

Jane

40, Russian



What's going on for Jane

Just arrived in Australia - "I was born in Russia and moved to Australia with my son to be with a man I met online. We had spoken to each other for over 6 months before he proposed to me. I moved to Australia to marry him. The abuse started just after we got married, when it got really bad I ran away with my son."

Mother to a young son - "I wanted the best for him. I was so afraid that my husband would find us and so ashamed that I changed our names so they are no longer Russian."

Immigration status - "It is difficult finding help. I don't speak very good English and had no access to money due to my immigration status. Everything is very foreign."

Poor mental health - "The abuse and being so far from my family had left me feeling depressed, lacking confidence and ashamed."

High risk situation - "My husband told me he won't let me leave. The first time I tried to leave he found me and threatened to hurt my son if I didn't return."

Below is Jane's healing journey through the refuge service

BEFORE

Pre-engagement with services

"I am so scared... I can't believe after moving all the way here it's turned out to be such a mistake... I'm so ashamed of myself, I can't believe I'm thinking about leaving him."

Jane tried to leave once before and stayed at a friend's house which she met at her son's school. She didn't want to be a burden to the family that was helping her and when her husband started to make threats she decided it was safer to return.

Jane attends a community event where she sees a stall for an interpreting service.

She walks over and sees a leaflet on their table on domestic violence. It is translated into a number of different languages. The person working at the stall notices Jane looking at it and asks her if she is ok. The leaflet and the concern encourage Jane to tell them that she needs help.

Awareness

"They don't have these refuges in Russia... I don't really understand what it is but maybe they can help me"

The interpreting service is partnered with the refuge, so has a good understanding of domestic violence and understands how the refuge works.

The person at the stall makes Jane aware of the refuge and gives her a leaflet that has been translated into Russian.

After school drop off one day Jane speaks to the friend that tried to help her leave before to see what she thinks. The friend encourages her to give it a go and tells her in Australia these services are set up to help women just like her. The service will be able to keep her and her son safe and help her develop a plan to live independently in the community safely.

Soft Referral

"...I'm terrified of my husband finding out about this.... How do I know these people won't tell my husband?"

The interpreter reassures Jane that they are trustworthy and her husband won't find out. The interpreter organises a call for Jane with the refuge.

The interpreter translates for Jane and the refuge worker. The refuge has a number of trusted interpreters, who also have a good understanding of DV, to call on if their workers don't speak the language.

On the call the worker/interpreter assures Jane that there is nothing to feel ashamed of and it is not her fault. They talk about what healthy relationships should look like and the fact that her husband's behaviour towards her is not acceptable and that he is breaking Australian laws.

The worker/interpreter asks if they can meet Jane in person and give her some different options for how this could happen. They also check with Jane the safest way to get in contact with her.

Empowered to decide

"It feels so nice to be believed... maybe these people can help me change things for my son and I."

Jane is sent a link to the website where she can find lots of information in her language. She can also see a 360 degree view of what the refuge looks like.

After having some more contact with the worker/interpreter from the refuge, they ask her if she would like to come and visit.

On her visit, it's the friendly and encouraging staff members and physically safe environment that make Jane feel like she can leave her husband.

Jane likes the look of the independent units as sharing a room with people she doesn't know was a big concern. Another positive is the fact that staff are at the refuge 24 hrs a day and duress alarms are in each unit.

The refuge worker asks Jane some questions to check she is eligible for the refuge.

Preparing for refuge

"I feel like this would be a step in the right direction for my son and I."

Jane has decided to go to the refuge. She is offered support to pack up and leave safely. The refuge organises for the Police to attend as a precaution, a staff member comes to help her and provide transport.

Jane knows that if she didn't want to go to the refuge, the refuge would still support her to find another appropriate option (e.g. a safety plan).

It is decided that Jane's son won't be told until it's time to move because this is likely to trigger his anxiety. Jane and the refuge staff discuss how best this should be done and make sure he has some of his favourite toys in his new bedroom and favourite food in the fridge to make it feel more like home.

Jane's thoughts

Jane's experience

DURING

POST STAY

Welcome

Settling in time

Proper induction and assessment

“I’m finding it hard to think straight, I can’t believe what I have done.”

Jane arrives at the refuge at lunch time with the worker that helped her leave her house and the translator. She is shown to her unit. They all have a cup of tea and Jane is given a chance to talk about how she is feeling. She is reassured that she is safe and has done the right thing for her son.

Jane is feeling very emotional and asks for some time to herself before picking up her son from school.

With the refuge worker’s help Jane picks up her son from school. They go back to the unit where Jane explains what is happening. The refuge worker stays close by to support and assist Jane if needed.

The refuge worker judges how Jane and her son are feeling. If they are up for it the worker introduces them to other staff, show her around and give her some information about what to expect and answer any questions they have.

“I really, really appreciate the space and time they have given me.”

Jane is told that her and her son can take as much time as they need to settle in. They only have to start to participate when they feel comfortable. Jane decides that it is best her son change schools and the refuge offers assistance with this. Jane decides it would be best if her son has a few days to settle into the unit before starting as they are both feeling overwhelmed with the big changes.

She is encouraged to make the space she is given her own. Jane asks to use some of the art supplies she saw on the tour so that her and her son can paint some pictures to decorate the unit.

Jane has access to the translator via telephone or face to face when required. Jane takes up this offer and speaks with her everyday for the first 3 days asking questions to the workers as this is a very new experience for her. She has never been to any place like this before.

“These people have all been so welcoming, I hope I can repay them in some way.”

Jane receives a full induction whenever she has settled in.

This induction can happen anywhere, any time and is an opportunity for workers to be creative. Jane’s preference is for this to happen while her son is at school giving them an opportunity to talk freely. The refuge uses this as an opportunity to really get to know Jane, her strengths and preferences.

A refuge worker asks Jane if she would be interested in having a buddy. This would be someone who might share a similar quality, interest or experience with Jane who is a bit further along in their journey.

Jane’s son talks to the children’s worker after school. This is done while playing minecraft which is her son’s favourite hobby. Jane’s son is excited about the activities planned for the children at the refuge.

What Jane needs on her journey to healing



How are her mental health needs being met?

E.g. Feelings and emotions, safety, wellbeing, support services

- During her toxic relationship, Jane rarely had time to focus on or look after herself. She wants to heal but finds talking about herself in counselling difficult at first. The counsellor understands this and reassures Jane that it will take time. The counsellor uses a light hearted approach to make Jane feel comfortable. The non-judgemental space the counsellor creates slowly encourages Jane to open up.
- The counselling helps Jane to process the situation she has been in. The counsellor speaks Russian which means when emotions are high Jane finds it a lot easier to express herself.
- The refuge helps Jane get access to the services she really needs to start building a life in Australia. This includes:
 - Access to legal aid which helps her to get a restraining order against her husband.
 - Help getting access to a computer and filling out the application form to become a permanent resident.
 - English lessons.
 - Information and help getting her son into the local school.



How are her physical needs being met?

E.g. Accessibility of facilities, space, amenities, food, medical

- The refuge receives many donations. Jane finds clothes and toys for her son.
- Physical safety is very important to Jane, especially as her husband is within close proximity to the refuge. The physical building and the fact that there are always people around make Jane feel safe.



How are her social needs being met?

E.g. Relationships with children, extended family, friends, community, sports and hobbies

- Jane really appreciates how good the staff members are with her son. She learns many positive parenting skills from spending time with them. The staff members identify that Jane loves to cook in her initial assessment. Staff members encourage Jane to run a cooking class for other women at the refuge. This is a great opportunity for Jane’s confidence to be built. Jane enjoys being able to give something back to the refuge.
- A staff member sometimes drops Jane off at the local shopping centre. They tell her to meet them back at the same spot in an hour so that Jane gets some independent time for herself.



How are her cultural needs being met?

E.g. Connection to country, connection to community, practicing my faith, access to healing, etc.

- The refuge has connections to many community services and centres. They find a Russian group and offer to take Jane along to it. These connections remind Jane of home but also give her hope that she might be able to start a happy life in Australia like the people she has met.

Transitioning time

Post refuge support



“I feel like I have made a new family here in Australia...I’m nervous about leaving but I know I will always find support here.”

Jane makes an assertive decision on behalf of herself and her son that she is ready to start thinking about leaving.

She engages with a worker to start building the toolkit she will need to leave and live independently. This includes support:

- Sourcing accommodation and support she will need to attain it
- Creating the investigative skills to navigate services herself
- Establishing connections in the future residential community for support, leisure and cultural needs
- Getting access to furniture donations for her future accommodation



“I am feeling settled in my community - I feel confident to seek help again if I need it.” ...

Leaving the refuge was scary for Jane but she is able to live independently knowing she has the connections within her new community and the refuge if she needs.

She’s got a sense of purpose to her life and has left the refuge feeling more control of her and her son’s life.

Jane and her son and invited back to the refuge for events. She keeps in regular contact with the refuge staff.

Marlee

30, Aboriginal



What's going on for Marlee

Aboriginal heritage - "I'm a proud Menang Noongar woman living in Perth. My culture is very important to me, it influences every aspect of my life. The non-Aboriginal workers I have meet at refuges in the past don't understand how it is for me. When we have been the only Aboriginal family at the refuge I have felt uncomfortable and out of place and so have my kids."

Mother to five kids - "I've never stayed long at refuges as they don't often have the space for 5 kids. Having 5 kids also makes it difficult to find the time I need to focus on myself."

Socially isolated - "My partner has always been very jealous and wanted to know where I was going and who I was with, it has just got worse over the years. Now I hardly see my family and have lost contact with my friends. It's hard for me to ask for help from these people now. The only person I really have is my Gran."

Alcohol addiction - "Growing up I saw a lot of drinking and violence involving my parents and other family members. I started drinking when I was 14."

Currently homeless - "I'm worried about the government finding out I'm homeless and what I've been through. I don't want them to take my kids from me, they took my little brother off of my Mum. She never got him back."

Below is Jane's healing journey through the refuge service

Marlee's thoughts

Marlee's experience

Pre- engagement with services



"I hate everyone knowing my business and putting other people out. I hate asking for help and just want my own space where me and the kids are safe."

Marlee was evicted from her house 6 months ago due to damage done to the property by her ex-partner. Since then she has been going between family and friends houses with her five kids.

Marlee got a Family Violence Restraining Order (FVRO) a few months ago but this hasn't stopped him from harassing her.

Moving every few days or weeks has become really exhausting and the older kids are missing lots of school because of this.

Her ex-partner has threatened the people she has stayed with and now she can't go back to their houses.

Awareness of refuge



"Maybe there is some hope... this might be the best thing for my kids."

Marlee is made aware of this refuge through her Gran, who is a cultural advocate for the refuge within her community.

Gran organises for a woman who has stayed in the refuge before to come over and tell her about her experience.

The lady has been through similar things and really understands why Marlee is so scared. The lady gave Marlee her phone number and offered to answer any other questions she has that may come up later.

Fears about her children being taken from her are reduced. Marlee starts to genuinely consider the refuge option.

BEFORE

Referral to the refuge and telling her story



"I can't believe someone in my community is able to do the assessment."

Different options for how Marlee can receive an assessment are offered to her.

She decides that she would feel most comfortable with her Gran (the advocate for the service in her community) doing it. Her children also feel more comfortable with their Gran doing the assessment. The assessment happens at Gran's house on the weekend.

Marlee's Pop and brother watched the kids play out the back so that she and Gran could have a good yarn.

The assessment is done over a cuppa and something to eat at Gran's kitchen table. They talked about what has been going on and what Marlee wants to happen.

DURING

Preparation for her stay



"I feel like I am setting the pace."

To prepare Marlee for her stay at the refuge, she is sent a link to a private YouTube video. The video gives her a virtual tour and a clear description of what to expect.

Marlee and the Aunty from the refuge explain the process to her children together to help prepare them for another move.

Marlee meets with one of the refuge workers to create her withdrawal management plan. Gran also comes along to ensure she feels comfortable.

The withdrawal plan is created considering risk, support, Marlee's preferred timing and her goals and aspirations.

If Marlee is feeling unsure, she is given a few days to fully consider the refuge offer.

Welcome to the refuge



"It's so homely! I wasn't expecting this. I love all of the Aboriginal art - it reminds me of home."

Marlee has the freedom to choose when she wishes to arrive at the refuge.

Marlee arrives with her Aunt and children. She is shown around by an Aboriginal staff member.

Marlee admires some of the Aboriginal art and Aboriginal language posters in the reception. She also appreciates how physically safe the environment feels.

A few hours later, Marlee receives a Welcome to Country from a local female Elder. This makes her feel more comfortable on this Country and safe in the new home. Marlee is asked if she would like a smoking ceremony for her and her children. Marlee takes up the offer and the Elder does this as well.

Settling in time / withdrawal management



“I like that they have given me time to settle in and sort out some really practical worries for me. I feel like someone is there for me.”

Marlee is given her starter pack. This includes free meals for her first days.

She is not pressured to start her withdrawal management plan immediately and is given time to settle in. She has the option to be around people, but is not expected to engage if she is not ready.

She is also not expected to have to do any paperwork or intensive work early on.

Workers make sure that she knows who to come to when she is ready and these workers are prepared to tackle any of her immediate needs.

Marlee catches up on some much needed sleep. Her kids enjoy the down time and having their own space and toys.

The children's worker offers to do some activities with the kids to give Marlee a break. The kids are excited about spending time with the lady they met at Great Gran's a little while ago.

What Marlee needs on her journey to healing



How are her mental needs getting met?

E.g. Feelings and emotions, safety, wellbeing, support services

- Marlee attends Aboriginal healing services. The healing service comes in and takes place at the refuge. All clients are invited to participate. The healing service could include massages, Australian bush flower essence, art, grief and loss, yarning, dance and smoking ceremonies.
- An Elder comes in at least once a week to yarn and spend time with the families. Sometimes On Country trips are organised, these are a highlight for Marlee's kids.
- Marlee's whole family have access to a counselling session together specifically to work on their relationship together after what they have been through. This happens off-site.
- After the initial withdrawal program, Marlee's AOD support continues throughout her stay. AOD support worker makes sure Marlee isn't made to feel like she's failing and acknowledges that it's going to be a difficult process with its ups and downs.



How are her physical needs getting met?

E.g. Accessibility of facilities, space, amenities, food, medical

- With the help of staff, Marlee lodges a review for her eviction as the family and domestic violence tenancy laws were not considered in her situation. Her debt has been cleared and she is now on the priority housing list.
- Staff at the refuge assist Marlee in enrolling her older children in school and help get all the things they needed.
- Staff assist in purchasing a double pram for Marlee. She had a single stroller but this made getting around with a baby and a toddler difficult.
- The refuge arrange for a child carer to come to the refuge a couple times a week. This means that Marlee has the opportunity to leave her children with them so that she has time to focus on herself. She will often organise to meet up with a relative, do a counselling session or an exercise or art class.



How are her social needs getting met?

E.g. Relationships with children, extended family, friends, community, sports and hobbies

- Marlee's Aunty is invited to join any of the appointments that Marlee feels like she needs her support in. Marlee's Aunty is also able to visit to help with child care. On weekends, the Aunty takes some of the kids for a sleepover; this not only gives Marlee a rest but also gives the kids a chance to see their cousins who they miss a lot.
- The refuge ensures there are many opportunities for Marlee to rebuild connections with her community through either visits or Marlee being able to go out.
- The kids are able to join in different programs at the refuge. Marlee and the kids are told about the rules and who to go to if there is a problem. Marlee is reassured by the staff's involvement in children's activities as her kids have been bullied by other kids when they've stayed at other refuges.



How are her cultural needs getting met?

E.g. Connection to country, connection to community, practicing my faith, access to healing, etc.

- The refuge makes the most of Marlee's strengths and identity. Marlee used to enjoy organising gatherings for her family. The refuge helped her to plan an event for everyone staying at the refuge for National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day. Local dancers come in to teach the children traditional songs and dances; everyone joined in.
- Once a week the refuge cooks traditional food, they often have damper and kangaroo stew and every now and then one of the Torres Strait Islander ladies does a kup murri. This is something Marlee wasn't able to do for a while because she was homeless. Marlee and the kids are encouraged to join in the cooking and talking about their culture during this time.

Preparing to leave



“I feel so much stronger and I know I'm not alone.”

During her stay at the refuge Marlee has been able to reconnect with her family and community through meetings and activities that the refuge has encouraged and facilitated.

This and the fact that Marlee feels more confident and less dependant on alcohol makes Marlee feel like she's ready to take the next step and to start preparing her family to leave the refuge.

Thanks to the refuge Marlee has been able to find accomodation to move into with her family. The refuge helps Marlee to think about all the things she will need to prepare for leaving.

Post refuge



“The kids and I are excited about our future. I know it won't be easy but I feel ready to take the next step having re connected with my family and having made a new family.”

Marlee's family help her to move out of the refuge. Marlee finds that a lot of the support she had during her stay at the refuge she can now find in her stronger community.

Marlee offers to volunteer at the refuge. She is called in to welcome new Aboriginal women and to help out with organising Aboriginal events. She finds this very fulfilling and it helps her stay connected to the refuge community.

Marlee receives a call from the refuge every 3 months for a year after her stay specifically to check in on how she and her children are doing.

Lucy

23, Australia



What's going on for Lucy

Experienced abuse from a young age -

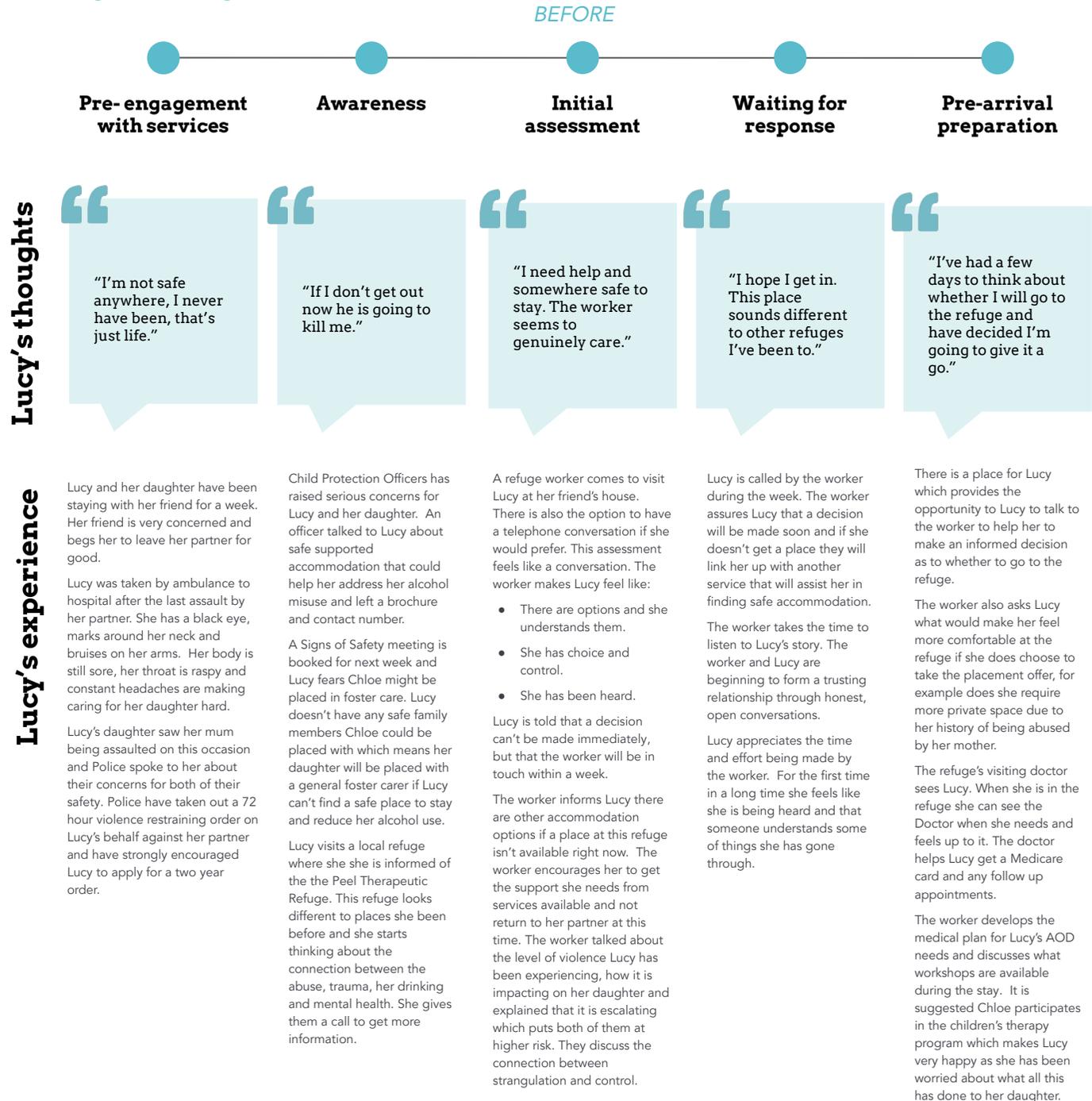
"Growing up, my mother and other family members abused me. Sharing spaces with other women can trigger difficult feelings and memories."

Addiction to alcohol and drugs - "At a young age I started hanging out with a group of boys and taking drugs. I have experienced abuse and problems with drugs all of my life. I started drinking more to cope with everything."

Wants to reunite the family - "After a few months of being with my partner I fell pregnant. We had been together less than a year when Chloe was born. I would never have believed that he would have hurt me if you had told me then. His meth use got really bad and he started being abusive while I was pregnant. I really wanted our little family to work, which stopped me leaving."

Negative experiences with a refuge - "When it got too bad, I went to a refuge with my daughter. It didn't take long for me to be kicked out for drinking. This meant I returned to my partner who beat me up worse than ever before. I ran away again a couple of months later to my friends house who told me I needed to do the best thing for my child and go back to a refuge."

Below is Lucy's healing journey through the refuge service



Welcome



“This is really really tough. At least there is someone familiar here.”

On arrival, Lucy is offered a cup of tea and a hug. The worker senses where Lucy is at and makes a judgement about how overwhelmed she is feeling. The children's worker offers to take Chloe to get something to eat and a book to draw in, which Lucy accepts. The worker and Lucy talk about how she is feeling. Lucy does not feel rushed and is starting to feel more relaxed and happy about taking this brave step. After an hour or so, Lucy and Chloe are given a tour of the place and are shown their unit. The worker acknowledges it has been a big day for both of them and gives them time to themselves to adjust and get to know the place.

Important information



“It feels a bit like being a guest at a friend's house.”

Lucy is given a one page important information sheet. This includes practical information, safety information and the wifi password. This first induction avoids introducing any of the routines and rules at this stage. Lucy is introduced to one of the other residents who is her assigned peer buddy. Lucy appreciates having someone to come to if she has questions or feels lonely. The buddy is honest with Lucy about the process and the fact that it's going to be up and down. Lucy appreciates this transparency.

Settling in



“That's nice how they've put some food I like in the fridge.”

A worker offers Lucy a tour but she is welcome to just show her self around if she prefers. Lucy and Chloe take some time to set up their belongings in their unit. They didn't have much to bring with them and have been given some clothes, toiletries and food to last them the first few days of their stay. Chloe is given some books, toys and children's DVDs. As Lucy walks around, she sees some of the artworks created by the residents and photos of activities mothers and the children have participated in together.

Proper induction



“I'm nervous that I am going to get kicked out again for drinking... I really want to be able to be strong this time.”

Lucy received the full induction when she has settled in (this could be 2 days later or longer). This induction takes place where Lucy feels comfortable. As she is still not feeling very comfortable around other residents, it is done in her unit at the kitchen table. Breaks are taken when needed. The induction is an opportunity for the worker to get a good understanding of Lucy and Chloe's needs and wants, to set up a safety plan and help decide which workshops they would like to participate in. Lucy and her buddy engage in the induction together.

What Lucy needs on her journey to healing



How are her mental needs getting met?

E.g. Feelings and emotions, safety, wellbeing, support services

- Lucy develops a mental health plan with her GP and attends follow up hospital appointments. The GP does a referral to a psychologist and suggests Lucy try medication to assist with her low mood.
- It is decided to postpone a dedicated withdrawal program until Lucy feels more settled. The refuge work with Lucy on understanding the journey toward minimising her harm from AOD.
- Staff at the refuge assist her in accessing specialised counseling, provide transport and child care and support Lucy through the medical journey, which she finds daunting.
- Lucy joins one of the workshops and is supported by the staff member running the session, which puts her at ease. Lucy is building her confidence and hopes to join other workshops in time.
- Chloe has a good relationship with the children's worker and is attending the play group regularly.



How are her social needs getting met?

E.g. Relationships with children, extended family, friends, community, sports and hobbies

- An appointment with the Centrelink social worker was organised with the help of staff and issues with payments were worked through.
- Staff informed Lucy of the family violence legislation for rentals and assisted Lucy in having her name removed from the lease agreement.
- Lucy has started parenting sessions and positive changes are being seen between mother and daughter.
- Lucy's best friend comes in once a week to offer support. Sometimes they go shopping together other times they stay at the refuge listening to music and talking.
- Lucy has the option to take part in social activities but is able to do activities individually until she feels comfortable to engage with other residents (if she ever wants to).
- It's important to Lucy that her partner receives the support he needs. The refuge works in partnership with perpetrator services to keep him in the picture. Throughout her stay, a joint decision is made that it is safe for Lucy, her daughter and her partner to begin their family healing journey together.



How are her physical needs getting met?

E.g. Accessibility of facilities, space, amenities, food, medical

- Lucy was supported through detox whilst in the unit with her daughter. As Lucy had no money when she arrived, she was given financial assistance to buy food, clothes and personal items for herself and her daughter.

Preparing to leave



“The refuge is very secure. I feel safe here.”

Lucy spent over 6 months at the refuge and during this time has started to work on challenges in her life. Strong connections with refuge staff, medical professionals and a small number of community services have been formed during her stay and her confidence and self esteem have grown significantly. Lucy is now feeling like she can tackle the next part of her journey living outside the refuge with ongoing support and encouragement. As Lucy has made such strong local connections she looks into relocating close to the refuge. Suitable local accommodation is being explored with the help of refuge staff as well as household goods. The refuge staff look over their ecosystem for different accommodation solutions.

Post refuge



“I'm glad I have some time to rest. I didn't get much sleep on the couch at my friend's.”

Refuge volunteers assist Lucy to move into her new home. Whitegoods have been donated and bedroom furniture purchased with the assistance of the Department of Communities. Lucy has weekly or fortnightly appointments which she and/or her daughter and/or her partner attend. These keep her on track and feeling positive. She worked with these services whilst she was staying in the refuge and has developed a trusting relationship with them and feels she can speak up when problems arise. Lucy continues to attend AA meetings as well as individual counselling.

Ben

13, Australian



What's going on for Ben

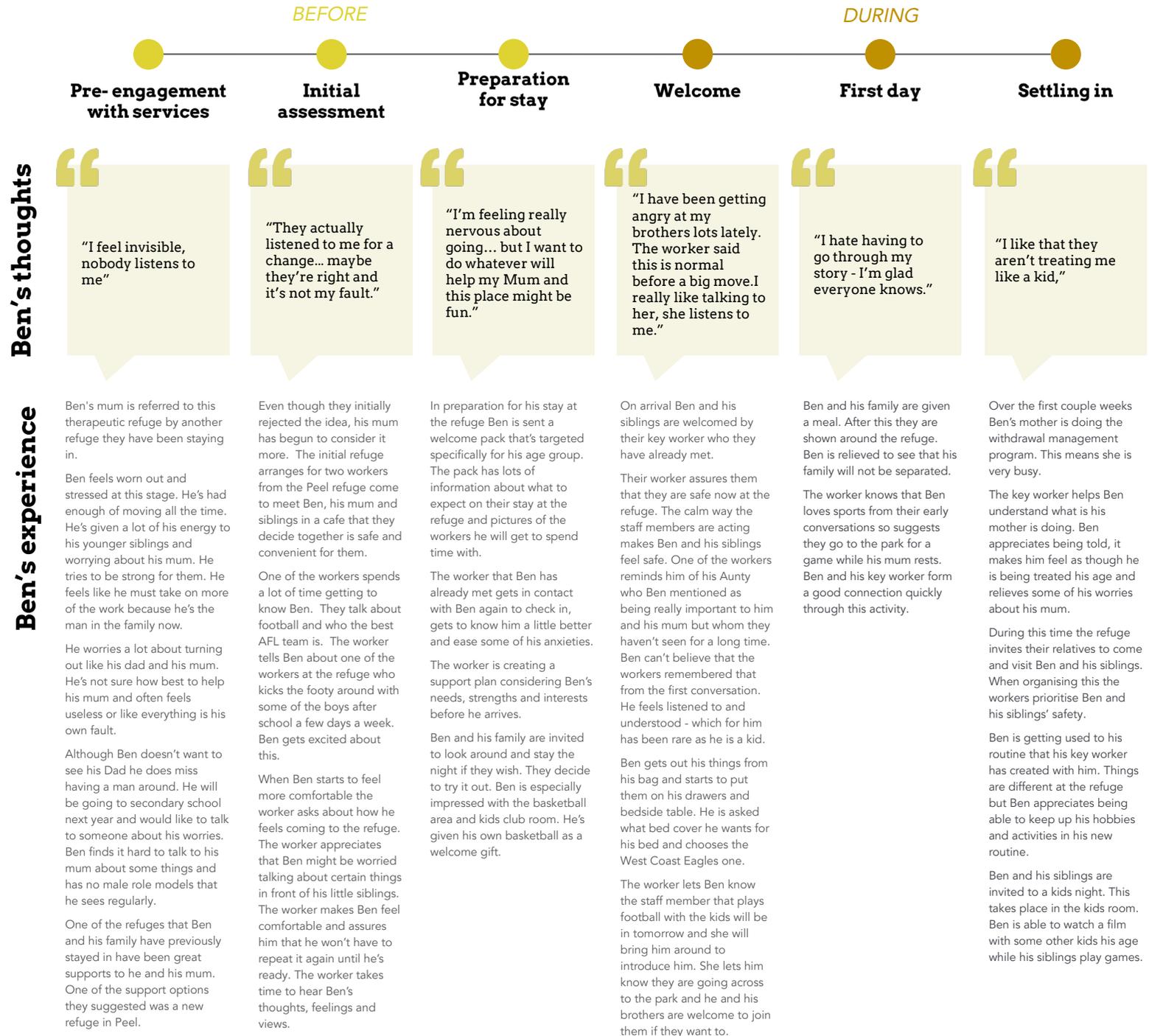
A protective older brother to two little brothers - "I am Ben and I have two little brothers. I'm the chatterbox of the three of us. I love playing games outside and watching sports. My little brothers are annoying sometimes but it's my job to keep an eye on them."

Doesn't want to turn out like his father - "My Dad started hitting my Mum when I was very young. My mum took my brothers and I away from home, leaving all of our stuff. We moved around different relative's houses and refuges for ages."

Distrustful of adults - "I have been forced to see my Dad by the courts. I told them I didn't want to and I hate that I wasn't listened to and believed. Now I find it hard speaking up and trusting adults. My little brothers miss Dad and want to see him but I really don't want to. I told the kids at school that he was dead so they wouldn't ask about him."

Poor communication with mother - "I don't like talking about what worries me because I don't want Mum to worry. She has enough to worry about already. I wish Mum was happier and could spend more time with me. She's always busy going to appointments and speaking to people on the phone. We never go anywhere fun together."

Below is Ben's healing journey through the refuge service



What Ben needs on his journey to healing

How are my mental needs getting met?

E.g. Feelings and emotions, safety, wellbeing, support services

- Ben has the option to receive both individual and family counselling, neither is forced. The refuge realise that to deal with Ben's trauma he will require an independant space where he can talk openly and not worry about saying the wrong things in front of his family. Equally, the refuge appreciates that family counselling is an important way for the family to come together, understand each other and develop their relationships to heal as a family.
- Staff members encourage Ben to do the things that he enjoys. They also know that these activities are good opportunities to encourage Ben to talk, while he is at ease and feeling comfortable.
- Ben finds it difficult telling his story and so is not expected to have to repeat it. Ben takes comfort in the fact that everyone in his support team already know. Staff members help Ben develop a narrative around his story that he feels comfortable to communicate to others.
- Through taking the time to listen to Ben and asking the right questions staff members realise that Ben feels a lot of responsibility for his mother and little siblings. Ben's key worker reassures Ben that it's not his job to have to always protect his mum and siblings and that the refuge will make sure they are safe. This shift of responsibility and reassurance means that Ben doesn't feel as much pressure to e.g go visit his dad with his siblings (who want to) when he doesn't.

How are my physical needs getting met?

E.g. Accessibility of facilities, space, amenities, food, medical

- Ben and his siblings make the most of the outdoor space and local facilities. There is a pool near by and some great parks which he likes to make the most of.

- Ben appreciates the structure of the physical space. The unit is large and the fact that the furniture is on wheels has meant they can rearrange it to suit their family needs. Whilst his young siblings want to sleep near their mum, Ben has been able to create some privacy by moving the tall bookshelf on wheels to create a partition in the room.

How are my social needs getting met?

E.g. Relationships with children, extended family, friends, community, sports and hobbies

- The members of staff have made Ben feel comfortable to open up and approach them if he needs. Ben and his siblings feel more comfortable around different staff members. Ben gets to know the gardener who ends up being a great male role model for Ben. The gardener reassures Ben that, apart from certain situations, whatever he shares with him will be kept confidential.
- The refuge works collaboratively with Ben's school and teachers to support him in the transition to the new local school. This means that Ben doesn't need to worry about explaining his situation to teachers and that the school can help out with logistics.
- At the refuge there are large and shared cooking facilities which can be booked to use. Ben and his family do this sometimes so that they can invite other families to all cook a meal together.
- The refuge also organises family trips out to parks, the cinema and theme beach. These are great opportunities for the family to connect.
- Ben's key worker uses resources in the community to find activities that he would enjoy and are age appropriate. Ben goes to the football club weekly and his new coach has talked to Ben's old coach so Ben knows that he can return to his old team.
- The kids club, buddy system and camps help Ben create positive social connections with other kids at the refuge. Ben likes spending time with them as they have all gone through something similar.
- Ben is supported to remain connected to his network in his home community and he is able to bring his closest friends to the region for pre-arranged social engagements.

Preparation for leaving



"I feel so safe here, I have mixed feelings about leaving..... Mum is doing so much better though."

Ben's mum is feeling ready to leave.

The key worker has been talking to Ben about leaving. It's their job to make sure Ben feels supported and equipped to leave. The key worker also tries to help Ben understand the value of the journey he has been on.

Ben and his key worker have maintained connections with his home community so Ben already feels supported and less anxious in the impending transition.

Post refuge



"I never thought that the refuge would change me so much..."

Ben has the option to meet up with his key worker after he has left. They also text a lot.

He is still engaged in lots of activities that he started at the refuge.

Ben and his family are invited back often for events at the refuge.