



## *'Can Do' for Veterans*

Alternate case stories for  
*'Can Do' for Young People Families and Carers*

**Unit one: where do we start?**

## Unit one - Jodie: Daughter of a peacekeeper

### Case story

*When I wake up, it's just black. Life's just black. It's really hard to get up and even harder to make it to school. But there's no way I'd tell Mum about it. You can't tell her anything or she'll just go off. Dad used to be the nazi but since Mum served in Timor, it's different. It's like he's trying to be the calm one. Mum used to be so funny and like a girlfriend but now she's stressed all the time. I know she has to take pills but they're not doing any good.*

*She has to control everything. Like even where you put the milk in the fridge. She freaks if it's on the wrong shelf. You can never do anything right. And then, she'll lose it over really little shit. One minute you're just talking and you think its okay. And the next she's screaming and slapping you across the face. That happened last week because she said I should be more grateful. I'm so sick of hearing about those poor little kids in Timor. What about me?*

*So I just steer clear of her and at night, I sneak out. I meet up with my friends, they're older and they can get booze. We do stuff that I never thought I would...stuff that I guess is stupid. I used to feel guilty about all that... and about my Mum. But now I don't really care what happens. It's all screwed up anyway.*

### Points for discussion

1. What are the important issues here for Jodie?
2. If Jodie was talking to you in your service, how would you engage with her?
3. What are the risks and what assessments might you make?
4. What interventions might be useful?
5. Would you involve her family?
6. How can Veteran and Veterans Families Services (VVCS) help?
7. What other support could local health and community services offer to Jodie at this point and how would you access them?

## Unit one: Facilitator's notes

### Story Vignette – feedback session

- The points for discussion are to trigger group discussion.
- Use the whiteboard to write up main ideas.
- The facilitator's notes below are to direct discussion and prompt further explanation of important issues.
- Ensure only one participant speaks at a time and is heard by the entire group. Be aware of who is speaking and who is not.
- Invite participation from everyone.
- Reflect and if necessary rephrase the participant's comment to link its relevance to the topic.

Be sure to allow the different aspects of care on offer from the various service providers in the room. Encourage them to think about how these fit together. Eg a youth service may be able to offer a number of services but how would they link Jodie up with a GP and put her family into contact with VVCS? Do they know what a GP can offer and how they can refer to specialist mental health services if necessary? Ask a GP participant to explain and to talk about the use of care plans and referral pathways when working with patients with mental health and substance use problems.

### Facilitator's trigger questions

- Discuss Jodie's story - what other history would participants want to find out?
- Discuss Jodie's age – this is not given in the vignette except through the reference to 'school' and 'older friends who can get alcohol'. What differences might there be if she is 15 or if she is 16-17?
- Discuss issues of confidentiality and of family involvement.
- Spend some time on ways to engage and establish trust with Jodie. Refer back to the earlier presentation in this unit.
- Make it clear that this is not a situation that can be resolved in one consultation or meeting.
- What do you think Jodie means by 'doing stuff I never thought I would'? Discuss.
- How would participants explain the risks to Jodie of using alcohol and other drugs when you are depressed.
- Consider the family context and the fact that Mum is a 'veteran' – note that peacekeepers are veterans too.
- Do participants know what VVCS has on offer for families of veterans?
- Ask any DVA or VVCS participants to explain what they have to offer?
- Outline some immediate steps that could be put in place for Jodie and also longer term strategies.