Handout 2: Initial Contact

Entry/screening

This is the starting point for gathering and assessing information about the applicant so as to establish eligibility and evaluate the need for services. At CPCC the data gathered during the initial contact is basic and demographic: age, marital status, educational level, employment information and the like. Other information may be obtained to provide detail about aspects of the client's life - for example, medical evaluations, social histories and educational reports.

Workers need to be very clear about who their target groups are, what the criteria for admission are and what the service can provide. If any of the services within CPCC are unclear about this it leads to a lack of consistency and confusion for clients.

Some Points on Entry/Screening

- Create a non-threatening, comfortable environment to put the client at ease and to assist with the exchange of information. If possible have another staff member look after any accompanying children during the interview

- If you are unable to provide the service requested, let the client know as quickly as possible. Explain why you are unable to assist and refer the client onto a service that will be able to help

- If people are to be declined a service on the basis of their previous history with CPCC, this should be checked with the program coordinator

- If the person is not happy that you are unable to assist, provide them with information about the service complaint procedures

- Do not overload the client with information, especially if they are under stress. Provide the information in manageable bits.