

## Caseworker Support in the Northern Territory

Strong, stable, and trusting relationships between caseworkers and children and young people in care are protective, result in better outcomes for young people, and ensure that children and young people are heard and have their views acted upon.

CREATE asked 26 young people with a care experience aged 12 - 17 in the NT about their relationship with their caseworker.

**96%**  
of young people reported that they currently had a caseworker.

Only **one-third** had been supported by their current caseworker for more than 1 year.

**62%**  
were satisfied with the amount of contact they had with their caseworker

Most frequently, young people rated how supported they felt as **50 out of 100**

“  
Help me stay connected with my family and country  
(Female, 16)

When we do speak, he listens.  
(Male, 15)

I don't really know her. I haven't really talked to her as such. She asked me how I was but that was it. She was at our house for about 2 hours talking to our grandma. All I know is her name. She doesn't even know my hobbies.  
(Female, 14)

”

## Key Messages

- Young people wanted to be supported by caseworkers who had good listening and communication skills.



Talk to me in a good way.  
Good communication.  
(Male, 15)

They don't listen to  
us or our ideas.  
(Female, 17)

- Young people also wanted caseworkers:
  - to build and maintain trusting relationships with them over time,
  - be organised, reliable, and provide practical support,
  - to inform them when they were leaving and introduce them to their new caseworker.



One time I rang the office and asked for my caseworker and she was gone and there was someone else. It happened unexpectedly. She didn't tell me. They could have told us that they were leaving and at least said goodbye. It would be good to introduce the new caseworker or let us know before they leave.  
(Male, 16)

- Family contact was a high priority for the young people in this consultation and their view was that a good caseworker actively supported family contact.



She asked us if we want to see our parents again.  
Supports me in planning to see my family. (Female, 15)

## Actions

- Ensure there are adequate staff employed to ensure:
  - caseloads are realistic
  - caseworkers have time and space to develop good relationships with young people
  - caseworkers are accessible and able to be contacted.
- Ensure training and reflective practice opportunities for caseworkers so they have skills and strategies to build relationships and communicate well with young people.
- Establish procedures for incoming and outgoing caseworkers (e.g., making introductions; saying good-bye).
- Ensure caseworkers interact with the young person's family, social, and community networks and help young people establish and/or maintain meaningful, safe, and stable connections.

Consultation  
conducted in 2022

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