RAND; 1998.
7. Reid J, Trompf P. The Health of Aboriginal Australia. Marrickville: Harcourt Brace & Company,; 1994.
8. Mathews JD. Historical, social and biological understanding is needed to improve Aboriginal health. *Recent Advances in Microbiology*. 1997;5:257-334.
9. Clarke C, Harnett P, Atkinson J, Shochet I. Enhancing resilience in Indigenous people: The integration of individual, family and community interventions. *Aboriginal and Islander Health Worker Journal*. 1999;23(4):6-10.
10. Jia T. Indigenous young fathers' support group. *Aboriginal and Islander Health Worker Journal*. 2000;24(1):18-20.
11. Podnieks M. Mother and Child, Father and Child: Final Report of the Wilcannia Parenting Project. Wilcannia: Wilcannia Coordinated Care Trial, Far West Area Health Service, Wilcannia Social and Emotional Wellbeing Team,; 2000.
12. Howard S. Fathering and Indigenous Families - A North Queensland Community Partnership. Presented at the Helping Families Change Conference; Melbourne; 2001.



# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Brief Overview of Reconnecting Families Program Sessions

### Session One: Introduction to Reconnecting Families

#### Aims:

- ❖ To conduct pre video interviews with participants.
- ❖ To set Group Rules.
- ❖ To outline the program.

### Session Two: What Is Communication?

#### Aims:

- ❖ To define the term communication.
- ❖ To explain and discuss various aspects of communication such as verbal and non-verbal communication.
- ❖ To explain and discuss the differences between using effective and ineffective communication in conversations.
- ❖ To explain and discuss what may block or encourage communication between individuals or groups.

### Session Three: Communication Maintenance

#### Aims:

- ❖ To explore the effects that body language has on communication.
- ❖ To look at how feelings affect the way we communicate.
- ❖ To understand the power of words.

### Session Four: What Is Discipline?

#### Aims:

- ❖ To explore the meaning of discipline.
- ❖ To look at the meaning of boundaries.
- ❖ To explore different ways of setting boundaries.

### Session Five: Building Relationships

#### Aims:

- ❖ To gain some understanding of the different elements to building and improving relationships.
- ❖ To gain some understanding of the different ways of improving relationships.
- ❖ To discuss the different ways of working through conflict.
- ❖ To look at the importance of encouragement in our relationships.

### Session 6: Review Sessions 2, 3, 4 and 5



## **Session 7: Self-Reflection & Connecting**

### **Aims:**

- ❖ To discuss a range of feelings and emotions.
- ❖ To look at our own feelings and acknowledge that others have feelings also.
- ❖ To better identify feelings/emotions through body language and facial expressions

## **Session 8: Sharing Responsibility**

### **Aims:**

- ❖ To identify and discuss the meaning of responsibility.
- ❖ To identify and discuss who is responsible.
- ❖ To understand the importance of sharing responsibility.

## **Session 9: Showing Affection**

### **Aims:**

- ❖ To look at ways of communicating your love to your child/ren.
- ❖ To identify the five basic ways a child feels loved.
- ❖ To explore the meaning of unconditional love.

## **Session 10: Review Of Sessions 7, 8 and 9**

## **Session 11: Child Development**

### **Aims:**

- ❖ To understand what child development is.
- ❖ To identify the various elements of child development.
- ❖ To understand the different stages of child development.

## **Session 12: Sexual Health & Pregnancy**

### **Aims:**

- ❖ To look at the female and male reproductive anatomy.
- ❖ To get an understanding of the impact of pregnancy and childbirth has on the relationships between parents.
- ❖ To increase knowledge of sexually transmitted diseases/infections.
- ❖ To increase knowledge of menopause.

## **Session 13: Hunters and Gatherers**

### **Aims:**

- ❖ To increase the understanding of the psychological and emotional differences between female and male.
- ❖ To explore the impact in which female and male psychological and emotional differences can and do have on a relationship.

## **Session 14: Review Of Sessions 11, 12 and 13**

## **Session 15: Post-Video Consultations With Participants**

- ❖ To assist with the evaluation of the program and each individual participant.



# Appendix B: Expression of Interest

## **Aboriginal parenting skills training**

Expressions of interest are welcomed from Aboriginal staff and community members who would like to participate in a “Reconnecting Families” training workshop.

### **What is the Reconnecting Families Program?**

The *Reconnecting Families Program* is a 15 week program that aims to support Aboriginal people in their roles as partners, parents or carers. This program was developed by Aboriginal people through the North Coast Area Health Promotion Unit using a relationship based approach.

### **Who is supporting this training program?**

The Aboriginal Child, Youth and Family Strategy (ACYFS) is being implemented on the Far North Coast with a focus on capacity building through strengthening partnerships and responding to community need. This training initiative is a result of partnership between ACYFS, North Coast Area Health Service, Malanee Bugilmah and Rekindling the Spirit. Parenting skills have been identified through a number of forums as a key need for Aboriginal parents and communities in our area.

### **What does the training involve?**

Training will involve a **four day** intensive program at Toonumbar Water Retreat 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> May 2005, facilitated by **Anthony Franks** and **Chris Binge**. This will involve exploring feelings and experiences in a group setting, and includes a pre- and post-training video interview. A Train-the-trainer model will be used to increase capacity in Aboriginal families and communities to raise their children. It is expected that participants will learn additional skills in:

- Building better relationships;
- Communication;
- Knowledge of child development;
- Techniques in managing children's behaviour; and
- Confidence in running programs in Aboriginal communities.

All costs for this training will be met by the NCAHS, Health Promotion Unit. Fourteen people will be selected to take part.

### **What happens next?**

Workers will be expected to work in pairs to deliver at least two programs in their local community(s). Funds will be provided through the Aboriginal Child, Youth and Family Strategy to cover the costs of delivering the *Reconnecting Families Program* to community(s).



## How do I apply?

Applicants will need approval from their organisation to take part in the training and to be released to conduct two 15 week programs (1/2 day per week) in their local community(s) by June 2006.

Information in the attached questionnaire will be used to select suitable participants and for evaluation purposes. Ideally workers will either have 'parenting support' as a core part of their current position or be a community member who has regular contact with parents and an interest in the issues they face.

Please complete the following questionnaire and return to:

**CLOSING DATE:      April 1, 2005.**



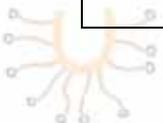
**Sallie Newell  
Health Promotion  
31 Uralba St, Lismore  
Fax: 02 6622 2151**

**For further information please contact:  
Anthony Franks              0419 228 471**





<p>Have you completed any formal training in child development? Please give details.</p>	
<p>Do you have experience in group facilitation?</p> <p>If so, please give examples.</p>	
<p>How do you think this training will help you in your job?</p>	
<p>Are you prepared to run two Reconnecting Families programs in the community by June 2006?</p> <p>Which communities?</p> <p>Will your organisation support this?</p>	
<p><b>About your personal experience:</b></p>	
<p>Would you be willing to explore your own feelings in a group setting?</p>	
<p>What personal experience do you have as a parent/carer?</p>	





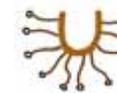
This section to be completed by your manager	
Do you support this application?	
How do you see this skill development being used in the applicant's current position?	
Are you prepared to support the applicant to conduct two parenting programs over the next 12 months within their normal duties?	
Details of training commitment	Pre-course interviews will be held on Friday April 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2005 Training course will be held from Monday, May 2 <sup>nd</sup> to Thursday, May 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2005
Manager's contact details:	
Name:	
Position:	
Agency:	
Phone:	
Applicant's signature	
Date	
Manager's signature	
Date	



# Appendix C: Demographics & Attendance Log Form

TRAINING  
PROGRAM:

## Demographics & Attendance Log



Complete as part of Session 1 introductions									Tick off for each session																	
Name <i>(please print clearly)</i>	Age <i>(please circle one)</i>		Living with Partner? <i>(please circle one)</i>		Own Children?					Attendance - Session																
			Yes	No	Child	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
	20s	30s	Yes	No	Age																					
	40s	50s			Sex																					
	20s	30s	Yes	No	Age																					
	40s	50s			Sex																					
	20s	30s	Yes	No	Age																					
	40s	50s			Sex																					
	20s	30s	Yes	No	Age																					
	40s	50s			Sex																					
	20s	30s	Yes	No	Age																					
	40s	50s			Sex																					

# Appendix D: Facilitator Training Feedback Form

**TRAINING  
PROGRAM:**

## Facilitators' Training Feedback Form



**1. What did you expect from facilitating the training?**

**2. Would you say your expectations were met completely, partly or not at all?**

*If not or partly: How were*

**3. Do you think the training will help the participants with their own parenting?**

*If yes: In what ways?*

**4. And do you think it will help them with their own relationships?**

*If yes: In what ways?*

**5. And do you think it will help them in their work with Aboriginal families?**

*If yes: In what ways?*

**6. And do you think it will help them in other areas of their lives?**

*If yes: In what ways?*

**7. Can you suggest any ways the training could be improved?**



**8. How well do you think the training met its aims? (please circle one number for each row and feel free to make comments)**

<u>Aim</u> : That participants will learn additional skills in:	Not at all	A bit	Fairly well	Very well
Building better relationships	1	2	3	4
Communication	1	2	3	4
Knowledge of child development	1	2	3	4
Techniques in managing children's behaviour	1	2	3	4
Self Reflection and Connecting	1	2	3	4
Sharing Responsibility	1	2	3	4

**9. Any other comments you'd like to make?**

Thank you very much for your time.



# Appendix E: Worker Training Feedback Form

## TRAINING PROGRAM:

### Workers' Training Feedback Form



1. What did you like most about the training?

--

2. What did you like least about it?

--

3. What did you find the most useful?

--

4. What's the main thing you learned?

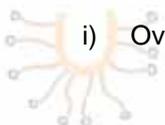
--

5. How could we improve the training?

--

6. How would you rate the training program on the following? *(circle one number for each)*

	Terrible			OK				Fantastic		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
a) Providing appropriate resources	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
b) Providing useful resources	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
c) Covering the main issues facing Aboriginal families	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
d) Facilitators' knowledge and understanding on the topic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
e) Facilitators' willingness to listen to and address the issues raised	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
f) Facilitators' ability to understand where you're coming from	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
g) Facilitators' willingness to share their own experiences	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
h) Length of the training program	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
i) Overall	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



**7. Overall, how much do you think the workshop helped you with each of the following? (circle one number for each)**

	Not much	A little	A fair bit	Lots
a) Understanding the issues facing Aboriginal families	1	2	3	4
b) Knowing ways to support Aboriginal families in their parenting	1	2	3	4
c) Knowing ways to help support Aboriginal families to improve their relationships	1	2	3	4
d) Feeling confident that I can support Aboriginal families in their parenting	1	2	3	4
e) Feeling confident that I can support Aboriginal families to improve their relationships	1	2	3	4
f) Learning ways to improve my own parenting	1	2	3	4
g) Learning ways to improve my own relationships	1	2	3	4
h) Feeling able to share my own experiences in a group setting	1	2	3	4

**8. How would you rate your current levels of the following? (circle one number for each)**

	Low			Average				High		
a) Knowledge of child development	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
b) Knowledge of ways to manage difficult behaviour in children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
c) Communication skills with adults	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
d) Communications skills with children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
e) Confidence in working with Aboriginal parents around their parenting needs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
f) Confidence in delivering a parenting course in your local community	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

**9. Any other comments you'd like to make?**

Thank you very much for your time today.



# Appendix F: Worker Video Interview Protocols

## TRAINING PROGRAM:

### Baseline Video Survey



Welcome and thanks for coming in. Remember, this isn't a test, it's to help you see where you're at. We'll do the same at the end of the training.

**IMPORTANT:** Fathering questions are for MALES only  
Mothering questions are for FEMALES only

#### Questions

1. In your view, what is fathering/mothering?
2. And is that different to how you were parented? If so, how is it different?
3. Why have you come along to this training program? What do you expect to get from it?
4. How do you see yourself as a father/mother? How would you describe your fathering/mothering?
5. So, overall, how would you rate yourself as a father/mother – out of 10 (where 1 = poor and 10 = great) – on average?
6. And thinking about your child/ren – how well do you know them?
7. And how would you rate your relationship(s) with your child/ren – again, out of 10 – on average?
8. **(If have partner)** And thinking about your partner – how well do you know him/her?
9. **(If have partner)** And how would you rate your relationship with your partner – again, out of 10 – on average?
10. What can you tell me about child development – the stages a child goes through as it grows up?
11. And what can you tell me about different ways of discipline, or managing children's behaviour?
12. And what can you tell me about communication – what does it mean to you?

OK, that's all the questions – thanks for your time.



**TRAINING  
PROGRAM:**

## Post Video Survey



Welcome and thanks for coming in. Remember, this isn't a test, it's to help you see where you're at.

**IMPORTANT:** Fathering questions are for MALES only  
Mothering questions are for FEMALES only

### Questions

1. In your view, what is fathering/mothering?
2. Why did you come along to this training program? What did you expect to get from it?
- 3a. Would you say your expectations were met completely, partly or not at all? **If not or partly:** How were they not met?
3. How do you see yourself as a father/mother? How would you describe your fathering/mothering?
4. So, overall, how would you rate yourself as a father/mother – out of 10 (where 1 = poor and 10 = great) – on average?
5. And thinking about your child/ren – how well do you know them?
6. And how would you rate your relationship(s) with your child/ren – again, out of 10 – on average?
7. **(If have partner)** And thinking about your partner – how well do you know him/her?
8. **(If have partner)** And how would you rate your relationship with your partner – again, out of 10 – on average?
9. What can you tell me about child development – the stages a child goes through as it grows up?
10. And what can you tell me about different ways of discipline, or managing children's behaviour?
11. And what can you tell me about communication – what does it mean to you?
12. Do you think coming to this training will help you with your own fathering / mothering? **If yes:** How do you think it will help?
13. And do you think it will help you with your own relationships? **If yes:** How?
14. And do you think it will help you in your work with Aboriginal families? **If yes:** How?
15. And do you think it will help you in other areas of your life? **If yes:** How?
16. Can you suggest any ways the Training Program could be improved?
17. And finally, is there anything else you'd like to say about the program or these questions?

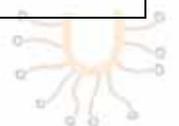
OK, that's all the questions – thanks for your time.



# Appendix G: Worker Video Interview Responses

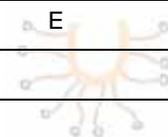
Feedback about the training			
Theme	Response	ID	
Improvements for RFP	Maybe a little more about love	C	
	More role playing to get people more involved	A	
	Participants should get up and do a speech on a module then ask for questions just like a real facilitator would	A	
	Could have had some rich conversations ... get a lot from participants ...their rearing.. rather than a text book... but did well for time allowed	K	
	Jargon – Tailor wording to suit group	B,J,K	
	Bit more culture. If I'm going to deliver it to Aboriginal people ... have to make it culturally appropriate. Maybe using other words?	K	
	Using a doll or some icebreaker... bit flexible and creative	J	
Program	Didn't expect it to be so good / Better than I thought	A,B,D,F,G,H,I,L	
	Wouldn't change anything	D,I	
	Enjoyed it / Wonderful course / Awesome / It's a great program / fantastic / excited / Good experience	A,B,C,D,E,FG,H,I,J,L	
	Good challenge	C,D	
	Got a lot out of it / Learnt a lot /Great information	B,E,F,H,I,J	
	Good handouts	J	
	Volleyball was really good for relaxing after sessions	L	
	Anthony and Chris have said all along that there is no right, there is no wrong – I think that is so important	L	
	Interesting to see how fifteen weeks go	E	
	Would love to see this program happening in Year 10 for kids. Get young dad's out of this group (Participant A&D) doing it in schools they'd love them. People they could relate to	C	
	Would be good to put a mini version into Jarjum preschool	C	
	Questions	General	K
		Make you think - confronting but they were good	C,L
		Were fine	E
Change focus on the questions on sexual abuse – guilt, shame, fear spread it over a wider gamut of feelings – different scenarios		G,H	
Group	Felt a part of a team	C,K	
	Group have respect for each other	B	
	Openness of the group was good	A	
	Selection of participants important	A	
	Being able to relate to other people and their kids and understanding where they're coming from at a better level	H	
	Been great to be a part of a very special group	G	
	Get a lot from participants	K	
	Trust in facilitators	C	
	Program intense but felt comfortable to share deep secrets from the past	B	
	Took a huge risk coming here	C	
Length	4 days a long time away from family	L	
	A lot of information for a short time/Bit rushed	E,F,K	
	Make longer maybe 5 days / Maybe a couple of extra days	E,F,K,L	

Theme	Response	ID
Facilitation	Good two men facilitating (One added that it shows hope for the future / Big help having two males facilitating	I,K,L
	Would have been different with one or two women facilitating not sure though or one male and one female	I,L
	Well set up/Flowed beautifully/ Facilitation good	A,C,D,F,G,I
	At a community level / Down to earth	F
	Patience of facilitators good	A
	When it's our turn to facilitate we should be creative with our delivery	J,K
	You haven't made a judgement on anybody but people have .. felt comfortable to bring up their mistakes	L
	Needs to be acknowledged a lot of hard work went into the program it's first time things – trial and error / Learning experience	J
	Acknowledge Chris and Anthony and the big job they've done running the program	A,G,K
Sexual Abuse/Feelings topic	Openness about abuse quite confronting /heavy / Felt uncomfortable	C,E,H
	Prior warning should be given to prepare people	C,E,L
	Was caught off guard	C
	Have section in nomination forms: 'Personal experiences may be exposed'	E
	A couple of people didn't disclose in the room but they have been victims of sexual assault but they found it really hard	L
	Talking about your feelings should be a lot broader not just directed at sexual abuse / Discuss feelings away from sexual assault / Feelings can come from different things	C,L
	Not appropriate to talk about when trying to encourage the parents to be better parents... too overwhelming. But having parents involved in a parenting workshop could lead on to discussions re sexual abuse etc	H
	Look at different contexts for the same feelings. Guilt could come from telling lies, stealing then lead on to in a subtle way I feel guilt or shame from sexual abuse etc.	G,H
Domestic violence	Need some talk on domestic violence without being too negative	C
	Balance it between the men and women not just blaming the men. Women also guilty of domestic violence.	C
Other	Didn't realise it had so much affect how you parent to how you have been parented as a child	L
	My expectations were met; it made me think about a lot of things that I haven't thought about for a lot of years. It let me put a few ghosts to rest	G
	Even if there's one or two things, parents might get a heap out of it	J
	Get it out there	C
	Can't wait to get out there and share info	C,D
	I think it's great that there's a group of people all around the area to go out there and have a go, especially Aboriginal workers 'cause usually we've had to rely on non aboriginal people to go out there and deliver a parenting program to, you know and that hasn't always worked where people, we can't get people to come to parenting programs at Child and Family Health so hopefully this is how we do it. We get our people talking about our families – this is our future	J



## Knowledge

Knowledge of stages of development					
Overall Theme	Sub-themes		Participant ID		
			Pre	Post	
Milestones	General		A,C,D,E,F,G,I,J,K,L	B,C,D,E,F,G,I,J,K,L	
	Reaching milestones important / They are predictable / A Guide		C,G,J	C,E,G,L	
	Various ways of defining different stages / transitional periods		C	I,J,K	
	Tricky question every child different		I	C	
	Lots of things can impact on child's development		J		
Knowledge	Said she knew but fairly vague in response		F		
	Know more than was stated		C,G,I,J	C,G,L	
Stages	Pregnancy / Foetal / Should start here with self care		J	J	
	Birth/Baby 0-9mths		A,D,E,F,G,H,J,K,L	A,B,D,E,F,H,I,K	
	Older baby 9-18mths		A,D,G,H,L	B,D,E,F,H,I,K	
	Toddler 1½ - 2½		H,K,L	B,D,F,H,I,K	
	Tot 2½ - 3½		E,H	A,I,K	
	Young child 3½ - 5 (Preschool)		D,E,H	A,B,D,K	
	Child 5 –11 (School)		A,D,E,H,L	A,D,I	
	Teenager 12 – 17 (High school)		A,D,H,K	A,D,F,H,K	
	Baby till teenager		A,D,F,H	D,F,H	
	Terrible twos		A	A	
	Becoming adult / establishing independent 18+		F,H,K	A	
Functional/skills	Breastfeeding			F	
	Dependent / Vulnerable / Lots of needs when babies/young		D,H,K		
	Attachment to parents / Bonding		E,K	I	
	Smiling		C		
	Weaning / Start solids		L	E	
	Eye contact		B,C		
	Teething		A	F	
	Bathing		D		
	Learning	To Sit up		G	E
		To Crawl		D,L	E,F
		To Walk		D,L	E,F
To Feed themselves		B,L	E		
To Talk/Speech		B,J			
To Toilet train		B			



Functional/skills cont...	Learning cont...	Their boundaries	A,E,H,K	A
		New things	A	I,J
		Drugs/Alcohol	A	
		To be good adults in teenage years	A	
		From their mistakes	A	
		From us	J	
	Nappies		F	
Waking in the night		A,F		
Types of development	Physical/ motor	B,H	B,J	
	Emotional	A,C,K	B,J	
	Hormonal	K		
	Cognitive (speech/ learning/ intellectual)	C,H,J,K,L	J	
	Social/ interacting with other kids/adults	C,E,J,L	J	
	Own identity/ values	H,K	A	
	Self esteem	J		
	Establishing independence	E,G,K		



Knowledge of ways of discipline & managing child behaviour			
Overall Theme	Sub-themes	Participant ID	
		Pre	Post
Types of discipline	Time out/ put in room/ put in corner/Sit them down	A,B,D,E,H, K,L	D
	Stopping privileges/ grounding/taking things off them	A,K,L	D
	Explaining why actions not acceptable/ Setting/ teaching boundaries	A,B,C,D,E, J,K,L	A,B,D,E,F,J
	Encouraging/ rewarding good behaviour	K,L	
	Teaching consequences/ responsibility/awareness	A,D,E,H,I,J	B,E,J,H
	Developing respect for people & property	F	J
	Smacking/hitting/Abusive/Spare the rod, spoil the child	A,D,E,F,G, H,I,J,K,L	A,F
	Shouting / Threatening / Verbal	K	A,F
	Authoritative / regimented / Strict	C,H,J,K	C
	Softly / softly approach / Gentler approach	C	
	Cut television cord off	G	G
	Permissive		C
Principles of good discipline	Smacking/hitting /painful methods ineffective/don't do	A,C,E,F,G,I ,J,K	A,C,F
	Shout swear ineffective/don't do / Verbal abuse	F,H	C,D,F
	Authoritative/Regimented not appropriate	C	
	Be assertive/Firm	F	F,I,K
	Build awareness / guiding / education / to train/teach	A,C,D	A,E,H,J
	Consistency/routine important	J	J,K
	Good communication	A	A,B,D,G,K
	Need to be Fair		J
	Role model/Set good example	K	C
	Do in loving way/ Emotionally fill them up & maintain that	C,F	F,K
	Shared responsibility with partner/ Would have been better with a partner	C	J,K
	Many different forms / Other alternatives		A,D,I,L
	Kids making good choices		H
	Be there for them	A	H
Middle ground between authoritative and permissive / A balance	K	C	
Talk to them nicely	B		
Other	Good discipline can be difficult/ hard work	E	
	Didn't use strap but used hand	F,G	
	More relaxed approach/flexibility / not so strict	C,H	J
	Teenagers harder to discipline	F	

Knowledge of ways of discipline & managing child behaviour			
Overall Theme	Sub-themes	Participant ID	
		Pre	Post
	Should have taught children to be more self reliant (eg. Make beds etc)	I	
	Youngest child difficult to discipline	L	
	Many forms some have detrimental affects/More awareness on effects		L
	Will review ways of discipline / Look at different ways		L
	Keep children busy	A	
	Patience	C	
	Should have disciplined children more when young	I	
	Different ways for different kids/ ages/ tailoring	D,H,I,J,L	I,J
	Don't give "I love you" just lip service you know to actually follow it up with some action		K
	Discipline is a form of punishment but it's not it's really a pride in the children		H
	Different Ages		I
	Do it out of love not duty		K
	Give them direction in life		H
	I don't feel guilty and maybe I should. I didn't quite bring my kids up the older ones that are older now in the way that I've learnt, the better way to have done it or tried anyway		K



Knowledge about communication			
Overall Theme	Sub-themes	Participant ID	
		Pre	Post
General	Importance of communicating	A,C,D,F,G, H,I,K,L	A,B,C,D,E, F,G,I,J,K,L,
Talking	No further explanation/ Part of communication / Verbal	B,C,D,E,G, H,J,K	B,H,I,J,K,L
	Asking questions – to understand other person	A,B,G	A,B,K
	To get point across / express self	A,C,F,H	B,C,F,J,K
	Encourage kids to talk / discussions	G	
	How you word things / tone of voice / Think about things before you say them	C,J	L
Listening	No further explanation/ Part of / important in communication	A,C,D,G,H, J,K	A,E,H,I,J,K
	To non-verbal as well as verbal stuff	C,J	H,J,K
	Being receptive to other person/ two-way thing	A,C,D,G,H, J	B,C,E,F,H,J ,K
	Active listening	J	
	Get feedback	A,B	
Respecting	No further explanation/ Part of communication	C,J	J
	Acknowledging other's feelings/ emotions	J	H,J
	Sensitivity towards other person	C	
Understanding	No further explanation/ Part of communication	B,E,J	D,E,J,K
	Understand what they are saying	G,J	E,K
Sharing	Sharing feelings/ emotions/ self	H,J,K	A,B,C,K,H
	Getting to know other / bonding / Spend time together	A,G	A,F
Forms of communication	Exchanging info/ thoughts	A,D,F,G,K	A,F,J,K
	Laughing/happy times		H,K
	No blaming	H	H,J
	Sad times / Bad times		H,K,L
	Just being there	A,F,J,K	A,G
	Communicate emotions / Important to express emotions and feelings	A	C,K
	Communicate that I love them		B
	Written communication		L
Principles / techniques	Get down to kids' level	E	A
	Keep eye contact	B	L
	Have to be genuine	J	
	Watch/ observe		J
	Stay calm/ don't shout	J	J

Knowledge about communication			
Overall Theme	Sub-themes	Participant ID	
		Pre	Post
	Open/honest /Security/trust/acceptance/tolerance	E,H,J,K	E,J,L
	Praise/encouragement	K	H
Important to good relationships with:	General / no further information.	C,D,I,L	C,J,K
	Partner	A,C,J,L	A,C,J
	Kids	A,C,D,G,I,J ,K,L	A,B,C,I,J,K
	Family members		K
	Community	L	C
Other	Different ages/stages/levels	C	
	Communicate with other kids/people/teachers	D	K
	Appropriate communication		L
	Berate	K	
	Not communicators in family when growing up – Dad silent type	I,L	C
	Culturally appropriate things		L
	How we relate to people		H
	Good communicator is being healthy mentally and physically		C
	Be able to talk to your kids about any subject	G	
	Communication to me is just life if there wasn't any you wouldn't be able to learn or you wouldn't be able to know. So growing and knowing		F
	That I hope they are happy		B
	Really important to me and my children because it's just a way of living, we communicate	I	
	That's where I'm very good. I communicate everything, you know whether it is not very pleasant or and if of course it's easy to communicate something that is very nice	K	
Communicating all the time. I think that's what saved my parenting if I've done everything else wrong this is one thing we've kept the communication open and the kids have no fear about a two way thing with communication	K		

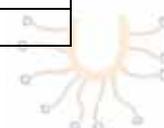


### Self-perception as father or mother

Rating		
Response	Participant ID	
	Pre	Post
1-4		
4-5	G	
5	K	
5-6		D
6		
6-7	H,J,L	J,L
7	A	B,E,G,I
7-8	E	A
8	B,C,D,F	F,H,K
8-9		C
10	I	

Quality		
Response	Participant ID	
	Pre	Post
Very good/excellent overall	C	C,G
Good/Pretty Good overall	A,B,D,E,F,G, H,I,J,K,L	C,H,I
Satisfied with past performance	E, G, I, J,K	B,C,F,G,H,J,K
Dissatisfied with past performance	A,H	
Recognition of need to improve /commitment to Improve	A,C,D,J,L	A,B,C,D,E,F,H, I,J,K
Conscious of need to be different to own parents	H, L	
Aware that quality fluctuates depending on felt pressures/moods	K	J,K

Comments		
Describe yourself as a parent? What makes you a good parent?	Participant ID	
	Pre	Post
Spend a lot of time with them/being there for them	D,E,J,	J
Teach them: social skills/to read /to be independent	D,G	
Give them direction/ independence to solve their own problems	D,G	
Try and put myself in their shoes	C	
Respect their feelings	C	
Allowing each their own time so none feels more loved than another	J	
Asking if they are happy		B
Caring, loving and being their for them	K	
Very protective	L	K
Other		
I have tried to be what my father wasn't	H	
Too high expectations of myself	H	
Might have been too strict/ Listen to them more	H	
These programs are here to help educate parents while kids are young	A	



### Relationship with/know children

Rating		
Response	Participant ID <i>(insert each participant's ID multiple times to cover each child referred to in this section <u>or</u> just once if a general rating is provided)</i>	
	Pre	Post
	1-4	
5	L	I
5-6		
6		L
6-7	D,H	D,J
7	G,H	G
7-8	H,L	H
8	A,F,K	B,F,K,L
8-9	J	C,E
9	C,D	A
9-10	D	
10	B,E,I	I

Quality		
Response	Participant ID	
	Pre	Post
Very good/excellent overall	A,B,C,E,F H,J,K	B,C,F,J,K
Good/Pretty Good overall	D,G,I,K,L	A,D,E,G,I,L,
Recognition of need to improve /commitment to Improve	A,F,J	D,J,K
Dissatisfied with past performance	G,I	
Aware that quality fluctuates depending on felt pressures/moods	F	J,K
Varies between children		L
Know them less as they get older	F,I,J	C,D,G

Comments		
	Participant ID	
	Pre	Post
I have 6th sense knowing with daughter and daughter has 6th sense with me		F
Kids need privacy in life		C
There's a part of me in them	A	
Never know anyone totally	K	J,L
Well enough to know when there's something wrong		F
Like their company		B
Feel I know them a lot better/will improve as a result of this course		H,D



## Relationship with/know partner

Rating		
Response	Participant ID	
	Pre	Post
1-4		
5	K	
5-6		J
6		
6-7		D,G
7	G,I,J	
7-8		
8		
8-9		H
9	A	A
9-10		C
10	C	I
2- 8	H	

Quality		
Response	Participant ID	
	Pre	Post
Very good/excellent overall	A,C,H,K	A,C,G,H
Good/Pretty Good overall	G,I,J	D,I
Dissatisfied with past performance		J
Recognition of need to improve /commitment to Improve	A J	J
Aware that quality fluctuates depending on felt pressures/moods	G	D,J

Comments		
	Participant ID	
	Pre	Post
Grown together	C	
Connected on big things. Not so much on small things	J	G
Communication & trust building stuff	J	J
Know him better now that we are separated	K	
Not with him. Don't have much respect for him	K	
Six weeks before he died he told her he didn't like chocolate cake. The kids and I loved it but he didn't like it but he never said anything for 38 years. He just ate it!	G	
Early years more rocky / Later years better	J	G
Young – raise family – doing this together but in last 20 odd years of his life he was really sick so it changed from a lover to a mother/carer roll		G
Mind intimacy could be better but I can rely on him he's there for us	J	
After being here I'd rate us higher		G,H,I
We don't communicate as effectively as I would like to. I'll have to take some of that on board. It can be a bit challenging at times and he can, his way of coping is withdrawing so it's not really conducive. Better off being open and honest .		J



**(THE REMAINING ISSUES WERE COVERED ONLY IN THE POST SURVEY)**

**How RFP training will help / has helped.**

How RFP helped with parenting				
Overall Theme	Sub-themes		Participant ID	
			Post	
	Will help a lot		A,B,C,D,E,F,H,I,J,K,L	
Parenting specifics	In relationship with kids	No further explanation		F,J,L
		Build stronger relationship with children		A,B,H,J,K
		Respond to their need for affection/love		B,E,J,K
		Improved communication/ I listen more		B,CI,J,L
		Being a good role model		F,J,K,L
	New parenting info and skills	No further explanation		D,E,H,I,J,K
		Discipline	General	D,E
			Alternative discipline techniques	E,K
			Work together as parents	J
			Consequences have to be realistic	K
			Concentrate more on positives	J,K
			Target behaviour not child	J
			More consistency	K
		Patience		C
		Made me reflect on parenting techniques		J,K
		Aware of parents actions/words effect on child		L
		Get in touch with their feelings		J
Tell them you love them more		B,G,K		
Other	Excited by what was learnt and how it will help		A,B,C,D,H,I,J,K,L	
	Better parent / Feel more confident as a parent		A,B,F,K	
	Respect for each other		J,K	
	Commitment to your kids		B,D	
	Help to overcome the barriers of own childhood		B	
	Reaffirmed the stuff I did do without knowing – naturally		K	
	Standards/Expectations could be to high		J	



How RFP helped with relationships				
Overall Theme	Sub-themes		Participant ID	
			Post	
	Will help a lot		A,B,C,F,G,H,I,J	
Will help		E		
Relationship specifics	Relationship with partner	No further explanation	D	
		Need to build more communication and trust	D,H,J	
		More comfortable / able to support / Will share with my partner	A,D,H	
		Stop the mind games	J	
		Improved communication / listen more	D,G,H,J	
		Needs to be a two way thing	H,J	
		Understanding of partner	A,D,H,J	
		Commitment with partner / Work together / Help one another to become a family	A,D,J	
		Learning experience for both	A	
	Relationship with others	No further explanation	E,I	
		Better relating to people generally	G	
		Better relationship with parents	E,K	
		Being a good role model to family/friends/community	F	
		Siblings	Better relationship with siblings	F
			Understanding relationship with siblings	E
		Being a better grandparent	F,G	
		Being a better auntie/uncle	E,F	
Other	Highlights what to keep doing and what not to do	K		
	Not blaming people / Not judging people	C,E		
	Conditional and unconditional love	E		
	Better relationship with extended family / people we love the most	F,J		
	Consistency	K		
	Only say what you mean	K		
	Importance of expressing feelings.	G		



How RFP helped with working with Aboriginal families		
Theme	Sub-themes	Participant ID
		Post
Overall	Will help a lot	F,G,H
	Will help/Hope it will / Think it will	A,B,E,C,D,G,I,
	Want to know more / become more familiar with it / practice	A,D,G,I,J,K,L
Improved communication skills	No further explanation	E,I
	Understand about other peoples perspectives	J
	Helped me understand about body language	J
	Acknowledge how difficult it is for them to express how they feel	C
	Teach them how to look at things from kids perspective	J
	Give them a foundation to work on	I
	More respectful of other people	J
	Share my feelings	J
	More understanding – I don't have all the answers	B
	Know I have my own needs and I need to be supported	J
	Deal with my issues and not bring them into the program I run	F
Ability to share experiences	Share my feelings	C,J
	As a single parent	F
Families	To work with families/More contact with Koori families	E,F,H,I
	Families working with families	A
	More confident when talking about families	A
	Realise not every father is the same and Aboriginal men need help & support	F
	Help mothers at playgroup	F,I
	Engage with parents around the importance of having good relationships and trust and respect. How to look at things from a children's perspective	J
	Hope can get parents to understand	I
Group work skills	Will help with men's groups I facilitate	H
	Ideas on how to deal with things	J
	Will look at parenting more extensively	H,J
	Helps in prioritising work	L
	Making notes to try individual things on families and record effectiveness	L
	Important not to get people off side	J
Other	Know a lot more than before / thought we knew all but didn't	A,B
	Realised you can't just learn all this from a handbook.	K
	Need to pass that on while people are having young children	K
	Sitting with lots of generational stuff	F
	Would benefit community enormously	K

## How RFP helped with other areas of life

Theme	Sub-themes	Participant ID
		Post
Overall	Will help a lot	A,L
	Will help/has helped already	B,C,E,F,G,H,I,J,K,L
	Helped in my work	A,E,H,I,J,L
	Being a bit more assertive	J
Made me more responsible	No further explanation	A,D
	Being a role model / a good teacher	F
	Understanding impact of own behaviour on kids	L
Improved communication skills	No further explanation	A,G,H,K
	Will help with everyone	G
	With my children	I,L
	With other children	G
	Understanding others perspectives	H,J
	On all levels personal, interpersonal.	G
Understanding opposite sex	No further explanation	K
	How to deal with maleness around fathering	F
	Male – female differences	K
Understanding self	Own feelings/Me as a person/Self reflection	C,E,F
	Increased self-esteem	C,F
	Helped me come to terms with how I was parented / should parent	B,E
	Made me look at my life/ I could have helped more	A,F
	Recognise I need to deal with my own issues first	B,E,F,H,J
	Have to deal with own stuff I didn't know was still there, to be effective.	F
	Know I can do a better job with the upbringing of my children	B
	Coming to terms with bad times	L
	As a single parent	L
Other	More understanding of parents	E
	Respect for partner	A
	They are life skills and can open doors/They're building blocks	C
	Give me more ideas	J
	Can be applied in lots of areas – communication, trust to bond	K
	Accepting we aren't all the same	J
	Respect – General	A
	Was it money that made people happy, was it prestige or power, but it wasn't it was your, it's your own thoughts about how you feel about yourself and other people	C
	Reaching out to other family members and hope they get out of it what I did	I

### Summarising Comments

A big journey starts with the first step and I think we've made the first step. Look we've got a hell of a long way to go and it's got to be a bumpy ride but what else have we got to do

This course has been everything and a whole lot more. It's really opened up my eyes

I like the fact that it is called Reconnecting Families. To be honest I probably wouldn't have wanted to come if it was 'Parenting'. Whether that's egotistical or not doesn't make much difference

I think this can be applied in lots of areas. You know the fact that you've got to have respect and trust and communication that helps all relationships. In intimate relationships with my children, with my parents and all my siblings. I think that some of that communication could be very confronting. However it might need to be done. So I've learnt this, and also to try to understand where the other person's coming from.

I'm very keen to know where males are coming from, obviously 'cause I'm not one. I've done a lot of stuff about it because of my sons and I'm still hungry to know more about it. So how can we come together and I think we complement one another and like somebody else said in the group: I don't want them to change. I want to stay as men. I just want to understand so we are able to communicate much more clearly.

