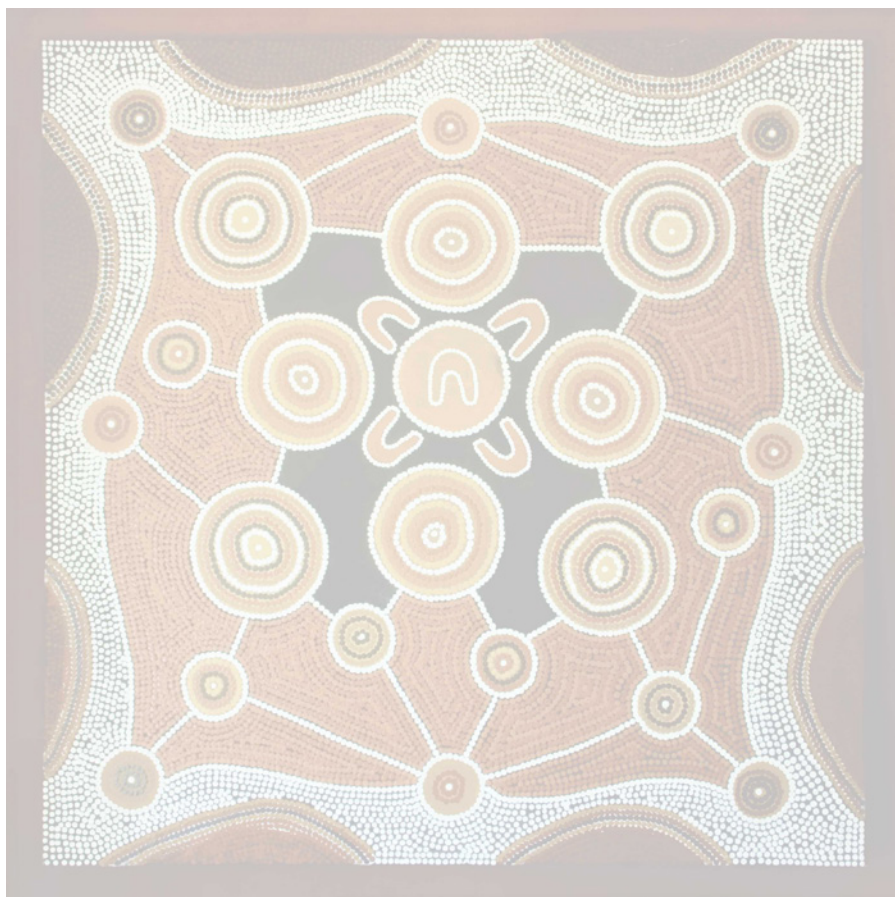




Family Therapy Information Booklet

Supporting families
through their journey
towards growth and
connection

umfc



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Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians and Elders past and present, who have raised children, taught them about the world around them and gave them the gift of culture and language. We recognize our part in bringing fairness to our Indigenous brothers and sisters and creating a community where all children, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, can 'grow up strong'.



Supporting families through their journey towards growth and connection


Family Therapy Information Booklet

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Who is UMFC and what do we stand for?

UMFC was established in 1979 and, over almost five decades, has transformed from a small-scale agency into our region's leading support service for children and families.

We take pride in our ability to respond to the needs of our local community. We offer a diverse range of services and programs that are designed to strengthen, nurture and support children, young people and families.



“We take pride in our ability
to respond to the needs of
our local community.”

- Child and Family Services
- Care Services (Foster Care and Kinship Care)
- Carers, Aged and Disability Services
- Hume Riverina Community Legal Services
- Family Relationship Services (Post Separation Services)
- Financial Counselling
- The Orange Door

At UMFC we value all families and their unique qualities and stories.

We do not define family;
we support your family
as defined by you.



What is family therapy?

Family therapy views a family and their supports as a system that is connected and interdependent on one another.

Family therapy aims to keep this front and centre when supporting families to work through challenges or concerns. It aims to provide a welcoming environment for people to express and understand one another's experiences and needs, to identify and expand on the strengths and resources already within the family, to build stronger and more positive connections and relationships and to walk alongside families in creating the positive changes they are seeking.

Some families may come to therapy with various goals, such as addressing conflict or communication difficulties within the family, or they may come with a concern about a particular family member.

Family therapy recognises that each member, including those inside and outside of the home, all have the ability to influence one another. Therefore, when one person in the family or a specific relationship is experiencing difficulty others around them can also be affected. These others can also play a key part in contributing to the solution. It should however, be noted that where family members are experiencing very complex or distressing issues it may be important to also call on more specific individualised support and there will be times when such support may even be crucial to the family therapy process.

Who can we assist?

UMFC welcomes all families wishing to engage voluntarily in family therapy. If there is a family member wishing to not be involved in therapy, we can still provide support to other family members. We will seek to keep this person present in our minds, to understand them and keep open an invitation for them to join.

Our Family Therapy services are available under a wide range of scenarios, such as:

- families seeking to repair relationship difficulties
- families looking for new ways to communicate or to navigate conflict
- families wanting to build stronger connections and to better relate to and understand one another
- families seeking to heal after family trauma, violence, loss, separation or other stressful life events
- families in which a particular member or members may be struggling with their individual wellbeing, such as mental health or drug and alcohol issues
- families in which a family member or members has/have experienced trauma.

Involvement in Family Therapy



Who will be involved in family therapy?

Family therapy aims to involve as many family members as we can. At times, it may also draw on others who are important in the lives of family members, who may be connected to the concerns presented, or who may be linked in some way to the achievement of the family's goals. The way people are included in therapy can vary. It may include having everyone together in a session; it may be about bringing in the perspectives of people who are not in the room; it may involve seeing different groups or individual family members at different times or it may be helpful to work with the other services that surround a family.

To assist your family in achieving the goals you identify, each session will be organised with thought around who needs to be invited, giving consideration to everyone's emotional and physical needs. There will be assessment of, and sensitivity toward, family members who are not feeling physically or emotionally safe to be in the room with other family members.

When are we unable to provide services?

There are some instances in which our Family Therapy team is unable to assist. For example:

- we cannot see people seeking counselling individually, unless it is part of the process of achieving their family's overall goals
- we cannot see families who are currently experiencing risk issues, such as active moderate to severe family violence or significant drug and alcohol use
- we cannot provide specific clinical risk management related to individual mental health needs
- we cannot directly provide court reports. If information is required for the courts, the therapy file must go through the process of being subpoenaed as per our family law policy.



What is single-session family therapy?

Research indicates that in a range of counselling settings the most common number of sessions attended is one, and that families generally find one session is sufficient to meet their needs. Single Session therapy uses a framework that approaches each session as if it will be the only session, aiming to make the most of the time shared. To do this the counsellor talks with the family to identify what is of most importance to achieve from the appointment and regularly checks in throughout the appointment that the discussion is staying on track to meeting these needs.

The single-session program is however offered for 1-3 sessions. After each appointment the counsellor encourages families to reflect and try new things with intention. They will then check in about what the family has noticed since the last appointment. Some families decide that after experiencing the single session program that they would like to engage in further ongoing therapy. If requested the family counsellor can support the family in navigating this next phase.



Which scenarios are a good fit for single-session therapy?

Single-session family therapy is often appropriate for most families and scenarios.

It is usually an appealing option for families seeking only brief support, looking to compliment other services they are already linked with or whose members are unsure about the process and may therefore feel more comfortable committing only to a one-off session.

Some reasons to consider single-session family therapy may be when:

- families are looking to work on specific goals within their relationships
- families are looking to improve specific communication needs with one another, to be able to listen and better understand one another
- families are looking to explore a particular issue together and come up with ways to move forward
- single-session therapy may not be appropriate in some scenarios when families are experiencing current risk issues around safety that first need to be addressed through other support options.



Therapy Sessions and Counsellors



What should you expect in your first appointment or during the single session?

Therapy, and the process of change within a family can be uncomfortable and challenging at times. With this in mind, your counsellor will seek to make the environment a welcoming space where you and your family feel supported emotionally throughout the process.

Prior to the first session we will likely ask your family to fill out a questionnaire. This is something we do at the start and the end of therapy, and sometimes during. This is to help your family members think about what they would like to get out of the therapy. The questionnaire also assists your counsellor generally in understanding more about your family and whether the service we are providing is/has been helpful.

The first appointment often will go for around an hour. During the first appointment your counsellor will be interested in getting everyone's perspective on what's happening in the family, what they are hoping for the family, and what they would like to focus on in the appointment.

During the appointment your counsellor may provide their thoughts or ideas that could assist your family in achieving its goals. The counsellor will probably check in with you at other points in the session to ensure the session is on track.

Towards the end of the appointment your counsellor will ask if and how you would like to proceed with further therapy.

What should you expect from your counsellor?

Your counsellor will have a set of skills and experience that may vary from social work, psychology, counselling, and other therapeutic professions. They will also have had additional training in working with families and the broader social support system. To ensure quality of service your counsellor will also receive regular supervision and opportunities to talk through their work.

Whilst your counsellor will be drawing from their training, they acknowledge that you know yourself and your family best, and value your personal knowledge and experiences when supporting you towards your family goals.

Your counsellor will be interested in understanding your family, to create a space for your stories to be heard and respected. So that they can be of most help to you and your family they will also look to be honest and transparent.

They will value your right to privacy and confidentiality, and therefore will be guided by you and your family as to what information is okay to share and what you would prefer to remain private from other services alongside UMFC policies and procedures.

Your counsellor may see different family members at different times, and there may be things that you would prefer other family members are not made aware of. Your counsellor will look to build a trusting relationship with you; one that encourages them to share with other family members only what you feel is going to be helpful in achieving your family's goals. Your counsellor will always have your goals at the forefront of their mind.



For further information regarding our privacy, fees, feedback and complaints policy's please speak to your counsellor or you can request a copy via email: familytherapy@umfc.com.au

Important Phone Numbers

Police / Ambulance / Fire: 000

Call in an emergency

Parent Line: 13 22 89

Phone counselling for parents and carers of children aged 0-18 years (Victoria)

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Mental Health crisis support, suicide prevention and support 24/7

Maternal & Child Health Line: 13 22 29

Information, support and advice to Victorian families with children from birth to school age

MensLine Australia: 1300 789 978

Phone and online support, information and referral service, helping men to deal with relationship problems in a practical and effective way www.mensline.org.au

Kids Help Line: 1800 551 800

Confidential and anonymous phone and online counselling for young people aged 5-25 years www.kidshelpline.com.au

The Orange Door Ovens Murray: 1800 271 157

Providing intake, information and advice for families in need of support with the wellbeing and development of children

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) (Child Protection, Disability, Housing, Homelessness)

Wodonga: 02 6055 7777

Wangaratta: 03 5722 0555

Child Protection After Hours: 13 12 78**Child Protection Intake: 1300 360 391****Suicide Line: 1300 651 251**

Phone counselling service to support anyone affected by suicide 24/7

Mental Health Crisis Line:

Wodonga: 1300 881 104

Wangaratta: 1300 783 347

Psychiatric triage – information, assessment and referral

**Centre Against Violence:
03 722 2203, 1800 806 292**

Crisis support, counselling, advocacy, information and support about family violence, sexual assault and problem sexualised behaviours.

DirectLine: 1800 888 236

Drug and alcohol counselling, advice and referral service 24/7
Emergency Relief Service

St Stephen's Wodonga: 02 6048 6900

Emergency relief

Monday to Friday 9:30am to 12:30pm

Anglicare Wangaratta: 03 5723 7900

Emergency relief Monday to Friday 9:30am to 12:30am

Safe Steps: 1800 015 188

Confidential service for women experiencing violence and abuse 24/7 www.safesteps.org.au

**Hume Riverina Community
Legal Service: 02 6055 8090**

Telephone legal advice and face-to-face clinics



If you're interested in engaging in family therapy, attending a single session, or would like to learn more about the UMFC program and our process, please email us at familytherapy@umfc.com.au



Upper Murray Family Care

Supporting children,
young people and families
in their time of need

You can visit or contact UMFC's
two local offices as follows:

Wodonga Office:

27-29 Stanley St Wodonga
PO Box 725 Wodonga VIC 3689
Telephone 02 6055 8000

Wangaratta Office:

36-38 McKay St Wangaratta
PO Box 389 Wangaratta VIC 3676
Telephone 03 5720 0000

familytherapy@umfc.com.au
www.umfc.com.au



We celebrate diversity and are committed
to inclusion for all as a service and a workplace.
We are a Child Safe Organisation

Reg No. A5357 ABN 99 081 624 768

