MOAT: Mental Health

National Foster Carers’ Conference
Foster Carers and Foster Kids

Foster families take a chance when fostering kids

Foster kids take a chance when being fostered

Child Protection takes a chance every day

It’s good to “Take a chance”
What’s missing from this kid’s life?
• Safety
• Love
• Nurturing
• Belonging
• Care
• Support
• Connection

How is she likely to present?
• Scared
• Emotionless
• Angry
• Alone

What does she need?
• All that’s missing

What’s the best Accom model for HER?
• A group of traumatised kids
• A loving home

We’re talking about:
Kids in care
High-risk adolescents
Disadvantaged youth
Children on protective orders
Young people living away from home
Wards of the state
Kids in Care

We need to provide them with all those things they’ve missed out on
Single-parent family unit
Traditional family unit
Kids in Care
Which roles do the Foster Carers play?
What’s involved for these roles?

- **D&A Worker** - $45k, 1-2 years training
- **Social Worker** - $55k, 3 years at Uni
- **Youth Worker** - $40k, Quals optional
- **GP** - $100k - 150k, 6 years at Uni
- **Police Officer** - $55k plus, 6 months at academy
- **Psychiatrist** - $150k - $200k, 9 years at Uni
- **Teacher** - $55k plus, 3 years at Uni
What training do foster carers receive?

Conferences
Occasional workshops
Lifetime in the “School of hard knocks”?

What Salary do foster carers receive?

What Professional Recognition do foster carers receive?
Which Mental Health diagnoses are we likely to see?

Anxiety
Depression
Dysthymia
Oppositional Defiant Disorder
Conduct Disorder
ADHD
Emerging Borderline Traits
Oppositional Defiant Disorder

1. often loses temper
2. often argues with adults
3. often actively defies or refuses to comply with adults' requests or rules
4. often deliberately annoys people
5. often blames others for his or her mistakes or misbehavior
6. is often touchy or easily annoyed by others
7. is often angry and resentful
8. is often spiteful or vindictive

The disturbance in behaviour causes clinically significant impairment in social, academic, or occupational functioning.
Conduct Disorder

1. Aggression to people and animals
2. Destruction of property
3. Deceitfulness or theft
4. Serious violations of rules

The disturbance in behaviour causes clinically significant impairment in social, academic, or occupational functioning.
ADHD

Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder

An extremely debilitating organic disorder

Not to be confused with poor self regulation!

USA study:
4.5 million diagnoses in under 18s
AT LEAST 900,000 mis-diagnosed
Borderline Personality Disorder

Female

Emerging Traits?

Splitting

Untreatable

Manipulating

Self Harm

Attention Seeking
What training **SHOULD** foster carers receive?

As much as they need
As much as they want
As much as they deserve
As much as we can afford

What payment **SHOULD** foster carers receive?

What Professional Recognition **SHOULD** foster carers receive?
What support can we offer?

When is it most likely to go “pear-shaped”?  
• When the 9-5 supports have gone  
• When kids feel unsafe  
• When it’s dark  
• When you rely on “On-call”  
• After midnight?
Foster Carers are NOT any of these roles

They are ALL of them - 24/7

But, when it’s getting too hairy, we need you to ask for help

And make services accountable!!

Services - be accountable
They don’t ask for much!!