

Multi service systems approach to better support children with disability and/or mental health issues

Presenters: Kim Simpson and Susanne Llopis

The effects on children who are exposed to abuse and neglect are well understood. When a child and/or the parents have a disability or mental health issue the effects are even greater. This interactive workshop will explore the additional needs of these children and their family/whanau, and the role of social workers, teachers and other professionals involved.

An integrated child-centred approach will be applied to demonstrate how best to meet the needs of these children by using a holistic approach which examines the family strengths, areas of difficulties, and stress inside and outside the family system and ensures a collaborative practice.

By looking at the complexity of the family system, it acknowledges the importance of social services working together collaboratively in a multidisciplinary setting in order to facilitate changes within the family system which are sustainable.

This will include looking at disability rights, the New Zealand Disability Strategy and barriers to collaboration. Case examples will be presented to share some practical, innovative solutions in order to develop better services for children and young people, achieve positive outcomes for this group of vulnerable children and to emphasise the importance of feeling confident and competent when working in collaboration.

Kim Simpson is a community facilitator at Community Living, working in the Te Puna Awhina service supporting children and youth up to the age of 18 years. She is a registered social worker who believes that working in partnership with family/whanau and other professionals is key to success for children and their family/whanau.

Susanne Llopis is the disability liaison professional in the Te Puna Awhina Service at Community Living. She has a particular interest in supporting children with high and complex needs who require a flexible and innovative approach that takes into account their learning, behaviour and emotional problems, working in collaboration with parents and caregivers and professionals.