



# The experts say...

## **Michael Voumard, Manager; Hobart Family Relationship Centre**

Being a teenager, or being the mum or dad of a teenager, is one of life's hard tasks. When you add parental separation into this mix, it's a recipe for real difficulty. This booklet is a terrific guide for teenagers and for their parents as well. It does a good job of normalising feelings and experiences for teenagers about separation; it also contains useful information for mums and dads who might be wondering how best to support their son or daughter through a very difficult time.

## **Heath Christie, Clinical Practice Supervisor for Kids Help Line.**

*Kids Help Line, which in 2006 received 573,639 telephone calls and 32,932 on-line contacts from young Australians, was a key contributor to the booklet.*

This booklet is a welcome and empowering youth-focused resource.

Family relationships are the number one reason young people contact Kids Help Line, with many experiencing family conflicts and break-ups.

The booklet contains age appropriate information and self-help strategies that will help young people draw on their strengths and access their support networks with confidence.

## **Michael Carr-Gregg, Adolescent Psychologist**

When parents separate, young people often report feeling isolated and lost. The Child Support Agency is to be congratulated for producing a sensational booklet that can help teenagers in this situation realise they are not alone, which understands their emotional responses to the situation and provides them with a list of youth-oriented support services.

The booklet contains loads of useful information along with practical ideas and suggestions, all written in an adolescent-friendly format, and it is clear that it was developed in close consultation with stakeholders, young people and parents.

## **Lisa Laschon, E.D; Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia**

Family breakdowns are never easy. It's not your fault and you don't have to fix it. *Family separation - a guide for teens* is a great reminder that you have many people around you who can support you. Friends, relatives, youth workers or people in other groups you belong to are all able to help. You don't need to feel alone, you're not.

This booklet is a great resource for young people as it reminds them that they are not alone and that they have a strong network of support that already exists around them including friends and their families, relatives, youth workers and members of other organisations and groups they may already be involved in.

## **Karen Morris, Deputy CEO, Interrelate**

I congratulate the Child Support Agency on their latest resource, *Family separation - a guide for teens*. This is a timely addition to the suite of CSA booklets and will really help us when seeing teenagers and their parents at

## **FAMILY SEPARATION A GUIDE FOR TEENS**

[www.youth.csa.gov.au](http://www.youth.csa.gov.au)



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our Family Relationship Centres. I really like the practical way the information is presented around often difficult topics like living in two households and the really touchy one of how to handle it when mum or dad gets a new partner. The booklet is very well laid out which is important - when you're stressed or going through tough times you don't want to read "War and Peace". I love it that you can open the booklet at any page and get some great practical tips. Like CSA's Me and My booklets, this one is packed full of tips that you can read today and do tomorrow.

### **Kate West, Director, [prisms.com.au](http://prisms.com.au)**

One central theme of the booklet is that teens do not have to face separation and divorce alone.

Being a teenager is tough at the best of times, but for teenagers whose parents are getting divorced, life is even more complicated. With a guide *like Family Separation: A guide for teens* there is now an easy-to-access booklet to help teens find the answers to their questions.

The guide will serve two important functions: it will help teens find support, identify their rights and encourage them to reach out to friends and professionals during this tough time, and it will help parents understand what their teens need and how to help them adjust to their parents' separation.

By reading the guide, teens can find out crucial information about their rights, what input they will have into where they live and what happens to them after their parents separate.

It takes the responsibility for separation and divorce and places it firmly on the shoulders of the parents and off the shoulders of the kids. It will also increase the likelihood that teens whose parents separate or divorce will be just as likely as any other teens to experience healthy relationships and partnerships into adulthood.

By connecting teens with information, advice and support, the Child Support Agency is increasing the likelihood of them adjusting in a healthy way to their new family composition.

### **Dr Tony Hobbs, Chair, Australian General Practice Network**

This latest booklet, *Family Separation - a guide for teens*, is a welcome addition to the CSA's valuable series of resources for families affected by separation and divorce.

Separation can be a stressful time for everyone involved. Young people need to know that help is always available.

GPs are well trained to support people who are going through difficult life changes such as divorce or separation. They can provide teenagers with care and support, and if necessary, refer to other health professionals such as social workers or psychologists. I encourage young people to develop a relationship with their local general practice.

