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| Good Practice Bulletin |
| Spotlight on collaboration  Office of Professional Practice, Issue 13, September 2018 |

# Chief Practitioner’s welcome

# Tracy Beaton

Children benefit when significant people in their lives work together. Collaboration with families, across sectors and with a diverse group of professionals is fundamental to achieving good outcomes for children.

We cannot keep children safe by working in isolation. Click [here](https://vimeo.com/287574569/d84b5a2919) to watch this good practice story where a collaborative approach underpinned a good outcome for Milly.

The family violence information sharing legislation, and the child wellbeing and safety legislation gives us strong support to collaborate and work together to keep children safe.

# What does collaborative practice look like in child protection?

* talking, sharing, trusting, and working alongside caring professionals who are committed to the wellbeing of children
* combining your skills, experience, and knowledge of working with children and families to see the child’s experience
* generous and open minded professionals relying on each other and collectively working with a family
* other professionals to talk to about your concerns and assessment of the children and families you are working with
* other professionals who understand and care for a child and family as much as you do
* respectful discussions that build a picture of the children’s strengths and their vulnerabilities

## Case study

Reuben is 12 years old. He lives with his Dad and his sisters in a large regional town. Child protection has known Reuben since he was a baby – mainly because of his exposure to family violence. Reuben was nearly always in the room when his Dad assaulted and hurt his Mum and he often heard his Dad verbally denigrating his Mum telling her she was useless, and he knew she was frightened. Both his Mum and Dad have used heroin in front of Reuben and they used to sell Ice from their home. Reuben’s Mum took responsibility for the drug offences and is in prision.

Reuben has experienced trauma and his behaviour can be really challenging to manage – it can sometimes be aggressive or sexualised. It’s not clear on CRIS whether Reuben has a diagnosis but case notes refer to possible Asperger’s syndrome or Autism. The school is very supportive of Reuben and his Dad and just made a referral to a child and youth mental health service because he has been hurting himself.

Reuben was just made subject to a family preservation order. You are Rueben’s newly allocated child protection practitioner.

## Discussion prompts

How are you going to work with Reuben to understand what his life is like, what his worries are, and who can help him?

Who will help you collaborate and connect with Reuben?

How are you going to work with others to make sure Reuben’s parents get the support they need?

What can other services do to help you in your job?

What are the benefits of service collaboration for Reuben and his family?

# Successful collaboration involves:

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| Ok, Check, Todo, Agenda, Icon, Symbol, Tick, To Do, Gui | Sharing child protection knowledge about the impact of trauma on children and how this manifests developmentally. |
| Ok, Check, Todo, Agenda, Icon, Symbol, Tick, To Do, Gui | Family meetings, case conference and care teams. |
| Ok, Check, Todo, Agenda, Icon, Symbol, Tick, To Do, Gui | Pooling resources for the benefit of the child and family. |
| Ok, Check, Todo, Agenda, Icon, Symbol, Tick, To Do, Gui | Regular communication and cooperation with others who can help solve problems for children and their families. |
| Ok, Check, Todo, Agenda, Icon, Symbol, Tick, To Do, Gui | Creativity in generating ideas to help provide new opportunities for children, using the different skills and experiences of all involved. |
| Ok, Check, Todo, Agenda, Icon, Symbol, Tick, To Do, Gui | More detail about interagency collaboration can be found [here](http://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/our-approach/multi-disciplinary-practice/interagency-collaboration) on the child protection manual. |
| Ok, Check, Todo, Agenda, Icon, Symbol, Tick, To Do, Gui | More detail about family violence information sharing can be found [here](http://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/our-approach/roles-and-responsibilities/family-violence-information-sharing-scheme) on the child protection manual and [here](https://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/family-safety-victoria/information-sharing-and-risk-management.html#A) on the Family Safety Victoria website. |

On behalf of the Office of Professional Practice, we hope you have found this issue of the Good Practice Bulletin useful. If you have any feedback or ideas about what you would find useful to include, please email *officeofprofessionalpractice@dhhs.vic.gov.au*

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