

Australian Domestic & Family Violence CLEARINGHOUSE

newsletter

CLEARINGHOUSE NEWS

Stakeholder survey

NOW in its second year of operation, the Clearinghouse is currently seeking feedback from stakeholders in order to improve and develop the services offered. We would appreciate your completing and returning the *Stakeholder Survey* which is included in this mail out. Please note that the final date for return of survey forms has been extended to **Friday August 3rd**. Additional copies can be obtained from the Clearinghouse.

New entries on the Good Practice Database

THE *Good Practice Database* on the Clearinghouse website assists those working with domestic and family violence to keep in touch with what others across the country are doing. It is a way to build on what others have learnt in order to further develop our efforts to prevent and to overcome the effects of domestic and family violence. Please contact Jane Mulrone at the Clearinghouse to discuss entering your program on the database. The following programs have recently been added to the database.

Cross Border Domestic Violence Service – NT, SA and WA

The service is an initiative of the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council. It covers a region of 350,000 square kilometres which includes border regions in Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory. The NPY Women's Council developed the cross border service, 'Good Protection for All Women', in 1994 in order to provide protection for Aboriginal women experiencing domestic violence. Aboriginal women within these communities experience severe levels of violence in circumstances where there are few support services and tremendous geographical isolation, not to mention enormous cultural barriers.

The service employs the equivalent of three full-time positions and provides opportunities for women to talk about their experiences of violence and abuse, information about domestic violence and support options, ongoing advocacy and liaison with services,

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Partnerships Against
Domestic Violence



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NEW SOUTH WALES

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practical assistance including financial resources, access to medical services, transport and accommodation. Support provided by the service is especially important for Aboriginal women pursuing legal remedies. The service ensures access to legal advice and representation with some financial assistance from the Women's Legal Service, South Australia. The service has also engaged in community development activities such as community education programs about domestic violence, production of bilingual information, training programs to enhance understanding of domestic violence and cross-cultural issues and the development of interagency protocols. The establishment of cross border protocols on policing has been critical to positive legal outcomes as three different states' legislation and different police practices are encountered by the service.

Over time, a number of factors have emerged which have contributed to the success of the service. These include:

- the need to work closely with Aboriginal women, following through with their matter to its conclusion;
- effective advocacy in relation to responses from other services;
- establishment of good working relationships between the service and others in the justice system;
- gaining the confidence and credibility with women and the community by building on successful outcomes for individual women;
- incorporation of mechanisms to ensure the active participation of women from the NPY Council and the community, in the decision making process.

The service highlights the importance of ongoing, practical involvement with individual women, beginning some months before legal action and carrying through for months or years after the court process has taken place.

Target group: Aboriginal women; service providers (criminal justice)

Intervention mode: advocacy; coordination

Perspective: access; cultural sensitivity; social justice

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Tennant Creek Women's Refuge – Northern Territory

Tennant Creek Women's Refuge offers a safe and secure environment for women and children experiencing domestic violence. It operates 24 hours a day throughout the year. The refuge has two dwellings with a separate office and sleepover area for workers. It provides a range of services within a non-institutional and welcoming environment. These include information, advocacy, referral to support services, court support, and practical supports such as transport and help in retrieving furniture and personal belongings. The refuge has a strong commitment to a case management approach that works towards empowering women to make their own choices and recognise their potential.

Tennant Creek Women's Refuge works closely with its community to raise awareness about the issues concerning domestic violence. In September 2000, the refuge held an open day which was attended by about 80 people. This was the first time the refuge had been open to the general public and the success of the day has encouraged the refuge to consider repeating the day. The intention was to inform the community about the services provided by the refuge and how women and children escaping domestic/family violence can be supported.

The refuge has also developed links with remote communities within the Barkly region such as Ali Curung, which is 380 kilometres from Alice Springs. Workers from Tennant Creek Women's Refuge meet Ali Curung Safe House workers half way, a 150 kilometre trip for both services, to bring clients back to the Tennant Creek refuge. Ali Curung have established their own Night Patrol which is run by community members. Police believe that there has been a reduction in the number of incidents of domestic/family violence as a strong message has been given to the men in this community that domestic/family violence is unacceptable.

Target group: women; Aboriginals; remote areas

Intervention mode: counselling/support ; crisis intervention

Perspective: access; empowerment; feminist; cultural sensitivity

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Draft Queensland Government Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Policy

Safe Families – Safer Communities and the Safe Families – Safer Communities Action Plan 2001-2003

The Queensland Government has released for community comment a consultation draft of the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Policy: *Safe Families – Safer Communities*, and the *Safe Families – Safer Communities Action Plan 2001-2003*. The draft Policy and Action Plan articulates the Queensland Government's commitment to:

- Reducing the impact of domestic and family violence on individuals, families and communities;
- Providing a service to people affected by domestic and family violence through a seamless, co-ordinated and collaborative service system; and
- Creating a culture of intolerance for domestic and family violence in individuals, families and communities.

These are vital building blocks towards achieving the Queensland Government's overall objective of safe and supportive communities and a better quality of life for all Queenslanders. The draft policy document identifies a number of principles to underpin the Government's policy and programs related to domestic and family violence, whether delivered directly or through funded community agencies. The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring that responses to domestic and family violence are effective, client-focussed, well co-ordinated and based upon a common understanding of the issues. The draft Policy and Action Plan details strategies and current and planned actions that Queensland Government Departments have committed to implementing, to achieve the outcomes articulated in the Policy.

Further information

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Central Violence Intervention Program – a case study

Clearinghouse Newsletter 5 outlined the operation of the South Australian Central Violence Intervention Program (CVIP). In this article, CVIP Case Manager, Sarah Cartwright, further describes the program's approach via a case study. A poem by the male client in this case study is also included.

Background

Peter (aged 50 years) and Freda (aged 52 years) were in a relationship for two years. Peter has a brain injury and is in receipt of a Disability Support Allowance. Peter was charged with Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm/Assault Police/Resist Police after he severely assaulted Freda. She required intensive medical treatment and hospitalisation as a result of the assault. Peter was referred to the Magistrates Court Diversion Program, which is a program that targets individuals who have impaired intellectual or mental functioning. Peter was then referred for assessment to the Central Violence Intervention Program.

Men's Participation in CVIP

The CVIP operates according to the principle that abusive behaviour is a choice and is not an inevitable consequence of anger or other emotional or psychological distress. Thus the referral to the CVIP was accepted on the basis that Peter's behaviour was not attributed to his brain injury.

All men entering the Program undergo an assessment process. This involves a minimum of three interviews and includes the completion of two assessment tools: an 'Abusive Behaviour Inventory' which rates the frequency of both physical and psychological abuse and a 'Responsibility Assessment' that records a man's level of responsibility for his violence.

In order to be accepted into the program, the man must accept responsibility for his violence and indicate that he wishes to take steps to cease it. Initially CVIP workers had some doubts about Peter's readiness to participate in the program. Peter acknowledged a history of physical and psychological abuse but was unable to accept responsibility for changing his violent behaviour.

In the early stages of his participation in the Program it was evident that Peter was struggling with an alcohol dependence problem. He had also continued to breach his Domestic Violence

Restraining Order. While he did not consider alcohol abuse was directly responsible for his violence, he believed that it influenced his participation in the program and efforts to cease his violent behaviour. Peter was also referred for counselling for his alcohol dependence. Over a period of time Peter demonstrated a greater degree of responsibility for his violence and the desire to change his behaviour and he was assessed as a suitable participant for the Program. Throughout this period, Peter's case continued to be managed by the Magistrates Court Diversion Program. However, there was considerable liaison between CVIP and the Court Diversion Program Case Managers on matters relating to his participation in the Program.

Peter then attended a twelve-week Stopping Violence Program. This program encourages men to take responsibility for their behaviour, understand the impact of their violence on women and children, cease their violent behaviour and work towards achieving violence free relationships. The group challenges the beliefs that many men hold which support their use of violent and abusive behaviour.

Women's Participation in the CVIP

The CVIP provides a service to women which prioritises safety, empowerment and support. A Domestic Violence Information Package including an invitation to participate in the Program is sent to all women whose partner or ex-partner is being assessed for the Program. The Women's Worker ascertained that Freda had a limited knowledge of resources available for victims of domestic violence or her legal rights, even though she had had contact with various health and welfare agencies. Freda completed an 'Abusive Behaviour Inventory' (ABI) which indicated high levels of physical and emotional abuse, which was also consistent with Peter's assessment of his abusive behaviour.

Although they had been separated for some time, Freda remained fearful of Peter and concerned about her ongoing safety. She stated that he continually breached the Restraining Order by telephoning her, attending her home and approaching her in public. She reported considerable distress because of the apparent lack of police action to reports of alleged breaches of the Domestic Violence Restraining Order.

The Women's Worker and Freda developed a safety plan. Some of the strategies in the safety plan included increasing home security, screening of phone calls, and alerting neighbours and/or police. The Woman's Worker advocated on Freda's behalf with the local police and the Police Child and Family Investigation Unit. The breaches of the Domestic Violence Restraining Order were subsequently investigated and Peter was charged.

Outcomes

Peter participated in a post group assessment, which concentrates on the identification of responsible and respectful behaviour and focuses on demonstrable behaviour changes. Peter was able to identify changes in his behaviour. This included his awareness of "dangerous" thoughts and ideas which previously preceded violent outbursts and the ability to implement appropriate strategies to deal with these thoughts and ideas. He also reported a change in his self perception, confidence and interaction with others. Peter was also continuing to address his alcohol dependence.

All women are invited to participate in the post group assessment process and may have their views included in a final report. The Women's Worker consulted Freda regarding her assessment of any change in Peter's behaviour. Freda indicated that there had been a marked improvement in Peter's behaviour and that he had ceased harassing or contacting her. Freda also said that her fear level had reduced considerably and her self-confidence and self-esteem had risen as a result of her involvement in the program. She now felt that she was able to get on with her life.

These changes identified by Peter and Freda were included in an Intervention Outcome Report presented in Court. The purpose of this report is to record evidence (if any) of changes in the man's behaviour. In Peter's case the Report indicated that that he had demonstrated positive behaviour changes and had developed strategies to address his violent behaviour. He was convicted and sentenced to a 12 month Good Behaviour Bond with supervision with conditions to undergo ongoing assessment and treatment as required.

Conclusion

This case study demonstrated an effective collaborative approach that involved liaison and referral between two specialist courts (Family Violence and Court Diversion Programs). CVIP provided the specialist domestic violence interventions for both the perpetrator and victim of the domestic violence. The Court Diversion Program provided other supports required.

The CVIP places responsibility solely on the man to change his behaviour while at the same time providing services to women that emphasise safety, empowerment and support. This case study is a good example of the application of the CVIP model in a situation that could easily have been considered inappropriate because of Peter's brain injury. It is also a demonstration of the positive outcomes that can be achieved.

Autobiography in Five Chapters

“Peter”

One

I walk down the street
There is a deep hole in the side walk
I fall in.
I am lost ... I am hopeless
It isn't my fault
It takes forever to get out.

Two

I walk down the same street
There is a deep hole in the side walk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in the same place
But it isn't my fault
It takes a long time to get out

Three

I walk down the same street
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk
I see it is there.
I still fall in ... it's a habit.
My eyes are open
I know where I am
It is my fault.
I get out immediately!

Four

I walk down the same street
There is a deep hole in the side walk
I walk around it.

Five

I walk down another street

Queensland's Domestic Violence Prevention Week

QUEENSLAND'S annual Domestic Violence Prevention Week (DVPW) 2001 was held from May 6-12. The aim of DVPW is to reduce the incidence of domestic and family violence in Queensland by raising community awareness and changing attitudes and behaviour that support violence in relationships. Each year the number and diversity of activities held across the State increases with the activities having local relevance to the community where they were held.

'Expect Respect' was chosen as the theme for DVPW as it reflects the concept that each person is entitled to a healthy relationship free from any form of violence. This year the focus of the Week was on young people. The theme emphasised the need for

young people to identify the danger signs of potentially abusive relationships. Images of young people and their comments in relation to what constitutes a healthy relationship were used on the DVPW products. The products for this year's campaign included posters, postcards, a game for young people, and a resource specifically designed for Indigenous people. The resource for the Indigenous communities is approximately the size of three business cards that fold on top of each other and contains information on family violence and relevant contact numbers. This resource is small and discreet. The Expect Respect z-card that was used last year was reprinted for distribution this year. Examples of the products are available on the revamped website: www.families.qld.gov.au/expectrespect

For the first time since the inception of Domestic Violence Prevention Week, the total \$35,000 in one-off, non-recurrent grants was made available to Indigenous organisations to undertake activities to raise awareness amongst young Indigenous people about family violence and to promote the development of healthy, respectful relationships. This focus recognised the disproportionate number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people affected by domestic and family violence, including domestic homicide, which was so powerfully conveyed in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Taskforce on Violence Report.

A highlight of the Week was the annual Domestic Violence Prevention Awards, this year produced by Aboriginal artist Robbie Canning. These recognise the significant contributions individuals and organisations make towards the prevention of domestic and family violence in Queensland and also promote successful activities that can be adapted for other communities. The Minister for Families, the Hon. Judy Spence, presented the Awards and also launched a picture book, *Hands are for Holding*, produced by the Domestic Violence Resource Centre. Awards were presented to:

- Education Queensland for 'SAVVY Schools'
- Queensland Police Service for the Cairns Liaison Officers' Domestic Violence Follow-up Program
- North Queensland Domestic Violence Resource Service for a video: *Non-Violence: What's it all about?*
- Domestic Violence Service of Central Queensland and Woorabinda Women's Group for the Indigenous Family Violence Project, and
- Druamalon (Women's) Association Inc for Napranum Kids Club

These initiatives are excellent examples of the high

quality, innovative work that is being undertaken by the community in Queensland in the area of domestic and family violence.

Further information

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Extraordinary People/Extraordinary Lives Project

OFTEN we like to think that horrific and tragic things don't happen to ordinary people. This buffers us from recognising that everyday, ordinary people seemingly leading very ordinary lives are in actuality living with, or have lived with, domestic violence. The *Extraordinary People/Extraordinary Lives* campaign is an initiative of the Domestic Violence Resource Centre's Statewide response in conjunction with the ninth Queensland Domestic Violence Prevention Week. It is built in and around women's, children's and young people's stories of living with violence.

The silence around domestic violence remains one of the most confounding barriers to protection from, and prevention of, domestic violence. Since people experiencing domestic violence maintain seemingly ordinary lives, often the 'red-flag' that someone may be experiencing or perpetrating violence is very hard to pick up. The community is often looking for the bruises and the overtly violent husband, partner or boyfriend. This is very much due to violence being so much a part of being "ordinary" – it is woven into the context of everyday living.

The aims of the *Extraordinary People, Extraordinary Lives* campaign are threefold:

- To raise public awareness about domestic violence, its nature, extent and impact on people's lives;
- To challenge community perceptions and stereotypes about domestic violence and victims of domestic violence;
- To provide individuals and communities with information to enable them to assist women, children, young people and families.

The campaign consists of a series of three postcards which were developed as snapshots of people's lives

as they participate in everyday living, unbeknownst to most that they have been, or are victims of, domestic violence. The postcards are linked with the campaign web page that contains video clips and the stories of women and children.

Further information

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To view the video clips and read women & children's stories visit
www.dvrc.org.au/extraordinary

Domestic violence and child contact services: protecting against further violence in separated families and visitation

Recent editions of this newsletter have featured Australian research concerning the post separation abuse of women and children. In this article, Michael Sheehan, Co-ordinator of the Child Contact Centre, Fremantle and Rockingham, outlines the way in which the service approaches situations where there has been domestic violence.

RESEARCH has shown that violence by men toward their wives does not cease upon separation and divorce (Wyndham, 1998). For example, Shepard (1992) found that for 60 per cent of separated parents, spousal abuse and conflict continued during contact visits. In addition, psychological and emotional abuse continues to be perpetuated through contact by the visiting parent failing to return children on time, threatening abduction, or using visitation as a means of maintaining contact with the other parent. Children, who have witnessed and experienced family violence when their parents were together, continue to re-experience this trauma during contact visits.

In many cases, in an attempt to avoid ongoing conflict and violence, the residential parent has refused to allow contact to occur, or has insisted that it occur in a public place, such as at a police station or McDonald's. Sometimes this contact has been organised via a third party such as a family member or friend. However, these arrangements have often not stopped the violence, abuse and conflict from occurring, and family members, who are rarely neutral, often get caught up in the conflict and are subject to abuse themselves.

Alternatives to these arrangements are the Child Contact Centres, funded by the Commonwealth Department of the Attorney General, to assist parents to manage contact issues without parents and children re-experiencing conflict, tension, and violence. The centres, which provide changeover and supervised contact services, ensure that children are able to maintain relationships with both parents through the provision of physically and emotionally safe environments. According to the Interim Standards for Children's Access Services (1995), the purpose of such contact services for separated families where violence and abuse is ongoing is:

- to promote the safety and welfare of the child during changeovers and visits;
- to promote the safety of the vulnerable parent at changeovers;
- to facilitate child and parent interaction while contact is taking place; and
- where appropriate, to work towards the independent management of contact by the parties.

Given the level of threat and violence that has given rise to the need for contact services, maximising physical safety and a sense of security for vulnerable parents and children is a priority. This can be achieved in a range of ways which include conducting comprehensive assessments of parties, ensuring confidentiality, employing qualified and experienced staff, establishing set procedures and protocols around visits, and having comfortable, yet secure environments.

An assessment or intake interview for each of the parties in a face to face context is a critical first step to ensure the safety of service users. The purpose of the assessment is to establish the levels of risk that each individual might pose, and the level of vigilance required. This is ascertained by obtaining details of the circumstances that prompted the request for handover or supervision, the nature and extent of supervision sought, and by identifying any risk factors (e.g. a history of violence). Copies of relevant reports, Court Orders and Restraining Orders assist in this process.

The assessment also provides the opportunity to explain to the parties how the service operates, as well as the conditions on which visits would be provided. A written agreement that is signed by both parents is often required to ensure that each parent is genuine and aware of the expectations of the Service. Conditions upon which contact would be provided include the adherence by both parents to the procedures of changeover or supervised visits, and punctuality in relation to arrival and collection and departure and return times. Other requirements

of the agreement include that parents must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and that they refrain from making derogatory remarks about the other parent in the presence of their children.

Another effective means to promote safe and conflict free contact is to provide experienced and trained staff who are fully briefed about each case before contact occurs. Just as important is the fostering of a sense of psychological security in parents and children by matching supervisors to cases, and providing for the same worker to supervise the same families. Moreover, both safety and security are improved by having procedures in place around the ratio of supervisors to visits. Such ratios depend on the nature and extent of risk factors in each case, the level of supervision required, and the number of visits occurring at the same time.

The requirement to provide a safe environment that maximises the physical safety of all is further achieved by the provision of portable duress alarms to staff to call for assistance if required (e.g. police). Also, separate parking areas and entrances into the premises for residential and non residential parents, together with staggered arrival and departure times (e.g. time intervals of 15 minutes), help minimise the possibility of parents encountering each other. Comfortable, yet secure buildings, including screened off separate spaces if both parents are on the premises at the same time, further contribute to the safety and sense of security of all service users.

In many cases, spousal violence does not cease upon separation and divorce, with vulnerable parents and children re-experiencing violence and emotional trauma through contact. However, through the establishment of Contact Centres, with risk management procedures, physically and emotionally safe environments are now available which promote the welfare of service users. Contact Centres ensure that children's relationships with visiting parents are maintained and enhanced while at the same time protecting vulnerable parents and children from re-victimisation.

References

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Wyndham, A. 1998, 'Children and domestic violence: The need for supervised contact services when contact with the violent father is ordered', *Australian Social Work*, 51(3), pp. 41-48.

Further information

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NEW PUBLICATIONS/REVIEWS

Out of the Fire: domestic violence and homelessness

Published by Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre, NSW Women's Refuge Resource Centre and Victorian Council to Homeless Persons (2001)

Zoe Craven, *Social Work/Law student, Clearinghouse*

IN THE 21st century, the movement against domestic violence is faced with a myriad of new challenges and issues. *Out of the Fire: Domestic Violence and Homelessness* addresses one of these. Through a series of articles and professional anecdotes, *Out of the Fire* examines the 'nexus' between domestic violence and homelessness, presenting a clear picture of how the two can form elements in an ongoing and destructive cycle of poverty, abuse and inequality. This publication aims to provide both a practice resource and a forum for discussion for professionals working in the field of domestic and family violence. It is the product of an extensive nation-wide consultation process involving service providers, government representatives and non-government organisations. While the majority of contributions have come from Victoria and New South Wales, the only State/Territory not represented is Western Australia.

Out of the Fire is divided into four main topic areas. The first outlines several State and Commonwealth government initiatives currently being implemented and examines the role and rationale of two key service providers in the field: the Australian Federation of Homeless Organisations and the Women's Services Network. Once this brief background has been provided, some key concerns regarding service and policy responses to domestic violence and homelessness are raised. Robyn Gregory critiques the quality and availability of housing provided to women escaping domestic violence situations while Helen MacDonald puts forth an argument for establishing clear and inclusive definitions of domestic violence and homelessness. Veronica Wensing reinforces the feminist position on perpetrators, contending that the safety and rights of the victims should remain paramount in any agency's practice. Sherron Dunbar

advocates for the return of more humane and inclusive immigration policies which do not place refugee and illegal migrant women in unnecessarily dangerous and stressful positions.

The second section reviews some of the latest research on domestic violence and homelessness, revealing the findings of the first national research project to look specifically at the link between the two. The study, conducted by the University of South Australia, highlights the need to consider a broad range of factors, such as social support and housing options, when assessing a woman's risk of becoming homeless following domestic violence. Julie Oberin and Carolyn Frohmader build upon this theme when they examine the specific barriers faced by women with disabilities, women living in rural areas, Indigenous women, young women, women from non-English speaking backgrounds and other 'emerging' groups of women affected by domestic violence. The principal message conveyed is that while many women experience violence in the home, they experience it differently and to varying degrees.

The third section takes a critical approach to the legal parameters of domestic violence and homelessness. Sue Edwards introduces the topic by providing a legal definition of, and rationale for intervention in, domestic violence. She then outlines and compares the various sources of law and the powers of courts under these laws across jurisdictions. Her synopsis suggests that most women have little confidence in, or knowledge of, legal mechanisms set up for their protection and that a more uniform approach is needed. Meryem Ali and April Pham continue the critique, highlighting specific ways in which the legal system disadvantages migrant women living with domestic violence. Emma Sydenham examines the impact of recent amendments to the Family Law Act which, it is argued, circumscribe the rights of the victim whilst extending those of the perpetrator. The introduction of 'Sole Occupancy' orders is explored by Jenny Nunn who maintains that their utility, and the utility of the legal system generally, is 'limited by the attitudes of those who work within it, as well as by the rules and procedures that govern it' (p. 35). Cecilia Lenagh discusses the policing of domestic violence orders in rural areas, using the Hastings area of NSW as a reference point. Rhonda Cumberland articulates a position common to each of the women who contributed to this section – the law can provide adequate protection against domestic violence and prevent domestic violence homelessness, but it doesn't. Conversely, in many situations, it exacerbates the difficulties faced by victims.

The fourth and final section focuses on services responding to domestic violence homelessness.

Several articles simply describe and provide a rationale for a service being provided, while others raise more theoretical issues which emerge in the context of practice. Marion Hosking, for example, questions the assumption that a State driven by a market economy can maintain its position as the 'ultimate' intervening third party in domestic violence situations while Pauline Woodbridge assesses whether or not practitioners truly have a common understanding of what constitutes a 'collaborative' or 'integrated' approach to service provision. What is emphasised throughout, however, is the complexity of issues most women escaping domestic violence face and the failure of current housing, health and welfare policies, to respond appropriately to the needs of these women. This contention is highlighted specifically in relation to women with a history of sexual abuse or mental illness, Indigenous women, women from non-English speaking backgrounds, young women and women with a disability but is inclusive of all women at risk of becoming homeless because they have been forced to flee a violent or abusive home. Case studies and personal anecdotes are used occasionally to illustrate the devastating impact of violence on women and children's lives and the ways in which the system contributes to their trauma through failing to provide safe, affordable and secure housing options, sufficient resources to existing services and adequate legal protection. At the back of the publication contact numbers, office hours and services offered by relevant agencies in all Australian States and Territories (except WA) are listed.

Out of the Fire: Domestic Violence and Homeless is a candid presentation of what is happening to some victims of domestic and family violence. All too often women and children are faced with the choice of living in fear or living on the streets. Waiting lists for public or subsidised housing are long and refuges are not adequately resourced to provide long term accommodation or services to women with multiple issues, forcing many families to live in sub-standard conditions. The law provides only limited protection and a large proportion of women are returning to abusive relationships, simply because they have no other options. *Out of the Fire* examines the nexus between domestic violence and homelessness from a national perspective and gives professionals in the field the benefit of others' experiences in dealing with the complexity of issues that can arise.

Hands Are For Holding: a picture book

THE Children's and Young People's Domestic Violence Prevention Project of the Queensland Domestic Violence Resource Centre (DVRC) has

developed an infants' and toddlers' picture book, *Hands are for Holding*. It describes some of the uses of hands and other parts of the body to talk about non-violence. This book provides a tool for adults to begin to discuss issues surrounding violence with young children.

Children will be exposed to all forms of violence, either personally or through depictions in cartoons, movies, books and television shows. They may need to make sense of contradictory messages they get about violence. Parents and other primary carers, such as childcare workers, are significant role models for children and can provide examples of non-violent, caring behaviour. The book provides an opportunity to talk with a child about not hurting or harming others, for example, brothers and sisters, friends or family pets.

Hands are for Holding: A Picture Book was launched by the Honourable Judy Spence at the Queensland Domestic Violence Prevention Awards during Domestic Violence Prevention Week. A storytelling and activities kit will be developed to accompany the book. Plans are also underway to develop the book for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Further information

To obtain: One copy of the book will be distributed free to domestic violence services, children's welfare services, children's libraries, childcare centres and playgroups throughout Queensland. Interstate services can purchase a copy for \$11.00 (GST included) from the DVRC:
Phone: (07) 3217-2544;
Post: PO Box 3278, South Brisbane BC, Qld 4101.

Stepping Stones – Toward Recovery From Family Violence

(unpreviewed)

THIS new video resource, which addresses the largely unexplored area of women's recovery from domestic violence, was produced by the Gippsland Women's Health Service, with the help of the Victorian Department of Human Services. The video concentrates on women and children who have managed to leave an abusive relationship and features the stories of two women, Julie and Marion. Julie was married for 15 years and her husband was her 'best friend' and they 'shared every laugh together'. She explains that the abuse started when she was pregnant with their first child and how the abuse then also extended to the children. She was suicidal and extremely fearful of going anywhere. A friend assisted her in getting help and during a

group session she realised that she was not the only one with this problem. Julie encourages women in similar situations to 'get help' and not 'put up with it'.

Julie and Marion also talk about the effects of family violence on their children. 'My oldest son was really aggressive in his teens and my daughter was more like the piggy in the middle'. The video has children telling how it felt when abuse was going on. They had to hide, couldn't cry, because Dad would tell them they are a 'sook'. They could not see a future and only lived from 'one day to the next'. They describe how it feels now that Dad has gone: 'Mum is smiling a lot now' or 'I don't have to hide in my room any more'. It makes the viewer realise that children know a lot more about what is going on than we often give them credit for.

Julie and Marion share what helped them in breaking free, such as workshops, support groups, outreach and where they are now. Julie is involved heavily in the surf live saving club in her town and Marion strives to do things she was not allowed to do, such as going to a concert. They have slowly gained confidence and independence and are 'seeing light at the end of the tunnel'.

This video is unique for several reasons. Its research and production was a combined effort of family violence workers in a rural region (Gippsland, Victoria); the service information is relevant for Gippsland; it focuses on a largely unrecognised aspect in the family violence response; it can be used for information *and* education; and it is useful for both workers and clients. The resource is accessible to women in rural and remote areas through the free return library service of Gippsland Women's Health which enables women to view it in the privacy of their homes.

The process of producing this resource made it clear that the term 'recovery' throws open a wide variety of issues. For example, what made women try to get out of the abusive relationship? At what point did recovery commence for them? What helped them in the process, what did not? Can we put a timeframe on recovery or is it a life long process? From interviews with survivors, there appear to be different stages of recovery. What are the implications of this for workers? What services did women access? How can services/workers assist more in recovery?

The video addresses three key issues: self awareness and personal well being; children and domestic violence; and goals for the future. It aims to provide Stepping Stones of hope and encouragement for survivors and strives to help women and children make positive choices in their future lives to break the cycle of violence.

Further information

To obtain a copy of this video contact:

Gippsland Women's health Service Inc.

PO Box 664, Sale, VIC 3850

Phone: (03) 5143 1600; Fax: (03) 5143 1224

Email: gippswhs@tpgi.com.au

Web: <http://www2.tpgi.com.au/users/gippswhs/index.html>

RESEARCH FINDINGS/INITIATIVES

Recovery from Family Violence Project

THIS 15 month research project, funded by the Victorian Department of Human Services, is a partnership between Chisholm Institute (TAFE) and Women's Health in the South East (WHISE). The project draws on women's 'lived experiences' of recovery from family violence and will reflect the deeply personal dimensions of recovery and the impact of societal context on this experience. The project methodology – Participatory Action Research (PAR) – is well suited to exploring women's lived experience, with its emphasis on collaboration and participation.

The project aim firstly, is to define the nature of women's recovery from family violence and to identify elements that support recovery and elements that act as obstacles to this process. Building on this information will be the development of a detailed framework and set of principles that will inform Victorian State policy, support services, Government agencies and the general community.

At this stage of the project, after speaking with many women from a diverse range of backgrounds, it appears that there are certain stages through which women move on their journey of recovery from family violence. This journey through stages is often cyclical in nature. To date the following aspects have been identified as characterising the experience described by women:

- There appear to be broad stages, which involve some overlapping.
- There are key factors that act as obstacles to a woman's recovery. Some of these are personal, others structural.
- There are key factors that support a woman in her recovery.
- At times there are particular factors that are more significant for women from diverse backgrounds. Indigenous women, women from

culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, lesbians, women with disabilities and women who live in rural Victoria appear to experience greater obstacles such as increased isolation, reduced access to information and support, significant discrimination and racism and cultural norms that emphasise family preservation.

In general, women don't like the word "recovery" as it implies they are "getting over an illness". Most say they don't "recover", but they do change and life does, gradually, become more like "living". Women speak of this change as a process involving a "rediscovery" or reinventing of the "self" together with a gradual gaining of some control over their lives.

At this stage, a draft 'framework for recovery' comprising key areas including – knowledge/language; social relationships; resources and service pathways; the criminal justice system; and diversity – has emerged from the research. In depth interviewing with women and consultation with workers and agencies on this draft framework will continue until the project's conclusion in September 2001. It is envisaged that this project will act as a catalyst for further investigation into the various dimensions of women's recovery.

Further information

Lorraine Wilson, Louise Morphett and Sam Seamer
The Recovery From Family Violence Research
Work Group – Phone: 03 9209 5758

The Support and Safety Survey

THIS research is exploring women's income, social support and safety during pregnancy. Overseas research and anecdotal evidence indicate that pregnant women are particularly vulnerable to domestic violence resulting in poor maternal and foetal outcomes. Research in this area is a very sensitive issue due to the complexity around definitions and a range of methodological challenges. Therefore, by combining research on safety with other aspects of social and economic need, it is predicted that women will be more likely to discuss a range of issues including any incidence of violence.

Our sample is drawn from a public hospital antenatal clinic where women who are 26+ weeks pregnant attend for a psycho-social assessment with midwives. The hospital population is culturally and linguistically diverse so the research sample has been stratified to include these women. We are also including women with disabilities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in the research population. It is our understanding that this is the largest study of its kind to be undertaken in Australia.

Further information

Associate Professor Wendy Weeks,
University of Melbourne – Phone: (03) 8344 9422
Email: wweeks@unimelb.edu.au or
Deb Walsh, PhD student:
walshd@cryptic.rch.unimelb.edu.au

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES/SEMINARS

Australian Women Speak

Inaugural National Women's Conference hosted by the Commonwealth Office of the Status of Women

August 26-28, 2001 National Convention Centre, Canberra

Sharing knowledge and celebrating diversity will be the central principles of this conference which aims to: comprehensively identify women's current concerns; identify trends and emerging issues; and discuss policy and service initiatives addressing these trends and issues. Its four themes are: economic self-support and security for women; optimal status and position of women; elimination of violence in the lives of women; and maintenance of good health and well-being throughout women's lives.

Contact

Australian Women Speak Conference C/- Australia Convention and Travel Services, GPO Box 2200, Canberra ACT 2601; Fax: (02) 6257 3256
Email: women@ausconvservices.com.au
Web: <http://www.osw.dpmc.gov.au/content/resources/conference.html>

Seeking Solutions – Australia's first joint domestic violence & sexual assault conference

September 5-7, 2001, Gold Coast, Queensland

Combined Women's Crisis Services Gold Coast Inc.

Aims to bring together, for the first time, specialists in the area of domestic violence and sexual assault from across Australia and overseas. Acclaimed keynote speakers will address a variety of topics on a broad range of issues, research, emerging trends, innovative programs, responses and practice models relating to Violence Against Women. International speakers include: Kirsty Sword Gusmao, East Timor; Associate Professor Ruth Busch, New Zealand; Roma

Balzer, Hamilton, New Zealand; Anne O'Dell San Diego; Jim Hardeman, Workplace Violence Prevention Strategies, Boston; Det. Chief Inspector Peter Sturman, Metropolitan Police Department, London; and Fiji Women's Crisis Service.

Contact

Conference Organisers
PO Box 40 Southport QLD 4125
Phone: (07) 55 912397; (07) 55 914222

Building an intervention system for men who abuse their partners:

Organisation Development, Judicial Oversight & Program Evaluation

November 28-30, 2001 Brisbane

The objective of this interactive and solution oriented conference is to stimulate and support the development of intervention programs for men who abuse their partners through practical technical assistance and system planning. Keynote presenters are:

- Dr Edward Gondolf, USA, Professor of Sociology at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Associate Director of Research for the Mid-Atlantic Addiction Training Institute and principal investigator for the Centre of Disease Control's evaluation of intervention programs for men who abuse their partners.
- Mr Robert Foster, USA, founder and director of the "Domestic Abuse Counselling Centre" the largest and most successful provider of intervention programs for men who abuse their partners in the USA.
- Chief Court Judge Jack Simmons, USA, responsible for the operation of the Magistrate Court/Domestic Violence system in Pittsburgh.

This conference will give practical guidance on implementation on a range of issues including: protocols, procedures, and administration of domestic violence counselling programs; a criminal justice response that can be uniformly applied holding the perpetrator accountable for his behaviour; ways of making domestic violence offender programs more accountable to the community; improvement of program outcomes in terms of victim quality of life, cessation of assaults and reduction of other forms of abuse; procedures and steps to effectively evaluate programs.

Further information

Suzanne Daley, SDVMA, Phone: (07) 3206 6799;
Email: sdvma@pacific.net.au

Violence Against Women – Meaning • Cultures • Difference

February 18-22, 2002 The University of Sydney

CALL FOR PAPERS – Due August 1, 2001

Violence against women is a global problem but it takes many different forms and is shaped by both local context and international developments (such as economic development, migration, labour markets, armed conflict). The subtitle *Meanings, Cultures, Difference* seeks to challenge singular approaches to theory, policy or practice that are unreflective about the differences between and among women. The conference aims to encourage debate, facilitate sharing of information about innovative practices and foster development of international networks among participants. It also will provide the opportunity to showcase innovative Australian research and practice.

Speakers include Professor Sherene Razack, University of Toronto; Dr Aurora de Dios, Philippines representative to the UN for CEDAW and Chair of the Asia-Pacific Board of the International Coalition Against Trafficking in Women; Prof Liz Kelly, UK; Merepeka Raukawa-Tait, CEO of the NZ National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges; and Shamima Ali – Director of Fiji Women's Crisis Centre & Chair for the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women.

Deadline for contributions to the September 2001 Newsletter is August 20

Contact

VAW2002 Conference Secretariat
Professional Development Unit
Faculty of Education, University of Sydney
AUSTRALIA 2006
Email: vaw2002@edfac.usyd.edu.au
Phone: (+61 2) 9351 6311; Fax: (+61 2) 9351 6249
Web: www.edfac.usyd.edu.au/projects/VAW2002

The views expressed in this Newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the Commonwealth of Australia or the *Partnerships Against Domestic Violence* Taskforce.

Whilst all reasonable care has been taken in the preparation of this publication, no liability is assumed for any errors or omissions.

The Clearinghouse is linked to the Centre for Gender-Related Violence Studies, based in the University of New South Wales School of Social Work.

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