



# Back on Track

## Strengthening the Parent-Child Relationship after Family Violence

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A specialised therapeutic intervention for children aged 8–12 years who are using challenging behaviour in the home after family violence.

Commencing the first term of 2025 in the Kingston/ Bayside/ Glen Eira Council area (clients can attend who live outside the area)

### Program Overview

#### Target Audience:

- Back on Track is a 20-week holistic therapeutic program designed to support children (aged 8-12) exhibiting challenging behaviours at home and their mothers who have been impacted by family violence.
- The program uses a comprehensive approach integrating evidence-informed psychoeducation, art therapy, and play-based interventions.

### Program Details

**Duration:** 20 weeks

#### Structure:

- **Group Sessions:** 10 therapeutic sessions focused on psychoeducation, art therapy, and play-based interventions. The child and mother attend separate groups on different days.
- **Dyadic Sessions:** Each dyad (child and mother pair) will work with a therapist to strengthen key program learning and address their unique family dynamics.
- Trauma-informed therapeutic specialists employed by Emerge will deliver the program
- There is a significant time commitment for families of twenty weeks, with group sessions being 90 minutes. The parent session will run in the morning during business hours, and the children's group will be after school hours.

### Program Goals

Back on Track is a program designed to:

- Enhance child-parent relationships affected by family violence.
- Promote emotional regulation, social-emotional learning, and prosocial skills.
- Enhance Protective Factors: Develop prosocial skills and social-emotional learning.
- Trauma Awareness: Educate participants about trauma and its impact on behaviour.
- Conflict Resolution: Foster healthy conflict-resolution skills through structured sessions.

## Key Components

**Psychoeducation:** Understanding the impacts of trauma and family violence on behaviour.

**Art therapy and play-based:** Involves engaging children and mothers in meaningful activities that foster the expression and integration of their experiences.

**Therapeutic Dyad Sessions:** Tailored support for children and mothers to strengthen their relationship and understanding of one another.

### Inclusion Criteria:

- Age: 8-12 years old.
- Exposure to family violence.
- Displaying aggressive and challenging behaviours at home.
- Assessed to be safe and in the best interests of the clients.
- Living separately from the perpetrator of violence
- Child's voluntary participation.

### Exclusion Criteria:

- Non-violent behaviour issues are unrelated to family violence.
- Aggressive and sexualised behaviour towards other children and peers.
- Participation is assessed to be safe and in the child's best interest.
- If the perpetrator of violence still lives at the home with the child.
- MARAM risk assessment indicates high risk.

## Why This Program Matters

### Critical Gaps in Service Delivery:

- Lack of specialised programs for children aged 8-12 experiencing family violence.
- Insufficient focus on child-caregiver dynamics post-trauma.
- Unaddressed childhood trauma can lead to high-risk behaviours in adolescents.

### Potential Consequences of Not Addressing These Needs:

- Disrupted family functioning and secondary trauma from this sub-type of family violence
- Increased risk of future violence in peer and intimate partner relationships
- Strained family relationships and academic challenges.

## Research

The program will be internally and externally evaluated to inform future service delivery and provide much-needed research. Clients can opt into the research component; attending the program is not required, and the client can opt-out at any time.

## **Expected Outcomes**

### **For Children:**

- Decreased externalised challenging behaviour in the home.
- Strengthened relationships with caregivers.
- Improved emotional regulation and prosocial skills.
- Enhanced communication and conflict-resolution abilities.
- Increased resilience, including healthy coping strategies

### **For Mothers:**

- A better understanding of trauma's impact on child behaviour.
- Improved parenting skills and confidence.
- Enhanced capacity for healthy attachment and communication.
- Improved well-being and decreased shame and isolation

**Emerge:** Addressing the gap in service delivery with compassion and evidence-based practices to foster safe, nurturing environments for children and caregivers.

### **Back on Track enquiries and referrals:**

[Therapy@emergesupport.org.au](mailto:Therapy@emergesupport.org.au)