

Regional PD opportunity, group work
brokerage funding, new therapist
bumper issue!

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The Snapshot

Welcome to the FRMP Newsletter, Summer Edition

Happy New Year to all our wonderful subscribers!

MCM's Family Reconciliation and Mediation Program (FRMP) is a state-wide service funded by the Victorian Government. FRMP provides brokerage funding and other capacity building activities for the youth homelessness sector.

[Learn more](#)



Regional Professional Development Opportunity!

Transform Conflict: Practical Skills for Youth

Homelessness Workers

Frontline youth homelessness work often involves navigating high-emotion conversations with young people, families, and carers. In February 2026, practitioners are invited to attend Transform Conflict, a two-day, face-to-face training focused on building confidence and capability in these challenging interactions.

Hosted by the Family Reconciliation Mediation Program in partnership with Grace + Justice, this practical training has been developed specifically for frontline practice. Participants will learn simple, repeatable tools to de-escalate conflict, listen deeply, respond with curiosity, and identify needs beneath positions — while maintaining clear professional boundaries.

The training is designed for youth homelessness and housing support workers, case managers, intake and triage staff, family services practitioners, school engagement officers, and team leaders.

Transform Conflict will be held on 26–27 February 2026 at Duart Homestead in Maffra, Victoria. Places are limited and registration is essential.

[Register here!](#)



Grace
Justice

Did You Know? FRMP Brokerage Can Support Groupwork and Group Therapy Programs

Groupwork brokerage funding can be used to support a wide range of group-based and mentoring activities that strengthen engagement, wellbeing, and connection for young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The following example highlights how brokerage has been used to enable some young people to attend a structured mentoring program that builds confidence, skills, and positive relationships.

'In Your Corner' Mentoring Program

East Gippsland Integrated Health, in Bairnsdale, deliver their *In Your Corner* experience focused on boxing fitness and partner drills and working with young people on their coordination and fitness. This all helps them go above and beyond what they thought they were capable of and teaches them about, pushing their limits, respect for each other, social skills, and being connected with others all while building confidence.

Their youth mentoring program includes a variety of enriching activities led by passionate mentors. These mentors support young people to discover their strengths, explore their talents, and develop their skills. EGIH designs and delivers youth experiences grounded in four key pillars: Healthy Minds, Bodies, Routines, and Limits.

👉 To learn more or to start a group work or group therapy brokerage application, visit our website or contact frmp@mcm.org.au

[FRMP Group Work Brokerage](#)







Please meet Vessal Safaei, our new Mental Health Social Worker in Fairfield



Vessal Safaei (she/her) is an Accredited Mental Health Social Worker with over ten years of experience working with families. She has worked in both the public and private sector to support the mental health of parents, as well as the emotional wellbeing of young people. Vessal speaks English as well as Farsi (Persian) and has a close connection to the LGBTIQ+ community.

Vessal's work is deeply rooted in strengthening family relationships and helping them find new ways of facing challenges that bring them closer together. She has experience supporting young people who have survived early childhood trauma, sexual abuse, and family violence. Before private practice, Vessal has worked for organisations such as the Australian Childhood Foundation, Neami National, PANDA Helpline and Gidget Foundation.

Vessal has a Bachelor's degree (Hons) and a Masters in Social Work. She has completed further training and supervision to register as an Accredited Mental Health Social Worker with

Medicare. She has also completed studies in perinatal mental health, Synergetic Play Therapy as well as Developmental Psychiatry by the Mindful Institute (Melbourne Uni). Vessal has also recently completed her training in Child-Parent Psychotherapy which allows her to specialise in working with the 0- to 5-year-old age group and their primary care givers to reduce the impact of early childhood trauma.

Please meet Jack O'Sullivan, our new Mental Health Social Worker in Avenel



G'day, I'm Jack O'Sullivan. It's my privilege to do counselling as a day job and see folk's worlds from the inside out. I'm a PACFA-registered clinical counsellor (Master of Narrative Therapy and Community Work; Graduate Certificate of

Developmental Trauma; Bachelor Counselling), with about 10 years' experience in the sector. I offer plain-spoken and straight-forward counselling for (young) men in regional and rural Australia through my practice: Red Gum Reflections. I offer in-person appointments in Avenel, Victoria or via video call (telehealth).

I combine formal studies (I'm a therapy nerd), my genuine interest in people, and my life/professional experiences to support men to develop purpose, sort crap out, and promote healing. I aim to keep my work down-to-earth and relevant to the shape of people's lives.

When I'm not counselling, I'm learning to cook Thai food, engrossed in literature, or trying to keep my garden alive.

Feel free to call 0458 115 401 or email me contact@redgumreflections.com.au to chat.

Please meet Mary Shamaly, our new Family Mediator in Templestowe



Mary is a Nationally accredited mediator, lawyer, conflict coach – and the founder of Grace + Justice.

Mary has spent nearly a decade in public service working at the intersection of conflict transformation and major system reform. She began as a Legal Aid lawyer before moving to the Children's Court, where she mediated over 1500 child protection cases, guiding difficult conversations in high-pressure environments.

Along the way, she stepped into roles focused on leading and training through change: supporting a youth justice reform pilot, leading project work to embed new family violence laws within court operations, and mentoring law graduates through their Practical Legal Training.

Her work sits in the space of relationship breakdown, communication rupture, and structured repair – especially when a young person and their family have reached a point where talking feels impossible.

Mary's approach is structured, trauma-aware, and strengths-based. Her clients find her caring, and gentle with her words, but firm when needed – creating a safe space with genuine care and compassion.

She supports young people, parents/carers, and families to transform their conflict, set boundaries, repair where possible, and make practical agreements about next steps – including reconnection planning when that's appropriate.

Mary believes that hard conversations can be held with dignity and grace, and that small shifts in communication can change the trajectory of a young person's confidence, support, and stability.

New therapists on the FRMP register

Please also welcome the following therapists who have recently signed up to support young people experiencing (or at risk of) homelessness:

- JD Mitchell - Creative Art Therapist (**Brunswick**)

- Lorna Parker - Creative Art Therapist (**Werribee**)
- Matthew Delosa - Mental Health Social Worker (**Newport**)
- Karli Dettman - AUSLAN Counsellor (**Blackburn**)
- Kerry Knight - Counsellor and Psychotherapist (**Frankston**)
- Louise Goodwin - Mental Health Social Worker and Family Therapist (**Frankston**)
- Sam Gummer - Creative Arts Therapist (**Rye**)



Contact Us

The FRMP team has allocated contacts for the regions:

- **Poppy Fotiadis:** Metro West (incl. CBD), Metro North and Loddon Mallee
- **Cassie de Ruyter:** Metro South, Metro East and Gippsland
- **Linda Schwan:** Grampians, Hume and Barwon South West

Please contact the team on **03 9977 0046** or frmp@mcm.org.au with any enquiries.



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Family Reconciliation Mediation Program (FRMP)

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