



# Support services available for parents after separation

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There is a wide variety of publicly funded and privately available courses, programs and resources that can help you as a parent, and your children, following separation. These programs include strategies for managing the co-parenting relationship, improving communication, understanding your children's developmental needs through the different stages of their life, and moving forward as an individual person.

Following separation, there is often an adjustment period for families with children; a "teething" period so to say, as both the parents and the children adjust to life in separate households.

Some people may think that attending these courses is some sort of admission of not being able to co-parent or care for the children's needs. There is nothing further from the truth. These courses are recommended to ALL parents following separation.

Even if you are going through family law litigation, accessing these services is being proactive and learning new tools to support your children's needs as well as your own.

This blog sets out the most common post separation support services and where you can find further information and referrals.

## Post Separation Parenting Courses (also called Parenting after Separation Courses)

Regardless of whether there is conflict between parents, there are several programs designed to help you practice self-care following the breakdown of the relationship.

Communicating in a friendly and effective manner with your co-parent enables you both to reach decisions (and provide updates to each other) about your children. These courses also give you an opportunity to learn about different parenting styles and the impact of separation on the children.

Publicly funded providers include:

- [Relationships Australia](#)
- [Relationships Matters](#)
- [Better Place Australia](#)
- [CatholicCare](#) (no religious connotation in the service)

Some tips covered through this program are also covered in our blog, ["Top 10 Tips for Co-Parenting"](#).

## Parent education programs

These programs are designed to help parents recognize, understand and manage your children's emotions and behaviors following separation, with the view building a positive relationship.

Different providers have different names for these services, like Tuning into Kids, Tuning into Teens, Roadworthy for Dads, Parentzone and Bringing up Great Kids.

Publicly funded providers include:

- [Relationships Australia](#)
- [Relationships Matters](#)
- [Better Place Australia](#)
- [CatholicCare](#) (no religious connotation in the service)
- [Anglicare](#) (no religious connotation in the service)
- [Drummond Street Services](#)
- [ParentLine](#)

## Family violence support services and Men's Behaviour Change Programs

Sadly, it is an unfortunate reality that during a relationship there can be incidents of [family violence](#). Family violence is a gendered issue, in that it is mostly perpetrated by men against women.

However, there are programs designed to assist victims and support perpetrators of family violence.

For victims, we have put together a comprehensive list of services in our blog, [“Family violence and support services during COVID-19”](#). This article is also relevant outside of COVID times.

For perpetrators, Men’s Behaviour Change Programs are programs designed to help parties understand their behaviour, how this may impact their relationships and how to better themselves.

These programs are also recommended when there have been allegations of family violence. Allegations mean just that. They are not proven and parents can undertake these courses for their commitment to improving following separation.

Publicly funded providers include:

- [Relationships Australia](#)
- [Relationships Matters](#)
- [Centre for Non-Violence](#)
- [Anglicare](#) (no religious connotation in the service)

## Individual or couples counselling or family therapy

Separation is one of the most uncertain and anxious periods of a person’s life. Understandably, this can impact on your day-to-day activities while navigating post separation life.

Attempting to see the other parent’s circumstances and consider therapeutic support such as individual counselling or couples counselling, can assist you moving forward and building a positive co-parenting relationship in the future.

Family therapy also helps parents and children address family conflict, loss and trauma and may even be used to holistically rebuild a child’s relationship with a parent.

You can contact your general practitioner for referrals to local professionals or contact any of the below publicly funded providers for services:

- [Relationships Australia](#)
- [Relationships Matters](#)
- [Family Life](#)
- [Australia Counselling](#)
- [CatholicCare](#) (no religious connotation in the service)
- [Women’s Centre for Health and Wellbeing](#)

## Parenting Orders Programs

Even once an agreement is made between parents about the care arrangements for children (either with a Parenting Plan or [Parenting Orders](#)), there can still be communication issues or difficulties in implementing that arrangement.

Parenting Orders Programs are designed to help separated families experiencing difficulties in implementing the care arrangements, with the support of professionals. The benefits include taking a child focused approach to disputes without the need to go to Court for further expensive and uncertain litigation.

Publicly funded providers include:

• [Relationships Australia](#)

• [EACH](#)

• [Family Life](#)

• [CatholicCare](#) (no religious connotation in the service)

## Indigenous Australian services

There are specific programs and service providers that can provide the above programs (and more), in line with Our First Nations' community.

• [Victorian Aboriginal Health Service](#)

• [Dardi Munwurro](#)

• [Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Service Inc](#)

• [WRISC Family Violence Support](#)

• [Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service](#)

## Culturally appropriate programs

There are specific programs and service providers that can provide the above programs (and more), in a culturally specific way.

• [CatholicCare \(Refugee Dads and Kids Weekend\)](#)

• [Multicultural Health and Support Service](#)

• [InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence](#)

• [Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre](#)

•[Australian Government Translating and Interpreting Service](#)

## LGBTIQA+ appropriate programs

There is also a wide variety of referral and service providers that can assist with the post separation issues experienced by members of the LGBTIQA+ community, in a way that focuses on their unique circumstances.:

•[Thorne Harbour](#)

•[Drummond Street Queerspace](#)

•[Gender Help for Parents](#)

•[Rainbow Families](#)

## More information

More information and referrals to post separation services can be found at:

•[The Australian Government's Family Relationships Line](#)

•[The Victorian Family Law Pathways Network](#)

•[The National Family Law Pathways Network](#) with links to Networks around the country.

## How a family lawyer can help

Smith Family Law can help you find services near you and refer you to the appropriate service in line with the circumstances of your matter. Our first point of reference is always to guide parties into the right service to achieve holistic outcomes for all members of separated families.

## Contacting Smith Family Law

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*This blog is of a general nature and should not be relied upon as legal advice. If you require further information, advice or assistance for your specific circumstances, please contact us.*