

Kilkenny Strengthening Families Programme  
Evaluation from the Pilot Implementation  
September 2010 to February 2011

## **Background:**

The Fr. Mc Grath FRC(FRC) had sourced funding from the HSE to develop and run a family support programme.

The FRC research various family support programmes and decided to focus on the Strengthen Families Programme (SFP).

To progress this work, the FRC decided to take on a part-time family support worker (FSW) in March 2010.

## **So what is the SFP:**

The programme was developed in America but is adoptable to an Irish context. It has been run for 10 years in America and has a proven track record and researched statistics of being effective for strengthening families.

The SFP is an inclusive family support programme. It includes parents or adults in the family who play a parental role, Teens / young people and Children. Families are referred onto the programme by someone who has participated in the SFP training.

### ***How it works:***

To support the family attending the programme, transport, dinner and childcare are provided. In addition the referrer makes weekly contact with the family.

Facilitators plan and deliver the programme for 14 weeks focusing on relevant areas of family life such as , effective communication skills, dealing with conflict, holding family meetings, setting limits and respectful relationships.

The SFP programme provides agencies an opportunity to work in a collective way, for the delivery of their work. We hear continually from government that they want an increase in partnership approaches for the delivery of local services.

The SFP is a clear and effective example of partnership in action which delivers results for the families involved but also for the agencies involved.

The programme is focused on the family members enhancing their existing skills and learning new skills but facilitator's too gain learning and skills from their experience of facilitating the programme.

## Outreach:

The FSW made contact with a number of key agencies in Co. Kilkenny with a view to their agencies becoming involved the initial 2 day training for SFP.

*Please see the additional documentation section for the list of agencies who participated in the training*

## Delivery of 2 Day Strengthening Families Programme (SFP) Training:

As Forige staff from the Drum Centre were one of the key agencies interested in becoming involved with SFP in Kilkenny, Faorige staff who were Master Trainers for SFP Ireland, facilitated the 2 day training in May 2010. 28 people participated in and completed the 2 day training, from 13 agencies and 4 sections of HSE attended.

Kilkenny RAPID Programme printed all training manuals required for the training.

## Formation of the Steering Group:

Following the training contact was made with various agencies and a steering group was formed with representatives from the HSE ( Social Work Team and Community Services Team), SE Drugs Task Force, Fr. Mc Grath FRC, Newpark Close FRC , RAPID Kilkenny, DRUM Centre, Compass GYDP.

The Steering Group met Monthly for the progression of a pilot implimentation of the SFP.

## Progression Stages:

The progression of the first took place in the following stages:

- Identifying Referrers
- Identifying Facilitators
- Identifying Childcare Workers
- Developing Flyers for Parents and Teens
- A Visit to Ballymun SFP took place in June for research
- Insuring all policies and procedures are in place for Child protection and Best practice
- Provision of Child Protection Training
- Provision of Facilitation Skills Up-Date Training and Facilitators manual
- Planning session with Facilitators
- Facilitator and Referrers Meetings
- Identifying caterers for the implementation
- Organisation and allocation of rooms for dinner, parent, teen and family session within the Fr. Mc Grath Centre
- Identifying additional volunteer support for the smooth delivery of meals ( staff from Fr. Mc Grath Centre)

- Accessed 2 students for placements with the SFP through Ossory Youth Drugs Project
- Agreement of Families who were referred to the programme
- Managing the 14 week implementation including Graduation Night and Christmas Dinner Night
- Follow up in between sessions
- Regular Steering Group Meetings
- Facilitation of Evaluation
- Planning the Next Steps

### First Pilot Implementation of the SFP:

Finally on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September the pilot programme started.

- The number of families directly involved the SFP was 7 with an additional 4 families participating through being part of one of the 7 families on the SFP.
- There are 11 adults participating in the parents session including, Mum's, Dad's, Aunt's and a Grandmother
- There are 7 Teens who participated in the programme
- There are 10 Children who attending childcare during the programme
- There were 7 Referrers who supported the participation of families on the programme
- There were 7 volunteers and 3 staff who supported the programme with restaurant set up, clean up, waitressing and facilitating
- There are 10 facilitators who facilitated the sessions for the 14 weeks including staff from the:
  - Fr. Mc Garth FRC Community & Family Support Services and Youth Services Teams,
  - Newpark FRC Community & Family Support Services Team
  - HSE, Young People's Counseling Service and Family Support Services
  - And 3 facilitators who volunteered their time

The SFP had worked effectively because of the high level of inter-agency work and the dedication, motivation and skills of the facilitators and of course of the commitment from the families themselves.

All the agencies involved in all aspects of the Kilkenny SFP, all have a remit in Family Support and the programme gave an opportunity for agencies to work in partnership as a collective with families on the programme.

## Evaluation of the Implementation:

Evaluation of the implementation took place informally and formally.

### ***Informally:***

At the end of each session, facilitators checked in with the groups they were working with as to how things were going for them. In addition referred who checked in with the family weekly inquired how things were going and any issues feed back to the site coordinator.

At the end of each weekly implementation there was a check in session with facilitators and in addition facilitators could contact the site coordinator re concerns, issues or items for follow up in between sessions.

### ***Formal Evaluation:***

An evaluation session was facilitated with the facilitator of the programme, many of whom were also referrers. There was only 1 referrer who was not a facilitator ( due to conflict of roles with a family participating on the SFP) and an evaluation was facilitated with him also and included into the following:

#### ***From Facilitator / Referrers Group:***

As all bare one of the referrers, were also facilitators on the implementation, it was decided that a joint approach to the evaluation would be appropriate. The referrer who had not facilitated was unable to attend the full session and therefore gave a separate evaluation.

At the evaluation session it was decided to break the group into the Parent Team and Teen Team in which they had facilitated the programme.

#### ***Evaluation from the Parent Team:***

- 1. As a facilitator / referrer, what did you enjoy about being part of the programme?**
  - Working as part of a team involved and connecting with people
  - The commitment from the team
  - Coordinator from site coordinator
  - Seeing a number of adults from some families participate
  - To see the families progression
  - The peer support, openness and honesty from parents between each other
  - The joint planning sessions worked well
  
- 2. What was hard or difficult about being involved as a facilitator / referrer?**
  - The major trauma experienced by 2 teen early in the programme and the issues this brought up for us as facilitators re boundaries.

- Keeping continuity with other facilitators at the beginning
- As a facilitator on the programme it was time consuming and was a big time commitment
- That the programme was a pre-set structure, so trying to adopt it to an Irish context was time consuming
- There was too many hand-outs for parents
- Too much from a top down approach and too much detail
- Not having a briefing on families and their issues before the programme started was difficult for facilitators to be aware of risk factors. Some of the facilitators did know the families.
- Boundaries needs to be acknowledged and would suggest more discussion on them before the programme starts
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**3. What did you or your organisation gain from being part of the programme?**

- Referral pathways and contacts
- The word of mouth about the SFP is best advert
- Highlighting that the SFP was positive about family progression, whole family approach skills, development in a supportive setting. An approach that works.
- The Family Resource Centres high level of awareness about what they do the variety of supports, staff and support for HSE groups.
- Contacts with other agencies / people
- Gave an opportunity for facilitators to give out information about their group and services.
- It helped with college assignments
- The sharing of the information skills and interaction between agencies involved

**4. What do you think did not work well within the programme and what suggestions do you have on how these could be changed for the next implementation?**

- Continuity of facilitators. Feel it is crucial to have the same facilitators for the 14 weeks or at least have anchor facilitators.
- It is important that your agency see's the value of the programme and builds it into your work to allow time for it.
- Planning separately
- Gaps in links with referrers, these links need to be stringer
- Handling risk issues such as overdose and the need for protocols

- We had a counsellor involved as a facilitator which was a great support. Would recommend that there would be a counsellor involved in future programmes
- Possible need to go down HSE routes, case conferences, referrers involved liaison with other groups re family issues?
- Not being briefed can lead to a family pulling you into individual family issues.
- That there is no programme for 10 yr. to 14 yr. olds that could be run simultaneously (emotional development, play therapy, anger management etc.)

**5. What do you think were the key impacts for the families who participated in the programme?**

- Improving of self esteem
- Participants developed a sense of self
- Helped build family identity
- The art based exercises for family time were good and the revisiting of them
- Helped families hold family meetings and my time
- Skills were developed re anger / conflict management
- Helped some parents revisit the need for counselling without feeling there was a stigma about it or feeling labelled
- Facilitators are also parents of teen and understand that keeping a sense of humour
- The honesty from the parents and from the facilitators
- Having the meal together at the start of the programme lead to families doing this at home
- Having a facilitator who was also a professional counsellor for the 14 weeks supported parents and the group deal well with traumatic issues

**6. Any other comments?**

***From Teen Team:***

- 1. As a facilitator / referrer, what did you enjoy about being part of the programme?**
  - Building relationships with other facilitators and the families
  - The interaction with young people
  - Seeing their progression weekly
  - The family meals at the start of each session
  - Working with other agencies
  - Making contacts ( Maurice)
  - Finding Paul as a youth worker
  - As a large group of facilitators we worked well together
  
- 2. What was hard or difficult about being involved as a facilitator / referrer?**
  - Involvement in the programme was time consuming
  - The time of year was difficult re dark nights / snow etc. but maybe this was not so for families
  - The mix of ages and development stages of the young people
  - The lack of intimation given to facilitators re families and lack of communication flow from referrers
  - No format for sharing of information between facilitators
  
- 3. What did you or your organisation gain from being part of the programme?**
  - Gained experience
  - Built relationships with the young people that we were working with
  - Families we had been working with in the community reengaged
  - Meeting new families
  - Cohesion amongst staff and the Teen Team
  - Developing relationships with other agencies
  
- 4. What do you think did not work well within the programme and what suggestions do you have on how these could be changed for the next implementation?**
  - Lack of communication re family issues
  - The language of the programme
  - FRC staff were the main Teen facilitators
  - No programme for 9 yr. to 11 yr. age group. Children in childcare not programme

- A lot of changes were made re the delivery of the programme using art so as to encourage more interaction in the family session
- A couple of weeks the focus of the parents session was different from the teen session
- Referrers did not always see the programme through

**5. What do you think were the key impacts for the families who participated in the programme?**

- Improved communication skills with the family
- Learning about personal responsibility
- Having a sense of empathy for teen ( parents)
- Developing respectful relationships with facilitators
- The programme came in good time for some families who were at crisis point
- Families developed day to day skills for family life cohesion
- The programme challenge some of the young people

**6. Any other comments?**

**Childcare Evaluation:**

Childcare staff were provided with evaluation forms to return to the site coordinator but none were returned.

In conversations with the staff over the course of the implementation the site coordinator identified the following:

- That a pre meeting with the childcare staff would have useful to give dedicated riles to each of the staff, go over ages of the children ect. Rather than leaving this to the first night.
- That the use of work sheets linked to topics covered in SFP sessions did not work as staff were not qualified in dealing with issues that arose for the children.

## **Additional Documentation:**

### **List of participants on SFP Training Kilkenny May 2010**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>ORGANISATION</b>
1. Elinor Mountain	Drum Centre
2. Karin Todd	Fr. Mc Grath Centre
3. Wendy Taylor	Fr. Mc Grath Centre
4. Triona Buckley	Fr. Mc Grath Centre
5. Eilis Maher	Fr. Mc Grath Centre
6. Catherine Lennon	Fr. Mc Grath Centre
7. Victoria Dempsey	Fr. Mc Grath FRC
8. Louise Nolan	Newpark Close FRC
9. Ber Brophy	Newpark Close FRC
10. Elizabeth Byrne	
11. Sheila Donnelly	Newpark Close FRC
12. Paul Bolger	Compass GYDP
13. Dolores Rochford	FSP HSE
14. Margaret Lacy	Family Support Prog HSE
15. Helen Casey	FSP HSE
16. Maurice Casey	SE Family Support Group
17. Patricia McGarry	HSE Social Worker
18. Margaret Rissitor	Carlow Family Support Group

19. Joy Hanlon	Young Persons Probation Service
20. Mel Bay	Kilkenny Drug Initiative
21. Dave Gray	KDI
22. Robert Parker	Ardu Substance Misuse
23. Anne O'Regan	Ed Welfare Officer
24. Karen Rice	Foroige
25. Suanne Cox	The Mill FRC ( 1 day)
26. Edel Fortune	Compass GYD
27. Elizabeth Byrne	
28. Michael Callan	HSE Social Worker
29. Stephen Murphy	Fr. Mc Grath FRC

**Facilitators Timetable For SFP Kilkenny 2010**

Date	Parents Session	Teen Session	Family Session
29 <sup>th</sup> of September	1.Ber Brophy 2.Elionor Mountain 3.Maurice Casey	1.Karin Todd 2.Triona Buckley 3.Paul Bolger	1. Karin Todd 2. Maurice Casey
6 <sup>th</sup> of October	1.Elionor Mountain 2. Maurice Casey	1. Karin Todd 2.Triona Buckley 3.Paul Bolger	1.Triona Buckley 2.Elionor Mountain
13 <sup>th</sup> of October	1.Elionor Mountain 2.Helen Casey 3. Maurice Casey	1. Karin Todd 2.Triona Buckley 3.Paul Bolger	1. Paul Bolger 2. Helen Casey
20 <sup>th</sup> of October	1.Ber Brophy 2.Elionor Mountain 3.Maurice Casey	1. Karin Todd 2.Triona Buckley 3.Paul Bolger	1.Karin Todd 2.Maurice
27 <sup>th</sup> of October  <i>Mid-Term Week</i>	1.Sheila Donnelly 2.Ber Brophy 3.Maurice Casey	1. Karin Todd 2.Triona Buckley 3.Paul Bolger	1.Triona Buckley 2.Sheila Donnelly
3 <sup>rd</sup> of November	1.Helen Casey 2.Maurice Casey 3.Elionor Mountain	1. Karin Todd 2.Triona Buckley 3.Paul Bolger	1.Karin Todd 2.Elionor Mountain
10 <sup>th</sup> of November	1.Ber Brophy 2.Maurice Casey 3.Elionor Mountain	1. Karin Todd 2.Triona Buckley 3.Paul Sullivan	1.triona 2.Ber Brophy

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17 <sup>th</sup> of November	1.Maurice Casey 2.Elionor Mountain 3.Sheila Donnelly	1.Karin Todd 2.Triona Buckley 3.Paul Sullivan	1.Paul Sullivan 2.Sheila Donnelly
23 <sup>rd</sup> of November	1.Maraide/Helen 2.Elionor Mountain 3.Maurice Casey	1.Karin Todd 2.Triona Buckley 3.Paul Sullivan	1.Maurice Casey 2.Karin Todd
1 <sup>st</sup> of December  <b><u>CANCELLED</u></b>	1.Ber Brophy 2.Maurice Casey 3.Elionor Mountain	1.Karin Todd 2.Triona Buckley 3.Paul Sullivan	1.Triona Buckley 2.Ber Brophy
8 <sup>th</sup> of December  <b><u>CANCELLED</u></b>	1.Ber Brophy 2.Maurice Casey 3.Elionor Mountain	1.Karin Todd 2.Triona Buckley 3.Mel Bay 4.Paul Sullivan	1.Paul Sullivan 2.Elionor Mountain#
15 <sup>th</sup> of December  <i>Christmas Dinner</i>	1.Maraide /Helen 2.Elionor Mountain 3.Maurice Casey	1.Karin Todd 2.Triona Buckley 3.Mel Bay 4.Paul Sullivan	1.Karin Todd 2.Maraide / Helen
12 <sup>th</sup> of January	1.Ber Brophy 2.Maurice Casey 3.Elionor Mountain	1. Karin Todd 2.Triona Buckley 3.Paul Sullivan	1.Triona Buckley 2.Ber Brophy
19 <sup>th</sup> of January	1.Ber Brophy 2.Maurice Casey 3.Elionor Mountain	1.Karin Todd 2.Triona Buckley 3.Mel Bay 4.Paul Sullivan	1.Paul Sullivan 2.Elionor Mountain

Evaluation of SFP Kilkenny

26 <sup>TH</sup> of January			
2 <sup>nd</sup> of February			

❖ **Stand By Facilitators:**

1. Stephen Murphy

❖ **Childcare Workers:**

Fr. Mc Grath Centre 1 Worker

Newpark Close FRC 3 Workers

❖ **Programme Numbers prior to week 1:**

2. Parents / Guardians		Teens		Children	
Mums	9	12 yrs	1	18 mnths	1
Dads	5	13 yrs	4	2 ½	1
Gran	1			3 yrs	2
Sisters	1	14 yrs	4	4 yrs	2
Partner	1	16 yrs	3	6 yrs	2
		18 yrs	1	7 yrs	4
				8 yrs	1
				9 yrs	2
				10 yrs	3
				11 yrs	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>

## **THE KILKENNY STRENGTHENING FAMILIES PROGRAMME**

### **Invites You**

To attend their **Christmas Celebration Dinner**

On **Wednesday the 15<sup>th</sup>** of December 2010

**For 5.45 p.m. to 6.45 p.m. in the Fr. Mc Grath Centre**



R.S.V.P to Wendy on 056-7751988 or Joan on 087-9171359

**Strengthening Families Programme**

**Childcare Evaluation**

1. As a Childcare Workers with the SFP, what do you think worked / went well within the childcare section?

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2. What did you enjoy most about working in childcare for the SFP?

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3. Do you have any comments on the organisational aspects (e.g. payment of wages, information flow, resources etc.)

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4. What do you think did not work well or could be changed for the next time the SFP is run?

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5. Any other comments?

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Evaluation Form of Kilkenny**  
**Strengthening Families Programme**

Evaluation of SFP Kilkenny

1. As a facilitator / referrer, what did you enjoy about being part of the programme?
2. What was hard or difficult about being involved as a facilitator / referrer?
3. What did you or your organisation gain from being part of the programme?
4. What do you think did not work well within the programme and what suggestions do you have on how these could be changed for the next programme?
5. What do you think were the key impacts for the families who participated in the programme?
6. Any other comments?

Name if desired