

aSMILE info regarding:

Families where Parents experience a Mental Illness, especially their dependent children (FaPMI)

The FaPMI program commenced in part since 2007, and has been fully funded across Victoria since 2016. Read more about the program in the [guidelines](#) developed by the Mental Health Branch, Health Service Performance and Programs Division. Twenty one regional FaPMI Coordinators, each based in an adult public mental health services whose role is to champion and organise activities within the catchment area of their employing service. They work closely with mental health services and **network partners** to develop a service provision that best reflects the needs of the region.

Network partners of specialist mental health services include, for example, local community agencies, maternity services, primary care and community health services, universal and targeted early years services, child and family support services, school nurses and student wellbeing and support staff, youth services, forensic, emergency services, housing and drug and alcohol services.

Whilst they do not provide direct clinical care, FaPMI coordinators offer:

- Secondary and tertiary consultation / joint work
- Education and workforce development
- Resources for practitioners, organisations and families
- Input into service and workforce development, policy and planning
- Program development and implementation
- Promotion of integration of family focused work into core practice
- Coordination of partnerships and networks to deliver collaborative care.

Peer support groups for children, young people, their parents and other adult family members are also being offered across the state of Victoria.

- [Space4Us](#) – a peer support program for young people aged 12 to 18 years who have a parent and/or sibling with a mental illness. Facilitator training now available.
- CHAMPS – a peer support program for children aged 8 to 12 years who have a parent with a mental illness. (Contact [Rose Cuff or your local FaPMI coordinator](#) for more information)
- SKIPS (Supporting Kids in Primary Schools) – a mental health promotion program for primary schools about FaPMI. (Contact [Rose Cuff or your local FaPMI coordinator](#) for more information)

You can find your local FaPMI Coordinator by going to the Bouverie website here:

https://www.bouverie.org.au/images/uploads/FaPMI_coordinators_contact_list_201809.pdf

Tips for families where a parent experiences mental illness / distress

- It is natural for all family members to have strong and changeable feelings such as confusion, anger, grief or loss from time to time when someone they care about has a mental illness.
- *Discussing things as a family is important.*
- We all have different ways to communicate. Consider how and when you might talk about things.
- Plan for your children's needs so that you and your children have a say in who and how they are cared for if you become ill and need some time out.
- Take care of yourself and have fun with your kids as best you can.
- Identify strengths; yours and each of your family members'.

- You are not alone! There are brochures, booklets, books, and videos as well as professionals trained to help you. Find more tips at www.copmi.net.au

What do children say they want?

1. A frank discussion about what is happening
2. Want an advocate to speak with them... but not “a counsellor”
3. To know their situation is not uncommon
4. They want to meet other children like themselves
5. To understand mental health problems
6. They want to know if it’s their fault or not?
7. Help with their fear they might catch ‘it’
8. They want to know how the mental health services work
9. To know what to look out for when their parent is becoming unwell.
10. To know what is normal behaviour for an adult / parent.
11. To know how to access help
12. They want their contribution to be recognised.
13. They want their knowledge of their parent and his / her illness to be respected and listened to. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnIzyimUcr0>

What is helpful for professionals?

- Strengthening your skills and elevating your understanding. There are various ways to increase your capability to respond effectively to parents, children and families who live with a parent who experiences mental illness.
- Our eLearning courses, articles, reports and other reports can now be find at our parent site, [Emerging Minds](#).
- [eLearning courses](#) are accessible at any time, and include helpful, practical demonstrations of skills in practice.
- [Resources](#) suit a wide range of audiences and are presented in many different formats.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

SOURCE	CONTACT DETAILS/LINK	DESCRIPTION
Head to Health	https://headtohealth.gov.au	Head to Health can help you find the right Australian digital mental health and wellbeing resources, for yourself or for someone you care about.
Emerging Minds	https://emergingminds.com.au	Emerging Minds is the National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health recognises that the best way to support infant and child mental health is through early intervention and prevention. To do this, our focus is on building the capacity and strength of our workforce so that professionals can better support parents to support the mental health outcomes of infants and children.

<p>Children of Parents with a Mental Illness (copmi)</p>	<p>http://www.copmi.net.au/</p>	<p>copmi national website provides information for parents, their children and other family members, as well as for professionals to promote better outcomes for children and families where a parent experiences mental illness. Great resources for all the family and all professions, including the latest research.</p>
<p>Families where a Parent has a Mental Illness (FaPMI)</p>	<p>https://www.bouverie.org.au/support-for-services/fapmi</p>	<p>FaPMI is the Victorian government program recognising the impact of mental illness on parents and other family members, particularly dependent children. The aim being to reduce the impact of parental mental illness on all family members through timely, coordinated, preventative and supportive action within adult mental health services.</p>