

# NEWSLETTER



## PERSPECTIVES from the Director...

### RESILIENCE

Welcome to the mid-year edition of our newsletter which is focused on resilience. The concept of resilience is very commonly referred to the individual being resilient, but just as important and especially for children, is the concept of family resilience. The UN International day of Families is an opportune time to think about what makes a family resilient and how can we as a society and as a service system, do more to build and promote this element as a feature of keeping children safe. The definition of family can vary and it depends on who you ask. Jannawi's definition views family as a group of people that are

connected, biologically or otherwise, that support each other and are in some way responsible for the care and well-being of children. Jannawi's use of a holistic definition of 'family', views it as a much broader concept than that of the nuclear family as it is commonly viewed in the western world. This often means that we engage with a broader number of adults than traditional services might, but it allows us to create safety in a multitude of ways with extended family members, community supports and promote healthy interactions and dynamics. There are a range of things that many of us take for granted, but which may not be present in families where violence and abuse exists. Features

such as open and healthy communication, having a stable routine and clear limits in how we can treat each other, warmth and affection- all of these can be built and can improve family dynamics in powerful ways. Resilient families also have a broad system of support from outside of the family and so the more support we can provide as a community to vulnerable children and their families and form a part of their support system, the more we can contribute to a safer and more connected society.

Biljana Milosevic  
Director – Jannawi Family Centre

## Family Story

A family of mum and four children were referred to address experiences of family violence and to create safety. It was clear when we first met that they had learnt some unhealthy ways to communicate which included blame, dishonesty, swearing, put downs and yelling at each other. Mum would use threats and bribes to get the kids to listen and she herself had fear used as a way to manage her behaviour when she was growing up. The children knew that she would not do what she said she would, so the threats did not work in managing negative behaviour. All these interactions are common at Jannawi and represent the dynamics of abuse. We understand why they exist and know that no-one wants to be this way. The power of our work is to notice these behaviours to the family, name them for what they are and try to figure out when they first began

and who introduced them. Most often, these people have since left the family, but have left behind a harmful legacy. Sometimes, they are still in the home and our work also includes talking to them too.

Over time, our challenging, role modelling of open and safe communication, warmth, non-judgement and clear rules and boundaries starts to seep into the way the family interacts and these unhealthy behaviours do not show up as much, then not at all. We focus on strengthening the sibling relationships to be positive, working to support mum to put in safe rules and providing service both at the Centre and in the home. This shifts the dynamics of abuse and hurting to one of safety and support of each other, strengthening the family unit.



## OUR RECENT EVENT

On Friday 15 May Jannawi hosted an online panel discussion “Building Resilient Families” to mark the United Nations International Day of Families. It was a fantastic conversation featuring our own Biljana Milosevic, the Director of the Jannawi Family Centre; Gillian Calvert AO, the inaugural NSW Children’s Commissioner from 1999 to 2009 and Annette Michaux, the Director of Policy and Practice at the Parenting Research Centre. We heard more about the critical work that Jannawi does and about the families who come to Jannawi who have survived violence, abuse and other traumas. We work with them through their whole journey as they grow stronger and better able to provide a safe and nurturing environment for their children. You can access a recording of the session on our website at <https://www.jannawi.org.au/resources/>



Jannawi hosted a CommBank Volunteer Day on 24 February 2020 which saw up to 20 staff volunteer their time to help revitalise one of our outdoor garden spaces. Along with Jannawi staff, fences were painted, new plants were laid along with mulch and broken fence pailings were fixed. We were grateful for the generous donation by CommBank for the resources needed on the day such as the colourful paints, brushes, mulch, plants and herbs for our garden. It made a big difference to the look and feel of our welcoming space and we look forward to another working bee scheduled for later in the year.

“It’s wonderful to see the mums and kid’s faces light up when they see all the bright colours may affect every aspect of their life, or lead to drug and alcohol abuse, self-harm and suicide.”

## UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY EVALUATION

Jannawi Family Centre is successfully achieving its objective of keeping children safe, happy and healthy, and has strong support from its clients and the child protection sector, according to an interim evaluation of its approach.

The study, by researchers at the University of Sydney’s School of Education and Social Work, found, “A key outcome for families was preventing the removal of children into out-of-home-care or achieving restoration of their children as the result of working with Jannawi. Family members also described how Jannawi had facilitated safe and consistent contact between parents and children, when children were not in their parent’s care.”

The findings, based on interviews with parents, children, staff and partner organisations, form part of a national

research project to determine the service needs of children and families living with domestic and family violence, led by the University of Melbourne. The interim report also found:

- Jannawi’s direct engagement with children means workers can better support their needs, wellbeing and safety;
- Engagement with men who perpetrate violence helps Jannawi hold them accountable and work with them towards changing their behaviours;
- Families with complex needs benefit from Jannawi’s integrated services that include assessment, counselling, case management, safety planning, early childhood and developmental assessments, advocacy, therapeutic groups,

playgroups, educational and recreational programs and supervised contact visits;

- Jannawi works respectfully with First Nations and culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse families, including through its culturally diverse and multilingual staff;
- Jannawi is recognised for its expertise and capacity-building, including training, student placements, workshops and interagency meetings and consultation with other agencies to support the most complex family situations.

The research is being conducted in partnership with the US-based Safe and Together Institute and will be completed later in 2020.

## Our recently published editorial in open forum—

---

### LEARNING ABOUT RESILIENCE FROM THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST

This week 24 million Australians are living with profound uncertainty. Many of us don't know when or whether our jobs might resume; if our superannuation savings will recover or crash further; when we will next be able to visit family interstate. For most of us that's an unfamiliar experience. It can leave us feeling insecure and uncertain of how to act. It can make us lash out at those we perceive as threatening our security – witness those Facebook videos of supermarket meltdowns. But for many families, insecurity is the daily norm. For people who live in poverty in an expensive city like Sydney, there is simply no expectation that life will be predictable from day to day. A precarious tenancy can be lost overnight, setting in train other consequences: new schools for children, loss of property that cannot be moved and stored, new bus routes that might not get someone to work on time.

People's behaviour, sometimes linked to their mental health, can fracture family bonds. Family violence, often committed by people who themselves have grown up in an insecure and frightening home, makes it harder still to feel any sense of safety. We know that the fear created by the coronavirus, and the stresses of quarantine and economic disruptions, will affect families, and we can expect that in the weeks and months ahead we will see the consequences in increased need for family services, including support around family violence. When Australia eventually moves beyond this current crisis into recovery, there is an opportunity to model our national response on what we know works best for families who live routinely with stress and dislocation.

At Jannawi Family Centre we work with families where there has been trauma, neglect or abuse. It is not a short journey; typically it might continue for a year or more as parents acquire new skills to support their kids and learn confidence in their own ability not to fall back into damaging old patterns. We want parents

to be resourceful, consistent, available to their children's needs. That's something that can be modelled through example. At Jannawi we go to great lengths to ensure people have what they need – whether that is a school uniform, help with a Centrelink application or support through a court hearing. In return, we make parents accountable for their actions. The deal is: people show up, treat our staff with respect, and commit to doing better by their kids. We take people seriously. Struggling parents who have been brushed off by service agencies all their lives, channelled through ill-fitting processes and marked off as statistics, drop their guard and begin to work in their family's best interests. Our clients sometimes tell us that they feel heard for the first time. That doesn't work unless the basics are in place. As the government and the non-profit sectors try to meet the needs of traumatised families in the months ahead, the first focus will need to be on physical safety, shelter, food, a dependable source of income. Security at this fundamental level gives people the psychological space to recover from their experiences and work on their own behaviour and responses. Then we will have a chance to create a system for helping people through their trauma based around long-term, reliable support, mutual trust and personal growth.

Jannawi's model has shown this can work phenomenally well at an individual level. Now we need to scale it up and apply this thinking at the heart of our service systems.







## WHY JANNAWI NEEDS YOUR HELP

During the Covid-19 pandemic we are focusing on meeting the immediate needs of vulnerable families under the current restrictions around school and work. Your donation of any size helps to provide groceries, educational resources and other essential items that our families urgently need. At any time, community donations can provide a skilled supporter during a difficult court hearing, or a weighted blanket to help an anxious child settle to sleep – things that make all the difference to people's lives.

We also need help to refurbish our therapeutic spaces to make them more suitable for traumatised children, and in the longer term we hope to move to bigger, purpose-built premises to allow more families to benefit from Jannawi's unique, holistic model of support.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Donations are always welcome and appreciated as this is the primary way in which we can continue to provide and extend the vital services that Jannawi offers to families in need. We also welcome contacts and introductions to corporate sponsors and property developers who can assist us in locating and securing additional space, even if it is on a short-term or temporary basis.

Contact: Please contact Jannawi Connections Board Chair, Monique Jackson for more information on how you can help 0410-716-927.

## DONATE TO JANNAWI

Online at [www.jannawi.org.au](http://www.jannawi.org.au) or return this form to:

Jannawi  
PO Box 148 Lakemba NSW 2195  
ph: 02 9750 0500 fax: 02 9750 6190  
info@jannawi.org.au

Title:  Mr  Mrs  Miss  Dr  Other

First name/s: \_\_\_\_\_ Last name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please accept my:

Single gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or Monthly credit card gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### PAYMENT DETAILS

Cheque (make payable to Jannawi Inc)

Credit card:  Visa  MasterCard  Amex  Diners

Card number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ CVV: \_\_\_\_\_ Cardholder name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your generous support!**

**Gifts over \$2 are tax deductible**

ABN: 45 306 019 085 Charitable Fundraising No: CFN 23846

PRIVACY ASSURANCE: The information you provide on this form is collected by Jannawi to maintain contact and keep you up-to-date with information about Jannawi, its services, events and achievements. Your name may be published in the annual honour roll. If you wish to remain anonymous or do not wish to receive information, please contact us on email [admin@jannawi.org.au](mailto:admin@jannawi.org.au). We abide by the "NSW Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act".