



ADVOCACY

WORKING TOGETHER TO LOBBY FOR BETTER SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR WOMEN

This resource looks at how women and service providers can work together to get the support and services they need for themselves and for other women.

"You want to help other people because you know what you've been through: being isolated, not having services and not knowing about services."

Four steps to getting what you need

1. Work out what it is you need. Some of the things that young mums in The Young Mum's Rock Project wanted included a local support group for young mothers, a playgroup, better access to child care, improved family friendly toilet facilities in their local shopping centre, better public transport, more opportunities to study or work, better playgrounds and improved pavements to make it easier to push prams.
2. Tell other people. If you can fire up other people's enthusiasm about it then chances are you are going to be more successful.
3. Work out who the best person is to talk to and explore how you might be able to achieve what you want.
4. Don't give up! Keeping asking for what you want.

"I just kept on pushing it and if nothing was happening, saying, no, that's not good enough!"

Where to start

- ◆ Your local council eg maternal and child health nurse, family and children's services workers, local counsellor or community development worker.

One woman's experience...

Brooke is a mother with two children. She wanted to start up a support group for young mothers in her neighbourhood. She talked to other young mothers about whether they would be interested in a group and made up a list of interested women. She talked with a child and maternal health nurse about the demand for a support group and found out the Council were also looking at how to set up a support group for young mothers.

It took a long time and a lot of hard work with different people and organisations and now a support group is up and running. The women in the group continue to work on how to make the group meet their needs. Brooke and another young mother, Julie, are now interested in how they might increase the availability of occasional care for young mothers, to give them a break.

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- ◆ Community health centre eg a worker who provides existing services for mothers
- ◆ Neighbourhood house
- ◆ Community groups who might be able to support your ideas

How service providers can help

1. Help women to clearly identify what they need and what might be realistic and achievable
2. Assist women to build up support among other community members and workers
3. Identify who might be the best person to talk to and potential funding sources
4. Support women through on-going frustrations and identify different strategies if actions are not working

"We've got so many ideas about what we want to do, what we'd love to see happening. If you really feel strongly enough, go and talk to other people."

There's always going to be another person out there who feels as strongly about it as you do. They will understand what you are trying to achieve and they will help you to do it. You've got to get out there and talk to people and tell them what you are passionate about."

Quotes are from Brooke and Julie, who are working to improve services for young mothers.