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[NOT BECAUSE

#1

“ I HAVE A PROBLEM WITH ANGER ”

“ I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT ”

“ SHE ASKED FOR IT ”

“ IT'S NOT REALLY ME ”

“ SHE NEEDED IT - SHE DESERVED IT ”

“ I CAN'T CHANGE WHAT I WAS TAUGHT ”

“ THIS IS THE WAY I AM - LIKE IT OR LUMP IT ”

People who use violence or abuse others often try to justify their behaviour and put forward a number of 'causes' for their actions.

These include alcohol, drugs, stress, anger, unemployment, poverty.

Whilst these causes may play a part in incidents of family violence, the analysis that they caused the family violence does not hold true, as:

- many people drink alcohol or use drugs and do not become violent
- there are people who do not drink at all but who are violent toward their families
- a job does not stop someone behaving violently
- most people who are unemployed are not violent toward their families
- well-off families experience family violence in the same ways as poor people
- most people feel under stress or angry with others at times but do not use violence to deal with it
- most people are provoked by the behaviour of others at some time but do not respond violently
- sickness does not justify violence directed towards family members.

(Some violent behaviour may be the result of a brain disorder or damage and lead to random acts of violence towards any other people, not exclusively family members. There is a distinction between this and family violence in the context of controlling family members by the use of force.)

Problems to do with unemployment, poverty, stress, alcohol, drugs, or anger will not be solved by violence. In fact they are likely to add to the difficulties.

ASK “ ARE THERE ANY EXCUSES FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE? ”

ASK “ CAN IT EVER BE JUSTIFIED? ”

Many people attempt to excuse violence towards members of their families. **FAMILY VIOLENCE IS NEVER ACCEPTABLE.** There are ways to address problems and difficulties that do not involve violence.

SOME COMMONLY REPEATED EXCUSES ARE:

SHE ASKED FOR IT

*“She wouldn’t listen to me/
I had no option/she drove me to
it/ provoked me.”*

NO EXCUSE – Violence has no place in family relationships whatever the provocation or supposed reasons. People can learn and use other ways to deal with conflicts, frustrations or disagreements.

IT WAS HER OWN FAULT

*“She neglected the children/
spent all the money/crashed the
car/slept with someone else/got
drunk/acted stupidly.”*

NO EXCUSE – Violence will only add to the problems of a difficult family situation or relationship. Problems need proper attention and a resolution which does not involve violence.

SHE NEEDED IT/ DESERVED IT

*“It’s my right and duty to
discipline my family.”*

NO JUSTIFICATION – Genuine discipline does not involve violence. Families can learn to interact in ways which respect the rights of each person. Protection from family violence is a right recognised by the law.

IT’S NORMAL/ NECESSARY/THERE’S NOTHING WRONG WITH IT

“Everyone does it.”

NOT TRUE – Everyone does not do it. It is not normal or necessary. It is against the law and is harmful to everyone involved and to society.

I CAN’T CHANGE WHAT I WAS TAUGHT

*“I was brought up in a violent
home.”*

NO EXCUSE – Not everyone brought up in a violent home repeats the cycle. Many men choose not to be violent because they know from experience the suffering caused by violence in the home. People can reject what they were taught.

Old patterns and attitudes can be replaced and new ideas can be learned.

I CAN’T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT

*“We’ve got a whole lot of problems
and they make me react like that/
we’re poor/unskilled/hopeless
people.”*

NO EXCUSE – Violence adds to the problems of poverty, lack of skills and despair. Those problems themselves do not cause people to be violent.

I HAVE TO KEEP CONTROL/I’M THE BOSS/I MAKE THE RULES

“I pay the bills, I’m in charge.”

NO JUSTIFICATION – No-one is permitted to be violent towards those they are responsible for. Attitudes about keeping control and being in charge are not suited to an adult relationship.

IT’S NOT REALLY ME

*“I had too much to drink/was
stoned/out of it/can’t even
remember.”*

NO EXCUSE – If someone chooses to drink or abuse drugs and becomes violent he is choosing to be violent. Alcohol or drugs alone do not cause the violence. The attitude allows it.

*“It was a bad time for me/I was
exhausted/ stressed/worried/at
the end of my tether.”*

NO EXCUSE – Bad times happen to everyone. There are many ways of dealing with difficulties that don’t involve violence.

“I have a problem with anger.”

NO EXCUSE – Anger can be openly expressed and managed without violence. Violence is a behaviour which may or may not have anything to do with anger. It is not acceptable or lawful to use violence to express anger.

“I lost control. I can’t help myself.”

NO EXCUSE – The offender makes the decision to be violent and acts on it. He also decides when to stop behaving violently. He chooses when, where and who will be at the receiving end of his violent outburst.

“I’m sick. I can’t help myself.”

NO EXCUSE – Sick people who are violent can only be cured if they admit the real problem is about an attitude towards violence and take responsibility for changing that.

*“It’s society’s fault (the system/
colonisation/oppression/someone
else is to blame).”*

NO EXCUSE – People who use violence must take personal responsibility for their actions. Society does not condone family violence any longer. There are laws which prohibit violent behaviour.

THAT’S THE WAY IT HAS TO BE

*“We (particular religious/ethnic/
cultural groups/bikies/gang
members/military men, etc) do
things this way.”*

NO EXCUSE – The law does not permit violence. It is generally unacceptable in modern society. Stereotypes and myths have built up around different groups of people and attitudes to violence. Cultural habits change over generations in the light of new knowledge and experiences.

IT’S A PRIVATE MATTER

*“It is no-one else’s business/leave
us alone/we’ll work it out in the
family.”*

WRONG – It’s everyone’s business when people are harmed and the law is broken. Family violence has far-reaching harmful effects for communities and society. It’s the business of responsible community members to change the attitudes and behaviours that allow family violence to continue.

[ALCOHOL AND VIOLENCE #2



“You can’t blame the car for a road accident. It’s the driver or the person who maintains the vehicle who is responsible.”

Barry – ex-drinker/abuser

Alcohol abuse is often used to explain and minimise family violence. It is a popular belief that alcohol causes violence and if drinking stops, the violence will stop.

Alcohol is a factor in many instances of violent crime and there appears to be a connection between people abusing alcohol and committing acts of violence.

However, it is clear from many studies that alcohol abuse and family violence need to be viewed as two separate issues.

Many people experiencing family violence are hopeful that treatment for alcohol abuse will end the violence. Abusers who promise to stop abusing alcohol may sincerely believe that this will stop them from behaving violently.

In a number of situations, people who abuse their family are affected by alcohol. They may claim that they lost control as a result of drinking and claim that they had no control over the situation.

They may show remorse and blame *their state of drunkenness*.

Addressing alcohol abuse is important and needs to be taken seriously, but this alone is unlikely to stop violence.

Abusers may argue that they only feel violent when they have been drinking. Deeper analysis may reveal that they choose to be violent and deny responsibility for their actions.

Stopping violence is a matter of facing up to the attitudes and behaviours that go with family violence, without resorting to excuses or being defensive. It means taking responsibility for, and being serious about, addressing and changing violent behaviour.

There is a distinction between abuse of alcohol – heavy drinking leading to intoxication – and addiction – clinical dependency on alcohol or other drugs. Addiction is a specialist area requiring long-term treatment and needs to be addressed as a health issue.

Alcohol is a factor in many instances of violent crime and violence

. . . but it's not an excuse

When family violence occurs in connection with alcohol abuse, the abuser may claim that he/she had no control over the situation. Alcohol is likely to be used as an excuse for the violence. Like other excuses, the analysis does not hold true.

- The victim of violence is usually a partner or family member: this shows that the abuser is able to choose who to assault.
- Assaults take place on some occasions of drinking and not on others: this indicates that much of the time the abusive behaviour can be controlled.
- The person drinks heavily knowing they are at risk of assaulting their partner: this suggests an approach to violence which includes building in an excuse.
- The drinking can take place with other people away from home but the assault happens later when the person is alone with his/her partner or family: this suggests a measure of control over the place, timing, and target of the assault.
- Assaults on partners or family members usually take place in private: this suggests that a rational decision is made about keeping the assault hidden.
- Men are more likely than women to commit assaults while under the influence of alcohol: this suggests that attitudes rather than chemicals cause the assaults.
- Some people abuse alcohol but are never involved in violent behaviour: this indicates that alcohol cannot be blamed for causing violence.

Attitudes allow people to make choices about behaving violently

“YOU CAN CHOOSE NOT TO ABUSE”

Peter – anti-violence advocate



CHILDHOOD SETS THE SCENE FOR LIFE

#3

Ahakoā he iti he pounamu – *although it is small, it is treasured*

“We now have scientific evidence that proves it is the day to day experience of babies, infants and toddlers that orchestrates the development of their brains - particularly from conception to the age of six.” **Brainy Babies: Dr Robin Fancourt M.R.C.P. F.R.A.C.P**



Children learn about personal relationships from their very earliest days. From the moment they are born they are learning from what they see, hear and experience around them.

Recent research has established that the experience of children in their very earliest years, well before they have language, impacts on the growth of the brain and particularly on the section of the brain that controls social and emotional behaviour.

Cuddling, singing, talking and reading can trigger the baby brain to start working.

Trauma and terror may leave no visible marks or scars but leave a lasting imprint by changing the physical structure and chemical balance of the baby brain.

Violence and neglect are extremely damaging experiences for babies' and young children's development at any point.

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.brainwave.org.nz

Children living in homes where there is partner violence are more likely to be victims of child abuse and neglect than children from homes where there is no violence. They are also more likely to be anxious, depressed, have problems with

learning and act aggressively with others.

Most children live in family units. Children learn from observing and reacting to what they see happen in their families.

By six years old children will have learned a great deal about the roles expected of them and the kind of behaviour associated with those roles. They may have learned how to control aggressive feelings and about the rights of others or they may have learned that aggressive behaviour will get them their own way or get them some attention.

The most effective way of preventing inter-generational violence is through good role modelling within families.

CHILDREN ARE CONFUSED WHEN:

- they are told that it is wrong to hit or hurt other people or animals yet they see adults hitting and hurting others
- they are told that they are not to fight with their brothers, sisters or other children, yet they see adults fighting and hurting one another
- they are told to speak nicely and not to yell at others but they see it happening with the adults in their own homes.

Children emulate the relationships and behaviour of the adults around them. Attitudes, beliefs and behaviours about violence are shaped by what children see, hear and experience in their home. Many children and young people who have experienced violence early in their lives go on to be the children, young people and adults who act aggressively towards others.

But children from homes where there is violence are not inevitably condemned to repeat the cycle. Awareness that things can be different can help these children respond to new messages about their right to be safe, respecting other people's rights and using alternatives to violence.

Relatives and friends, childcare, health and community workers can all influence a child's understanding of a better family life. Taking the concerns of children seriously, identifying non-violent role models, offering information about alternatives to violence to help families accept and practice non-violent living is a long-term undertaking for responsible community members.

“Kia kaha tātou e te iwi, ki te tautoko i a tātou tamariki, mokopuna kia tu pakari ai rātou i ngā tau kei te heke mai.”

“Let us support our children and grandchildren to ensure they have a secure future.”

All children need discipline – guidance to help them understand what is expected of them and to behave in a socially responsible way. It is an ongoing process of learning during growing-up years.

Discipline is not the same thing as punishment.

Punishment is about blaming and shaming – not about learning.

Positive discipline provides explanation and fair consequences for unacceptable behaviour. It notices and responds to acceptable behaviour.

It is not constructive to criticise, shame or harm children when they make mistakes or do not follow fair rules. Discipline is about teaching what is expected of them.

All too often children experience physical or emotional violence excused as discipline.

Good parenting involves effective discipline. It comes from the same source as the word “disciple” – a follower.

Effective discipline is never abusive, cruel or violent.

Children learn best by fair guidance, good examples, clear messages and patience, to allow and let them learn from their mistakes.

Children learn to behave well as they grow and develop.

They need time to learn how to control themselves and what is expected of them.

No child behaves well all the time.

“O fanau a manu e fafaga i fugalaau. Ao fanau a tagata e faafaga i upu.”

“Children of birds are fed by flowers while the children of people are fed by words.”

The following principles will help children learn how to behave well.

- 1 Set the scene well. A warm and caring home where the child feels secure and loved is the environment that fosters good behaviour.
- 2 Give lots of praise and say more positive than negative things – praise for getting it right is far more effective than criticism for getting it wrong.
- 3 Talk with your children as much as you can and listen to what they say.
- 4 Keep expectations realistic about what children can and can't do – know what is normal for their age.
- 5 Make it clear to children what you would like them to do and not do.
- 6 Make limits clear but keep rules to a minimum.
- 7 Don't fret the small stuff – ignore minor transgressions or provocation.
- 8 Be consistent in what you expect.
- 9 Model the kind of behaviour you want your children to copy.
- 10 Avoid physical punishment – it does not add anything constructive to discipline and carries risks.
- 11 Structure your child's world to make it predictable, interesting and as free from frustration as possible.
- 12 Children will behave better when their basic needs, such as for food, rest, stimulation and play are well met.

For further information:

Campaign for Action on Family Violence
www.areyouok.org.nz

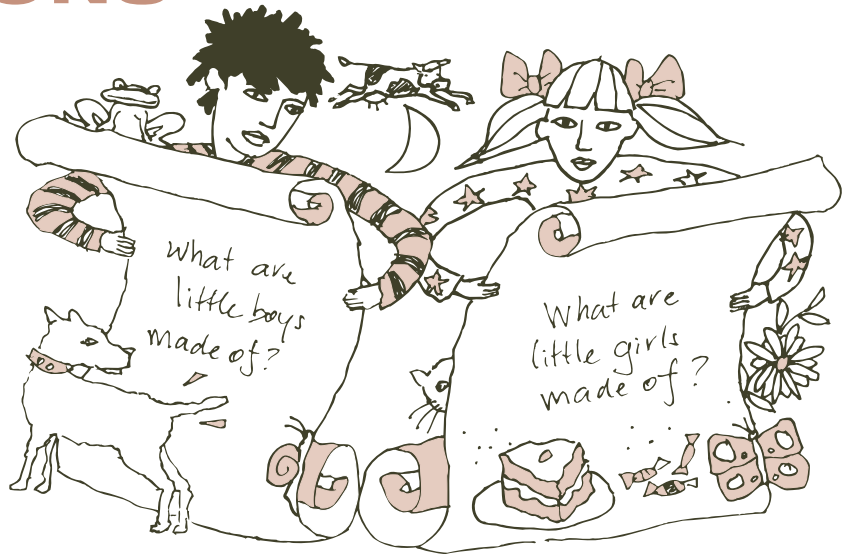
Office of the Children's Commissioner
www.occ.org.nz

Family and Community Services (MSD)
www.familyservices.govt.nz

Jigsaw www.jigsaw.org.nz

UNICEF www.unicef.org.nz

THE GENDER ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS WE HAVE OF CHILDREN CONTRIBUTE TO HOW THEY BEHAVE



Gender role: the expectations of the different ways males and females should behave.

Stereotype: standardised image or idea about a particular type of person.

GENDER IDENTITY AND ROLES IN THE FAMILY ARE CENTRAL TO ADULT EXPERIENCE

As children observe their families they begin to interpret what it means to be a male or female.

By their third year, boys and girls tend to identify with the same-sex parent and want to be like them. This begins to set the patterns for how they might behave in adulthood. Even in one-parent families or where children have same-sex parents they observe gender roles from other sources (other family members, school, TV) and they take on characteristics of same-sex identification.

In general, gender roles require that **BOYS** are:

- strong
- adventurous
- athletic
- brave
- robust
- rugged
- clever
- energetic
- rowdy
- smart
- dominant
- independent
- loud
- forceful
- active
- spirited
- lively
- muscular

In general, gender roles require that **GIRLS** are:

- good
- smiling
- dainty
- pretty
- careful
- slim
- kind
- amiable
- sensitive
- sweet
- charming
- dependable
- nice
- soft
- gentle
- tidy
- delicate
- agreeable

“There can be no finer children than those of the New Zealanders in any part of the world. Their parents are very indulgent and they appear always happy and playful and very active.”

Rev. Samuel Marsden 1814. The Letters and Journals of Samuel Marsden (ed. JR Elder 1932)

It is not surprising that boys may grow up feeling the need to be powerful and in control and girls can grow up feeling dependent and submissive.

Some common concepts which convey ideas of gender role stereotyping are:

for boys . . .

- big boys don't cry
- act like a man
- boys will be boys
- what a fine, big boy
- he's a tough little dude

and for girls . . .

- let me make it better
- behave like a lady
- nice girls don't do that
- she needs to lose that puppy fat
- she's so pretty and gentle

Some abuse in families results from children not conforming to gender expectations. Children develop and grow in very different ways and parents and families can be supported to accept difference and let go of rigid expectations.

CHANGING GENDER EXPECTATIONS

Point out and talk about role models, particularly women in leadership roles and men in domestic and caring roles. Encourage ideas about the equal value of men's and women's achievements in the community.

Watch our language. Eliminate gender roles and expectations of behaviour in language (eg, refer to adult females as women – not girls or ladies; refer to the school principal – not the headmaster; talk about police officer – not policeman).

It's cruel and demeaning to refer to "gentle", sensitive boys as "girly" or "pansy". Girls who show strength and independence are not "tomboys". Never put labels on children that put them down for being themselves.

Raise awareness of sexist attitudes and talk to children about them. Talk about how TV, films, advertisements, books, toys, magazines, pop stars etc convey images about men's and women's roles and behaviours. Look for and talk about alternatives. Show women in leadership and men in nurturing roles.

Encourage a liberated attitude to toys and play activities. Let boys dress up in fantasy costumes, paint their faces and dance. Let girls take active roles in leadership games. Let them use tools and be responsible for the equipment.

"You are the bow from which your children as living arrows are sent forth, let the bending in the archer's hand be for gladness."

Kahlil Gibran
Lebanese poet/philosopher
(1883 – 1931)

Many children and young people, girls in particular, now do not reflect outdated stereotypes. Girls are clearly encouraged to be more assertive, more physical and more openly confident than in their parents' or grandparents' generation. There are more role models of women in leadership and achieving success in more demanding and strenuous roles and sports. But subtle and not-so-subtle pressures can still compel young women to conform to traditional roles to achieve popularity, acceptance and admiration by their peer groups of both sexes.

HERE'S WHAT BRITNEY SPEARS SINGS ABOUT TO HER ADOLESCENT AND PRE-TEEN GIRL FANS

*I really wanna dance tonight with you
I really wanna do what you want me to
I'm a slave for you
I cannot hold it
I cannot control it
I'm a slave for you
I won't deny it; I'm not trying to hide it*

AND

*Boys
Sometimes a girl
Just needs one (You know I need you)
Boys
To love her and to hold (I just want you to touch me)
Boys
And when a girl
Is with one (Mmm, mmm)
Boys
Then she's in control (Yeah)*

AND

*So she met this man
He was kinda rough
He said, girl, whatcha lookin' for
She said, I don't know
I go with the flow
He said, let's get on the floor
He said, you look real cute with your low ride jeans
And your pink little baby tee
Let's get a room, girl
Come and ride with me*

These seductive lyrics totally counter the belief that girls can be strong, independent and achieve acceptance by being themselves rather than through attachment to a male, and reinforce that looking "sexy" is more attractive than being healthy, strong and physical.

In short – they are the most likely to become victims of violence and abuse.

AND WHAT ARE THE YOUNG MEN HEARING??

This is Rapper 50 Cent who played to sell-out concerts in NZ in 2006.

*Them Twinkies got your ass
gettin' fat fat*

*Them cookies got your ass
gettin' fat fat*

*That cake got your ass
gettin' fat fat*

*Bitch you grown, that ain't
baby fat fat*

*In the gym I see your ass up on
the stair master*

*But you got it on level 2, bitch
go a little faster*

*Look girl I ain't gonna lie, I'll tell
you how I feel*

*They should hand-cuff your big
ass to the treadmill*

*You wanna work out now, cause
you know its gettin' hot*

*And your big ass fin to pop all
up out the halter top*

*Find the right chick, wearing
some tight shit, and it's on*

*See your ass wearing some tight shit,
we like "She wrong"*

ENOUGH SAID!!!

So while it's not possible to prevent young people being exposed to such absurd attitudes it's vital to help them to see how they are being manipulated and hopefully proof them against the harm they do.

Free and frank discussions about peer and commercial pressure, sexism, adolescent and teenage angst, unhealthy and unrealistic body image and influences, early and inappropriate sexual behaviour and the great expectations and opportunities that life can offer, can help young people to appreciate that the whole world doesn't think like Britney and 50 Cent.

The message that every life has significance, every young (and older) person deserves appreciation and respect for who they are and what they bring to the world and that everyone is free to be the person they want to be may take time to penetrate. It will generate its own power in time, coming through trusted and supportive relationships.

Role models of young people that portray images of ability, courage, achievement and purpose are powerful. Find role models for young people in the community. Find the young sportspeople, singers, dancers, actors and writers, the cultural, classical and contemporary performers, who will promote strength, respect and self-worth as alternatives to the toxic influences of the commercial pop and fashion world.

It may seem like a tough battle but consistent messages to counter negative media and commercial images of young people need to be heard loudly and long!

UR FREE: by Victor Waru and Norman Dunn Schwencke

U R Free to be anything you wanna be,
But keep in mind don't hold your family as enemy
Because if anything it's family that we really need let's stay tight
Let's act right and live for eternity . . .
You are free to be
Living in a happy family
Is all we ever wanted to see . . .
Lord can you help my brothers
Lord can you help my sisters
Make it though the rainy day . . .
See there's a message in every song
Find out what it is and it won't hear you wrong
I'm singing you've got to hold tighter
To your family you inspire
See there's a message in every song
Find out what it is
And it won't hear you wrong. I'm singing you . . .
Got to hold on tighter
Hold on tighter . . . ehh . . . ehh . . .
Keepin' our family safe in everyday communities tryin',
Provide a unified family identity,
The opportunity's there but is up to you and me don't try to be naive
family violence ain't good to see.
Take the time to realise we can make it if we try see it all in your
eyes that it's hurting you inside...



This song was developed at an Everyday Theatre workshop in Whangarei as part of the Everyday Communities programme. It is their signature tune for promoting violence-free families and communities. Everyday Communities is a Child Youth and Family Services programme that raises public awareness about child abuse, neglect and family violence through working with and through communities. It recognises that everybody in New Zealand has a part to play in preventing child abuse and encourages community action to achieve wellbeing and safety for our children.

**“CHILDREN ARE MESSAGES WE SEND TO
A TIME WE WILL NOT SEE”** Neil Postman

VIOLENCE TOWARDS CHILDREN IS A WIDESPREAD PROBLEM IN NEW ZEALAND.

Child abuse includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

It usually happens within the child's close family circle.

Some abuse happens in the name of discipline, some through neglect and some through deliberate acts of aggression towards the child.

Child abuse is part of the spectrum of family violence.

Many of the dynamics and effects are similar to those of partner violence.

Early prevention of child abuse contributes to early prevention of partner violence.

Children in families where partner violence exists are at significantly greater risk of child abuse than children living in violence-free homes.

All children who witness violence between the adults in their lives are emotionally abused.

CHILD ABUSE IS ALWAYS A SERIOUS MATTER.

There is potential for serious emotional, physical, sexual, psychological and spiritual harm through abuse. Effects can last well into adulthood and there is a danger that the pattern of abuse will be repeated when the child is an adult.

It is rare for child abuse to be an isolated incident, particularly when the abuse happens within the family.



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release:

Thursday 17 November 2005

World Child Abuse Prevention Day Highlights Appalling New Zealand Statistics:

The Family Help Trust says more must be done immediately to stop children being hurt and killed at the hands of violent adults. New Zealand has one of the worst child mortality rates as the result of violence, in the world; 10 children die every year in Godzone, many more are injured and emotionally and physically scarred.

Trust Chair, Sally Thompson, says for the last two decades, the significance and effectiveness of early intervention programmes is well researched and documented.

“Since the Roper report in 1987, there has been much done in the area of early intervention, both nationally and internationally. I’m not talking about getting in to help change patterns when children are 9, 10 or 11 years of age. It’s breaking the cycle of dysfunction and violence in high risk families while children are under 5, younger or even before they are born,” she says.

“When we hear in the news that yet another child has been injured or killed at the hands of violent adults, we are all appalled and revolted. That quickly fades until the next one.”

[GUIDE FOR LISTENING TO AND RESPONDING TO CHILDREN WHO TALK ABOUT ABUSE

#8

Children talk about abuse in many ways to many people. They may use stories, games, verbal signals or “funny talk”.

It's not always obvious, as children are unlikely to have the appropriate language and experience to articulate what is happening, and may be totally unaware of the impact of the conversation on an adult listener.

These guidelines are designed to help family members, friends, childcare workers and others to be alert to the signals and respond in a way that is safe for the child.

NEVER IGNORE a child who talks about violence or abuse.

However, take care with the conversation so that you do not create difficulties if a legal, evidential interview needs to take place. **DON'T QUESTION** – listen and then record what took place **WORD FOR WORD** not your interpretation of what was said.

- Accept that children may not have the language to articulate their feelings or they may be afraid to express them. They are likely to show anxiety or fear in other ways.
- Use age-appropriate language. Listen carefully, don't rush the child and don't probe. Let the child lead the conversation.
- Respond with assurances and assess what further action you might need to take.
- Assure children that it is not their fault if someone hurts them or hurts someone else in the family. Even if they are “naughty”, people are not allowed to hurt them or be cruel to them or others.
- Assure children that they are right to talk to an adult they trust if anything bad happens to them or people in their family.
- Assure children that there is help if they are worried about being hurt at home. Always follow up if help is needed.
- Affirm any feelings and the child's right to express them. Assure children that they can love everyone in their family even when they are unhappy about what they have done. And it's also alright to express feelings of anger and hatred.
- Don't agree to keep secrets. Tell children that adults who hurt children or other people might have to be stopped. You can promise to help make sure the child is safe and doesn't get into trouble for telling.
- Never criticise any members of the child's family. You can condemn the behaviour and the actions without compromising the child's loyalty to family members.
- Make it clear that your concern is the safety of the child. You won't necessarily be involved in solving the problems in the family.
- Go gently. Be sensitive about a time to finish the conversation. Assure the child that you can be there for them again (if you can).

Talk to a person who is qualified to give good advice (social worker, child advocate, counsellor) – never act alone.

RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES OF ABUSE

IT'S EVERYONE'S BUSINESS TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM ABUSE

Concern that a child is being abused or neglected needs to be followed up.

Child abuse should **ALWAYS** be reported to the appropriate authorities.

- Suspicions of abuse can be reported and discussed with police or social workers.
- Know where to get qualified advice.
- Experts in the area will guide and help if further investigation is needed.

SECTION 16 OF THE CYPF ACT 1989 STATES THAT:

“No civil, criminal, or disciplinary proceedings shall lie against any person in respect of the disclosure or supply by that person pursuant to section 15 of this Act (reporting ill treatment or neglect) of information concerning a child or young person (whether or not that information also concerns any other person), unless the information was disclosed or supplied in bad faith.”

It means that if you suspect, or are aware of, child abuse that you report in good faith to the police or CYF, you cannot be held liable for any charges in connection with providing the information associated with the report.



“Shirogane mo kogane
mo tama mo nanisemu
no masareru no masareru
takara ko ni shikame yamo”

“How precious are gold,
silver and gem stones?
Nothing is more precious
than a child”

8th century Japanese poem

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED WITH FAMILY VIOLENCE

AT HOME . . .

“It was 1987 when the Roper Report noted that 80% of all violence was family based or in the home and identified family violence as ‘the cradle for the perpetration of violence and crime in the community’. That’s a New Zealand report and it’s almost 20 years old. The warnings are still not being heeded and our children are still dying and being hurt.”

Bill Pringle, Christchurch Family Help Trust, July 2005

“But there is hope. Every child saved from abuse and violence today in effect will protect the children of future generations.”

Dame Silvia Cartwright, Governor General of New Zealand
ACCAN Conference 14.02.06

. . . AND ABROAD

“There are no bad children, just unfortunate ones,” is the phrase often used by Juvenile Judge Shang Xiuyun of Haidan District, China.

“Behind each juvenile offender, there often lies a traumatic experience,” she said. “The education of children under 6 years old is most important, and its influence may last for a whole lifetime,”

said the amiable judge, whose face breaks into a smile when talking about children.

“The environment, especially the family environment in which the children grow up, is of vital significance for their character development,”

said Shang, a member of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC).

“The quarrels, fights or indifferences between parents can exert an incalculable negative influence on their children,” she said. “parents are their first teachers in the world. A broken family can leave a child in a miserable situation. They bring the child into this world, but they don’t want to bring them up or bring them up properly.”

Fangchao (China Daily) 13.03.2006

Children and young people who witness family violence are likely to experience:

- fear, anger, depression, grief, shame, despair and distrust.
- physical symptoms such as headaches or tummy aches, eating and sleeping disorders.
- delayed cognitive and emotional development.
- substance abuse.
- behavioural problems such as truancy, running away, aggression.

(Note that these could indicate other problems. The relationship to a violent situation should be considered after careful assessment.)

Children may learn to see violence as a legitimate way of expressing anger, resolving conflict or controlling another person.

A child can never be “spoiled” with praise, compliments and encouragement. Generous helpings of all three help build a confident, assertive and self-respecting individual. Self-respecting children are more likely to develop good self-discipline. Parents, family, teachers and wider community members can help them develop skills for relationships based on respect and responsibility.



Even if children or young people are not the direct target of violence in the family, they will suffer serious emotional abuse and possible neglect through being part of a family where violence and abuse take place. It may be difficult for an abused parent to give proper attention to the physical and emotional needs of children in the family. Living with the demands of a violent partner takes an excessive amount of energy. Conversely, the parent may be over-protective or over-controlling with children in an effort to appease the violent partner.

A fundamental lack of trust in relationships with other people is a common feature of children or young people who have been abused or who have witnessed abuse. Living with constant anxiety and fear makes many children and young people hide their feelings and use manipulative tactics in order to protect themselves. It is difficult for them to communicate openly with other adults and children. It is not easy to discuss their home life and their anxieties, even with supportive adults.

They may believe that they are responsible for the situation. Shame and guilt about what's happening in their family will restrict healthy emotional development and transition to adult life is likely to be even more stressful and confusing than usual.

Children and young people whose health, emotional or social wellbeing or educational achievement has been adversely affected by family violence need well-informed help. Children and young people affected by family violence need to be assured:

- they are not responsible for the behaviour of the adults in their family
- they are right to talk to someone they trust about what is happening
- confused feelings about family relationships are normal – they can love the people in their families at the same time as disliking and rejecting their violent behaviour.

YOUNG PEOPLE SPEAK

“I hate my step-father – he blames Mum for everything. He hits her and then yells at me as if it’s my fault. Sometimes I think I want to kill him.”

Jeremy (14)

“We always have to be quiet when Dad’s at home. He doesn’t like us making any noise and tells Mum off if we do.”

Toni and Terry (12-year-old twins)

“Dad makes Mum and me and my big sister stay up late until he says that all the work’s done and we can go to bed.”

Perry (11)

“I’m leaving as soon as I’m old enough. I can’t stand the way he treats my Mum and us kids.”

Denyse (14)

“We had to go out of the room and then we heard Mummy crying. We went and hid in the cupboard.”

Lizzie (6)

“I had to miss my school trip. Mum didn’t want me to go away because she was scared he was going to come around and bash her again.”

Pearl (14)

“When I’m big I’m going to look after Mum and not let him hurt her any more.”

Sam (8)

“Dad got angry because I broke the computer. He growled at Mum and then he chased her to get out of the house and take me and my brother. We went to my Auntie and then he came to get us but he was drunk and we wouldn’t go. Auntie got the police.”

Tama (7)

“Our Minister told Dad that he shouldn’t hit Mum and that we had to pray.”

Sina (11)

“Mum’s too hopeless to do anything about it.”

George (16)

“I hate it when Mummy and Daddy shout all the time.”

Jessie (4)

“We get scared when he hurts Mummy. We hide until he stops.”

Awhina (5)

“He had a gun and I thought he might shoot us all.”

Robert (11)

PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE

#10

“We know that many of today’s violent offenders were once abused children. We also know that abused and neglected children are more likely to commit crimes, become substance and alcohol abusers and to attempt suicide. Internationally, child abuse reports had increased dramatically over the last 10 years, and New Zealand was no exception to this trend,” Dame Silvia said. “Between August 2001 and August 2004 there was a 90 percent increase in notifications of child abuse. In one year, between 2004 and 2005, New Zealand’s child protection agency the Department of Youth, Child and Family Services received more than 53,000 notifications of suspected child abuse or neglect.”

Dame Silvia Cartwright

Dame Silvia said the fundamental goal was that children were kept safe from abuse and neglect. “A New Zealand and a world where this is always the case is our Holy Grail.”

Preventing child abuse is a complex and long-term societal goal.

It is part of prevention of family violence.

Communities can work towards:

- long-term education and support for parents and children combined with clear professional protocols
- information available throughout the community so that everyone is aware of and can respond appropriately to protect children
- initiatives aimed at changing attitudes and behaviours regarding family violence.

The 2003 UNICEF report on child maltreatment made for “sober reading”.

“Of 27 OECD countries, New Zealand recorded the third highest child homicide rate of children up to the age of 14. Those figures were exceeded only by Mexico and the United States. We in New Zealand have repeatedly recorded our shame at this ranking. Nonetheless, every year about 10 children are killed in New Zealand in domestic violence. We know that, unless addressed successfully, the cycle will continue.”

From Article 19 (1) United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

“States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.”

Friends, relatives, neighbours, support workers and professionals can all play a part in preventing violence towards children.

- Let children know about their right to be safe. Tell them no-one is allowed to hurt or be cruel to them. Tell them they can talk to a grown-up they trust if someone hurts them or is cruel.
- Promote positive parenting and positive discipline. There are courses, books, videos and resource people available to offer good ideas about bringing up children and coping with parenting problems.
- Know about the indicators or warning signs of child abuse. Know what to do and who should be informed. Don't ignore obvious signs. Act to protect children.
- Give children their say. Listen when they talk to you, treat them with respect and encourage their confidence. Assertive and strong-minded children are more likely to be able to protect themselves from abuse.
- Encourage personal safety training for children through pre-schools, schools, sport and social clubs.
- Give parents a break. Baby-sit, amuse the children, take them out or stay home with them and let the parents have time out.
- Praise brings out the best in everyone. Children and parents appreciate and respond to sincere compliments and comments about things they've done well, good behaviour or behaviour management.

IN THE COMMUNITY:

- Encourage all agencies working with children to have clearly-understood agency policies for management of child abuse or suspected child abuse and to develop inter-agency protocols for protection of children.
- Encourage regular networking and co-operative working relationships between various agencies and groups concerned with child protection – share information and resources, combine efforts for community awareness campaigns.
- Provide or organise information for prevention – positive parenting and child management, personal safety training, community awareness etc.
- Make the community at large aware of how to identify and report child abuse – enlist and inform resource people: community health and pre-school workers, Plunket or other Well Child providers and district nurses, social workers, general practitioners, parent support groups, early childhood workers, teachers, guidance counsellors, family service workers, neighbourhood support groups, community support groups.

“We tell our children how to be and they keep mirroring what we are. Children learn by example. If we are to raise happy and intelligent children we must bring to wholeness the models they are following.”

Joseph Chilton Pearce

[CHILDREN BEAR THE SCARS

#11

The effect of violence between adults in the home on children and young people can be a prime motivator for change. The primary caregiver (in most cases the mother), once made aware of the impact, is likely to find help and take action to increase the safety of the family. Educating parents about what happens to children who witness, or are present, when violence occurs is a worthwhile preventative strategy.

It's also a strong motivating factor for people wanting to behave less violently and to look for ways to change their behaviour.

The impact for children and young people witnessing, being present or experiencing the effects of violence between adults is severely damaging.

- There is a likelihood that they are suffering neglect or emotional neglect – living in a violent situation makes good parenting very difficult.
- They can be seriously affected – physically, psychologically, emotionally and the damage can be deep and lasting.
- They are highly vulnerable because they are unlikely to have any way of preventing or escaping from what is happening and may even feel that they are the cause of the conflict and blame themselves.

What can happen

- Damage can occur in utero – damage to a foetus through violence toward a pregnant woman is not unusual.
- Children (infants) can be dropped or be in the way and injured during a violent incident.
- Children can be injured in crossfire, hit by thrown objects, trampled on, kicked, pushed or fall and be hurt.
- Children may get hurt if they attempt to intervene or become entangled in trying to prevent violent incidents.
- Children can be threatened, terrified and traumatised by witnessing or being present when violence occurs (they do not have to be a direct witness – hearing about and/or coping with the aftermath is very damaging).

There can be serious consequences such as:

- congenital and/or on-going disability – impaired mobility sight/hearing/speech etc
- impaired neurophysiological (brain) development and ability to learn
- reduced emotional, cognitive and psychological wellbeing
- conduct and/or personality disorder
- propensity to later violence or victimisation
- socially unresponsive/emotionally blunted/passive, apathetic and inattentive disposition
- self-harming behaviour
- ongoing feelings of anger, fear, confusion
- seeing parents as weak and unable to care for or protect them
- seeing violence as an acceptable way of dealing with problems or getting their own way
- being hyper-vigilant and overly involved in adult activities
- bed-wetting, depression, headaches, chronic apathy, sadness, low self-esteem
- bullying, truancy, performing poorly at school
- running away from home
- anti-social behaviour and poor social skills
- suicidal thoughts
- alcohol and drug abuse as they get older.

Damage can be long-term or permanent. The family is where humans should be nurtured, supported and cared for. Children have the right to be safe in their families. Adults around them have responsibility to provide a safe and secure environment.

Young people can be encouraged to be part of the solution to the problem of family violence and they have an important part to play in contributing to safe families of the future.

Young people naturally assimilate ideas and attitudes from what they have seen, heard and experienced as children and young adults. How they behave in family situations, friendships and close relationships will be influenced by observing how adults around them behave. When violence and abuse has been a feature of home life, young people may see the situation as the natural way of things in families.

Messages which counter expectations of males to be dominant or controlling and females to be submissive and compliant, will assist young people to an understanding of roles in family life and relationships which are not based on outdated stereotypes.

Violence is learned behaviour and it can be unlearned

If we have been or are part of a violent family it does not mean that we have to follow that pattern. We can learn other ways to live that do not include violence.

There are always alternatives to violence

We all make choices about how to cope with situations and we can make the choice not to be violent.

Learning alternatives to violence increases our chances of a happier and better life. We are more likely to attract good friends and have good relationships without violence.

There are people who will support us and help us to learn ways of dealing with problems and difficulties without involving violence.

Violence rarely solves any problems and usually creates new ones

There is less and less tolerance of violent behaviour in our society today. Offenders cannot expect to escape the consequences of their violent behaviour and their excuses are not likely to be believed or accepted.

Violence is not entertaining, fun, or glamorous

Violent imagery and representations of violence as cool or exciting exploit ignorance of the real situations in which family violence takes place. The results and consequences of family violence are distressing and degrading for everyone and in some situations the damage is too great to repair.

Developing awareness in young people about the following will contribute to family violence prevention:

- healthy relationships
- alternatives to violence and making choices
- gender stereotyping and counter messages
- family life: roles, rights and responsibilities
- human and individual rights
- power and control issues
- respecting difference and appreciating diversity.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE

#13

When young people date or are in intimate relationships there is the possibility that violence will be denied or minimised. Some young men will naturally expect to be “in charge” in a relationship and assume that their partners accept this.

Many young men and women may lack the skills or experience to communicate their needs and expectations adequately. Arguments, differences of opinion and battles of will can quickly become abusive and violent.

Sexual abuse, including rape, can occur in teenage relationships. Young people may be forced, manipulated or coerced into unwanted sexual activities.

Many victims are reluctant to let adults know that they have been abused. They may be fearful of the reaction and consequences or they may believe that they are to blame in some way. They may have been in company that would not be approved of. They may be afraid that controls will be put in place to restrict their freedom and friendships or they may fear retaliation or rejection if they “nark”.

Adults or youth leaders can help by making information and opportunities to talk about rights and responsibilities in relationships readily available and accessible to young people.

Conversations need to be inclusive of all aspects of sexuality – include same-sex relationships – and be prepared to support young people, answer questions and know where to get more information.

GIRL TALK

“I told Mum I was staying with a girlfriend and I went with this boy in his car to the beach. He told me to do it or he’d leave me there. So I had to.”

Tracey (14)

“He said I was the only 16-year-old he knew that was a virgin and that it had to happen some time. So I just went along with it. I didn’t like him and I hated doing it but I didn’t think there was any choice.”

Aleesha (16)

“I fought him off for a while then I just gave in. I was afraid of getting hurt and all his friends were in the next room.”

Jodene (14)

“He was my boyfriend and he said that we should do whatever he wanted to.”

Aylene (15)

“He used to make me really scared, like driving too fast and acting stupid with his friends. When I called it off he said he’d tell my Dad about the sex.”

Treena (16)

“He said if I didn’t he would do it with my younger sister.”

Tui (14)

“I thought that because we were gay it would be fine, but she was very strong and overpowering.”

Kayla (16)

Family violence can take the form of teenagers abusing family members. Parents are the most likely target but grandparents, brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews or other members of the family can be subjected to violence from teenagers.

Most teenagers go through a process of trying to discover a sense of separateness from their parents. This might include resisting parental authority or displaying a defiant and disrespectful attitude.

There is a difference between this and the aggression demonstrated by a young person attempting to control the parent(s) through abusive or violent tactics.

Parent abuse cannot be dismissed as “normal teenage behaviour”. For most families affected, the abuse is a regular (possibly daily) occurrence where there is no sign of remorse or guilt from the child. The effects are serious and damaging, and as with other forms of family violence, have the potential to strain family relationships to the point where irreparable long-term damage occurs.

Information about the situation in this country is limited but a Canadian study shows:

- girls and boys are likely to participate equally in all forms of parent abuse
- families of various races, social groups and of differing make-ups (biological, step-families, adopted etc) are affected
- mothers and stepmothers from both single and two-parent homes are the most frequent targets
- parents with disabilities are also frequent victims as are other vulnerable family members including younger brothers and sisters, older people and even family pets
- many abusive young people are also engaged in other damaging activities (drug or alcohol abuse or criminal activities such as shoplifting, burglary and assaults)

As with other forms of family violence, shame and guilt obscure the issue and many families are reluctant to acknowledge the extent of the problem.

Parent abuse can be described as an act of a young person or child that is intended to cause physical, psychological or financial damage to gain power and control over a parent.

Effective intervention with parent abuse requires:

- breaking the silence so that the true extent and nature of parental abuse can be determined and appropriate responses developed
- seeking support through information and understanding.

VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS #15

Family violence impacts on schools as young people and the staff act on beliefs inherited from their families and reinforced by society as a whole. The way schools manage such things as the roles of males and females, authority and peer relationships, school and community relations, power and control and discipline will be reflected in the way members of the school community behave towards one another.

The effects of violent behaviours in schools are well documented and include:

- absenteeism, including truancy
- low morale
- low expectations, low achievement
- loss of learning potential
- poor school image and school spirit
- victimisation of particular groups (gender, sexual and gender diversity and race-based)
- high rate of premature leaving and resignation
- extreme staff and student stress
- injury
- illness
- suicide.

Some students and staff will be experiencing or witnessing family violence in their immediate living situation. Some will have suffered physical, sexual or psychological violence from other students or members of the school community. Among staff and older students there are likely to be some who are in relationships where they are experiencing or using violence.

Schools illustrate values, beliefs and practices about acceptable behaviour and can play a major part in developing attitudes that help prevent family violence.

Schools can play a part in changing attitudes and behaviours regarding violence and supporting children and young people by:

- having the matter raised at staff and Board of Trustees meetings and discussing appropriate responses
- designing and implementing a whole school plan to assist attitude and behaviour change for violence prevention
- sending a school representative to community and inter-agency meetings dealing with family violence
- being involved in community initiatives addressing attitude and behaviour change



BULLYING

Bullies are often children and young people who have experienced some form of violence in their own homes. They victimise and control others with a variety of verbal and physical assaults intended to harm and control others. They are often insensitive to the suffering of others and their success in reaching their violent objectives reinforces their violent behaviour.

A variety of initiatives and resources exist to assist schools reduce bullying. The best of these advise a “whole school approach” which ensures prompt responses to reports of bullying, clear policies and protocols for the school community and accessing help for bullies and victims.

For information on Ministry of Education go to www.minedu.govt.nz

- organising in-service training for all staff on the nature, causes and effects of family violence and appropriate responses for attitude and behaviour change
- bringing in speakers to address the assembly or speech day about the part young people can play in changing attitudes for a violence-free society
- supporting fundraising for the refuge or other community agencies dealing with family violence
- linking the topic of family violence into other school subjects such as:

History – historical context, men’s position, women’s position, women’s movements, women and children in history, legislative positions, anti-violence/protection movements

Geography – comparisons with treatment of women and children in other countries, other countries’ responses

Art and Drama – potential for poster design, painting, dramatised scenario, dance

English – family violence as a literature theme (eg, *The Colour Purple*, *Once Were Warriors*, *The Bone People* etc), written expression, comprehension exercises, debates, essays, media awareness

Social studies – gender issues, current situation, groups affected, social effects, UN position, community responses

Health – keeping safe, speaking out, effects of violence, the case for prevention

Physical Education – building strength, self defence (physical and verbal).

Media release: 16/03/2006: **Government to step-up focus on bullying issue**

A Ministry of Education report on the nature and extent of bullying in schools, including through text messaging, was released today by Education Minister Steve Maharey.

“This report reflects the seriousness of this issue for New Zealand schools and communities,” Steve Maharey said.

“It is also a reminder that there is strong awareness of the issue and a lot of effort going into dealing with it.”

Steve Maharey says establishing clear boundaries for behaviour in schools will be a key priority over the next three years.

“I want to ensure there are consistent policies across all schools, that teachers are well supported, and that parents and the community recognise the role they need to play in addressing this issue.

“I also want to send a clear message that bullying in any form is not acceptable and will not be tolerated in our schools or communities.

“Schools can expect to get more help and to see a greater focus on the role played by the Ministry of Education and the Education Review Office in dealing with this issue.

“From next month the Education Review Office will be reporting in each school review on the school’s anti-bullying strategies. I will also be looking at options through this year’s budget to strengthen the work we are doing and improve co-ordination across the various programmes.

“Experience tells us that what works best is consistent guidelines about appropriate behaviour, reinforced through the school. We also know that schools can’t do it alone. Parents and communities also have a responsibility.

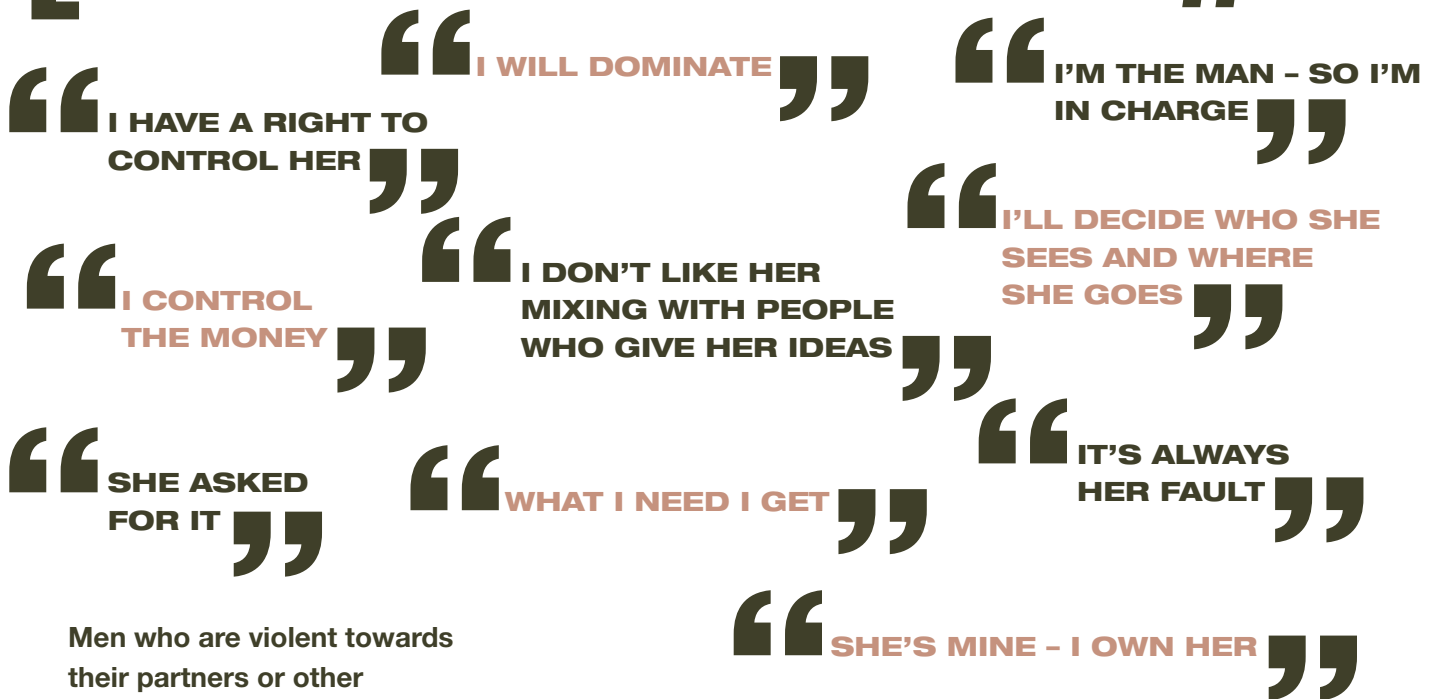
“There are many examples of New Zealand schools that have turned behaviour problems around. We need to ensure there are good policies and programmes across every school and that these are reinforced both in the classroom and the community.”

**Kia Kaha:
Whole school approach**

www.police.govt.nz/service/yes/nobully/kia_kaha/

[MALE ATTITUDES

#16



Men who are violent towards their partners or other family members are not an identifiable group. They are from all walks of life, from all cultures, occupations and age groups.

They do not look alike. They can be large or small. They are ordinary men.

There are some common attitudes among men who abuse their partners.

THEY USUALLY:

- believe that men have the right to control the behaviour of their female partners and/or family members
- believe that the use of violence is justified as a means of controlling their female partners and members of their families
- are jealous and possessive of their partners
- have a strong belief in sex role stereotypes – men in charge and women subservient

- believe that self-esteem and a secure male identity are built around concepts of male dominance or being in control

OR

- they believe absolutely and unquestioningly that their own needs, wants and interests are more important and have more significance than their partner's.

These beliefs, and the behaviours which coexist with them, are usually so ingrained that they are regarded as natural and normal. It is often a shock for men to have these ideas challenged and to be confronted with the notion that they are outdated and unreasonable.

Masculinity is commonly viewed in terms of power. This is reinforced by traditions, habits and customs assuming men's right to power and control and by gender bias in education, language, literature,

media, entertainment and sport.

Connections between beliefs about sex-role stereotyping, male dominance, aggression and the high incidence of family violence in society are evident. Many of these power dynamics are also present in same-sex relationships.

“It's a lie . . . it's a lie – that you gotta be the Big Man in this world.”

*Nest Egg
(Phoenix Foundation 2005)*

[MACHO-MAN

#17

machismo - strong exaggerated masculine pride or masculinity *Machismo: Collins Dictionary*

Machismo culture demands that a man must be in control of his family. It is taken for granted and incidents of family violence are minimised or excused by justifying, blaming someone else, something else or the circumstances.

Violent men commonly respond to challenges about their behaviour or attitudes by:

- refusing to acknowledge that they have a problem
- justifying violence or believing that their partners are at fault and are exaggerating the issues
- minimising issues as “communication problems” and thereby implicating or blaming the victim
- blaming feminism for corrupting established values.

WHAT THEY SAY

“It was easy for me to believe that she was to blame. I hit her and then blamed her for making me do it – I could always find a reason. I convinced myself that it was always her fault.”

Jim (23)

“I slapped her around one night while my mates were in the other room. She got smart to them. When I went back in none of them said a word and we just went back to jamming.”

Barry (38)

“I made jokes about her weight, her looks, her cooking, her driving and her family all the time. I did it in front of other people and I didn’t care what she felt. It made me feel good.”

Peter (56)

“As far as I was concerned she got what she deserved. She was lazy and the place was always like a pig sty.”

Jason (29)

“She said she was really scared. It was just a bit of a hiding – nothing more than that. I didn’t see myself as violent or anything. It took a lot of work for me to see it from her point of view.”

Manu (31)

“It only happened when we were drinking. And she usually started it. But I like a drink and so does she and sometimes it went too far.”

Shane (26)

“Those damned feminists – I blame them for filling her head with rubbish.”

Joe (40)

“Men will often tell me that she hit them first and are very resentful that they are the ones who are arrested and charged. When I ask them what plans they want to make for their personal safety they generally look at me with surprise. The fear element is not present. They are not dealing with a life threatening situation.” James, Counsellor

BEING A MAN - TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

In spite of cultural and social supports for male dominance, most men are not violent or abusive towards women. Male aggression is not an inevitable result of history and conditioning into sex roles.

An increasing number of men are joining groups to examine the effects of their violent and controlling behaviour on their families. The focus of group work is to challenge values and attitudes which belittle women and create the environment which allows family violence.

The groups aim to assist men to make changes in the way they think about, and behave towards, their families.

Awareness is a first step towards changing attitudes that have allowed them to believe that their violence can be justified.

There is no quick fix. It takes long-term awareness to unlearn the lessons of a lifetime – perhaps several lifetimes of inherited, intergenerational violence.

But it is possible and there are role models of men who have faced some hard truths and invested in change for a more enriching and happier future.

Many men have thought, reasoned, and developed awareness and have consciously chosen to reject a male culture which claims power, control, violence, abuse and male privilege as trademarks of masculinity.

Sometimes men will claim that their partner is just as violent as they are to justify their actions. However, usually where women assault men in incidents of family violence, the nature, causes and effects are not the same (see women as perpetrators).

Over the last three decades many men and women have adopted more progressive views of male and female roles.

It is not so unusual now for family relationships to be more equally based in terms of power and gender roles.

Role models of men who are primary carers in the family and women who are breadwinners are more common. Many couples share caring and family support and decision-making roles. Children have examples of more equal relationships in terms of family roles and power sharing.

These changes can be liberating and enriching for men. There are more choices about lifestyle, support for matters of livelihood and decision-making and narrowly defined sex roles can be rejected in favour of more active roles in matters to do with family and domestic life. Rewards are closer and happier relationships with partners and children.

No one claims that moving from the traditional male or machismo culture to gender equality is easy. There are many assumptions to unlearn and new concepts and skills to take on. It is long-term learning and a continuous process of reflection and developing awareness.

“At first the other men’s stories shocked me – but then when I looked at my own behaviour it was a shock to me to see that I wasn’t so different from them and the excuses and attitudes I had were the same.”

Morry (33)

“We had to do this exercise about what we thought our kids would say about us or be thinking at our funeral. That really got me thinking. My daughter had told me the week before that I bullied them all.”

Chris (41)

“I’ve got mokos now and I want them to see the good man in me – not be scared of me like I was of my father and our kids were of me.”

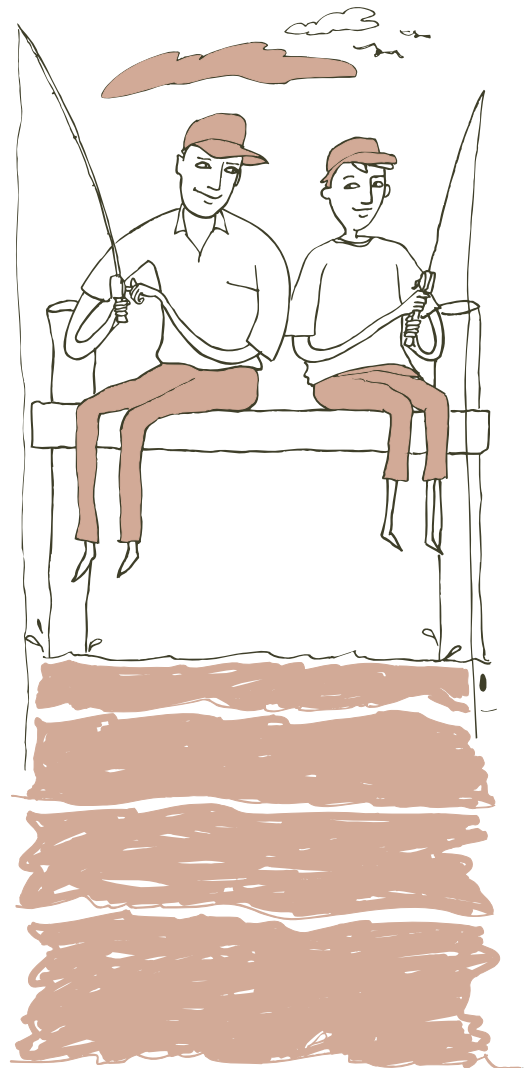
Jock (50)

“I’m a lot more relaxed now that I’ve let go some of the controlling tactics. Our family life is far better than I ever thought was possible.”

Peter (44)

“I never thought that the group would have so much to offer. I went because she was going to leave. I’ve learned heaps from the other men and I’m not so scared of trying new ways. I only hope it’s not too late.”

Mac (27)



Attitudes which support violence are often revealed in remarks men make to each other or stories or jokes they tell when they're together. They might sound amusing and harmless and many of these men would not see themselves as approving of family violence or showing disrespect towards women.

Stories and jokes alone are not dangerous – the attitudes they support are. Attitudes can shape the behaviours that cause violence against women and in families.

AN ATTITUDE CHECK

How do you react when other men talk about:

- "teaching her a lesson"
- "putting her in her place"
- "showing her who's boss"
- "keeping her under control"?

How do you react when men talk about women:

- "asking for it"
- by calling them names
e.g. "sluts, slags, tarts,
****ing stupid cow"
- by making sexist comments
such as "she's only good for
one thing"?

DISCUSS ALL THESE ISSUES

"Only I can make the change – it's like going to the doctor – he doesn't keep me healthy, I do that – like making changes with my weight – nobody else can do it – I am responsible for my actions."

Wiremu (38)

How do you react when other men make "jokes" or coarse comments about:

- rape
- violence towards women
- violence towards other men
- violence towards gays and lesbians
- transsexuals
- violence towards children?

How do you react when men wear clothing, badges, or have calendars or car stickers which degrade or demean women?

Do you:

- not even notice it
- notice but ignore it
- notice it and laugh along with it
- notice it and feel uneasy but say nothing
- say something to show your disapproval and disagreement?

[CHANGING ATTITUDES #20

EXCUSE ME MISTER

“So excuse me Mr, but I’m a Mr too
And you’re giving Mr a bad name, Mr like you
So I’m taking the Mr from out in front of your name
Coz it’s the Mr like you that puts the rest of us to
shame
It’s the Mr like you that puts the rest of us to shame”

Ben Harper: Excuse Me Mister



Men talking to other men is a strong factor for changing attitudes. When men are reminded that not all men support their attitudes about women and violence, it can make them look more closely at some of their assumptions and become aware of other ways of thinking.

Men can make a personal stand to show disapproval of attitudes that make violence against women acceptable. It doesn't have to be a big issue. A low-key approach can work too. The aim is to cause the “joker” to stop and think about what he is saying and what attitudes he is conveying.

LABELLING IT

Using a label when attitudes supporting violence are identified could be one small step towards prevention. It might alert the person to the meaning of their attitudes and behaviour. Where there's awareness, there's hope for change. Such things as violence, rape and child abuse can be identified and labelled.

WAYS WITH WORDS

A few well-chosen words or phrases at the right time can convey the message that men need to take the issue of family violence seriously and can play a part in changing attitudes.

- “Attitudes (ideas/jokes/films) that encourage violence are no good.”
- “Violence does not solve any problems.”
- “I want my family not to feel afraid of me.”
- “I want my sons to know that men don't have to be violent.”
- “I want my daughters to grow into strong women.”
- “I think everyone has the right to be free from violence.”
- “There are no excuses for being violent to your family.”
- “You're talking about rape – that's no joke!”
- “Violence in a family is not a laughing matter.”

STATE YOUR CASE

You can simply state what you think – you don't have to get into an argument or defend your position. You're not out to win or lose. You are always free to declare your own beliefs.

- “There's nothing at all funny about rape.”
- “There's nothing at all funny about beating up women.”
- “There's nothing at all funny about child abuse.”
- “There's nothing good about being violent to your family.”
- “I wouldn't want my wife/daughter/mother/sister spoken about like that.”
- “It must be rotten for your family to be so scared of you.”
- “It must be hard for your kids to grow up with that sort of violence.”

It is important to acknowledge instances of violence against males by their female or male partners and ensure that they are properly addressed. It is not common for men to call the police for assistance or to seek support or protection from violence in their home.

men are entitled to the full protection of the law

Men can obtain police assistance and protection orders to protect them against further violence in family situations. Families, friends, and support workers can encourage men to use the law for their protection and to call for police to assist when violence occurs.

This is preferable to taking no action and risking further violence or to taking the law into their own hands and retaliating with force that goes beyond reasonable self-defence.

no telling

Some men have commented:

- that the shame of being beaten prevents them from telling anyone and seeking help
- that they do not expect to be believed and that no one will take it seriously
- that they don't want to upset the family or put their partner through the difficulty of a court hearing and possible penalty.

These things (shame, disbelief and bad repercussions) are the same reasons that many women give for not reporting family violence or finding help.

It has taken many years and a lot of lobbying and education for the issue of violence in families to be taken seriously and to have appropriate responses in place.

Men have the right to be safe from family violence

Men who are subject to violence by their partners need encouragement and support to deal with the issues and to make themselves safe.

"I had a very violent partner. She would scream at me, the kids, the cat, anyone if something upset her. She pulled my hair, scratched me and kicked me. I tried to talk to her about it but she would just go ballistic and start throwing things. I left after 10 years – we share custody of the kids now."

Mike (36)

"It never occurred to me to go to the police – I thought they would laugh, she's quite small but very strong. She broke my finger once and then tried to run me over another time."

Paul (29)

"I hated going home in the end. She was always in a terrible mood and ready for a fight – and I mean a fist fight. I wanted her to get help but she wouldn't do anything. I got very nervous and had to go on medication to cope."

Garth (32)

"He used to beat me up, call me disgusting names and stop me seeing my friends."

Kingi (24)

(see also Violence in same-sex relationships)

THE ABUSE OF WOMEN BY THEIR PARTNERS IS A SIGNIFICANT, PERSISTENT AND COSTLY SOCIAL PROBLEM IN NEW ZEALAND.

What women say about family violence tells a great deal about the attitudes that keep the problem alive. Family pressure, religious beliefs, hope for change, isolation, lack of support/resources/information/confidence, fear, self-blame, attachment, manipulation, illness, guilt, economic considerations – all play a part in keeping the lid on a lot of what goes on in families.

“Everyone seemed to think that I should stay with him and support him because he was trying hard to change. But it was my head that was getting bashed and my life that was at risk. No one seemed too worried about that.”

Penny (32)

“I had nothing. No family, no friends, no skills, and no money. Just him and three dependent kids. He was really clever and fooled everyone in town about what a good man he was. It was 8 years of hell until I left.”

Janine (28)

“I showed his mother and father what he'd done. His mother said that every marriage had its bad moments and she would talk to him about his temper. It did no good at all. He still does it.”

Denise (23)

“I always believed him when he said he would change. I might have been battered and bruised but that's what I wanted to believe. It took me 20 or so years to wake up and think – it ain't gonna happen gal!”

Molly (40)

“I was convinced it was my fault – I made him behave like that because he was fine with everyone else. His mother told me that he was never violent as a young man, and his workmates all respected him. So I naturally thought it was about me.”

Alicia (41)

“He never left me alone – phoned me all the time, quizzed me about where I had been and who I talked to. I couldn't move without him knowing about it. It was like being with a stalker. And he said it was because he loved me so much.”

Chanelle (24)

“It's gone on for years. I can't leave the farm or the animals. I have nothing else and nowhere to go.”

Meryl (57)

“She just goes crazy. I love her and she loves me but there are times I am scared to death of her.”

Chloe (29)

“He tells me what to do and when to do it. He stands over me when I'm cooking, he tells me where to shop and what to buy. He treats me like I know nothing and I'm hopeless at everything. If I say anything I get 'the look' and that's enough to shut my mouth.”

(Shayla 26)

“We have a successful family business. He knows that I can't get out of it and he plays on that. He laughs when I say I'm leaving – he knows that I'm trapped.”

“He died in an accident and I felt really guilty because I was glad I was free of him.”

Maureen (35)

“He's said many times he'll kill me if I go and I know he means it.”

Alison (39)

“He said he'll kill us all – I can't take the risk. I know he could do it.”

Treena (34)



Why does she stay with him?

Why did she let it go
on so long?

Why doesn't she just leave?

If it's really that
bad – she'd leave.

These questions and comments are common in discussions about violence in family relationships and seem to assume that the victim doesn't mind too much or has the power to make changes. They further support the attitudes that allow people to believe that using violence is excusable.

They also assume that leaving will end the relationship. That's not always true. Many women are harassed long after leaving a violent relationship. For many it's a time filled with fear and trepidation about what the reaction will be.

Women stay in violent relationships for a number of reasons:

- **fatigue** – too exhausted and vulnerable to manage life alone
- **fault** – self-blame is entrenched and supported by beliefs and attitudes in their family and the community: “She must have done something to upset him”
- **fear** – combined with shame, guilt, confusion, failure
 - of severe retribution
 - of not being believed
 - of losing the children, their home, their contacts
 - of being alone
- **finances** – the possibility of having no financial support
- **father** – everyone says the kids need him
- **false hope** – that the abuser will change and become non-violent
- **faith** – “till death do us part”, marriage is sacred
- **familiarity** – better the devil you know than face the world alone.

Leaving a relationship is no guarantee of safety and security. In fact, most women who are murdered as a result of family violence are killed after they have left the relationship.

It is a time of very high risk for a woman in a violent relationship and needs to be managed carefully to ensure her safety.

“It wasn’t until I talked with my sister and she put me in touch with the refuge. They helped me make plans to leave and keep us safe until he got the message that we weren’t going to put up with his violence any more. If I hadn’t had that support and the information they gave me, I shudder to think what would have happened.”

Joy

“A women two streets away was murdered by her partner a year ago – that could have been me. I knew I had to get out. It took weeks of planning. I got help from a couple of good friends. His brother lived with us and we had to organise the kids and get out of the house when they were both away.”

Sasha

“My friends were a tower of strength. They came and got me and the kids and some of the men stayed and talked with him. It gave me space and safety to think about my next steps.”

Pauline

“Support was everything – I couldn’t have done it alone. I was so scared. My friends, the refuge, my family and church people all helped.”

Miriam

“I kept it quiet for years – shame I think but when my parents came to stay it all came out. They took me and the kids home with them and we started a new life down here. He’s come a few times to try and bring us back but there’s no way I’ll ever let myself into that again.”

Bella

“The women in my group were amazing. I learnt heaps from them. I went on a women’s self defence course as well and my self-esteem and belief in myself just grew and grew! I had never been in a situation for that to happen before! I feel strong and capable now and ready for more learning.”

Valma

“I phoned his Uncle who is a well known kaumatua – he organised the family to come over and meet with us. They listened to the story and I packed and arranged to leave while they were all there. I left that night and they stayed with him to keep him calm. They’ve been supportive of both of us and even though we won’t get back together we can talk about things and the kids aren’t scared any more.”

Coral

“She told me that the refuge wouldn’t know how to deal with a lesbian – she was wrong. They were great and gave me lots of help and support. They put me in touch with a lesbian support group – it’s actually helped us both.”

Sharn

“I was 16 and my Dad used to bash me and my mother – one day I told the counsellor at school and she got help for me. I felt sorry for Mum but she had to make her own way. I was ready to do something really desperate.”

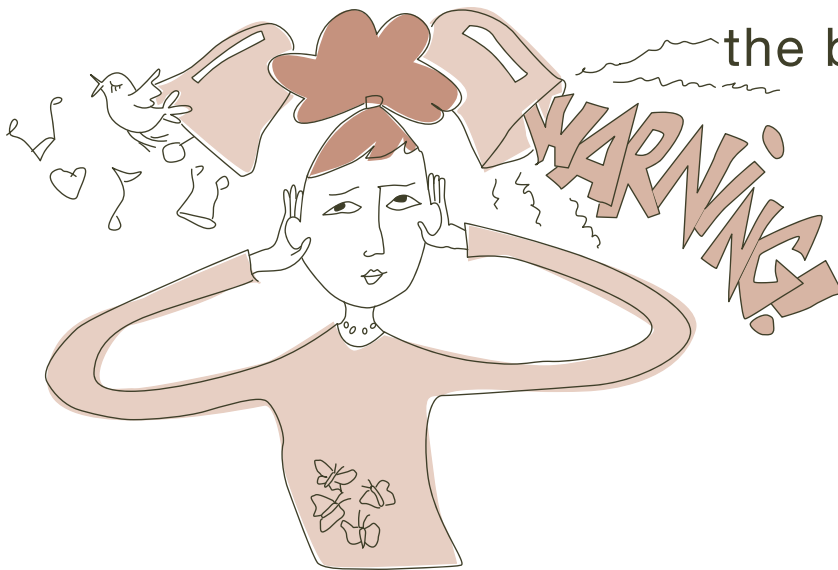
Melissa

**IT TAKES A
DOUBLE DOSE OF
COURAGE TO LEAVE
A RELATIONSHIP
WHERE VIOLENCE
IS A FEATURE**

The National Collective of Independent Women’s Refuges Inc. has produced a practical guide for women. This is available from www.womensrefuge.org.nz and local libraries.

WARNING BELLS OR WEDDING BELLS

#25



the best time to prevent an abusive relationship is before it starts

It's very easy to be so carried away by strong emotions and popular beliefs about male and female roles, the power of love and romantic idealism that undesirable behaviour might be ignored or dismissed as unimportant.

It is known that abusive relationships get worse as time goes on. What could be seen as a show of devotion early in the relationship can become a tactic to keep control of a partner

as it develops. Years down the track it could characterise serious abuse and violence.

Women escaping from abusive relationships often say that the warning signs were there early on but they chose to ignore them, or to believe that they would be able to change their partner over time.

Sadly, it's unusual for commitments to change to occur without first reaching a crisis point. By then there is likely to have been deep unhappiness and trauma for everyone involved.

YOUR RIGHTS IN A RELATIONSHIP ARE TO:

- **BE TREATED WITH RESPECT - AND DEFINE WHAT RESPECT IS FOR YOU**
- **DECIDE WHAT IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU AND SET YOUR PRIORITIES**
- **HAVE AND EXPRESS YOUR OWN FEELINGS AND OPINIONS**
- **HAVE A DIFFERENT VIEW AND NOT FEEL GUILTY**
- **BE LISTENED TO AND TAKEN SERIOUSLY**
- **ASK FOR WHAT YOU WANT**
- **MAKE MISTAKES AND BE ALLOWED TO TRY AGAIN**

Each right has a responsibility – to behave in the same way towards the other person.

AUDITING A RELATIONSHIP

#26

Check if any of these statements apply to your current partner, companion, boyfriend or girlfriend.

1 WARNING SIGNS:

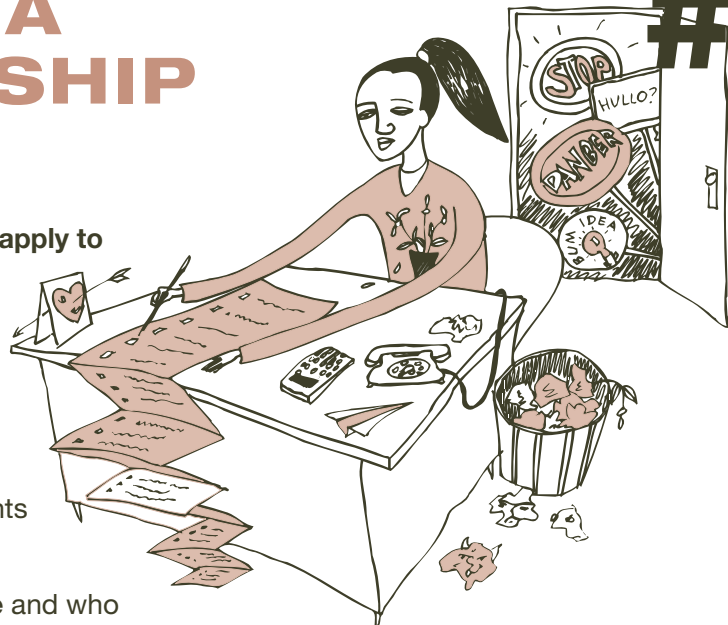
- Jealous** and doesn't like you talking to other people.
- Criticises** your friends and wants you to stop seeing them.
- Wants to know where you are** and who you are with all the time.
- Tries to control** your contacts with members of your family.
- Criticises what you wear or how you look.**
- Criticises what you say and do.**
- Questions what you've spent money on.**
- Expects sex on demand.**

If these apply, your partner is attempting to diminish your self-esteem, control your activities and who you see and talk to. This will make you much more dependent.

2 HAZARD LIGHTS:

- Tells people about things** you did or said that are embarrassing and makes you feel stupid.
- Blames you** for things that go wrong for him.
- Makes jokes which **put you and other women down.**
- Calls you fat, lazy, stupid, ugly, a slut,** or other things that make you feel bad.
- Ignores your opinions** or objections and does only what he/she wants.

If any of these statements apply to your partner, this talk is putting you down and making you feel less confident and less in control of yourself.



3 DANGER ZONE

- Drives too fast or does other dangerous things** which scare you.
- Goes too far when you are playing around** and hurts you or holds you down.
- Gets angry or violent when drinking or using drugs.**
- Threatens to break your belongings or destroy your property.**
- Threatens to hit you, hurt you or your friends, your pets or family.**
- Threatens to leave you or to commit suicide if you don't do what he/she wants.**
- Forces you into sexual acts you don't want – by threats, coercion or physical force.**
- Gets very angry about small, unimportant things**
- Won't express thoughts or feelings and then blows up.**
- Hits or physically assaults you in some way – may be sorry afterwards but does it repeatedly.**
- Threatens to kill you, your children or members of your family.**

You are in danger of your partner's violence.
GET HELP.

It is not unheard of for women to abuse their male or female partners or to commit acts of violence against them.

There is some debate about the true extent of the issue and its essential nature. Some claim that violence against males by their female partners occurs to the same degree as males assaulting females and women are just as likely to initiate violence. They also claim that women practise psychological violence to the same degree as males.

Others argue against this and believe that the context in which an incident of female-to-male violence takes place is entirely different from the pattern of systematic violence and abuse which is generally a feature of violence against women in family situations.

Male violence is associated with attitudes assuming males are entitled to power over, and control of, women. In some cases women acting violently may be attempting to control their partners and gain power over them.

“... a consideration of family violence would be misleading if it didn't identify that although both partners may use violence, the dynamics and consequences of male on female partner, or former partner violence, are quite different.”

Hon Lianne Dalziel, Minister of Women's Affairs, 2006

Information from police statistics, professionals and support agencies does not show violence toward males from female partners as a pervasive social problem, although obviously for the families involved it is indeed a very serious matter.

Usually when women assault men in incidents of family violence, the nature, causes and effects are not the same.

- It is unusual for a man to be seriously injured or killed in an attack by a woman.
- Men who are assaulted by a woman often retaliate with an excessive degree of force.
- Men are less likely to live in fear of their female partner's violence.
- Men are less likely to be financially dependent on female partners and therefore are likely to have more power to make choices about action for safety or security.

The context of family violence within the framework of male power and control over women links to the historic situation of men “owning” women, controlling their family resources and having the view that they are entitled to control women's lives. There is no equivalent basis for women to have power over or control of men.



“Mum doesn’t need her hair done anymore, she’s had her day!”

“She won’t miss the money, we need it more.”

AGE CONCERN NEW ZEALAND USES THE FOLLOWING DEFINITIONS:

ELDER ABUSE

- Elder Abuse occurs when a person aged 65 or more experiences harmful physical, psychological, sexual, material/financial or social effects caused by the behaviour of another person with whom they have a relationship implying trust.

ELDER NEGLECT

- Elder Neglect occurs when a person aged 65 or more experiences harmful physical, psychological, sexual, material/financial or social effects caused by the behaviour of another person with whom they have a relationship implying trust. It occurs as a result of another person failing to meet the physical and emotional needs of an older person.
- **ACTIVE NEGLECT** is conscious and intentional deprivation.
- **PASSIVE NEGLECT** is the result of the carer’s inadequate knowledge, infirmity or lack of trust in prescribed services.

TYPES OF ABUSE

- **PHYSICAL** – Infliction of physical pain, injury or force – eg: being hit, slapped, tied in a chair, etc
- **PSYCHOLOGICAL/EMOTIONAL** – Behaviour including verbal abuse which causes mental anguish, stress and fear – eg: name calling, blackmailing, “mind games”
- **SEXUAL** – Sexually abusive and exploitative behaviours involving threats, force or lack of consent
- **MATERIAL/FINANCIAL** – Illegal or improper exploitation and/or use of funds or other resources eg: having money or possessions taken from them.

Statistics from services in New Zealand show that the majority of abusers are members of the older person’s family (partners, sons, daughters, in-laws, siblings, grandchildren). Other abusers include people employed in positions of trust – residential facility staff or paid carers.

WOMEN CONTINUE TO BE THE MAIN VICTIMS OF ELDER ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT

Between 2002 and 2004, women made up 70% of the 884 individual clients referred to Age Concern New Zealand for cases of abuse and/or neglect.

12% of all cases of abuse and/or neglect involved physical abuse and 2% involved sexual abuse.

Not all cases of abuse are reported. It is estimated that 3–10% of the older population (65+) are victims of elder abuse.

From special report from Age Concern New Zealand

New Zealand society must show it does not accept any physical abuse of our young or of our elderly

MEDIA STATEMENT

Age Concern New Zealand releases report on elder abuse & neglect prevention service –12/12/2005

Key findings in Age Concern New Zealand's analysis of cases of elder abuse and neglect, just released, shows that the majority of abusers (70%) are family members, most commonly sons or daughters (40%).

Sons and daughters continue to be the most common abusers irrespective of the client's living situation. Older abusers (those aged 65+) were more likely to be husbands.

Family violence continues to occur even for older people living in residential care. 66% percent of abuse or neglect experienced by older people in residential care was attributed to family members.

Most frequently the older person experiences psychological abuse. For example, verbal abuse used to intimidate, humiliate, harass or control choices. This may have wide-ranging and long-term effects on physical and mental health.

The second most common form of abuse experienced is material/financial abuse, the illegal or improper exploitation and/or use of funds or other resources. For example, using a parent's EFTPOS card to help yourself to funds. Parents "loaning money" to children who then refuse to pay it back. Forty-two cases were identified as involving misuse of Enduring Power of Attorney.

The data presented in the ACNZ report is based on referrals to Age Concern services and provides information on reported cases only.

International research suggests that these cases are likely to be just the tip of the iceberg.

ACNZ calls for the whole community to act to challenge ageist attitudes which are used to justify abusive behaviour. "Not respecting older people's right to care, dignity, independence, participation and self-fulfilment is abuse."



ACCEPTANCE OF ELDER ABUSE CONDEMNED: 09.03.06

Minister for Senior Citizens Ruth Dyson has condemned New Zealand society for allowing elder sex abuse and other harm of the elderly to flourish nationwide.

"New Zealand society should be ashamed of itself. We are a civilised society and we are judged on how well we protect our weakest members," she said.

"We need to change the environment and New Zealand society must show it does not accept any physical abuse of our young or of our elderly," she said.

"Public awareness and debate is vital," she said.

GETTING THE BEST FROM THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

#29

“I don’t believe those old myths. I’ve made heaps more friends since I turned 75. I do all sorts of things now – I’ve become older and bolder and it’s great.”

Patsy (76)

Community action to prevent elder abuse and change attitudes and behaviours that have allowed it to continue needs to include the views and ideas of older people.

Older people need to be encouraged to speak out about abuse and violence and be assured of community support. It is never too late to stop the cycle of violence and work toward attitude and behaviour change.

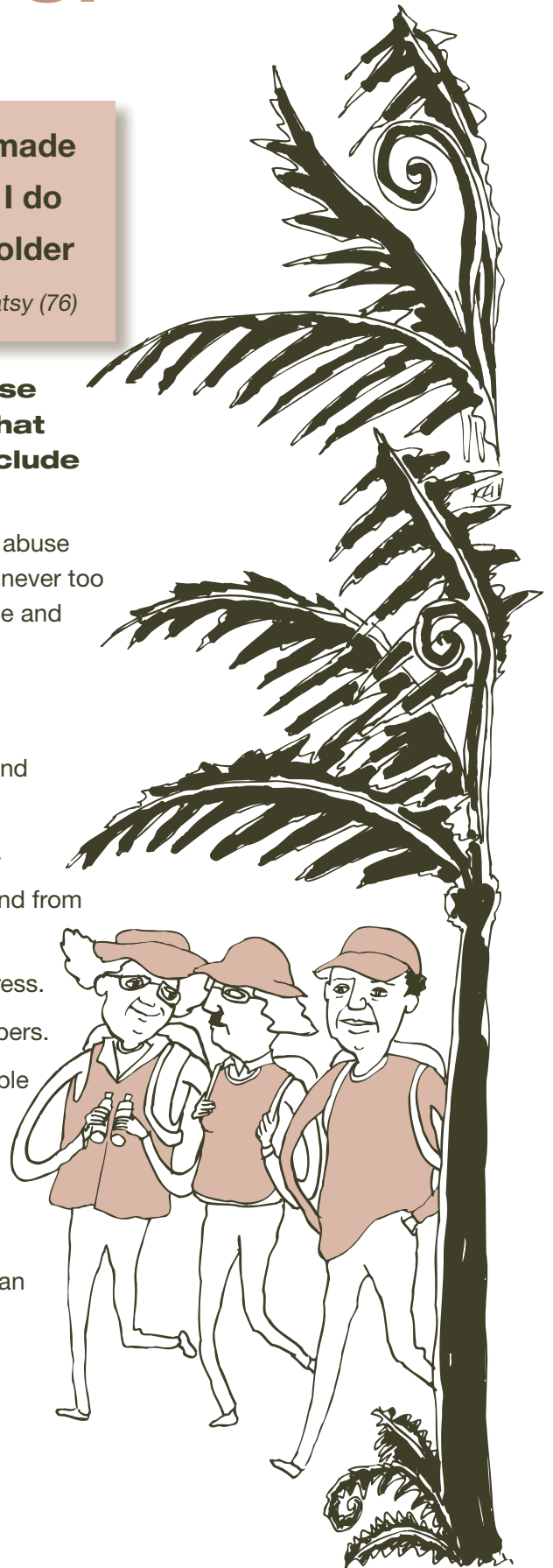
GETTING THE BEST FROM THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

- Stay in touch with your community, trusted friends and neighbours. Share news and information.
- Keep active. Learn new skills and make new friends.
- Ask for help when you need it. Everyone needs a hand from time to time.
- Exercise, eat well, get enough sleep and manage stress.
- Enjoy the company of good friends and family members.
- Be positive about the special contribution older people have to make to their family, the community and society.
- Tell people what you will and will not tolerate – your opinion is important.
- Know the services available in the community that can assist older people.

Atawhaitia o mātua
Cherish your parents

Whakanuia o tūpuna
Salute your elders

Ngā taonga morehu
A surviving treasure



KŌTAHI TE HA O TE TIPUNA ME TE MOKOPUNA

SURVEYS SUGGEST THAT FAMILY VIOLENCE IS WIDESPREAD AMONG MĀORI. IN 2001, 49% OF MĀORI WOMEN, SAID THEY HAD BEEN HIT, THREATENED OR FRIGHTENED BY A PARTNER AT SOME TIME, COMPARED WITH PĀKEHA (24%) AND PACIFIC (23%).

Darrin Haimona, chief executive of Waikato-based Ngāti Haua Healthcare, told a conference in Auckland in November 2005 that traditional Māori culture was no excuse for Māori men who were violent.

“We need to be consistent in messages saying that violence is taken seriously,” Mr Haimona said. Mr Haimona said this was the reverse of pre-European Māori society, where the role of women and children was one of “divinity and sanctity”.

When European missionaries opened schools in the Waikato, many Māori families boycotted them because they punished children with violence.

“However, when we look at the statistics today . . . we as Māori men and women are doing the violence towards our own children. That is absolutely contrary to our traditional values.

“Male violence against women and children is not a traditional aspect of Māori society.”

He acknowledged that warfare was also a feature of traditional Māori society, but he said people who infringed the sanctity of women and children, even in war, were regulated by utu. Utu meant revenge, but it also meant “restoring balance”.

Mr Haimona said the only system that existed to restore “balance” after a transgression today was the justice system. “I don’t want to see more Māori people going through the police and justice system.

However, that is the only tool that we can legally use, because our traditional ways of dealing with it might have been a bit too harsh.”

ALVA’S INSPIRING WORDS . . .

“I continue to support whānau and whānau whanui to focus on tikanga as a way of transforming whānau to become violence free. It ain’t easy at times given systematic/structural attacks on our culture. But the cycle has been broken in my whānau and a new ‘Pa Harakeke’ (my own) stands stronger and clearer with tikanga at the forefront of whānau practise’. Alva works in Te Tai Tokerau with strategies to break the cycle of violence by using principles and practices that derive from Te Ao Māori.

**“ . . . WE
AS MĀORI
MEN AND
WOMEN ARE
DOING THE
VIOLENCE
TOWARDS
OUR OWN
CHILDREN”**

“There is nothing in the Māori world that promotes and encourages the idea of whānau violence. No one can point to an ideological belief that talks about women as being in the lower social order. Mana tangata is female in nature. Life itself is symbolised by women. Hence the terms like te whare tangata where humankind originates from.”

In September 2004 the updated version of the report from the 2nd Māori Taskforce on Whānau Violence was published through Te Puni Kōkiri (www.tpk.govt.nz). *Transforming Whānau Violence* offers a conceptual framework for addressing violence within whānau.

THE VISION

THE WELLBEING (MAURI ORA) OF WHĀNAU, HAPŪ AND IWI AND WITHIN THAT, INDIVIDUAL MĀORI

“Violence damages the mauri ora of both victims and perpetrators. It creates disease and imbalance which results in a state of kahupo, which can be described as having no purpose in life or spiritual blindness.”

In the introduction to the document Minister Parekura Horomia states:

“Turning away from violence in all its forms is one of the most pro-whānau choices any person can make. In making this choice individuals and their whānau deserve the kind of support that serves their particular circumstances. This is a challenge for all those who work within the field of whānau violence.

“Violence is not normal or acceptable. We want a culture of zero-tolerance to whānau violence.”

He describes the report as a culmination of ideas, discussion and debate. The framework links different

components of tikanga to enable family violence practitioners to interpret and apply it in a localised context to bring about whānau wellbeing.

The vehicle for putting the framework into practice initially is Project Mauri Ora, established through Te Korowai Aroha with iwi in 10 locations.

It is also important to note that communities of Māori in many locations have established programmes that deal directly with violence prevention through health and whānau wellbeing promotion. Māori are also well represented, and showing leadership in community collaborations aiming to change attitudes and behaviours regarding family violence.

Mana Wāhine

The central role of women in Māori society rests on the connection to Papatuanuku, the female divinity and the earth mother, the element from which all human life emerges and is nourished.

The status of women, Mana Wāhine, is pivotal to spiritual, emotional and cultural wellbeing for whānau, hapū, iwi and for Māori society in any context. The special mana of women is inherent to her place as te whare tangata, the carrier of future generations.

In Māori convention the strength of the whānau depends on the mutual dignity of women and men in their complementary roles. The mana of women is considered equal to the mana of men. In traditional Māori life men did not dominate women.

Children have their own mana and are taonga. An abuse on a child is an abuse and an offence to the whānau. The obligation for care, protection and safety of children is with each and every member.



IT'S ABOUT WHĀNAU

Dr Pita Sharples Co-leader, Māori Party Member of Parliament for Tamaki Makaurau, made these comments in a press release on 27 February 2006

“LET’S GET REAL ABOUT VIOLENCE EVERYONE KNOWS WHEN THERE IS VIOLENCE OCCURRING IN THE FAMILY.”

Dr Pita Sharples

“It is time now to get brave and to face up to the huge challenge before us. **My challenge is to every family to remember their role as the primary guardians of our children.**

“The last thing our whānau want is for the state to intervene, and to take actions which can ultimately destroy the nature of whānau relationships.

“We need to address the whole family to find a way to restore their balance, to heal their hurts, and to find new ways of moving forward.

“And I’m not talking only about Māori families and Māori youth. I am talking about all groups. There are Pākeha, Chinese, Indian youth racing their souped-up cars amongst pedestrians. Pacific Islands youth gather in groups and fight with neighbouring groups. It has to stop. Parents, uncles, elder brothers, mothers have to clamp down.

“**Building strong communities is not the responsibility of the police, the courts, CYF, Work and Income etc. It is families who have to get real about the behaviour of their own.** The prisons are jam-packed – we have a culture of arresting, convicting and imprisonment.

“Putting energy into getting more beds into secure youth residences, or managing for increasing numbers of young people in police cells is all about face.

“We need to look at the vital role that whānau play in supporting our young people,” said Dr Sharples. “Indeed, if any interventions are to be successful their starting point must be about inspiring whānau to take on their responsibilities to their children.

“**It all comes back to the whānau,**” concluded Dr Sharples.

“Our enduring solutions must be to reunite our young people with their families. This approach may indeed be challenging, but it is critically important if we are ever to make a difference to the depressing statistics that make headline stories.”

and more

from Tariana Turia, co-leader of the Māori Party on 9 March 2006 (referring to United States Department Report on Human Rights Practices in New Zealand, by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour).

“. . . of huge concern to the Māori Party were – continuing violence against women; high numbers of Māori recorded as victims of violent abuse (32% compared to 17% of European persons); other societal abuse and discrimination including abuse directed at Somali and Muslim communities, discrimination against Pasifika peoples and vandalism of mosques,” said Mrs Turia.

“We are also shattered at the high number of convictions of Māori for assault by male on a female; and assaults on children. **Such violence is intolerable and we must all take responsibility for making it stop.**”

PACIFIC PEOPLE ADDRESSING FAMILY VIOLENCE

#31

An old man of Polynesia was approached by a man of the world and after talking for some time he said to the old man, “so you come from one of the smallest nations in the Pacific.” His reply was humble but strong and he said “No! We come from the biggest ocean in the world.”

KEY PRINCIPLES FROM THIS NARRATIVE:

- 1 Our approach is not deficit but strength based:** The old man refused to be confined to others’ perceptions. We draw from our own stories and journeys of hope and success even amidst failure and the struggle with family violence.
- 2 Our responsibility is collective:** Like the old man we need to respond as a community even when addressed as individuals. This does not mean removing individual accountability, but it requires many hands to remove the burden and curse of guilt and shame, which comes from family violence.

Our Pacific people immigrating to Aotearoa/New Zealand have had to adapt, and have survived the challenges of maintaining family solidarity in a new land amongst a dominant culture. Our struggle to survive has, at times, come at a terrible cost and the reality is that violence has often been the pay-out to our children and our families.

New generations of New Zealand-born Pacific people have been affected by Western European influences and values such as individualism and materialism and this has often disconnected them from the traditional structures which sustained family and community cohesion in their parents’ homeland.




OUR DEFINITION OF VIOLENCE: Violence is about a dominating force of power and control

OUR GOAL:

To stop family violence within our Pacific communities

OUR APPROACH:

To stop family violence we need to affirm three key elements:

-  **our cultural values**
-  **our spiritual beliefs**
-  **our physical wellbeing**

Our Pacific communities have begun the journey of reducing family violence through:

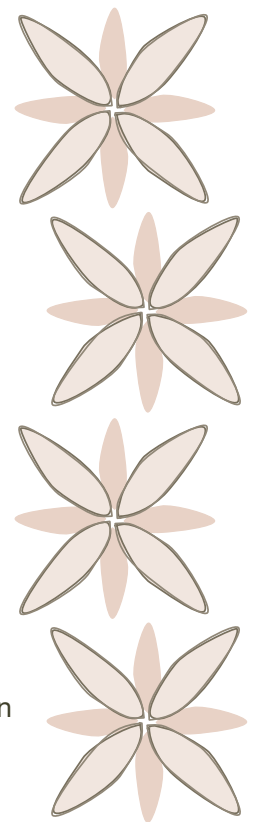
- providing information and education in a variety of settings appropriate for our Pacific communities
- establishing support services to help families affected by violence
- establishing services for youth to access information and support
- entering into community/ church/school/family partnerships to develop programmes and support services and plans for prevention

- strengthening community and cultural solidarity.

The core prevention

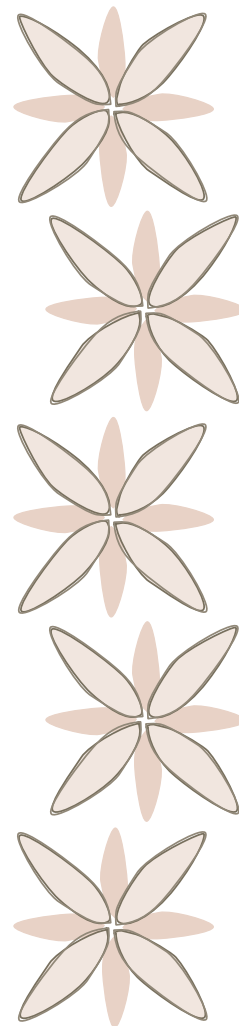
messages apply across all cultures and all Pacific groups. Strategies to deliver the messages will depend on the cultural context and the ability to effectively facilitate forums for discussion and planning for action.

This is not a one-off event but a clear, long-term strategy to embed into the consciousness of Pacific people emotionally, spiritually and physically, as we take a strong stand against violence within our communities.



WE NEED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF:

- **The influence of the church and its leaders.** Changes in attitudes can be inspired and motivated by leadership from the church and through using a theological construct within the church/community context.
- **Recent arrivals from Pacific Islands may tolerate higher levels of violence.** They are a key target group to educate and inform about the New Zealand legal and social framework around family violence.
- **Current myths** about the use of violence can be replaced with alternative ideas, provided they are supported and promoted by leaders with influence in Pacific people's communities.
- **Acceptance of the urgent nature of the problem** is a key issue for education at all levels.
- **Written material and courses** will only reach a certain sector of Pacific people's communities. Personal connection to the information by familiar family service workers or trusted professionals will reach many other people.
- **Positive messages** that are more readily acceptable and encourage change – eg, promote the vision of families free of violence.
- **Language** – attention to appropriate taste, tone and terminology as well as dialect is critical in making messages acceptable and encouraging participation.
- **Use narrative and traditional forms** to reinforce key messages so that the approach is indigenous.
- **Work within a community development framework** to ensure that the strategy is not imposed from the top down but grown and owned in the community.



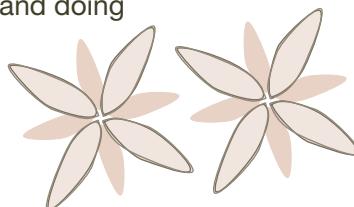
to stop family violence we need to affirm three key elements – our cultural values, our spiritual beliefs, and our physical wellbeing

The Pacific Island family is the lifeline of its members. The Pacific Island concept of aiga, anau, magafoa, kaiga, kainga and yavusa are fundamental to the ways of life and being of Pacific Island peoples. Preservation of Pacific Island family and its values is the responsibility of every Pacific Island person.

As Pacific peoples, we are not acknowledged enough as nations of people each with our own unique language and culture. We, from the Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, Tonga, Samoa, Tuvalu, Kiribati and Tokelau have our own histories in ways of living and doing things.

As immigrants to Aotearoa we have brought the richness and diversity of our heritage with us.

As residents and citizens of Aotearoa we find ourselves faced with concerns that challenge some of our attitudes and relationships.



It is in this context that we need to address family violence. We all accept the need for family violence to stop and the challenge ahead for us is to ensure that this happens.

While we acknowledge the cultural values of our ancestors, we must deal with the reality of belonging to families whose children do not understand cultural discipline and parents who may or may not realise that they are using violence as a tool for power and control.

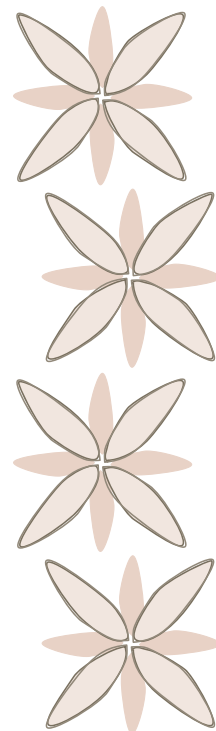
Cultural values can transition through a current contemporary context to become a relevant tool in addressing today's issues of family violence.

It is up to all of us to ensure our men, women, children and families have appropriate information, education, resources, support services, strategies and inspiration to enable us to stop the vicious and damaging cycle of family violence.

Our families are the essence of our culture, our language, and history and our nationhood. With family violence we violate all these aspects of ourselves.

COMMUNITY ACTION

- **Network** regularly to share ideas, information and plans.
- **Develop a community development model** to ensure sustainable ownership and relevant engagement for attitude and behaviour change.
- **Set up appropriate community supports.**
- **Hold seminars** for church and community leaders to inform and gain support.
- **Involve church and community leaders** in campaigns and public awareness programmes. They play a central role.
- **Organise or be involved in orientation sessions for new arrivals.** Inform them about legal and social sanctions on family violence.
- **Promote role models, sporting heroes, performers** etc, ask them to put their names to prevention campaigns and awareness material.
- **Give information to professionals,** family service and support workers who can interact on a personal level with family members. Include community health and pre-school workers, doctors etc.
- **Use media,** community radio and newspapers, advertising brochures, school and church newsletters etc to get messages about prevention across. Community and religious role models can be involved.
- **Drama, music, creative writing and art in schools, youth clubs** can promote ideas of families free of violence.
- **Bring young and old together in friendly settings** to hear each other and come to understanding about violence-free families and the part each group can play.



FAMILY VIOLENCE IS A CRIME

- **New Zealand law states that assault is against the law, whether it happens in a public place, between two people who don't know each other, or in the home when a man beats his wife.**
- **The police policy is to make an arrest when they are called to a domestic incident, where it is clear that there has been an assault.**
- **One of the consequences of family violence can be arrest and imprisonment.**

VIOLENCE IN SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS #32

The Domestic Violence Act applies equally to people living in same-sex relationships and their children, in providing protection from all forms of domestic violence.

The basic power and control dynamics are at the core of violence in both same-sex and heterosexual relationships. Many of the tactics used to maintain control are the same.

Issues that can result in denial and under-reporting are common across all relationship types:

- **fear for personal safety**
- **fear of not being believed or taken seriously**
- **shame and fear of exposure of the abuse.**

ADDITIONAL REPORTING DILEMMAS

Additional factors involved in same-sex partner abuse mean that people in same-sex relationships may be particularly reluctant to seek help or discuss their troubles with others.

- The heterosexist bias of society means that people in same-sex relationships may not expect taken seriously.
- A person may be hesitant about seeking help for fear of a homophobic response. A victim may be concerned about the safety of their partner if he/she is arrested and held in custody.
- Some people go to great lengths to keep their sexual orientation a private matter and are extremely unlikely to seek help for fear of exposure. They may fear it will result in “outing” to parents, former partner, children, employers etc.
- The invisibility of same-sex domestic violence in the gay and mainstream media, and in society in general, means that people experiencing violence and abuse from a partner of the same sex may not relate what is happening to them with a perception of “domestic violence”.
- There can be overt denial of the existence of domestic violence from within gay and lesbian communities which makes it very difficult to address. This may result from not

wanting to draw further negative attention to already stigmatised communities.

- Some same-sex attracted people are keen to present a form of relationship which is free of the problems of heterosexual relationships. Someone wanting help may feel guilt associated with “betraying” the gay community and fear being ostracised.
- People in same-sex relationships may feel particularly at risk of having children removed from their care.
- People in same-sex relationships may not expect the law to apply to them or services to be available to them.
- Traditional family supports, often relied on at a time of need, may have been weakened or severed by non-acceptance of the person’s sexual orientation.

Any of these factors may be used as a weapon of control by an abusive partner. For example, “if you tell anyone what’s happened I’ll tell your mother about you”, or “don’t bother ringing the police, they’ll enjoy having a good laugh at you.”

PLANNING PREVENTION

Recognising and raising awareness of the reality of violence and abuse in same-sex relationships is important.

Mainstream prevention programmes need to include messages that are inclusive of same-sex relationships. Communications also need to be specifically targeted within gay, lesbian and bisexual communities.

Agency and community workers involved in family violence prevention and who work with children need to locate specialist training to be aware of and responsive to domestic violence and abuse in same-sex relationships. Gay and lesbian involvement in planning for attitude and behaviour change is essential to ensure appropriate media and methods are used.

REFUGEE AND MIGRANT #33 FAMILIES

New Zealand refugee and new migrant communities have established relationships with mainstream health and social service providers, as well as community links, through various education and cultural events. This provides opportunities for inclusion, sharing ideas, perspectives and learning from one another. Family violence affects all New Zealand communities including well-settled and new migrant communities. Support to address family violence and information to understand New Zealand law and the impact and consequences of family violence may be a priority for this particular sector of the community.

Most communities prefer to address the matter of reducing family violence from a strength-based approach; the following objectives for strengthening action to prevent family violence may be a useful guide for further action.

- Promoting healthy relationships and safe behaviour in families with a particular emphasis on the safety and wellbeing of children
- Strengthening families through improved resettlement support
- Preventing family breakdown
- Strengthening and supporting the role of motherhood
- Reminding families that violence is not acceptable in any faith and New Zealand law specifically prohibits it with serious consequences for offenders
- Educating families about the impact of family violence and breakdown
- Increasing awareness of family violence prevention with spiritual and community leaders
- Promoting culturally appropriate counselling and intervention services
- Increasing acceptance and respect for refugee and migrant families among New Zealanders through engagement and understanding
- Increasing community agency responsiveness to refugee and migrant families

Refugee and migrant families can be involved with family violence prevention. Knowing the laws governing protection of all family members from violence and what services are available may be the first step and can be delivered through targeted community awareness and learning activities.

Like all women in violent situations, migrant or refugee women who suffer family violence are very vulnerable.

- She may lack family and community support.
- For some an abusive relationship seems better than being alone.
- She may feel that she should tolerate her partner's violence because of trauma he has endured.
- She may not be aware of the laws concerning family violence.
- Cultural difference, language barriers, lack of knowledge of protection and support services make it difficult for her to seek help or leave a violent home.
- Shame, helplessness and despair can prevent her from taking action.
- Threats, intimidation and fear of her partner may make it hard to speak out.
- Cultural or religious attitudes towards separation and divorce and the desire to keep the family together may pressure a woman to remain in a violent home.
- She may be reluctant to involve police or authorities in a family matter.

Including new migrants in community action to prevent family violence will enhance awareness and promote learning for everyone involved.

It will be useful to:

- establish dialogue with refugee and migrant community leaders about preventing family violence
- facilitate mutual learning, understanding, inclusion and respect between refugee and migrant communities and advocates for preventing family violence
- enable and promote the mobilisation of refugee and migrant men and women on the issue of preventing family violence
- empower refugee and migrant women to define and articulate their needs and social realities
- enable the development of resources and services that meet the needs of refugee and migrant communities.

The major religions of the world all have commitments to peace, justice, honesty, personal responsibility and forgiveness.

Church and spiritual leaders can play a vital part in preventing family violence through breaking the silence which surrounds the subject and promoting and acting on some key messages:

- **Family violence is never acceptable.** There is no justification for abusing family members.
- **Violence and abuse within the church, family and community must be addressed.** Victims must be supported and abusers held accountable.
- **Women are entitled to full human rights and equal treatment.**

QUESTIONS FOR RELIGIOUS/SPIRITUAL CONGREGATIONS COULD BE:

- Where does this congregation stand on the issue of family violence?
- Are teachings being misinterpreted and used to justify violent behaviour?
- Do victims of abuse find our congregation a safe haven from the ravages of abusive relationships?
- What does our congregation offer that would help to eliminate family violence?
- Is our congregation working co-operatively with secular agencies in the community to help victims of abuse and to combat its underlying causes?

“States should condemn violence against women and should not involve any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to its elimination.”

From Article 4 of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women

The earth is Papatuanuku, the ancestress of all Māori, and that land is of paramount significance to Māori socially, culturally, spiritually, politically and economically. Papatuanuku also played a key role in instructing her son, Tanemahuta, where to find the human element and how to make Hine-ahu-one so that humankind could be created.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

#35

“Persons with disabilities and their families need to be fully informed about taking precautions against sexual and other forms of abuse. Persons with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to abuse in the family, community or institutions and need to be educated on how to avoid the occurrence of abuse, recognise when abuse has occurred and report on such acts.”

*Persons with Disabilities (General Assembly of the UN, 1993),
Rule number 9. - Family life and individual integrity.*

International research has shown that people with disabilities are more likely to be abused than other people.

This is because people with disabilities:

- are often socially isolated with little opportunity for contact outside their immediate living situation
- may rely on others for personal care and support and not be able to report any abuse
- may be unable to defend themselves against abuse
- may have been socialised to be compliant and not to question or object to the behaviour of people in authority or control
- may not have access to information about abuse, keeping safe or their right to protection
- are not able to report abuse or remove themselves from a violent situation.

COMMUNITIES CAN SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES BY:

- ensuring their buildings and services are accessible
- ensuring disability groups are included in community activities, including training in family violence awareness, identification and prevention
- making sure educators with skills can provide appropriate support
- ensuring people with disabilities have opportunities to be involved in planning
- encouraging service providers to develop protocols to ensure safety of people with disabilities, including checking that staff have no history of violence or abuse
- making opportunities for community members to become aware of and informed about rights and needs of the disability community.

**TELL SOMEONE
YOU TRUST
IF YOU OR
SOMEONE
YOU KNOW IS
BEING ABUSED**

IN THE COUNTRY

#36

Rural communities in New Zealand share some common features although they may be very diverse in character.

Particular issues regarding family violence in rural areas need to be taken into account when considering attitude and behaviour change.

Iwi, hapū and tauiwi or settler connections and traditions all play a part in defining the nature of rural communities. History and economic conditions have contributed to features of modern rural life.

Many families are interconnected and/or related. Many have been part of the same communities for many generations.

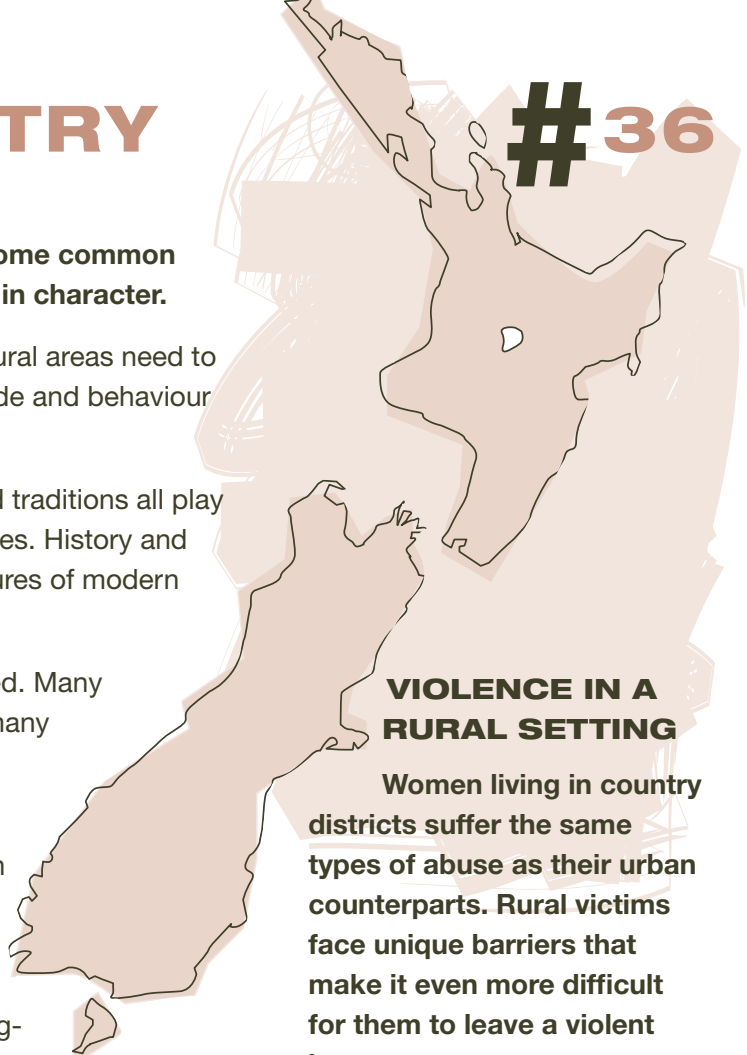
Some families move in to rural areas for economic or lifestyle reasons or to re-establish ancestral links. Adjusting to a different way of life and perhaps dealing with more conservative values can be difficult. There may be tensions between newcomers and long-standing community members as differing values and approaches impact on how the community operates and what issues take precedence (eg economic and conservation approaches may conflict).

Tensions can evolve particularly where acquired land is subject to Treaty of Waitangi claims by Māori. Prejudice, racism and differing opinions on the issues can open up divisions between Māori and other communities.

Male culture in rural New Zealand is traditionally built around being a hard man who can handle the harsh side of rural life. The focus of social contact is often the rugby club or pub. Guns are common in rural households.

Rural women in New Zealand are noted for their practicality and ability to cope with difficult circumstances. They are often multi-skilled and manage many practical tasks in their own family situation and in community- building. Their partners often need to spend long hours away from the home and women often deal with farming or household crises on their own.

There is a tradition of rural families supporting each other, sharing things and providing practical help in times of adversity or crisis. Conversely, some people choose to live in the country where family life can be more private and neighbours are less likely to know what goes on within a family.



VIOLENCE IN A RURAL SETTING

Women living in country districts suffer the same types of abuse as their urban counterparts. Rural victims face unique barriers that make it even more difficult for them to leave a violent home.

Family privacy may be preciously guarded. Family violence may be seen as an individual and private matter rather than a social and public issue. This can make it difficult to reach out for help and reveal family troubles.

Involving friends or neighbours who are part of a small, close community can threaten community security.

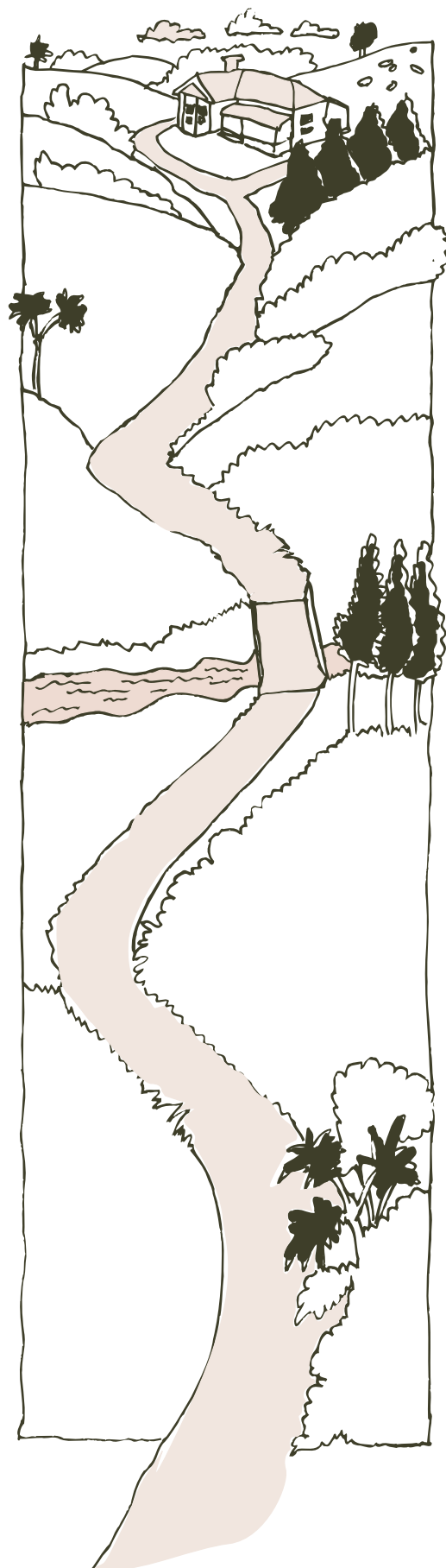
Help is not readily at hand in a crisis. It could be some time before there is a response to family violence emergency calls.

Many women live miles away from the nearest town, family, friends, neighbours, community providers and the police.

LEAVING HOME IS HARD

It's not easy for anyone, but rural women face additional barriers leaving or escaping the influence of violent and abusive partners.

- A strong sense of belonging to a particular place makes moving away an extreme and sometimes impossible option. For Māori women, to live anywhere but among her own hapū in her turangawaewae may be unthinkable.
- Farming women may hate to leave land they have lived on for years and worked to develop. Many know no other lifestyle and regard their choices as limited. There may be a generational attachment to the community and the land. There may be major financial considerations regarding jointly owned assets and investments.
- Leaving home might mean leaving animals. This is especially difficult for women who care for pets or farm animals and fear that they will suffer from neglect or cruel retaliation.
- News travels fast in small communities. Unusual movements are more noticeable and confidentiality is less likely. The location of a safe house may not be a secret for long.
- The knowledge that her partner has and can use a gun is a strong deterrent to a woman who has lived with death threats and fear.
- Social and support services may be lacking and volunteer help is scarce. Few rural towns have a refuge or a counselling service. A lengthy time can elapse before a response is made to needs.
- Professionals such as police, doctors, lawyers and family service workers may know the family well. They may even be related or be part of the family's social network. Familiarity may cause embarrassment and reluctance to use these services.
- For isolated women, the phone may be their only means of contact beyond the home. The risk of calls being checked and sources of help discovered can inhibit women calling for advice or assistance.
- Women in farm worker accommodation are aware that if their partner is arrested and sentenced they have little chance of being able to remain in the dwelling.
- Transport is likely to be a problem if women don't have their own vehicles. There may be no buses or taxis or they may be too costly. Walking to escape violence in country areas has further dangers.
- Living alone in a rural area is difficult for many women. Isolation, lack of transport and other services, and fears for personal security, increase problems for women on their own.



COUNTRY PEOPLE CAN PREVENT FAMILY VIOLENCE

IDEAS FOR ACTION

Building on attitudes to lessen the tolerance of family violence through drawing on the strengths of rural communities can begin the process of behaviour change.

- **Organise training** on family violence for family service workers and home visitors. They often have relationships established with many rural families. They see the women on their home ground and are in a position to offer information for prevention, support, or survival. Include community health workers, district and Plunket or other Well Child providers, nurses, community pre-school workers, visiting teachers, Maori liaison officers, and church and pastoral workers. Offer them brochures to leave and books and videos to lend to families.
- **Build alliances of people** who know and care about changing attitudes and behaviours relating to family violence. Learn together, spread the messages and develop a community culture to lessen tolerance of violence in families and other community settings.
- **Encourage gossip.** Or call it “networking”. It’s the way women pass on things which are important and have meaning in their lives. Talking about a friend in trouble is not vindictive or spiteful. It may be the thing that helps break the silence about violence and saves her life.
- **Organise opportunities for women** in isolated communities or situations to meet together informally to share ideas, information, and support. Keep it simple. It could be a coffee and networking session or it could be a discovery, learning weaving or other craft/hobby session. Maybe watch an informative video. Have brochures and other written material about family violence prevention and support available.
- **Run an information session** on family violence issues in rural communities for your Members of Parliament (remember Maori and list MPs), your mayor, councillors, community leaders, and kaumatua. Lobby for better services and support to prevent family violence in rural communities.
- **Run an information session for professionals.** Make them aware of the particular issues regarding family violence in rural communities. Have information available for them to pass on to clients or patients.
- **Involve men’s organisations in prevention.** What about a rugby match to support the refuge or the safe house network? How about a tug-of-war to raise funds for a positive parenting course? Make sure there’s awareness and support information available.
- **Let police have a list of support workers and contact numbers.** They can refer a woman to an individual rather than to an organisation. This can break down barriers of concern over confidentiality or exposure.
- **Involve rural support agencies,** Maori Women’s Welfare League, Country Women’s Institute, Federated Farmers, Women’s Refuge, iwi and hapu social service providers in organising learning opportunities for community members and support services about attitudes and behaviours that will prevent family violence.

family violence impacts on the social fabric of the nation and has serious implications for workplaces

FAMILY VIOLENCE IMPACTS ON THE WORKPLACE THROUGH:

- decreased productivity, when the effects of violence reduce a worker's concentration and capability
- absenteeism or loss of a worker through death, injury, illness, protection, arrest or imprisonment
- potential for accidents or mistakes to occur if concentration or application is diminished through issues related to family violence
- potential for taking on more responsibility being limited for reasons related to family violence
- worker discord through "taking sides", victim blaming, misrepresenting or misunderstanding the situation
- violence at home spilling over to the workplace, with serious consequences
- attitudes that justify, minimise or trivialise family violence being detrimental to harmonious working relationships
- damage to the image of the business through violent episodes or harbouring violent offenders.

Workplace education on the issues around family violence is a worthwhile aspect for prevention. Workers who are in risky situations or behaving violently at home can be linked to appropriate information, protection and support for change systems in their community.

Business organisations and sector groups can support community prevention strategies through involvement, sponsorship, fundraising and endorsement.

They can also contribute through developing strategies to deal with family violence issues arising in the workforce.

WORKPLACES CAN:

- **have a no-tolerance to violence policy, in or away from the workplace, and make sure it is well promoted and applied**
- **make information about preventing family violence available and link to community supports for people wanting change**
- **arrange training in family violence issues and prevention strategies for industrial chaplains, workplace counsellors, human resource personnel, health and safety officers, employee assistance programme advisors, employee organisations and organisers**
- **encourage staff involvement and support for community events and campaigns.**

Animal abuse is an internationally accepted indicator for family violence and child abuse.



“Anyone who has accustomed himself to regard the life of any living creature as worthless is in danger of arriving also at the idea of worthless human lives.” – Albert Schweitzer.

A strong body of research links cruelty to animals with the cruel treatment of human beings. The animal welfare movement of the early 19th century used this as the ethical basis for its ideas about respectful treatment of all living creatures.

Psychologist and United States Humane Society President, Randall Lockwood, visited New Zealand in 2001 and cites several studies that demonstrated connections between animal cruelty and family violence. A survey commissioned by the United States Humane Society found that nearly 30% of all incidents involving cruelty to animals were closely linked to violent crimes against people.

Cruel or violent acts towards animals are recognised as an indicator of a serious human problem. Where animals are mistreated in a home and a child is present, there is cause to be concerned for the child.

Children who abuse animals are likely to carry that behaviour through to adulthood and extend it to other humans unless there is appropriate intervention. While nearly all children will go through a stage of “innocent cruelty” as they explore and learn about the world of insects and small animals, appropriate guidance helps them to grow out of this stage of experimentation as they develop empathy and understand the pain and suffering that their behaviour causes. If the behaviour continues, it is an indicator of disturbance and help is needed to prevent it from escalating. Anthropologist Margaret Mead noted that “one of the most dangerous things that can

happen to a child is to kill or torture an animal and get away with it”.

Dr Stephanie Lafarge, a psychologist who has conducted a study for the American SPCA, believes that animal abuse is a warm-up crime for human victims. In Lafarge’s view, “anyone who hurts animals has the potential to move on to people”.

Cruelty to animals is not an uncommon feature of family violence. A violent person may torture or destroy family pets in an act flagrantly designed to threaten, intimidate and cause distress to other family members. Women in violent relationships are often afraid of leaving because they fear that their animals will be killed or tortured. Women’s Refuge has an agreement with the SPCA to care for animals while women and their children who are victims of family violence find refuge and assistance.

First Strike New Zealand is an organisation which raises public and professional awareness about the connection between animal cruelty and human violence.

Community Action can include animal welfare organisations and veterinary services in activities, information about animal abuse and links to later violence in publicity material, alerting parents and others working with young children to the issues and messages to children about the need to be kind and considerate to all living creatures.

Teaching children and young people the human rewards that come from respecting and caring for animals and the value of the animal world to humans is an activity that could well play a part in preventing family violence. For more information, email anmlwrites@united.ac.nz, or check website, www.hsus.org/firststrike

You may know, or be aware of someone who is being abused. You may have witnessed it, heard it, seen physical signs or have good reason to believe it's going on. It may be a friend, relative, neighbour or workmate. What are you going to do? Don't ignore it. Break the silence and lessen the isolation and shame of the victims.

HERE ARE SOME IDEAS ABOUT RAISING THE ISSUE AND GIVING SUPPORT TO THE VICTIM.

- **Be open about what you have to say.**

Approach the matter directly.

That's a nasty mark/bruise/injury. Has someone been violent to you? or I'm worried about what I'm hearing and seeing. Do you want to tell me what's happening?

- **Give them opportunities to talk.**

How can I help? Is there anything I can find out for you?

- **Listen without judging. Don't rush into providing solutions or insisting on intervention. She needs to discover her own solutions. You can help with information.**

Shall I find out about the refuge? or Shall I get you some information about legal protection?

- **Even if she denies what's happening you can still be supportive.**

I'm around any time you need help, or need someone to talk to – here's my number.

- **Remind her that she is not responsible for the violence, that she is not alone, that there is support for her in the community and through the law.**

This is not your fault. Family violence is a common crime. But you don't have to put up with it.

- **Focus on her safety and her needs. You can't be expected to understand what triggers the violence or how to make it stop. Tell her that your concern is for her (and her children) and their protection against further violence.**

I'm worried about you and the children. I want you to think about how you can be safe before it happens again.

- **Tell her that violence usually gets worse – in spite of promises. It's important for her to have a safety plan. You can help her put this together.**

Shall we talk about what to do if you're afraid or if it happens again?

- **Acknowledge that it's often difficult for her to see clearly and deal with the abuse. She may minimise or deny its impact. Re-state your concern for her safety.**

I know this is hard for you. It must be confusing. But I'm concerned for your safety.

- **Respect her confidence. If you involve others, she should know about it. Remind her that family violence is a public issue.**

I'm not prying – family violence is bad for everyone. It's our business to get it stopped.

- **Keep in touch. Stay sympathetic even if your approach is rejected and your intention is misunderstood. There is likely to be a time when she understands and appreciates your concern. She may well depend on it.**

- **Know your own limits and when it's time for specialist help. Have the number of a support agency such as Women's Refuge ready.**



More and more people in New Zealand want to be involved in preventing family violence. Everyone can do something. You can play a part. It may be as a friend, relative, neighbour or professional aware of a family where violence and abuse are happening.

“NOBODY CAN DO EVERYTHING BUT EVERYBODY CAN DO SOMETHING.”

IF YOU CARE - DO SOMETHING.

HERE ARE A FEW IDEAS ABOUT INVOLVEMENT AT A VARIETY OF LEVELS.

- 1 Break the silence.** Learn about and talk about family violence. This helps to lessen the isolation and shame suffered by victims. It may encourage them to find help. It's a message to abusers that there's awareness and condemnation of violent behaviour.
- 2 Name it. Call it family violence.** It isn't a "relationship problem", it isn't "just a domestic", it isn't "an argument that got out of hand" – it's violence and it needs to be named if it's going to stop.
- 3 Don't accept excuses.** Banish victim blaming. Make a clear stand that says family violence is unacceptable – there is never any justification.
- 4 Phone talkbacks. Write letters and articles for newspapers and magazines.** Make your opinion known in your place of work, club, sport or social group.
- 5 Raise discussions** around news reports and magazine clippings. (eg see the article about James Brown).
- 6 Get to know your neighbourhood.** Be an activist for a safe community. You could establish a network to ensure that everyone in your street or neighbourhood knows what to do if they become aware of family violence.
- 7 Know the agencies and community groups** that deal with family violence prevention, crisis intervention and support. Support their work through involvement, practical assistance, referral, raising community profile or helping to fund-raise.

You don't have to argue, justify or defend your stand against family violence. No-one can negate your beliefs that family violence is serious, damaging, unacceptable and there are no excuses.

You'd think he'd learn by now – I won't be buying his music anymore

Papa's got a brand new punch bag . . .

and another bad mark on his criminal record. Seventy-year-old Godfather of Soul, James Brown was arrested again last week for allegedly attacking his wife.



AWFUL FACTS ABOUT FAMILY VIOLENCE



10

TEN CHILDREN KILLED EACH YEAR BY A FAMILY MEMBER

6

SIX MEN KILLED BY A FAMILY MEMBER EACH YEAR

14

FOURTEEN WOMEN KILLED BY A FAMILY MEMBER EACH YEAR



55,000 CHILDREN AFFECTED



250 CONVICTIONS FOR ASSAULT ON A CHILD EACH YEAR



MORE THAN 70,000 CALLS TO POLICE IN A YEAR

COSTS ARE BORNE BY FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES, GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY



EACH DAY THE COURTS DEAL WITH AROUND 8 CONVICTIONS OF ASSAULT ON WOMEN BY MEN

IT'S A GRIM SITUATION BUT WHEN ENOUGH PEOPLE CARE AND TAKE ACTION, THE SITUATION CAN CHANGE

VISIT: www.areyouok.org.nz www.familyservices.govt.nz and www.nzfvc.org.nz/communityaction

OR WRITE TO: Family and Community Services, PO Box 1556, Wellington, for your Community Action to Prevent Family Violence Toolkit