

# Curriculum Vitae - Rhondda Matthews

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## EMPLOYMENT

**CEO, The Family Relationship Network | January 2018 - present**

<https://familyrelationshipnetwork.com.au/>

Single Expert Reports

**Regulation 7 Family Consultant  
January 2018 – July 2024**

Regulation 7 Family Consultants are private practitioners contracted to the Family Court and federal Circuit Courts of Australia. Family Consultants assess children and families. They provide expert social science advice to families and expert evidence to the Court in relation to disputes regarding children. Family Consultants deal with the most complex family disputes and need to have a sound knowledge child development, child abuse, family violence and the impacts of mental health and substance misuse on parenting capacity.

**Manager, (UNIFAM) Uniting Counselling and Mediation | Parramatta | March  
2017 – December 2017**

The Manager of Uniting Counselling and Mediation is responsible for the day to day operational performance of the service. This includes ensuring the effective and efficient delivery of Uniting Unifam's programs in dispute resolution (mediation and conciliation), counselling and relationship education.

**Manager Family Relationship Centre | Uniting Unifam | Fairfield | April 2016 –  
March 2017**

The Manager of Fairfield FRC is responsible for the day to day operational performance of the service. This includes ensuring the effective and efficient delivery of Uniting Unifam's programs in dispute resolution (mediation and conciliation), counselling and relationship education.

**Family Consultant [now known as Child Court Experts]| Federal Circuit Court & Family Court of Australia | Sydney & Parramatta | June 2008 – April 2016**

The Family Consultant's role is to provide child focused interventions to assist families and the Family Law Courts to achieve the best outcomes for children at pre-trial, trial, and post-trial stages of court proceedings.

Family Consultants assess children and families. They provide expert social science advice to families and expert evidence to the Court in relation to disputes regarding children. Family Consultants deal with the most complex family disputes and need to have a sound knowledge child development, child abuse, family violence and the impacts of mental health and substance misuse on parenting capacity.

**Official Community Visitor | Minister for Community Services | Sydney | Jan 2004-Dec 2009**

The role of Official Community Visitors is to promote the best interests of children and young people in out-of-home care and for children, young people and adults with a disability in care.

Community Visitors meet with children, look at records and discuss casework and operational issues with staff and management. They provide advice to the Minister and the Ombudsman about the quality of care provided to residents.

**Capacity Building Consultant | NSW Family Services | Glebe | Jan 2005-June 2008**

Provide training and support to Family Support staff working with parents who have an intellectual disability.

This role involved training staff from all over NSW, recruiting staff to engage with the Healthy Start Program and providing ongoing support.

I was also involved in the roll out of training in the SCARF case management system for Barnardos.

**Child Protection Caseworker | Helpline- Department of Community Services | Parramatta | Nov 2003-June 2004**

I worked at the Helpline on a casual basis for 12 months. I was responsible for intake and assessment of information received from the public and from professionals about children who may have been at risk. Because of my experience I occasionally went out to provide direct support to children at risk.

**Training Officer (Adoption) | Hertfordshire County Council | Hertfordshire UK | April 2001-March 2003**

Develop and deliver a range of training to adoption and child protection staff. Develop and deliver training to prospective and/or experienced adoptive and foster carers.

Keep up to date with latest research and practice through attendance at conferences and individual research.

**Crisis Care Worker | Child Protection and Family Crisis Service-Department of  
Community Services |  
Redfern | Jan - Dec 2000**

This role involved after hours crisis intervention for children at risk of immediate harm. Crisis Care Workers were graded at a higher level than caseworkers to reflect the different level of accountability required for the role. The nature of the work meant that CCW's had the delegation to remove children without seeking approval from senior managers (although this was rare).

**Community Services Consultant (Intercountry Adoption) | Department of  
Community Services |  
Parramatta | April 1997- Sept 1999**

Provide training for prospective adoptive parents.

Casework regarding the assessment, allocation and ongoing support of children adopted from overseas.

Liaison for the Korean and Ethiopian adoption programs.

**Senior Child Care Practitioner | Family Care Associates |  
Preston, UK | May 1996-Feb 1997**

As a Senior Child Care Practitioner, I was responsible for the supervision of residential care staff, casework for the children in the facility, rosters and the housekeeping budget. I provided supervision and mentoring for staff and was actively involved with the children daily. The children were often educated on the premises but sometimes a child was able to attend a local school. My role was to manage all aspects of the casework for specific children.

**Complaints Officer | Community Services Commission |  
Strawberry Hills | Jan - August 1995**

I was one of the first three Complaints Officers appointed under the (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993 to the Community Services Commission. The role involved assessing information received from the public about the care of people receiving a community service and making recommendations as to the action to be taken.

**Crisis Care Worker | Child Protection and Family Crisis Service-Department of  
Community Services |  
Darlinghurst | Oct 1992-Jan 1995**

This role involved after hours crisis intervention for children at risk of immediate harm. Crisis Care Workers were graded at a higher level than caseworkers to reflect the different level of accountability required for the role. The nature of the work meant that CCW's had the delegation to remove children without seeking approval from senior managers (although this was rare).

**District Officer| Department of Community Services |  
Bondi Junction | Feb1990-Oct1992**

The primary purpose of a caseworker is to work directly with children, young people and families to support them to achieve change that keeps children and young people safe and improves their social, emotional, health and educational outcomes.

Key accountabilities include

Deliver accountable and collaborative casework that respects the culture and context of each child, young person, family and community and is based on timely sharing of accurate information to ensure that the support meets their identified needs.

Undertake assessment / investigation and ongoing family work to identify and address safety and risk concerns for children and young people.

Model ethical and curious casework that is responsive to the changing needs of children, young people and families.

Build relationships within practice and legislative frameworks to create change in families and keep children and young people safe.

Develop and maintain networks and relationships with key stakeholders to deliver appropriate services for children, young people and families.

Participate and contribute to a culture of continuous learning and professional development to ensure practice knowledge and skills are contemporary and evidence-based.

Maintain accurate and relevant client records for reporting and information sharing.

Share decision making with family and key stakeholders about children and young people to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between the risks, safety and wellbeing.

**Casual Youth Worker | Caretakers Cottage |  
Paddington/Surry Hills | 1980-1990**

I worked both day and night, weekdays and weekend shifts when permanent staff was not available. The work involved promoting of the health, emotional, social, recreational and educational well-being of residents. This included; assisting in the development of independent living skills, working collaboratively with casework managers, deploying a range of therapeutic intervention strategies including developing relationships with residents.

## **EDUCATION**

**Couple Counselling and Family Therapy Diploma, 2018**  
**Centre of Excellence**

**Bachelor of Social Science, 1990**  
**Charles Sturt University, Bathurst**

**Bachelor of Social Work, 2000**  
**Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga**

## **Conferences/Presentations**

**Confidentiality in Court Ordered Family Therapy 2021**  
Greater West Family Law Practitioners Association

**Family Therapy in the Family Law context 2021**  
NSW Bar Association CPD event

**Mental health in the Australian Family Law Context: Clinicians and Practitioners Building Bridges together - 2013**  
6<sup>th</sup> World Conference on family Law and Children's Rights

**Supporting parents with intellectual disability - 2007**  
New Zealand Australasian Society for the Study of Intellectual Disability

## **Workshops / short courses**

**Safe and together Institute [2025]**

Coercive Control & Children: A Safe & together Conference

**Australian Association of Social Workers [2025]**

Surveying the similar terrains= borderline personality disorder and adult ADHD

**National Family Law Pathways Network [2024]**

Family Law Amendments Bill 2024

**Central Coast Family Law Pathways Network [2024]**

Darkinjung Community Cultural Immersion Day

**AFCC Webinar [2024]**

The Myth of the Child Witness: Deepening Our Understanding of Children's Best Interests In Domestic Violence Cases.

**Webinar with David Mandel: Safe & Together Model [2024]**

The Myth of the Child Witness: Deepening Our Understanding of Children's Best Interests In Domestic Violence Cases

**Autism Centre of Excellence (ACE) [2024]**

Working with Autistic Children: Key Considerations

**Family Law Pathways Network [2023]**

Understanding child mental health in the context of parental separation

**Central Coast Family Law Pathways [2023]**

High Conflict Personalities

**Judicial Seminar Series- Judge Beckhouse [2023]**

Contact and Unacceptable Risk

**Workshop with Nathan Wallis [2023]**

The Developing Brain

**Family Law Pathways Network Sydney[2023]**

Mental Illness: Always an unacceptable risk?

**Family Law Pathways Network [2022]**

Why People Lie? The Psychology of Attribute in Family Law

**Workshop with Chris Lennings [2022]**

Identifying Risk [sexual assault]

**Workshop with George Klein [2022]**

Drugs and Alcohol: Parenting and testing

**Central Coast Family Law Pathways [2022]**

Coercive Control

**The Professional Development of People [2022]**

ATTACHMENT ACROSS THE LIFESPAN - SUPPORTING RELATIONAL SECURITY:

Practice-focused interventions and approaches for specific developmental periods.

**Central Coast Family Law Pathways [2022]**

Complexities of Trauma

**Family Court (2021)** The value of reports: A view from the bench

**Family Court (2020)**

Coercive Control – Who are these guys?

**Family Law Pathways (2020)**

International mediation and 40 years of the 1980 Hague Convention

**Monash University (2020)**

Keeping Perpetrators ‘in view’ during the COVID restrictions

**Family Law Pathways (2020)**

Developmentally focussed approaches to Family Law interventions (Jennifer Macintosh)

**Family Law Pathways (2020)**

Flipping the script on the most difficult people during difficult times {High Conflict Institute}

**Family Court (2020)**

What is Family Violence, Vulnerable groups, The impact of Family Violence on parents, parenting and children, Risk screening assessment, Reflective and Trauma Informed Practice

**Child Inclusive Practice Forum (2019)**

Restoration, Renovation, Rebuilding

**AFCC (2019)**

6<sup>th</sup> Annual AFCC Australian Conference (Ethics: Duties and Dilemmas in Family Law

**Family Court of Australia (2019)**

The Assessment of Children in Family Law Matters (Erylin Rees)

**FRSA (2019)**

Love/hate and loving hate: A window into entrenched post separation parenting disputes (Jen Macintosh, Lawrie Maloney, Bruce Smyth)

**Legal Aid NSW (2019)**

Family Violence Law Help

**Watts McCray CLE Event (2019)**

Using Social Science to Guide Decisions in Family Law (Vincent Papalio) To Collaborate, Mediate, Arbitrate or Litigate? That is the question (Maurice Edwards)

**AFCC (2018)**

5<sup>th</sup> Annual AFCC Australian Conference (Alienation? myths, complexities and possibilities

**FRSA (2017)**

Child Inclusive Practice Forum

**FRSA (2016)**

National Conference

**Liana Lowenstein (2015)**

Creative Interventions for troubled Children and Families

**AFCC (2013)**

6<sup>th</sup> World Conference on family Law and Children's Rights

**Carol George (2012)**

Assessing Attachment Workshop

**LSC Psychology (2010)**

Risk Assessment of Sexual Abuse in Family and Children's Court Workshop

**Jen Macintosh (2009)**

Child Inclusive practice

**Family Court**

2010: Family Violence: Tightening the Safety Net In the context of Family Law

2009: Navigating Stormy Seas: achieving better outcomes for families in high conflict

2008: Mental Health Support Project Training

2008: Unacceptable Risk: Substance Misuse and Parenting

2008: Parenting and Substance Abuse

2008: Assessing young children and their relationships

2008: Parental reflective capacity

**Hertfordshire County Council (2003)**

Cultural Issues in Adoption and Permanent Care

**Tavistock (2003)**

Contact with Birth Families

**Gerrilyn Smith (2002)**

Caring for Children Who Have Been Sexually Abused

**John Tresiliotis & Michael Brennan (2002)**

Inter-Country Adoption

**British Agencies for Adoption & Fostering (2002)**

Legal aspects in Adoption

**David Howe (2002)**

Attachment – Children raised in care

**British Agencies for Adoption & Fostering (2001)**

Developing Training Skills

**Cornell University (2001)**

Training of Trainers Program in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention

**Hertfordshire County Council (2001)**

Evidence Based Assessment in Adoption