Therapeutic Assessments

*A Step Up for Our Kids* will create a **therapeutic trauma-informed system of care** based on the understanding that all children and young people who enter care have suffered trauma and that service providers, carers and families are aware of the impact that trauma has on a child or young person’s behaviour, health and development. This system aims to achieve positive, safe, healing relationships and practices that are informed by a sound understanding of trauma, attachment and child development.

**Therapeutic Assessment overview**

- **Week 1**
  - Contact carer
  - Declare the care team
  - Information gathering commences

- **Week 2**
  - Interim therapeutic plan

- **Week 3 & 4**
  - Consultation and interviewing
  - Preparation of clinical formulation

- **Week 5**
  - Therapeutic assessment report

- **Week 6**
  - Care team meet
  - Develop Therapeutic Case Plan outlining services and supports

- **Ongoing**
  - Case worker will coordinate delivery of Therapeutic Case Plan in consultation with the carer

**Therapeutic Assessment Service**

Under *A Step Up for Our Kids*, Therapeutic Assessments will be undertaken for all children and young people in care. This will happen in phases from July 2015. Intake to Phase 1 of Therapeutic Assessment service will be for new placements and children with high/complex needs in non-family based placements (residential care).

Carers will be a part of a child or young person’s Therapeutic Care Team and are integral to the development of the Therapeutic Case Plan. This process will facilitate information sharing and an understanding of how the carer can be best supported to meet a child’s needs.
Aim of the Therapeutic Assessment:
A Therapeutic Assessment aims to provide a holistic assessment of a child or young person’s needs across a wide range of domains. It will review the impact trauma has had on a child or young person’s development and to identify how carers may be best supported to meet the child or young person’s needs. The assessment process will ensure that any related difficulties are identified and treated as early as possible.

Therapeutic Assessors:
The therapeutic assessors will be suitably qualified professionals such as a psychologist, social worker, speech pathologist or an occupational therapist. The therapeutic assessor role is separate from the role of the child or young person’s case worker. This allows for an independent examination of a child or young person’s well being and progress.

Therapeutic Assessment Process (for Phase 1):
The therapeutic assessment process is designed to minimise the need for the child or young person to attend different appointments and for their parents/carers to repeat case history and developmental information. The focus is to gather information from others who already know or who have already assessed the child or young person.

Gathering Information:
With each new referral, the therapeutic assessor will talk with the child or young person’s case worker to find out about the background, circumstances, and what is known about the child or young person’s exposure to traumatic experiences. The assessor will also contact the carer and birth family (where appropriate) to introduce themselves and talk about the therapeutic assessment process.

Health and well being assessment:
Generally the first appointment will be arranged by the Child At Risk Health Unit (CARHU) at ACT Health. Respecting the needs and privacy of the child, the appointment is to be between the child and their medical practitioner/the suggested medical practitioner, with their carer present for support. The therapeutic assessor and case worker will be available at the time of the appointment to enable the declaration of the care team. The declaration of the care team is required to allow appropriate sharing of information.

Interim Plan:
Carers will help develop a written interim plan that will provide a summary of advice or strategies to help meet the child or young person’s immediate needs and identified areas of concern.

Assessment:
The therapeutic assessor will conduct further assessment to build a more comprehensive understanding of the child or young person’s wellbeing across a wide range of domains. These domains will include health and development, emotional and behavioural development, education and learning, family and social relationships, self help skills, identity and indicators of trauma in the child or young person. The assessment process may include the use of questionnaires for a carer or teacher, or follow up observations of the child.

Therapeutic Assessment Report and Therapeutic Case Plan:
Information will be gathered together to complete a Therapeutic Assessment report. The care team will collaboratively develop a Therapeutic Case Plan which will identify and prioritise goals, strategies and recommendations for a child and young person.

The case worker and Therapeutic Assessment Team will work with the carer to implement the therapeutic case plan and provide advice on referrals and available services. As a part of the ongoing relationship with the carer and child or young person, the case worker will coordinate implementation and review of the plan. The therapeutic assessments will be formally reviewed annually by a therapeutic assessor.

For further information please visit CBR Steps Up website www.act.gov.au/CBRstepsup or email CBRstepsup@act.gov.au