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Noosa Youth Service Inc.
Future Directions Responsive Placement Options Trial
24/7 Accommodation Project

Introduction to Noosa Youth Service

Noosa Youth Service Inc (NYS) is an integrated youth service based on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland. NYS provides a variety of preventative and intervention based programs and activities for young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the Noosa, Maroochydore and Cooloola Shire areas.

The program menu includes:

- Community/Schools Partnerships Program (Youth Support Program, Supported Work Experience, Flexible Learning and Mobile Education, TransEd);
- Jobs Placement Employment and Training (JPET);
- Supported Accommodation Assistance Program.

Other services offered at NYS are:

- Counselling Service (Relationships Australia and visiting psychologist)
- StandBy Suicide Bereavement Response Service
- Mentor Program (Youth Commitment)
- Seminars, training and professional development

NYS also draws on the assistance of a pool of skilled volunteers and is actively involved in Community Development activities in the region

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This practice-based paper will present one model of alternate care which is incorporated within the continuum of accommodation options offered to young people at NYS.

Supported Accommodation Program and continuum of care

NYS provides a continuum of accommodation/placement alternatives to at risk young people ranging from living with **family carers (Adolescent Placement Support Program)**, living with a **volunteer live-in support worker** in a NYS property, **shared living** with regular support from housing support staff, through **to independent living** with minimum support.

The length of placement may vary from two days to one year depending on the young person's needs.

NYS's continuum of care is a flexible service model that appreciates young people face many complex issues in their transition to adulthood. A case management approach is maintained and recognises the needs, rights and responsibilities of individual clients. Supported accommodation services are committed to integrated and creative service delivery to ensure young people are assisted to meet their needs and goals.

So, where does 24/7 Accommodation Project fit into this continuum of care?

Rationale and theory

A review of the reasons which include frequency¹ and source of referrals for accommodation, combined with an evaluation of the currently available supported accommodation options at NYS revealed the need to provide more flexible accommodation and support options for young people who were presenting with increasingly complex needs such as mental health, substance abuse, family conflict, unemployment and a history of emotional and/or physical abuse.

A steady increase in referral for accommodation and support for young people who are on conditional bail orders, under the age of 15 years and/or under custody/guardianship orders of the previous Department of Families has been recorded. Young people, subject to statutory intervention, present with multiple needs and significant challenging behaviours. These needs and behaviours have led to their involvement in statutory, crisis and other intensive service systems. The inability to provide the intensity and level of support required to adequately address young peoples' needs has resulted in multiple placement breakdowns, continued deterioration in mental health and well being, disconnection from family, significant others, community and appropriate education, and training and employment pathways.

The support and guidance offered by the already established live-in volunteer model at NYS has been very successful for young people who require some guidance, direction and assistance in non-family based accommodation. However, both workers and live-in volunteers have reported that this model is inadequate for young people presenting with more complex needs.

¹ 290 young people requested accommodation assistance from NYS 30 June 2003 to 1 July 2004 (NYS Annual Report– 2004)
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NYS workers have observed that when young people with numerous barriers are accommodated in existing programs the co-tenant arrangements quickly break down. Young people begin to unintentionally challenge and influence other motivated co-tenants to desist from pursuing positive activities.

Safety for other young people often becomes an issue and live-in volunteers feel frustrated with their own limitations to assist young people to meet the expected boundaries of shared living. The *24/7 Accommodation Project* aims to equip young people with social and interpersonal skills through specifically targeted intensive programs provided by skilled workers.

NYS regularly receives referrals for young people with such complex needs from both Maroochydore and Gympie previous Department of Families area offices. Often the only intensive assistance potentially available to young people is one-off funding for additional youth worker hours which is usually tied to the funding guidelines of programs such as conditional bail, and often results in broken periods of support.

NYS sought the opportunity to trial a more intensive accommodation program where young people with complex needs receive more concentrated support and supervision and an extensive case management plan with clear goals to be achieved within a twelve-month time frame.

Following a successful submission application NYS was funded by the then Department of Families to trial a Responsive Placement Option for young people between 12 and 18 years who present with challenging behaviours and complex support needs, and for whom family based care is not appropriate. NYS's trial, referred to as '24/7 Accommodation Project', (24/7) commenced on 3 February 2003 and current negotiations between NYS and the now Department of Communities² will determine the future direction of the project. NYS has requested extra funding available for Alternate Care to incorporate more therapeutic and psychological services to enhance the outcomes for young people. Such services would add value to assessments and case plans developed for individual young people. These additional services would include working closely with staff to inform their practice to better meet the individual needs of each young person, their families (where appropriate), and other related agencies.

What is the 24/7 Accommodation Project Model?

² Following the recent CMC inquiry into abuse of children in foster care the previous Department of Families is now the Department of Communities and will soon be Department of Communities and the Department of Child Safety. Future references to the Department in this paper will be Department of Communities
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The **aim** of the project, which is neither a foster nor a residential care model, but draws on and adds to components of both, is to identify models of quality care for young people with complex needs by providing accommodation combined with intensive support to achieve case plan goals.

Target group

Typically, the young people who may be referred to and be appropriate for 24/7 will present with a combination of one or more of the following:

- Aged 16 years and younger
- Have extremely challenging behaviours, including aggressive, sexualised, and self-harming behaviours
- Experienced multiple placements (including carers and other youth services)
- Have no positive relationships with family or significant others
- Not connected within a community
- History of involvement with Department of Communities
- History of physical, emotional or sexual abuse
- Have substance abuse issues
- Have offending histories or current orders to address
- Have very poor numeracy & literacy skills
- Lack adequate living skills
- Significant mental health and emotional problems that impact on their daily functioning.
- Limited educational, training or employment pathways

Service delivery to clients

The 24/7 Accommodation Project offers long-term accommodation and intensive support, supervision and therapeutic intervention services to these young people. The project operates from an existing Crisis Accommodation Program property which is a two storey home containing two fully self-contained living areas. The property is located in Sunshine Beach on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland with easy access to schools and public transport. NYS has managed this property for over three years during which time positive and supportive relationships have been established with nearby neighbours.

Utilising the skills of live-in carers, a coordinator, a senior youth worker and a pool of casual youth workers, clients are provided with on-site and off-site activities according to individual case plans.

Up to four young people may be placed in the property at one time. Their length of stay will be dependent on individual needs, however it is envisaged most clients will require long-term intervention and support for up to one year.

Careful attention is paid to client placement and matching. Placement principles are respectful and considerate of all clients residing in the property, as well as attentive to potential risks which may impact on the safety and health of residing clients.

The referral and assessment process which occurs between the Department of Communities and NYS is a critical component in ensuring appropriate placement. Research into 'Caring for Children Away from Home' (1998) identifies the question of the 'mix' of young people as critical to those requesting services and those providing services:

"There needs to be discussion about the groups of young people that can be brought together under the same roof without risk of undermining the aims and objectives of the intervention. The consequences of getting the 'mix' wrong can be serious indeed including bullying and abuse of young people and staff (by young people), placement breakdown, high staff turnover amongst others".

Department of Health (1998) *Caring for Children Away Form Home: Messages from Research*, London, HMSO.

Young people referred to the project participate in decision-making during the intake stage. Introductory meetings are arranged so that the young person can view the property, meet the carers and the senior youth worker, receive information relating to the project, and have questions answered. Recognising that it is important to the ultimate success of the placement that the young person has some control, he/she makes the final decision regarding his/her participation. Young people and family members (if appropriate) are involved in referral and placement meetings.

Workers in the 24/7 Accommodation Project also recognise the importance of assisting clients in the initial transition period during the first few weeks of the placement. Frequent 'house meetings' and ongoing assessment of needs occur more intensively during this period.

The project is based on a client-focussed model valuing the empowerment of young people and encouraging participation in decision-making and planning. Live-in carers and other members of staff work towards establishing a relationship with the young people based on mutual trust. Openness and transparency are encouraged in client related matters.

Continuity of youth worker contact with clients is achieved through a negotiated rostering system. Live-in carers, youth workers and the program coordinator operate as a team with

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all members meeting face-to-face, initially on a weekly basis and now fortnightly. All staff and carers have access to NYS's oncall system of support in the event of an out-of-hours emergency.

Support services provided by NYS are arranged within an integrated service delivery framework. Clients benefit from accessing services which are complementary to each other. The need to "tell their story" more than once is reduced, multi-skilled workers share in the development of creative and responsive client support strategies and resources are effectively targeted across a range of services. Young people are regularly referred into existing NYS programs eg FLAME, JPET, Literacy & Numeracy Program, Mentoring, Youth Support and Volunteer Program, as well as referral and linkages to other services such as Child and Youth Mental Health Services, Namtec, Centrelink, Disability Services Queensland, recreational activities. A vehicle has been assigned to the Project to assist with client transport.

Desired Outcomes

The desired outcomes for *young people* is that they develop the motivation and capacity required to maintain safe, stable accommodation and establish links and supports in the community, thus enabling them to live satisfying lives without further entry into statutory, crisis or other intensive service systems.

A desired outcome for *NYS* is that the service acquires an understanding of the needs of live-in carers, and of the skills, attributes, motivation and knowledge necessary for carers to fulfil their roles in the context of this model.

The desired outcome for the *Department of Communities* is reduced involvement in the statutory system both Child Protection and Youth Justice.

Interventions

To achieve these outcomes interventions include:

- Needs assessment and management of case/service plans
- Counselling
- Social and personal development
- Living skills development
- Establishing links with other services and community eg education, training, employment, legal, police, mental and physical health services, Centrelink etc
- Individual advocacy, information and referral

- Recreation/leisure
- Development of household management skills
- Job search skills development
- Exit strategies
- Supervision, debriefing, support and training of carers

Client outcomes achieved to date include young people:

- expressing a desire to reside in 24/7 accommodation in a long term arrangement
- having access to, and maintaining, a safe, supportive and stable environment
- developing positive attachments
- participating in pre-vocational courses at local registered training provider
- securing part-time paid employment through referral to supported work placement program (completed satisfactory work experience placement in order secure job)
- securing part-time paid employment through contacts in local community
- participating in tailor made photography program developed by 24/7 Project and JPET, in response to client interest and utilising skills of a NYS volunteer
- maintaining participation in mentoring program
- participation in a literacy and numeracy program
- exiting and maintaining placement with a relative carer
- exiting and maintaining share living arrangements
- accessing Child and Youth Mental Health Services
- participating in healthy recreational activities
- accessing the services of visiting psychologist

Skills development has progressed in relation to:

- cooking, budgeting, planning, shopping, cleaning, washing, personal hygiene, airing grievances appropriately
- interpersonal and communication skills
- goal setting, decision-making, problem solving and conflict resolution skills
- maintaining more positive relationships with carers, family, workers and other significant persons

Participants have an increased **knowledge** of:

- opportunities/experiences available
- supports/ links in the community
- how to access these supports

Some progress has been made in assisting young people to develop the **ability** to:

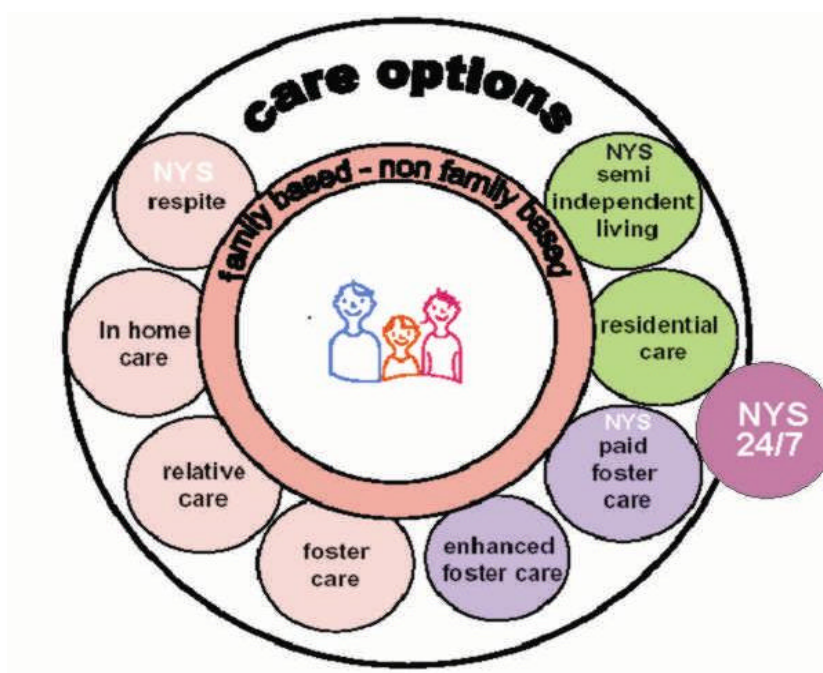
- see themselves more positively (self-awareness, confidence and identity)
- have a more positive view of the future

Relationship of 24/7 Model to conceptual model for alternative care options in Queensland

Noosa Youth Service (NYS) will continue to build on our collaborative and inclusive model of service delivery for the 24/7 model to provide quality outcomes for young people in statutory care in the Sunshine Coast Region.

Service delivery options used at NYS are reflected in the conceptual model for alternative care options in Queensland, including semi-independent living, paid foster care, respite and residential care.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR ALTERNATIVE CARE



“Semi Independent Living”

NYS provides shared living with regular support from accommodation support staff, through to living independently with minimum support.

Young people also have the opportunity to reside in accommodation that is supported by a live-in volunteer. This model provides additional support and security for young people who wish to, but are not quite ready to work towards independent living.

“Paid Foster Care and Respite”

NYS recruits, trains and assesses adolescent carers to provide placements for young people for up to twelve weeks at a time (Adolescent Placement Support Program). The focus of the program is to work closely with family members to have the young person return home.

“Residential Care and Paid Foster Care”

The 24/7 Accommodation Program is neither a foster nor residential care model, but draws on and adds to components of both. The aim of the program is to provide quality care for young people with complex needs by providing accommodation combined with intensive support to achieve case plan goals. Young people reside with live-in carers who receive an allowance, and are provided with additional support by youth workers and other therapeutic and recreational based activities.

Action Learning Team (ALT)

Action Learning methodology was used to integrate learning during the term of the trial and the continuous action learning cycle of *‘plan-act-reflect-connect’* provided an operating framework for the initiative during the trial period

The shared vision of the ALT was ‘to engage in continuous learning, reflection and action which generates improved understanding and knowledge in the on-going development of responsive placement options for young people’. Using an action learning cycle and a consensus approach to decision-making, the ALT assisted in analysing and reviewing the service delivery model (24/7 Accommodation Project) and identifying how this model can/does improve outcomes for young people.

Evaluation

The Department of Communities Evaluation and Review Branch used monthly data reports, a comprehensive Trial Report and stakeholder surveys to evaluate the trial and to make decisions about whether the trial was to be rolled over into a three-year pilot, and as mentioned earlier, current negotiations between NYS and the Department of Communities will determine the future direction of the project.

Statistics January 2003 to June 2004

See **Appendix A** for an overview of the number of referrals received to the Project, number of referrals that progressed, number that did not progress, number of completed placements and number of young people currently participating.

See **Appendix B** for statistics on duration of stay and reasons for young people exiting the project.

Case Study

See **Appendix C** for the story of Billy who participated in 24/7 for 12 months

Key Learnings

A number of key learnings have been reinforced throughout the life of the project

Key Learnings	Actions Taken
Open communication channels between the Child Safety Officer who has case management for the young people participating in the project and the day-to-day case worker at NYS is vitally important to successful outcomes for young people	Regular case updates by NYS day-to-day case worker to Family Services Officer; requests for meetings with Departmental staff to discuss communication issues
Continuity and consistency of care is essential to the relationship building between carers and young people	Changes to the initial carer roster to create a situation that fostered attachment forming and stability
A therapeutic physical environment is essential in ensuring the young people feel relaxed and safe	Attention and effort has been exerted to create a more therapeutic environment
In order to ensure carers/workers are equipped to best meet the varied complex need of each individual participant it is essential to provide ongoing training and supervision to carers and workers.	Ongoing training and supervision is provided
Carers/workers need to be and to feel supported	Support is provided through supervision, respite, debriefing, on-call procedures, team meetings, celebrations of achievements, social gatherings, and daily contact
Case planning needs to be reflective of the developmental needs of young people and done within a clinical / therapeutic context	Consistent coaching of carers and workers in this area; training in case management organised; utilising services of visiting psychologist to NYS; referral to other appropriate services and practitioners
The introduction of a new supported accommodation service targeting young	Draw attention to this learning through discussion at Action Learning Team

<p>people with intensive needs highlighted the existing referral and matching tension. Underlying this tension are different priorities. The referring agency has a priority of placement and the accommodation service provider has a priority of matching according to client needs and consideration of placement dynamics and client mix</p>	<p>meetings, with Family Service Officers, and in Evaluation Report</p>
<p>Better outcomes for young people are achieved if the placement is long-term. Reassuring the young person that he/she may remain in the program while it is meeting his/her needs alleviates initial anxiety around further changes or moves. Young people have time to settle into their new environment and take the necessary steps, at their own pace, towards goal achievement</p>	<p>Create a therapeutic environment in which the young person feels safe and secure; reassure young person that, while the program meets their needs, they may continue to participate; progressed the 24/7 Accommodation Project from trial to pilot</p>
<p>Carers who have the skills to deal with challenging behaviours, the ability to create an environment based on trust and openness, patience, a sense of humour, flexibility, and a willingness to learn and try new strategies are best suited to this role.</p>	<p>Recruit appropriate carers; continue to train and support carers</p>

NYS is currently undertaking an intensive recruitment drive for carers for the live-in carer model as well as the Adolescent Placement Support Program and the 24/7 Accommodation Project. This has proved to be an enormous challenge and is impacted on by the publicity surrounding the recent Crime and Misconduct Commission into Abuse of Children in Foster Care, as well as other social and economic factors. But that is the topic of another paper!!!!

Strengths of the model to date

1. The '24/7 Accommodation Project' provides safe, secure and long-term accommodation and intensive support to young people aged between 12-18 years, who are subject to statutory intervention and for whom family based care is not currently a viable option due to their significant challenging behaviours and/or complex support needs.

Neither residential nor foster care models of alternative care have met or do meet the needs of this target group. The 24/7 Accommodation Project is neither a foster nor a residential care model, but draws on and adds to components of both, and aims to

identify models of quality care for young people with complex needs by providing accommodation combined with intensive support to achieve case plan goals.

The model also:

2. Avails young people the opportunity to work on a one-to-one basis in a therapeutic environment.
3. Allows for goal-oriented case management that is tailor-made for each young person.
4. Allows young people the opportunity to work towards their goals at their own pace.
5. Offers opportunities for intensive support in the areas that meet the individual needs of each participating young person.
6. Assists young people to reconnect to their communities and significant others eg family, previous carers.
7. Forms part of a continuum of care and sits within an integrated service model. It is not a stand-alone option which can be transposed into other services without serious consideration of how it will fit within that service's current structure. It is because of this that the model is reasonably resource efficient.
8. Supports and promotes the professional role of carers.

Vision for an enhanced model of 24/7 Accommodation Project

Based on our learnings, experiences and the current strengths of the model to date, NYS seeks to enhance the 24/7 Accommodation Program with sustained and specific psychological support that is integrated and rationalised according to developmental maturation, cultural awareness and psychosexual development. To this end, our psychological support (and intervention where required), complements the basic aims of any alternative care system, that is, to facilitate young people under its care to:

- Stay safe

- Be healthy
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well being

Essentially, NYS psychological support proposes to augment these basic aims where appropriate by assisting development within the key systems of psychosocial maturation in the young person. In many cases, breakdown of family functioning has arrested development. Psychological support in these key systems attempts to reintegrate and bolster development in any young person according to his/her psychosocial maturity.

Specific Outcomes such as **Staying Safe** may be augmented by providing carers and support staff with psychological education in rule/limit setting as well as helping with self esteem and personal boundary setting.

Outcomes of **Enjoying and Achieving** will be promoted with psychological bolstering of esteem where necessary, supporting staff with skills learning, self-evaluation and goal setting.

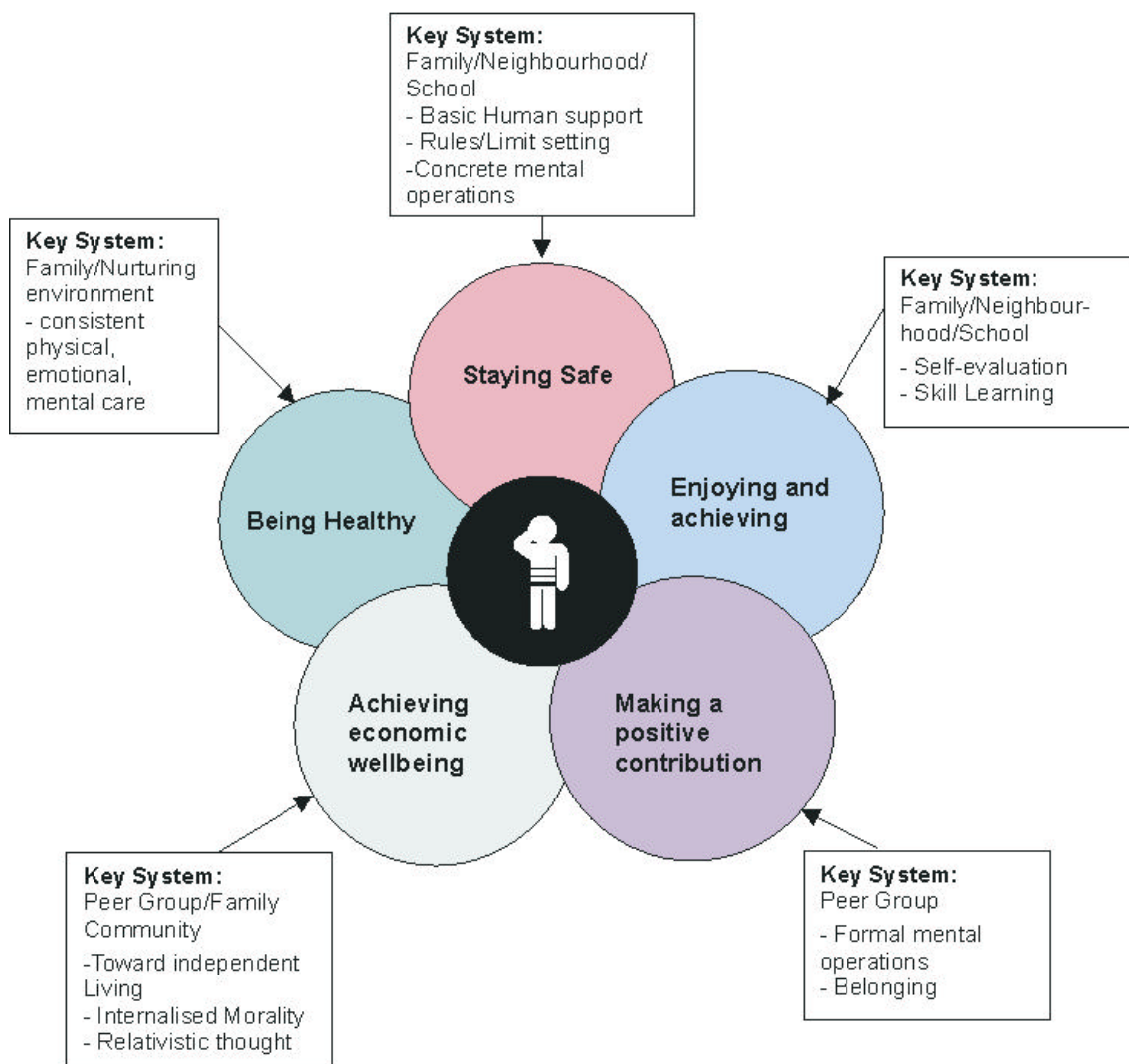
The Outcome of **Making a Positive Contribution** shall be assisted with psychological support in the Key System area of Peer Group. Basic support and psycho-education in relationship building, problem solving, basic decision-making and group affiliation and membership for the early adolescent (typically 13-17 years) is offered in our Alternative Care model.

The Outcome of **Achieving Economic Wellbeing** is supported with counselling (where appropriate) for the late adolescent. Here, support in understanding pluralism and relativistic thought, initial career decisions and transitions to independent living are given. The Key System targeted is the Peer Group, Family and Community.

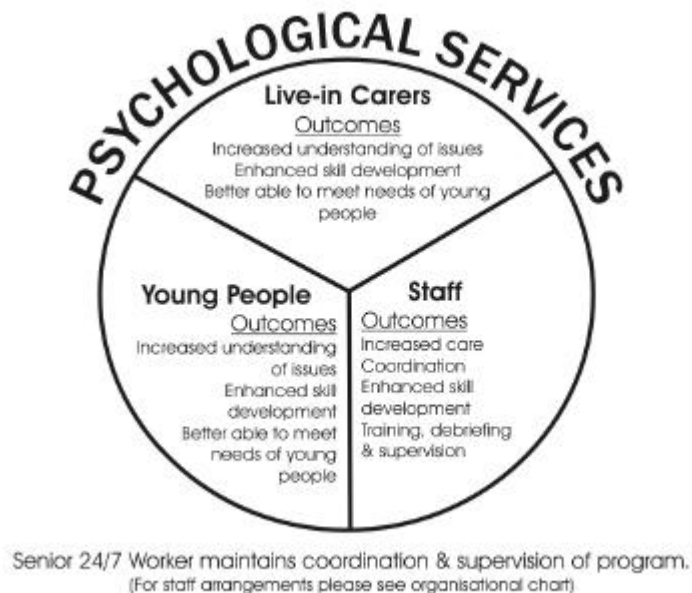
Being Healthy is assisted with 24/7 general psychological support and specialist intervention strategies across age and cultural groups to promote child and adolescent mental health for the duration of the young persons' care support at NYS.

Finally, the overall psychological support and intervention strategy proposed in the NYS Alternative Care Service attempts to integrate the key Aims above, overlaid with a sensitivity to psycho-social development to establish personal *value*, *acceptance* and *belonging* to each young person in the Service's care. In doing so, the strategy thereby aims to co-ordinate self-concept, self-esteem and self-confidence respectively, in the growing individual toward an integrated and effective sense of Self.

Psychological Overlays that promote the basic aims of the Alternative Care System



Enhanced Therapeutic Environment



Inclusion of a Psychologist as part of the primary care team at 24/7 will intensify the support provided to young people by:

- Entry assessment for young person
- Enhanced care coordination and planning, based upon ongoing assessment and review
- Providing specific training and professional development for the team including information about specific behaviours and disorders and appropriate strategies to manage them.

- The psychological input will underpin case plans which will be tailored to meet individual need
- Provide support and be available for after hours emergency contacts
- Provide situational debriefing for clients, staff and carers
- Activity based programs will be enhanced by psychological input to ensure the development of coping strategies, such as resilience, attachment, self worth, health and well being.

CONCLUSION

The 24/7 Accommodation Project, in response to identified high need and gaps in the alternate care system, has provided non-family based care and support for young people with challenging behaviours and complex support needs. By building on existing services within NYS, 24/7 has come *some* way in meeting the needs of *some* young people. Given the strengths of the model and the readiness of those involved in the project to learn and to respond to issues as they arise, NYS looks forward to continuing to implement, develop and evaluate this model of responsive placement option and offer opportunities to more young people in the future.

If you require further information about this project please contact:

Sue Griffiths

Service Manager

Phone: (07) 5442 4277

E-mail: sgriffiths@noosayouth.org.au

Fran Manning

Supported Accommodation Coordinator

Phone: (07) 5442 4277

E-mail: fmanning@noosayouth.org.au

APPENDIX A

Statistics - January 2003 to June 2004

The following table provides an overview of the number of referrals received to the Project, number of referrals that progressed, number that did not progress, number of completed placements and number of young people currently participating.

<i>No of Young People Referred</i>	<i>No of Referrals Progressed</i>	<i>Referrals Not Progressed</i>	<i>No of Completed Placements</i>	<i>No of Young People currently participating</i>
16	8	8	7	1

There have been **16** referrals to 24/7.

The **eight** referrals not progressed to placement were due to the following reasons:

- One young person was keen to remain at his current school where he enjoyed he enjoyed his studies and had built a strong support network. The distance between 24/7 and the school would have made continuing attendance at school very difficult;
- Another young person did not wish to relocate out of the area where his supports existed;
- another young person was referred before sufficient support had been put in place in the trial project to meet the complex needs of this young person;
- In three cases there was no further follow-up from Departmental worker – young person's needs changed;

- One young person's family support person assessed that participating in 24/7 could have negative outcomes for the young person; and,
- Accommodation with family member was arranged for one young person prior to placement.

APPENDIX B

Duration of stay and reasons for exiting

Between January 2003 and July 2004 eight young people have received placement and support in the 24/7 Accommodation Project and the following table informs on duration of stay and reasons for young people exiting the project

Currently participating	Exited	Duration of stay	Reason for exiting
1		8 months	
	1	12 months	Planned and supported exit to share living arrangements
	1	2.5 months	Planned and supported exit to family home of friend of client's deceased father
	1	5.5 months	Client wished to leave program to live with girlfriend in the latter's family home. Assistance was provided in collaboration with Family Service Officer
	1	1 month	Client wished to leave program to live with boyfriend in client's family home. Assistance was provided in collaboration with Family Service Officer
	1	1 month	Client identified that the program did not meet his needs, particularly relating to the location of the accommodation, and was referred to another agency with the option of returning if he thought the program could assist him
	1	1.5 months	Child and Youth Mental Health Service maintained case management of this client and Youth Mental Health Service and the placement was a temporary placement while more appropriate options were explored. Client moved to home of family friends.
	1	1 month	Supported exit to share living arrangements closer to school of choice.
1	7		

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APPENDIX C

Billy's story

Billy³, aged 15 years, was referred to the program by the Department of Families. Billy's complex support needs included a history of placement breakdowns, difficulty in forming trusting relationships, drug use, literacy issues, anxiety, limited living skills, aggressive behaviours, and a behaviour management program which required him to take regular medication. After his introduction to the program, the live-in carers, the property and the senior youth worker, Billy made the decision that he could benefit from participating in 24/7 and he was placed in the project in April 2003.

Billy faced some extremely challenging experiences with other residents during the first week of his placement and, although this was a difficult time for Billy, he was able to express his fears and concerns and strategies were put in place to resolve these concerns. Through this process Billy began to develop some trust with workers and in the project.

Billy's assessment revealed he has a keen interest in an unusual hobby. As there were no suitable programs in the local area, staff from the 24/7 Accommodation Project, JPET and the Noosa Youth Service Volunteer program worked collaboratively to create an eight-week program in which Billy actively participated. Billy also attended accredited literacy and numeracy classes conducted at Noosa Youth Service. He experienced difficulties coping in the group setting and exited after two weeks, however later attended individual literacy and numeracy classes.

Billy participated in a local mentoring program based at Noosa Youth Service. The mentoring program is an initiative of the Youth Commitment Partnership and was a positive experience for Billy. He participated in weekly meetings with his mentor and readily engaged in developing a positive new relationship that has contributed to increased self-esteem, self-awareness and interpersonal skills.

Billy accessed a pre-vocational program in which he learned how to build and drive motorised go-karts. This 12-week course was provided by a local service provider. Enrolment and course costs were covered by Noosa Youth Service's JPET program. Billy was linked to an employment agency to assist with the arrangements of a supported work experience placement in a local retail store. Billy achieved excellent results in his placement and was subsequently offered eight hours per week paid employment. Billy found it challenging to maintain his focus in this position, and after four weeks he communicated this to his supervisor and left the position on good terms. Through this experience, Billy's self-confidence and relationship skills improved remarkably.

Billy's ongoing participation in JPET and the support of a Noosa Youth Service volunteer resulted in a further offer of work experience in a large retail outlet. His application to his duties and his ability to develop a relationship with his fellow workers led to Billy being invited to work three days a week. Moving from strength to strength Billy is now considering an offer to work full-time in 2004.

³ Name has been changed to protect the young person's privacy.

During the period that Billy has been participating in 24/7 his living skills have steadily improved with the help of live-in carers and youth workers. Contact with previous foster carers has been encouraged and facilitated. His relationship with his older sibling and her partner has been fostered to the extent that he now spends every second weekend at their home. He is currently maintaining a relationship with a girlfriend. Recreational activities in which Billy has been involved include horse riding, go-kart driving, camping and fishing. He has also saved and purchased a Play Station 2 and spends some of his leisure time playing games.

As a result of his personal progress Billy exhibits improved self-esteem, confidence and insight through his changed body posture, improved communication skills, self-care and personal hygiene. Billy's former inappropriate behaviours are now negligible or non-existent; and, the use of substances that was occurring and causing difficulties initially, is no longer an issue.

Billy settled and felt safe and stable in his accommodation. Billy began to make some medium and long-term plans around his future including his career, his friends and his family relationships. After a twelve month stay Billy moved into share accommodation in a local caravan park and is attending literacy and numeracy classes and working part-time.