

Heading Upstream

Youth Support Service - diverting young people from the youth justice system & crisis health services

“Our children are running wild”

“Youth crime wave on the rise”

“RAMPANT teen boozing has fuelled a dramatic surge in youth violence in Victoria”

“Child crime on the rise, new figures show”

“KIDDY criminals in Victoria are getting younger and more violent - and there are more of them”



YSS in a nutshell



- The Youth Support Service is an early intervention service for young people at risk of entering the youth justice system.
- The system is based on an exclusive electronic referral process from Victoria Police - *SupportLink*.
- The service provides an integrated health and wellbeing response to diversion focusing on the underlying causes of youth offending behaviour.

Ollie's Story



- Referred to YSAS at age 19
- Homeless
- Estranged from family
- Intellectual disability
- Injecting Drug User
- Sex working
- Multiple hospital admissions – o/d
- Multiple health issues
- Offending (traffic heroin, theft, assault)
- Multiple court appearances

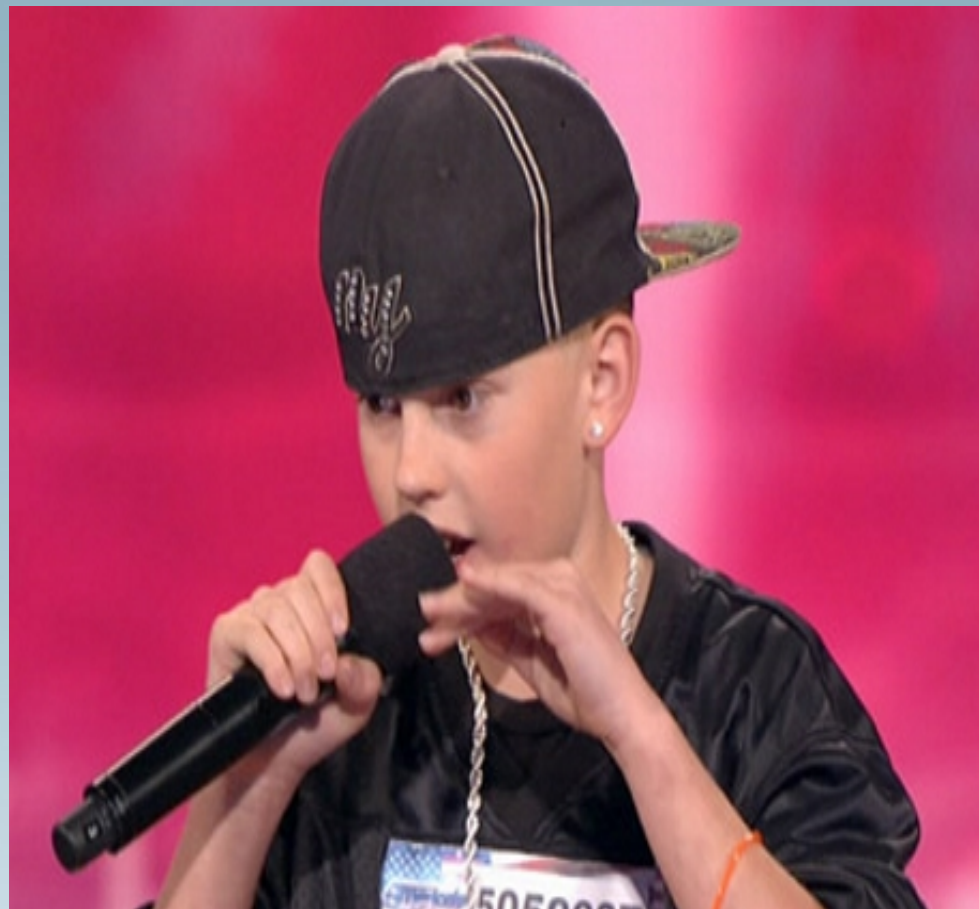
Ollie at age 12

He lives with his parents
Mum doesn't speak English well
Dad is an interstate truck driver
Poor attachment with his parents

Attending school but has been bullied
Finds it hard to make friends.
Teachers complain he is impulsive
& has challenging behaviours.

Has had a psychologist report and
some welfare support at school,
but his parents haven't attended
school meetings.

Ollie loves rapping, basketball and
his Auntie's cooking.



Who does YSS see?

- Young people aged 10-17
- First contact or recent contact with police
- Not case managed by YJ or Child Protection
- Time limited therapeutic case management up to 6 months



YSS metro Melb

- Over 2000 referrals in 17 months
- Young women = 30%
- 10-12 year olds = 8%
- 13-15 year olds = 48%
- CALD % vary according to region
- 80% enrolled in education but not engaged
- 90% + report Hx of family conflict



Police referral prompts



Types of offences or risks:

- High level risk taking behaviour / anti social behaviour
- Problematic behaviour / offence committed when substance affected
- Offence committed under 14 years
- Contact during school hours
- Serious or chronic victimisation history
- Offence involving use or carriage of weapon
- Reported as a missing person
- Offence involving serious violence
- Anger, aggressive behaviour
- Criminal offences including assault, theft & other

Common themes

- Social media / internet bullying
- Intergenerational conflict, family violence, families in distress
 - financial struggle, housing
- Mental health issues and substance use within the family setting
- Intellectual disability, autism and Asperger's
- Child Protection histories
- Cannabis use
- Lack of positive adults, limit & boundary setting



YSS Interventions

Family:

- Family inclusive practice
- Problem solving meetings to aid communication between mum & Ollie
- Utilise extended family to provide respite for mum

Social Connectedness:

- Supported referrals & access to basketball, music program run through local government
- Weekly dinner at Aunts place

Education:

- Facilitate school meetings to develop education plan with a focus on things that Ollie is good at
- Involve mother in school meetings through use of interpreter

Other:

- Skills based CBT
- Emotional regulation
- Psychoeducation
- Motivational interviewing

Outcomes



- April 2012 – 31 case studies sampled where young person had a two month post closure review
- High risk behaviour, theft & family conflict
- Of the 18 yp disengaged from education at the time of referral, 16 were linked back to education / training / employment
- 29 had no further involvement with police at the two month post closure follow up or reported positive contact with police.
- DHS commissioning full evaluation in 2014

Outcomes

- Decreased involvement in offending, with increased opportunities for participation in positive community, recreational, sporting and other activities
- Improved emotional health; regulation of moods, self care, interpersonal skills, developing insight.
- Increased connection to a network of supportive relationships including friends, family or significant adults.
- Engagement in education, training or employment.
- Have stable accommodation and independent living skills and receiving income support where eligible;
- Have a holistic health and wellbeing assessment (including primary and mental health) and be linked into services as needed.



Who do we refer to?



- Family services, Reconnect, Child First, Parent Line.
- Local Government Youth services
- Counselling, psychiatrists, paediatricians, psychologists, Headspace
- Vocational / training pathways, Youth Connections, TAFE.
- School holiday activities, camps
- Material aid, textbooks, travel cards, uniforms.

Community development & Assertive Outreach



- Ropes
- Operation Newstart
- PCYC – Police Citizen Youth Club;
Brimbank Street
Surfer Bus
- Yarra Blue Light –
Police mentoring
program “Two’s
Company”



- Police graffiti
management
strategy
- Assertive
outreach where
young people
congregate
- 1:1 mentoring
with YRO – i.e.
15 yo female
wants to be a
police officer

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*Y*outh
*S*upport &
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