

## *Tips For Separated Parents Who Are Further Down The Track – 3 plus years*

- It could be time for a reflection on how things have been
- Make a time with your child to chat about how it's been for you and ask how it's been for them, a car ride can be good as sometimes they don't like being eyeballed
- Resist the temptation to answer them back or defend yourself, just listen... even if they're a bit unfair sometimes
- If they are very critical of how things were handled say that you're sorry that they felt that way and agree it was a rough time
- Reiterate how much you love them and choose something they did that was positive and praise them eg: "you showed a lot of maturity when I couldn't see you on your birthday, we ended up having a great time later in the week and I haven't forgotten it"
- Try to separate their behaviour about the separation and their behaviour as teenagers or rebellious kids etc (maybe many of these tensions/issues would have come up anyway?)
- If you are concerned seek help – we have great counsellors and parent support workers at **drummond street services** – (03) 9663 6733
- If your child would be willing to chat to someone, you can book a single session where one of our counsellors will help you have a good talk, clear the air and move on
- The most important thing is to acknowledge kids feelings and reassure them
- Perhaps ask if they can make some plans or rules with you as to how you can both make things better from now on
- The time spent on talking and listening will bring you closer – you can also do some active things together like bike riding and bushwalking
- Most of all focus on the good things that have been achieved and try to plan an optimistic future with your kids, no matter how difficult the past has felt