

YMCA Sydney critical incident meetings 16 October 2012: Summary

3 meetings

1. Debrief with Caringbah staff
2. Debrief-response meeting with CEO, General Manager Children's Services, and 9 program managers,
3. Accreditation-audit briefing

1. 8 Caringbah staff, the CP Compliance Manager, and an (external) EAP officer attended

Key issues:

- High levels of ongoing stress for staff. One particular staff member remains acutely distressed and is in need of urgent attention and support.
- All staff expressed a substantial sense of "not knowing"
Not knowing what happened, the nature of the charges, behaviours, where and when the abuse occurred
Not knowing why JL offended against the children they worked with
Not knowing which children were offended against
Not knowing how they might help these children, or their families
- A pervasive sense of guilt
Why they didn't pick something up
Whether they might have unwittingly aided JL's access to and abuse of children
Of letting the children down
- Could not understand why they had to sign a confidentiality statement - told not to discuss anything to do with JL, felt kept in the dark
- Felt unprepared and unsupported in having to respond to parents' anxious and emotional questioning in relation to their children.
Felt obliged to lie to parents and children about JL
Thought more senior staff should have been at the centre to speak with parents or help the staff respond
- Staff took on a sense of mistrust of YMCA
- Staff expressing a need for closure, one member suggesting she go to the sentencing hearing
Understanding better the nature of child sexual offending
Anticipating the sentence JL likely to receive
- Staff were unsure whether YMCA acknowledges-appreciates what they have and are still going through.
- Staff felt disempowered, e.g. feared they'd be taken off roster if they didn't attend CP training

2. Managers meeting: topics discussed

- Grooming behavior, how to recognize and prevent
- Strong policies and practices in relation to grooming
- A shared culture of prevention across all levels of YMCA Sydney
- Confidence among all staff to recognize and respond to abusive behavior
- Means to ensure adherence to policy/procedures
- Taking a proactive approach to media
- Taking a proactive approach to Police/Child Protection/Joint Investigative Response Team
- What can be done to further support all affected staff, including senior levels, with what has happened
- Recognition that throughout this incident, no YMCA Sydney staff have left
- Consulting staff around lessons learned and planning for any future incident response

3. Accreditation-Audit briefing

- Not enough time, see attached PP as a sketch, can talk again and answer questions etc
- Outline of 7 standards
- Key steps of – online training (start immediately)
 - Specific training
 - YMCA Child Protection Policy (adopt National CP Policy or present any draft amendments to YMCA Australia/ACF for comment)
 - Identify key personnel who might assist or work in conjunction with CP Compliance Manager in implementing, leading-championing, and having ongoing responsibility for SCP across all organizational levels
 - Set an achievable date for audit (May 2013 scheduled)
 - Conduct self-assessment and use this to plan implementation priorities, milestones and preparation for audit
 - A brief rundown of interview structure and process
 - See attached for more detail that wasn't covered.

Recommendation; Consider follow-up meeting(s) for Caringbah staff and Managers