

children & young people



**online counselling:
the way of the future**

**women's services
in the 21st century**

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editorial



Welcome to the Spring issue of the *Newsletter*! It has been a busy few months for the sector, with lots of events and initiatives happening that you can read about in this issue. We hope that many of you were able to contribute to the Australian Law Reform Commission's discussion paper on family violence

and Commonwealth laws. We wish the commission well in its deliberations.

Research has provided us with ever increasing evidence about the damage caused to children growing up in a situation where violence is present in their home. In this issue, Rosa Campbell's Fast Facts provides a quick statistical glance at these impacts, while Anne Morris' National Update indicates that the service response can at best be described as patchy. We hope this *Newsletter* can sow the seeds for thinking about children's needs and how we can work together to ensure they receive the service support they require. You can also read about the issue in greater depth in a literature review on the impacts of domestic violence for children, published on the Clearinghouse web site (see back page of the *Newsletter* for details).

Megan Sety, the Clearinghouse Research and Information Officer, delves into the new area of online counselling for victims of gender-based violence. This is an emerging service that we will watch with interest. The growth of online responses, resources, support sites and campaigns using a variety of platforms is really quite extraordinary. While many people hold concerns about the use of electronic media, online counselling appears to offer significant possibilities for service delivery to many victims who remain isolated and difficult to engage. It looks to be a rapidly moving innovation that requires careful consideration, exploration and evaluation.

The Clearinghouse has dipped its toes in the water with our Facebook site and we encourage those of you who have not yet done so to add us to your list of sites you 'like'. We will be wading deeper into the technology waters in the near future, with plans to venture into webinars. These allow you to take part in a training session or forum from your own computer. We will keep you updated about topics, times and how to get set up.

In addition, we are working on an online training resource as part of our Workplace Rights and Entitlements Project. The resource is designed to equip workplaces and unions with improved understanding of how domestic violence impacts on the workplace and how to manage and implement domestic violence clauses to ensure a safe and productive workplace. The training will be made available through the project web site within the next few months.

In other news, I recently met with the team carrying out consultations on the proposed National Centre of Excellence for the Prevention of Violence Against Women. There is no doubt that the advent of the national centre will bring changes for the Clearinghouse, though we are yet to find out what they will be.

While we all can speculate about an ideal way of providing research and knowledge to the violence against women sector, it is nevertheless heartening to know our current model is working well for most of you. Our recent stakeholder survey again shows a very high level of support for our work. We were delighted to see how informative and useful you find our publications and our services, and are working to take on board your suggestions for changes and improvements. Thank you to those of you who took the time to fill in the survey.

Aside from the *Newsletter*, the Clearinghouse has published two new papers in the past few months. All of our publications are available for download on the Clearinghouse web site (see back page of the *Newsletter* for details) or by contacting the Clearinghouse. Don't forget that you can also subscribe to our monthly e-news – just contact us.

Finally, I wish to offer my condolences to the family and colleagues of Lydia Campillo. Lydia succumbed to malaria while working in Africa on an aid project in August this year. She was a long time employee of the New South Wales Public Service and had spent much of that time working on issues of abuse of women and children. We commend her work and commiserate her loss to her family, her community and the domestic and family violence sector.

GABY MARCUS
DIRECTOR

clearinghouse update

Clearinghouse stakeholders share feedback

Thank you to those who participated in our stakeholder survey and congratulations to our two lucky book voucher winners from the random prize draw, who were notified at the beginning of August. We were delighted to receive more than 400 responses to the survey, an increase of 25% from our last survey in 2009. While the feedback is generally positive and supportive, we were pleased to receive suggestions for improving our work, including suggestions around new areas of research to focus on, ways to improve our web site and utilising email to increase awareness of research and training opportunities.

Reference group meeting

Many thanks to our reference group members who provide ongoing support and guidance to the work of the Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse welcomes new members to the group: Alison Macdonald (Domestic Violence Victoria) and Angela Hartwig (Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services, Western Australia). Both women represent peak groups from their states and their input will be very valuable for us.

In July, the reference group held its second meeting for the year. The meeting discussed the role of the Clearinghouse in promoting the translation of research into practice, heard updates on the Clearinghouse's most recent projects and suggested publication topics for the remainder of our current funding period.

Financial security project

In August, the Clearinghouse met with policy advisors for the Prime Minister and Minister for the Status of Women, Kate Ellis, and met with the Minister for Human Services, Tanya Plibersek, to discuss implementing the findings of the financial security project and seek support to continue this work. Unfortunately, as no funding has been made available, we will have to scale back our follow up efforts which will slow the momentum of what we have achieved to date.

So far we have been working with Financial Counselling Australia to encourage best practice in the sector. We are seeking funds to assist with the development of training and client resources for financial counsellors. The Clearinghouse has also met with and written to a range of other organisations to seek their support for the recommendations in the *Seeking security* report, including the Centre for Social Impact at the University of New South Wales and the Security4Women Alliance.

We have produced a two-page resource with information about financial products and services available to women experiencing financial difficulties. This resource is available to download for free from the Clearinghouse web site (see back page of the *Newsletter* for details). We encourage

services to use and distribute it to clients and through your networks.

The Clearinghouse is discussing the potential delivery of a series of seminars on financial issues for women affected by domestic violence, in collaboration with Westpac and Ruby Connection.

We would also like to hear from anyone who has done some work to implement the recommendations and assist women to gain greater economic security following their experience of domestic violence.

www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au/financial_security.htm

Workplace rights and entitlements project

The survey for the workplace rights and entitlements project closed in July. We received 3600 responses – more than our original target – and will be publishing information about the findings later in the year. Meanwhile, the project workers have been busy rolling out training for union representatives and human resources staff around Australia. They have also been developing a new web site with information for workers affected by domestic violence, to be launched in October.

We are continuing to promote the work in Australia and internationally. In September, Project Officer Ludo McFerran presented the Clearinghouse's work to delegates at the *Our Work Our Lives: Women and Industrial Relations Conference* in Dili, East Timor.

Our next major event is the *Safe at Home, Safe at Work* national conference in Melbourne on 5-6 December 2011. Speakers at the conference will include representatives of the Commonwealth, the union movement, employer bodies, working women's centres and workplaces that have introduced the clauses.

www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au/dv_workplace_rights_entitlements_project.htm

ALRC inquiry

The Clearinghouse has responded to the latest Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) discussion paper, released in August, for its family violence and Commonwealth laws inquiry. The ALRC is due to report to the Commonwealth Attorney-General in November. Our submission is available on our web site.

www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au/submissions.htm

Staff changes

The Clearinghouse would like to extend a very warm welcome to Rosalie Tanabe, our new Administration Officer. Rosalie has a background in accounting and has previously worked with American Express.

issues in good practice

WOMEN'S SERVICES IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: WHERE ARE WE HEADING? BY MARIE HUME, ELSPETH MCINNES, KATHRYN RENDELL AND BETTY GREEN, WOMEN EVERYWHERE ADVOCATING VIOLENCE ELIMINATION (WEAVE)

The political beginnings of women's services

Services responding to violence against women in the home owe their development to feminist analyses, which recognised the prevalence of gender-related abuse in families. In the 1970s, second-wave feminists raised awareness of male violence against women in its many forms: rape, child sexual abuse and domestic violence. Women's refuges were established, along with specific women-only services such as women's health centres and rape crisis services (McGregor & Hopkins 1991). Most services were established without government funding.

One of the aims of the early women's services was to bring together women so they could share their experiences of male violence. What they learnt was that male violence was not just an individual experience but reflected broader social issues embedded in patriarchy. This experiential knowledge informed advocacy for much needed reforms and lobbying for funds and resources to provide such services (Dowse 1988). The push for services was, therefore, accompanied by political activism by feminists for legislative change in rape laws, other criminal laws and protective injunctions, as well as campaigns and awareness-raising.

Drawing on our collective experience of working with victims of domestic violence and conducting advocacy, we argue in this article that women's services are currently at risk of being de-politicised. While some services continue to lobby for legislative and policy changes, such activism tends to be compartmentalised, focusing on single, specific issues or events and not always on broad systemic change in the area of male violence. Moreover, the focus in the provision of services for women has shifted from the structural to the individual. Rather than sites of political activism, based on the sharing of common experiences and self-help, women's services have become sites of professionalised therapeutic intervention. Women are increasingly being treated as victims in need of professional help – and even seen by some services as the source of 'the problem' of violence against women.

Causes of de-politicisation

The causes of these changes to women's services are diverse but are broadly linked to policy and funding decisions of governments over time, as well as the backlash against women which has become evident in public debate. Here we focus on five key factors.

Changes in the political landscape

In Australia, during twelve years of neo-conservative government from 1996 to 2007, government funding was directed away from many progressive women's organisations and towards men's rights groups and conservative organisations.

Funding pressures

Funding agreements with recipient organisations prohibited funded agencies from challenging government policy and practices. Many women services were de-funded during this period or threatened with de-funding in order to silence any voices of dissent (Hamilton & Maddison 2007). Funding pressures came from both state and federal governments. Competitive tendering has also limited the capacity of services to work together on political action. Services for women are forced to compete against each other for funding, rather than working collaboratively and cooperatively to address broader social issues.

Professionalisation of women's services

As services drew increasingly on a professionalised workforce, the ability and will of these services to undertake political activism to challenge male violence within our society has diminished. Professionalisation has developed the recognised skills and remuneration of women's services workers, but has at the same time drawn on practice paradigms that have not been grounded in feminist theory and practice. The coherence of values developed from a focus on women's experiences of patriarchy has fragmented across profession-based models of human services provision.

Service silos

The separation and categorisation of different forms of assaults on women have led to the creation of different types of services, each dealing with their 'patch' of violence victimisation. There are unique programs and services responding variously to domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual trafficking and child sexual abuse. Service silos mean that organisations are working in isolation from each other. They are less likely to work together and seek policy changes to address the broader issues of male violence against women.

Absorption by large charities

Increasingly, services for women are being outsourced to generic, and often faith-based, organisations. These organisations operate from a managerial focus on key performance indicators, inputs and output targets. The result of such outsourcing is that women-only services are becoming less available. For example, some women's shelters have morphed into 'homelessness services' accepting both men and women as 'clients' and also employing both men and women as 'service providers'.

Reduced access to women-only services has a number of consequences. Women seeking shelter from men's violence feel less safe in generic homelessness services environments. The focus of the 'service provision' moves away from addressing the causes of homelessness, such as domestic violence or women's economic disadvantage, to solely providing shelter and referrals to other services.

The opportunity for women to share with each other their experiences of male violence is lost. In turn, women's ability to address social justice issues of male violence and to take collective action is severely diminished.

The medicalisation of male violence against women

The way of responding to an issue has a major influence on how it is defined. (Kelly & Radford 1998, p.60)

The medicalisation of women's issues has taken place alongside the decline in political activism. Medical/therapeutic models of service delivery have become increasingly apparent in the women's sector, with an emphasis on women's pathology, individual therapeutic responses and personal healing.

Individual counselling has come to be seen as the solution for women to 'cope better' with their experiences of abuse. Yet, counselling responses 'leave the deeper social causes of violence in families and against women unexamined' (Pence & Taylor 2003, p. 19). This approach is in stark contrast to the political advocacy for social justice and collective action that characterised feminist women's services, which developed in the 1970s and 1980s.

De-gendering violence

A growing resistance and backlash to the naming of male violence against women has also become apparent in recent decades. There are increasing calls for violence to be seen as a non-gendered issue. Challenges to well-established statistics on the extent of male violence against women have arisen (Flood 2004), such as the recent pro-men's *One in Three* campaign. Men's rights groups have been active in making claims that women are as violent as men and that men are also victims of domestic violence (Mulroney & Chan 2005). In this environment, perpetrators are also able to claim 'victim' status and activism for perpetrators 'rights' (often conflated with 'fathers' rights') has gained a footing.

In turn, de-gendering has diminished the capacity of policy makers and service delivery agents to effectively challenge the social and historical causes of male violence. Policy documents increasingly use gender neutral language such as 'family violence' rather than 'male violence'. De-gendering is also apparent in the laws that frame our responses to violence.

There has also been an increase in the examination of different types of violence. Classification systems and typologies have been used in such a way that violence is seen as a mutual, de-gendered form of 'conflict' between a couple rather than an issue of male power and control (Johnston 2006). In some service sectors, the concept of 'conflict' is used where there is domestic violence, which limits understanding and undermines responses to what, in earlier days, was recognised as the abuse of women by men.

The rise of post-separation family services

Since the enactment of the *Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Act 2006*, there has been a dramatic increase in funding to services to assist separated parents to make arrangements for the care of their children. Over time, these services have

begun to provide 'therapeutic' services to parents and children. Many women experiencing domestic violence now find themselves being offered counselling by family services, to help them sustain a 'better relationship' with the perpetrator. Individual interventions may include 'communication' skills, conflict management skills and post-separation parenting advice regarding the need to not be 'negative' about their abuser and to facilitate the ongoing relationship between father and child. Thus, any opportunity for women to understand their experience of violence as part of a much broader social/political issue is lost and women may even be judged negatively as being 'oppositional' or obstructive.

Conclusion

A political understanding is fundamental to action to reduce or eliminate violence against women. In this article, we have argued that politicised social understandings of men's violence against women have been significantly reduced due to a combination of factors, primarily: the defunding of progressive women's services; the growing divisions between different types of services; and the sharp shift in the provision and focus of services, away from a social recognition of men's violence against women and towards an individual pathology of women's poor choices and victimisation.

If a collective feminist consciousness of men's violence against women is to be regenerated, politicians, policymakers, human services professionals and managers need to once again listen to women's voices. Women's experiential knowledge of male violence must inform collective action that commands government attention in demanding social change.

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national update

SERVICES AND PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCE DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE BY DR ANNE MORRIS, FORMER SENIOR RESEARCHER, FLINDERS UNIVERSITY

Many services across Australia are facing the challenge of how to provide effective programs for children and young people who have experienced domestic and family violence. While most refuges and specialist domestic and family violence services have evolved services for children, usually in relation to support for their mothers, these services have tended to be constrained by minimal resourcing. This National Update reports on the changing Australian context for service provision in this area and provides an overview of the diversity of approaches to working with children and young people around the country.

National policy context

We know that that almost 25% of children witness violence against their mother or stepmother (National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2009, p. 20). There is a much higher incidence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait families.

As we have become more aware of the need to minimise the impact of exposure to domestic and family violence on children's long-term health and wellbeing, domestic and family violence has emerged as a key child protection issue. As its name suggests, the Commonwealth Government's *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022* focuses on supporting children as well as women. It is designed to work in tandem with the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020*, which aims to reduce child abuse and neglect.

Both plans are endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). They form the policy context within which Australian governments and non-government organisations are expected to develop programs and services for children and young people who have experienced domestic and family violence.

An overview of services around the country

Despite the increased emphasis on children and young people in current national policy, there is not as yet a comprehensive approach to responding to children and young people in the states and territories, nor a mapping of existing services. For this reason, the services and programs overviewed for this article are only a 'smattering' of examples and do not cover all of Australia.

Though by no means a definitive list, the services and programs discussed here do reflect a diversity of approaches to working with children. While focusing particularly on programs provided by specialist domestic violence services, the article covers a range of service providers, from government agencies to large charities, and includes both local and statewide initiatives.



Information was gathered by contacting key services or peak bodies in states and territories. Those that responded either provided information themselves about services to children in their state or circulated the request among domestic and family violence services. Phone interviews and emails were used initially and further information was gleaned from the web sites of services.

The overview points to some key differences in approaches to working with children, such as in the selection of forms of therapy and in the inclusion of caregivers or not. Some programs actively support the mother-child relationship; some build responses to children into their overall service provision to mothers and their children; and others offer specific therapeutic or support groups that bring children and young people together.

Australian Capital Territory

Domestic Violence Crisis Service (DVCS) assists women and children throughout the Australian Capital Territory. In a position paper available on their web site, DVCS (n.d., p. 1) argues that 'a future without violence depends on... building valued relationships with the most vulnerable members of our society – children and young people'. Guided by this vision, the service stresses the importance of child-centred work: of listening to children and acknowledging their ideas, resources and knowledge. DVCS employs a children and young people focus worker and also runs education programs in schools and colleges.

New South Wales

Information supplied by the NSW Women's Refuge Movement indicates that women's refuges in New South Wales provide case management and a range of supports for children including school liaison and childcare; skills education, structured play and skills development; and help with behaviour problems. Many women's refuges and safe houses identify children as clients in their own right and provide services such as protective behaviours training for children, parenting skills for parents, age-appropriate support groups and activities. They promote child-awareness practices and work with other agencies towards more integrated responses to children.

There are also a range of community-based programs for children that address the impact of domestic and family violence. Of particular note is the Brighter Futures early intervention program, a joint initiative of the Department of Family and Community Services and the non-government sector. An evaluation of the program was recently completed by the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales. In addition, the children's services provided by Jannawi Family Centre, in Lakemba, Sydney, and by the Benevolent Society across the state are well regarded.

Northern Territory

The Northern Territory has domestic and family violence services in Darwin, Palmerston, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. Unfortunately there were no responses to our requests for information on services for children who have experienced domestic and family violence.

Queensland

Some domestic violence services in Queensland offer particular services to children. The North Queensland Domestic Violence Resource Service promotes on their web site the Acknowledgement And Recognition of Domestic Violence And Real Change (AARDVARC) program. Using information sessions, groups and individual appointments, the program supports children and young people and their parent or caregiver to talk about and make sense of their experience within a safe and supportive environment. Groups focus on protective behaviours, safety, self-esteem, feelings and communication.

The Children, Young People and Caregiver Counselling Program (CYPCCP) at the Ipswich Women's Centre Against Domestic Violence works with mothers and children together, an approach the service believes is more effective than engaging solely with a child. An initial two-hour information session for women includes information on domestic violence, power and control tactics, and the effects of domestic and family violence on women and children. Subsequent counselling sessions incorporate sand-play, interactive drawing, cards and discussions. The service also offers six-week therapeutic groups for children throughout the year and family camps twice a year for mothers and children.

South Australia

In the past, South Australian specialist domestic and family violence services (ex-shelters) generally employed a children's worker. However, statewide reforms of the domestic and family violence sector now require these services to offer comprehensive programs to children and young people as direct clients.

Northern Domestic Violence Service (NDVS) has responded to this requirement by integrating their children's work into general casework, so that children and young people consistently receive a service within all family interventions. Recognising mothers' significant role in their children's recovery, NDVS has developed responses, activities and resources to support families to overcome the alienation between family members commonly produced by domestic and family violence.

The approach has freed the children and young people's advocate to oversee the work with children; provide resources, guidance and leadership to caseworkers; develop specific group programs for mothers and their children; and lead interagency work concerning children and young people.

NDVS was a co-initiator of the Northern Integration Project (NIP), with Northern Area Health Service and the Salisbury office of Families SA, the South Australian child protection agency. NIP now includes the Families SA offices at Elizabeth and Gawler and involves Aboriginal workers and an elder. Aiming to improve their collaborative work with women and children experiencing domestic and family violence, the challenge has been to work through the differing paradigms underlying domestic and family violence and child protection services (see *Newsletter 43*, pp. 7-9).

For more than a decade, agencies in outer southern Adelaide have collaborated to provide groups for children who have witnessed domestic and family violence. Children and mothers meet in separate groups, joining sometimes to affirm and strengthen their relationships. Mindfulness and martial arts principles have recently been incorporated into children's activities. Centrecare, Cornerhouse, Relationships Australia and Southern Primary Health are among the agencies involved, as part of the Onkaparinga Collaborative Response.

Another local initiative is the Yarredi Services Wellbeing Program for children aged four to thirteen years, including Indigenous children. Run by Port Lincoln Regional Domestic Violence Service, the program uses play, sand-play and art therapy with individuals and groups. Children are encouraged to play out their feelings, use toys to project identities and to create their own world. The program helps them develop an understanding of their world, work through their feelings and create new 'scripts' for their experiences. Art therapy particularly assists children to communicate, and even transform, their inner world. The program works with parents to support their children.

Tasmania

The Children and Young Persons Program (CHYPP) is available statewide in Tasmania for children and young people of any age who have experienced domestic and family violence. Funded by the Department of Health and Human Services, the program provides counselling, child/caregiver sessions, group programs, support and assistance to caregivers. Psychological assessments are used and CHYPP workers employ play, writing activities, games, art, books, sand-play and groupwork with children. Unfortunately, the program has a twelve-month waiting list.



Centacare runs a Specialised Family Violence Service in Hobart and north-west Tasmania offering counselling for children aged up to eighteen who have experienced domestic and family violence, using art, play, stories and video. The service provides counselling for women and the Changing Abusive Behaviours program for men. In addition, Centacare offers a club for children aged eight to fourteen years, which generally runs for eight weeks and uses art, play, sand-play and videos.

Victoria

Victorian refuges are funded to employ a children's worker, but each refuge uses this funding differently, some employing case managers who deliver therapeutic programs for children and others using this funding for other activities. In addition, the Victorian Office of Children, Youth and Families, which forms part of the Department of Human Services, funds a women and children's counselling program through a range of agencies, from specialist family violence outreach services to community health services and mainstream family support agencies. Unfortunately these programs have long waiting lists.

Western Australia

Improving responses to children and young people is a priority of the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services in Western Australia. Their recently re-funded Keeping Kids Safe project aims to ensure statewide consistency across refuges in Western Australia, which previously ran their own programs for children. The project is funded by the Department of Child Protection.

The key objectives of Keeping Kids Safe are: that mothers and children are supported to meet children's needs; and that children become engaged in education, health and community recreation. The project involves consultation with child support workers and children and young people, which are being used to inform the compilation of programs and resources, delivery of regional training for child support workers, and development and implementation of good practice guidelines. As part of the project, statewide children's services will be mapped; local protocols between refuges, schools, childcare and health professionals established; and stronger partnerships with child protection offices promoted.

Among other services in Western Australia, the Patricia Giles Centre in Joondalup, Perth, offers counselling for children, generally between the ages of four and eighteen. Their Children's Counselling Service can be accessed at

the centre's offices, metropolitan women's refuges and some other outreach locations. The service also runs camps during school holidays.

Funding for children's programs

While this national update highlights the diversity of services provided around the country, the ability of the domestic and family violence sector to meet the needs of children and young children continues to be constrained by lack of funding. Workers interviewed for this national update reported a serious paucity of funding for specialist programs, with the result that a significant number of children do not receive the support they need to recover from the effects of domestic and family violence.

A related issue is funders' insufficient valuing of existing programs. Some excellent programs for children have recently closed due to lack of ongoing funding, among them the Melbourne Royal Children's Hospital's Addressing Family Violence Programs (see *Newsletter 45*, p. 13) and the two Violence Intervention Programs (VIPs) in Adelaide: Central VIP, auspiced by the Salvation Army, and Northern VIP, auspiced by the Northern Primary Health Care Services. The VIPs provided high quality support and counselling services to children as part of their integrated and regional response.

States and territories need to develop much greater capacity if they are to meet the expectations generated by the two national plans discussed earlier. The significant gap in service provision to children must be addressed through increased funding to agencies that respond to children experiencing domestic and family violence. A comprehensive approach to these services is urgently needed across the country: an approach that recognises, values and supports existing quality programs and that builds on the diversity already there.

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ONLINE COUNSELLING: THE WAY OF THE FUTURE? BY MEGAN SETY, CLEARINGHOUSE RESEARCH AND INFORMATION OFFICER

The Hon. Kate Ellis, Commonwealth Minister for the Status of Women, recently announced the launch of a national free online professional counselling service for people who have been, or are, affected by domestic and family violence or sexual assault (www.1800respect.org.au). The twenty-four-hour, web-based service builds on the national 1800RESPECT telephone counselling service launched in October 2010.

The web site represents an expansion in services and commitment to meet the needs of families affected by violence by keeping pace with the advent of innovative online practices. Indeed, NSW Rape Crisis had already begun to explore online counselling in 2006. More recently, several other Australian non-government organisations have introduced or are piloting online counselling, crisis support, or information and referral services for people affected by violence, including Lifeline, Living Well, MensLine Australia and Relationships Australia.

Services offered via the internet, similar to in-person and phone-based services, can include hotline or crisis support, information and referral, and online counselling, either through an ongoing relationship or one-off conversation. Online services offer an opportunity to enhance and build on existing services, particularly reaching out to those affected by social or physical isolation or experiences that prevent people from seeking traditional sources of support. In particular, internet-based services offer increased access for people in rural and remote areas and for those who may be deaf or have other hearing disabilities. They present opportunities to provide culturally and linguistically diverse services that may not be available locally. For all users, they have some obvious benefits, such as a sense of anonymity and privacy, and access twenty-four hours a day/seven days a week.

For victims of domestic violence, seeking support can be significantly more difficult than for other needs. Victims may be socially, financially and economically isolated by their perpetrators or experience feelings of fear, shame and guilt. Online services can address these factors and empower victims to help themselves and seek support at the time they feel ready.

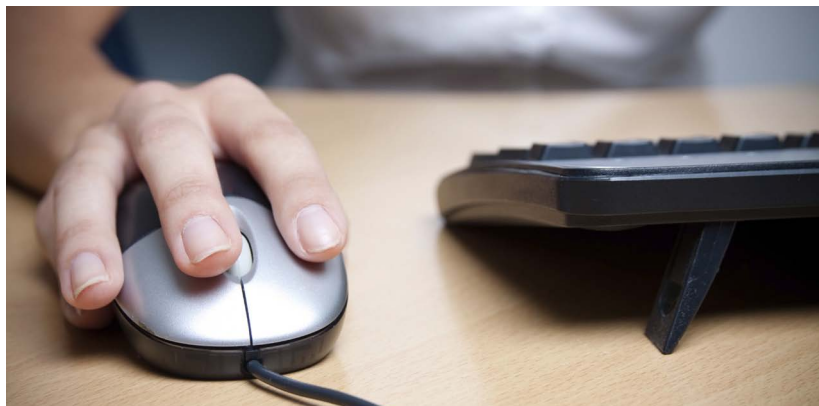
The concept of providing information, advice, support and referral online to victims of domestic violence is not new. Finn (2000a & 2000b) conducted some of the first research exploring the provision of domestic violence information and services online for victims over a decade ago. At that time, a web search for the terms 'domestic violence', 'spouse abuse' or 'family violence' retrieved more than 100 000 web pages. Finn's research documented the growing amount of information, email communication, opportunities for sharing of stories and art, and self-help support groups developing to meet the needs of domestic violence victims. At that same time, the Violence Against Women Online Resources (www.vawnet.org) web site, based in the United States (US), reported that 35% of unsolicited emails were requests from victims seeking support and information (Kranz 2001).

Since then, few researchers have examined online support and help-seeking among people experiencing domestic violence. A few studies have examined the provision of support and information through email. Rothman *et al.* (2009) found the majority of women who had stayed at a shelter thought it would be safe and acceptable to receive follow-up emails from shelter staff after leaving the shelter. In fact, 80% of respondents to the survey reported that they accessed their email from a computer other than at home, indicating an awareness of a key

strategy to support internet safety. Constantino *et al.* (2007) found that women who had recently obtained protection orders for domestic violence and their children found the use of a mobile email device effective and helpful in seeking practical information and advice from nurses.

The area of online counselling has been rapidly developing over the past decade, particularly for people experiencing drug and alcohol problems, depression, anxiety, trauma, social phobias, eating disorders and chronic physical health conditions. In their meta-analysis of ninety-two studies examining internet-based psychotherapeutic interventions, Barak *et al.* (2008) found that online methods can be as effective as traditional in-person therapeutic interventions. However, not one study looked at services for victims of domestic and family violence or sexual assault. Research, clinical guidelines, models and examination of liability and legal issues are rapidly being discussed in the published literature but almost none of this work has explored service provision to victims or perpetrators of domestic and family violence.

The only research to explore this area is an evaluation of a US-based sexual assault online hotline, in which the authors conclude the model could be applied to domestic violence. Finn & Atkinson (2009) and Finn *et al.* (2011) conducted evaluations of the first two years of the hotline, which offers support, information and referral to people in immediate crisis as well as those dealing with past, ongoing or long-term effects from sexual assault. In its first year, the hotline received more than 2000 visitors, which increased ten-fold to 20 000 visitors in the second year. Though the primary purpose of the hotline was crisis intervention, only 10-14% of visitors were seeking help for a recent incident (in the last few



days), indicating that most visitors may not have previously sought help or were continuing to seek support for ongoing effects.

The evaluations have shown that the service is useful and viable, with a majority of visitors reporting satisfaction with the service. The results from this US study support the expected benefits and success of 1800RESPECT and other organisations' forays into providing counselling, support, information, referral and crisis intervention online.

It also goes without saying that any work using technology to provide domestic violence services must be synonymous with considerations for safety and security of victims, particularly with the growing threat of cyber-based stalking and abuse. Both Constantino *et al.* (2007) and Rothman *et al.* (2009) acknowledge the need to address the risk of online victimisation and specifically suggest internet safety training. Finn and Atkinson (2009) developed, piloted and evaluated a train-the-trainer model of technology safety training. The vast majority of the more than 300 victims who completed the evaluations indicated the training was effective in increasing their safety and empowering them to use the internet to help themselves.

Yet, internet safety is only one of the challenges to providing effective and safe online counselling. As this work drives ahead, it should be complemented by documentation and evaluation. It is a prime opportunity to address the lack of research exploring innovative technology-based services to victims of domestic violence. Many questions are left unanswered, including who

uses online services (and who does not), what issues are best dealt with using these methods, what is the most effective way to provide online services and how online services compare to phone or in-person services in terms of outcomes, satisfaction, delivery and meeting needs of service users.

Future work into this area should explore the most effective clinical models, examine the difference between one-off or ongoing services, ensure effective assessment and responses to crisis calls and examine the effect on the counsellor-client relationship. As the Commonwealth Department for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) progresses current work with state-based helplines to develop national standards for telephone counselling for domestic violence, this work should also consider standards for online service provision.

As technological advances open new opportunities in service provision, we must remember that the internet is only one pathway of access to service and support. In 2008-09, more than 30% of Australian households still did not have access to the internet (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2009) and not all people will be comfortable using it to seek help and support. When Finn (2000a & 2000b) first predicted the future development of online counselling for victims of domestic violence, he cautioned that online services are only a supplement to in-person and telephone services. The value of online services lies in their capacity to expand the available options for support, not to replace well-established and needed services.

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fast facts

THE IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN AND INFANTS

BY ROSA CAMPBELL, CLEARINGHOUSE RESEARCH ASSISTANT

There is a growing body of research highlighting the impact of domestic violence on children and infants. Key statistics on the prevalence of children's exposure to domestic violence and its impacts on their wellbeing are cited below. In addition, links to issues of homelessness and homicide are discussed.

Violence during pregnancy

- The *Personal Safety Survey, Australia* found that approximately 1.1 million Australian women had experienced violence by a previous partner since the age of fifteen. The majority of women in this group (59%) were pregnant at some time during the violent relationship (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006, p. 11).

Children affected by violence

- The *Personal Safety Survey, Australia* found that 57% of the women who experienced violence by a previous partner had children in their care at some time during the relationship (p. 40).
- Over a third of women who experienced violence by a previous partner (34%) said that their children had witnessed the violence (p. 40).
- An earlier national survey of 5000 Australian young people (aged twelve to twenty) found that 23% of participants had witnessed physical domestic violence against their mothers (Indermaur 2001, p. 2).

Impacts of exposure to violence

- Children's exposure to domestic violence may seriously affect their wellbeing. Holt, Buckley and Whelan (2008) showed that, among other impacts, exposure to domestic violence may jeopardise children's abilities and key developmental processes (p. 802).
- In a recent Clearinghouse paper on adolescent violence against their parents, a mother and child's experience of family violence was reported as being the most significant determinant of adolescent violence in the home and towards mothers particularly (Howard 2011, p. 6).
- An earlier Clearinghouse paper on the attachment between mothers and their infants established that domestic violence often leads to insecurity in this key relationship (Buchanan 2008).
- The Clearinghouse's recent literature review on children affected by domestic violence highlighted growing evidence that impacts are most significant for infants and young children (Sety 2011, p. 6).

Children and homelessness

- Domestic and family violence is closely linked to homelessness for children. In 2009-10, women with children were one of the largest groups to use specialist homelessness services in Australia,

comprising 23% of total clients (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2011, p. 15). Domestic and family violence was the most commonly cited reason for women with children accessing support.

Children and homicide

- Australian research found that on average twenty-five children per year were killed by a parent between 1989 and 2002 (Mouzos & Rushforth 2003, p. 1). Fathers were responsible for 63% of these deaths (p. 3).
- Physical abuse of children was the most common cause of child homicides in Australia between 1991 and 2005. Deaths due to fatal child abuse accounted for 36% of child homicides (Nielssen, Large, Westmore & Lackersteen 2009, p.10).

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interview

IN CONVERSATION WITH JULIE OBERIN, AUSTRALIAN WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE ALLIANCE INTERVIEW BY THE CLEARINGHOUSE

What do you see as the role of the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA)?

Established in 2010, AWAVA is one of six National Women's Alliances funded by the Australian Government. Our vision is to ensure that all women and children are able to live free from all forms of violence and abuse. AWAVA recognises that gender violence is both a consequence and cause of gender inequity in all sectors of society. It must be addressed by promoting and working towards social, political, economic and cultural equity for all women, across the community.

AWAVA is an alliance and not a legal entity in its own right. The Women's Services Network (WESNET), the national domestic and family violence peak, is the lead agency for the alliance and is party to the funding agreement with the Australian Government.

What is the staffing structure of AWAVA?

AWAVA employs a Program Manager and other project and administration staff as needed to fulfil our project and funding requirements.

How does AWAVA engage with the Australian Government on policy issues regarding violence against women?

AWAVA has a close working relationship with both the Women's Branch and the Safety Task Force of the Australian Government Office for Women in the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA). In 2011-12, AWAVA has funding from the Commonwealth to support the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children by delivering a number of community engagement events in remote and regional parts of Australia. These events will provide women with an opportunity to share ideas with others in their community and consider options for violence prevention activities. Events are scheduled to be held in Bendigo, Broome, Katherine, Launceston and Wilcannia.

AWAVA is progressively developing relationships with other government departments to influence their policies and programs relevant to violence against women.

What is AWAVA's current key policy priority?

AWAVA has a number of key policy priorities and increasingly will be engaging with the Australian Government on policy issues as part of a better, more informed and representative dialogue between women and government. AWAVA's focus over the next two years will be on:

- supporting the implementation of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children
- positioning AWAVA to be able to effectively prepare and contribute to international mechanisms such as the

Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Commission on the Status of Women

- contributing to the evidence base and responding to emerging issues, such as the Australian Law Reform Commission inquiries, sterilisation of young women and girls with disabilities, forced marriages, honour-based killings, trafficking and immigrant women on bridging or spousal visas who experience domestic violence
- addressing issues impacting on marginalised groups of women
- supporting the work of our members and supporters.

How does AWAVA ensure that a diverse range of women's voices (and the voices of women's organisations) are considered in policy decisions?

AWAVA has a strong and diverse Advisory Group of key stakeholders as well as a growing group of Friends and Supporters, all of whom have a broad and diverse range of members they can consult with and provide information to. Within these mechanisms are also a growing number of individual women who are not necessarily linked in to peak bodies or networks. Messages are brought to government through AWAVA consulting with our networks, gathering information and delivering this information through meetings with government departments, reports and articles.

Our Advisory Group comprises representatives from:

- nine national peak organisations
- six state peak organisations or network representatives for domestic and family violence services in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia
- key individual advocates.

AWAVA is negotiating representation from domestic and family violence networks in the Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory and from Indigenous women through the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance (NATSIWA). AWAVA is also forming links with relevant organisations which focus on the trafficking of women.

Individuals and groups are able to subscribe via the AWAVA web site (www.awava.org.au) to our weekly e-bulletin of news, events and opportunities to feed into submissions or surveys. AWAVA also utilises email lists to communicate with our Friends and Supporters.

Surveys are used to consult on issues, identify priorities and emerging issues.

What consultations has AWAVA already undertaken with the violence against women sector? What future consultations are planned?

AWAVA consulted broadly last year when we developed, in partnership with Women's Legal Services Australia, a submission to the Commonwealth Attorney-General and the Australian Law Reform Commission on the Family Law Legislation Amendment (Family Violence and Other Measures) Bill 2011. The submission can be found on our web site.

To celebrate the centenary of International Women's Day, AWAVA consulted with our membership and networks and created a timeline of significant events and achievements affecting Australian women (timeline.awava.org.au). To promote the timeline, AWAVA produced print and web-based resources for use in upper primary and secondary schools and by community organisations. The women's timeline is a work in progress and will continue to be developed.

How does AWAVA report and ensure accountability to the violence against women sector?

As a Commonwealth funded National Women's Alliance, AWAVA reports to the Commonwealth Office for Women against the funding we receive and the outcomes we are funded to deliver. AWAVA reports to other funders according to contracts. AWAVA reports to and ensures accountability to the violence against women sector through:

- the web site which is maintained and up-to-date
- weekly e-bulletins to subscribers, also available on the web site
- our Advisory Group and their mechanisms of reporting and consulting with their members and networks
- the advice of our working groups, which gather up-to-date information on important and emerging issues and include representation from AWAVA's diverse membership
- our network of Friends and Supporters
- the other National Women's Alliances.

Within the field of violence against women, there are a number of intersections which impact on the work of domestic violence organisations in particular (e.g. intersections between domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse and family law). How will AWAVA bridge the gap between these historically separate service and policy systems?

AWAVA is an alliance which has all forms of violence against women as its focus not just domestic violence or sexual assault. AWAVA has both WESNET and the National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence (NASASV) on its Advisory Group and Executive. As the specialist peak bodies in domestic and family violence and sexual assault respectively, WESNET and NASASV are able to contribute to the work of AWAVA through these roles and AWAVA will benefit from their advice. Likewise, Women's Legal Services Australia is a member of AWAVA's Advisory

Group. It is not AWAVA's role to duplicate the work or role of specialist and effective existing bodies but to draw relevant expertise and advice together as a strong alliance.

AWAVA will continue to draw on the work of the violence against women sector regarding the intersections between domestic violence and child abuse. Academics are also able to become Friends and Supporters of AWAVA, along with skilled practitioners and organisations which focus specifically on the welfare of children.

The domestic violence sector is diverse and sectionalised. How will AWAVA work to bring the sector together as part of its broader advocacy around violence against women?

The domestic and family violence sector across Australia is strong and rich with diversity. Australia has funded specialist domestic and family violence services and sexual assault services, along with services in many related areas. AWAVA has nine national peaks working in these areas forming its Advisory Group and many other specialist groups and individuals within its Friends and Supporters network. AWAVA has spent the first year establishing these strong links, structures and advisory mechanisms to ensure that AWAVA can benefit from the expertise of the violence against women sector and be a strong advocate on all forms of violence against women.

The Clearinghouse has advocated for the establishment of a broad-based domestic violence peak body in every state and territory. Does AWAVA support this proposal? If so, how will it work with government to ensure sufficient funding is provided to existing and new peak bodies?

As AWAVA continues to map its advisory mechanisms and links to the violence against women sector, opportunities to strengthen these mechanisms will be fed up to relevant ministers and departments through lobbying and reporting mechanisms. Many of the peak bodies within AWAVA, including WESNET, are also without government funding. They operate to the best of their capacity with the limited resources they have. Their work would be significantly enhanced and consequently the advisory and consultative mechanisms to AWAVA would be significantly strengthened if these critical advocacy peak bodies had stable and adequate funds to enhance their important work.

AWAVA takes advice from its members and WESNET has also long advocated for the establishment of funded domestic and family violence peaks in each state and territory, along with funds to support Indigenous workers to gather on this issue.

We at AWAVA believe that it is crucial to have strong connections with all the states and territories and for the violence against women sector, at all levels, to be involved in and monitor the national plan's implementation. Strong links are needed to ensure the plan's optimal implementation.

Australian Women Against Violence Alliance

Email: admin@awava.org.au

Ph: 1300 252 006

Web site: www.awava.org.au

legislation update

Domestic and Family Violence Protection Bill (Qld)

The Queensland Government has released a draft new protection order bill. The consultation draft follows a lengthy period of community and stakeholder discussion, conducted by the Department of Communities. The draft contains a number of key changes, including changes to the test for orders, the inclusion of economic and emotional abuse in the definition of domestic violence, the introduction of police notices and the establishment of new holding powers and counselling (intervention) orders.

Controversially, the Bill directs the court to consider the 'twin pillars' of family law in making orders (i.e. that the

child's best interest is served by a 'meaningful relationship' with both parents, as well as consideration of protection needs). Although the subsequent clause prioritises a child's safety where there is conflict between the 'pillars', the importation of family law principles into a state protection order regime is unusual and has the potential to dilute the potential violence prevention function of protection orders in Queensland.

A brief period was available for stakeholders to submit responses to the draft. Submissions are now closed.

Further information about the reform process can be obtained from the Department of Communities at www.communities.qld.gov.au

new research

CURRENT RESEARCH

Disaster and violence against women

In disasters and their aftermath, women are affected differently and in many cases more severely than men. Increased violence against women is a documented characteristic of the post-disaster period. Women's Health Goulburn North East is currently investigating women's experiences of violence after the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria. This qualitative research, focusing on interviews with fire-affected women and workers, aims to assist in post-disaster planning and improve future services to women. The research report is expected to be ready later this year.

For more information: contact Debra Parkinson at d.parkinson@whealth.com.au

Homelessness prevention for victims of domestic and family violence

Dr Angela Spinney is leading an Australian Housing and Research Institute project investigating homelessness prevention for women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence. The project examines programs in Australia and Sanctuary schemes in England and Wales. To date the project has released a positioning paper: *No. 140: Homelessness prevention for women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence: innovations in policy and practice*.

For more information contact Angela Spinney at Swinburne University or see: www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/projects/p50602

Women's identity after intimate partner violence

Professor Rosemary Coates, Dr Gareth Merriman and Professor Bruce Maycock are leading a research project at the Centre for Health Promotion Research at Curtin University to establish theory regarding the construction of a woman's self-identity, personal strength and agency

after separation from an abusive relationship. The World Association for Sexual Health/Reproductive Health & Research Unit of the World Health Organization is a research partner.

For more information contact the researchers at Curtin University: wachpr.curtin.edu.au/projects/detail/BYsurvivor.cfm

RECENTLY PUBLISHED RESEARCH

Gender-based violence linked to lifetime risk of mental illness and disability

A new study shows that Australian women who report gender-based violence experience higher lifetime rates of mental illness, disability and substance abuse. The study, led by Dr Susan Rees at the University of New South Wales, is based on data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' *National Mental Health and Wellbeing Survey* (2007). The findings were published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in August 2011.

www.unsw.edu.au/news/pad/articles/2011/aug/GBV.html

LOOKING FOR A RESEARCHER?

Find Australian researchers working in the field of domestic and family violence on the Clearinghouse Researchers Database. You can search for researchers by name, their research area, institution or by keywords.

In the coming months, the Clearinghouse will be contacting researchers already listed on the database, asking them to update their contact and research details. If you want to be listed on the Clearinghouse Researchers Database, please contact us at: clearinghouse@unsw.edu.au

new initiatives and resources

AUSTRALIAN INITIATIVES

Australian Human Rights Commission 2011, *Mechanisms for advancing women's human rights: a guide to using the Optional Protocol to CEDAW and other international complaint mechanisms*, Australian Human Rights Commission, Sydney

This new resource provides lawyers, advocates and women experiencing violations of their rights with an introduction and a practical guide to using the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and other complaint mechanisms at the international level. Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick launched the guide in August 2011. Australia became a party to the protocol in 2008.

www.humanrights.gov.au/sex_discrimination/publication/mechanisms/index.html

GLBTIQ domestic violence toolkit

The toolkit is for agencies and service providers supporting gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (GLBTIQ) victims of domestic violence and their families. Produced by ACON's Lesbian and Gay Anti-Violence Project, the toolkit includes the 2011 report, *One size does not fit all: gap analysis of NSW domestic violence support services*, as well as posters and handouts for service providers and people experiencing violence. The toolkit is available online or in hard copy.

www.acon.org.au/anti-violence/resources/GLBTIQDV-toolkit

Family Violence Best Practice Principles

The Family Court's Best Practice Principles were first developed as part of the Family Court's Family Violence Strategy in March 2009. The Commonwealth Attorney-General launched a revised set of principles in July 2011. The principles now include the processes used in the Federal Magistrates Court of Australia, as well as the Family Court.

www.familylawcourts.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/FLC/Home/Publications/Family+Law+Courts+publications/fv_best_practice_for_flc

Western Australia Domestic Violence Service System Project

The Western Australian Department for Child Protection has funded the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services to undertake a scoping project of the state's domestic and family violence service system, with a particular focus on women's refuges. The project aims to find out the current and emerging issues in each region, highlight good practice, determine where capacity may be enhanced and identify opportunities for further professional development of refuge staff, management and boards.

For further information: contact Jackie Newbigin, Project Coordinator, on **(08) 9420 7285** or at jackie@womenscouncil.com.au

INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

National Online Resource Center on Violence Against Women special collections

The National Online Resource Centre on Violence Against Women, based in the United States, recently updated its special collection on addressing violence against women during natural disasters, adding resources on disaster planning and assessments and child protection. They have also released a new special collection that examines co-occurring trauma issues experienced by veterans and provides information related to best practices through a multi-systems approach.

www.vawnet.org/special-collections

Turquet L, Seck P, Azconna G, Menon R, Boyce C, Pierron N & Harbour E 2011, *The progress of the world's women: in pursuit of justice*, UN Women, New York

This first report from UN Women provides a global review on women's rights around the world. It recognises the positive progress made but also identifies ongoing issues of violence against women, a lack of access to justice and a lack of gender equality. Of concern, the report's authors found that women in the Asia-Pacific region still face significant injustice, especially in relation to domestic violence, household decision-making and land rights.

www.unifem.org.au

NEW CLEARINGHOUSE RESOURCE FOR CLIENTS EXPERIENCING FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

Following on from our financial security research project, the Clearinghouse has produced a two-page resource with information about financial products and services available to women experiencing financial difficulties. The resource is available to download for free from the Clearinghouse web site. Please feel free to distribute the resource to your clients and through your networks.

www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au/financial_security.htm

review

THE PURPLE DANDELION REVIEW BY JUANA KATZER, SOCIAL WORKER

F Sultana & S Nair 2011, *The purple dandelion: a Muslim woman's struggle against violence and oppression*, Exisle, Auckland

The purple dandelion traces the journey of Farida Sultana, from her childhood in Bangladesh, to her life as a young bride and mother in Iran and the United Kingdom, to her role as a women's rights activist and founder of the Shakti Asian Women's Support Group, now the Shakti Community Council, in New Zealand.

Along with co-author Shila Nair, Farida describes a frustrated childhood marked by the kindness of her father and the anger of her mother. As the story develops, however, it becomes apparent that the father's kindness was coupled with a strict adherence to the Muslim faith, while her mother's anger was tinged with the sadness of her own family history of domestic violence.

At eighteen, Farida was married off to a young medical student, who soon began to abuse her. In describing her adolescence and marriage, Farida is very open and honest about her confusions in relation to puberty, marriage and sex. While she yearned to be married and to be the perfect wife, she was absolutely terrified of sex and wanted to run away to a Catholic convent. In her detailed account of her engagement and married life, Farida explains the complex web of external pressures placed upon Bangladeshi women and how these pressures are subsequently internalised by women.

Although *The purple dandelion* is Farida's story, it also speaks of the experiences of many migrant women escaping or experiencing domestic violence; from the types of abuse perpetrated by their husbands and family members to the experiences of racism, systemic discrimination and marginalisation within women's refuges and broader society. For instance, when volunteering at a women's refuge in New Zealand, Farida worked with an African woman, who was told not to cook spicy food and was left without access to halaal meat.

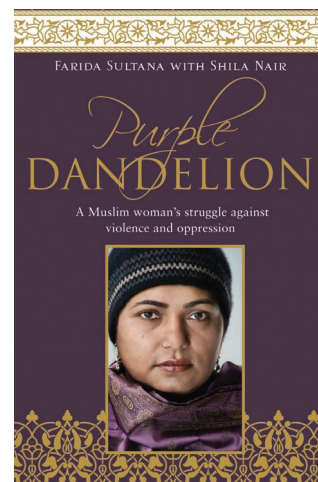
In response to this story and the experiences of other women escaping domestic violence, Farida and other migrant, Pakeha and Maori women established a migrant women's support group, where women were taught skills to support their independence, such as English and how to drive. Soon this support group grew into a migrant women's refuge; this feat eventually leading to Farida winning a Queen's Service Medal for community service.

Farida begins the book on a personal level and, as it progresses, the personal gradually becomes the political, with Farida exploring not only her political activism but her views on feminism and Islam. Despite being an avowed advocate for women's rights, she does not apply her feminist perspective to her views on Iranian religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini. In

The purple dandelion, Farida describes the Ayatollah as 'a man devoted to his version of Islam and devoted to the common Iranian people', without further examination of the effects his laws had on the lives of Iranian women. Although Farida comments on the consequences his laws had for the everyday Iranian national and expatriate, she does not acknowledge that the Ayatollah, for example, sacked female judges, introduced stoning as a form of punishment for prostitution and lowered the marriageable age from eighteen years to nine years of age (Nafisi 2008).

Nevertheless, this book is both relevant and pertinent, especially in the current context in which Muslim women are continuously portrayed as 'victims' of their faith, culture, patriarchy, men, their communities and families. Farida gives voice to the struggles and discrimination experienced by migrant women escaping domestic violence, while challenging mainstream services and workers to better accommodate the cultural and linguistic needs of these women.

Ultimately, *The purple dandelion* is not only a testament to the individual strength of Farida Sultana but also the collective strength of the women who impacted upon her life from the time of her childhood through to womanhood.



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recent additions to the research and resources database

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ARTICLES

Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention & Legal Service Victoria 2010, *Strengthening law and justice outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims/survivors of family violence and sexual assault and women and children: national policy issues – a Victorian perspective*, Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria, Melbourne

This is the first paper of a three-part series focused on law reform and policy development to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children as victims/survivors of family violence and sexual assault, emphasising legal equity, accessibility and outcomes. The first paper presents views on policy issues and national implications covering five sections: an overview of law and justice issues for Indigenous women, funding services in urban areas, a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's legal program, law and justice policy development, and funding issues.

Astbury J, Bruck D & Loxton D 2011, 'Forced sex: a critical factor in the sleep difficulties of young Australian women', *Violence and Victims*, vol. 26, no. 1, pp. 53-72

Using data from the 2003 Australian Longitudinal Study of Women's Health, this study examined the prevalence of forced sex and its contribution to sleep difficulties among young Australian women aged 24-30 years (n = 9061). The lifetime prevalence of reported forced sex was 8.7%. Significantly higher levels of recurrent sleep difficulties, prescription sleep medication, clinical depression, anxiety disorder, self-harm and substance use, as well as lower socioeconomic status indicators, were reported by the forced sex group compared to the no forced sex group.

McClain L 2011, *Women, disability and violence: strategies to increase physical and programmatic access to victims' services for women with disabilities*, Center for Women Policy Studies, Washington, DC

Drawing on focus groups and interviews with service providers in three communities in the United States, this report examines how partnerships between disability and domestic violence sectors can improve services for women with disabilities experiencing violence. Recommendations address the following areas: laying the foundation for effective partnerships; organisation-wide initiatives; multi-agency communication; cross training; appropriate policies, protocols, procedures and budgets; centralisation of information and resources; and creating welcoming environments.

Walby S 2007, *Indicators to measure violence against women*, United Nations, Geneva

This working paper examines existing international initiatives to establish measures or indicators of violence against women. The report is in four parts: a discussion on indicators, an overview of initiatives on indicators, examination of options in developing indicators and a summary of major options and recommendations.

REPORTS

Brown T & Hampson R 2009, *An evaluation of interventions with domestic violence perpetrators*, Monash University, Melbourne

This report presents findings from an evaluation of two men's behaviour change programs. The report provides a general overview of perpetrator programs and a detailed description of the two programs under review. Surveys canvassed perpetrator and partner views of and satisfaction with the programs. Findings cover: the context, type and patterns of violence; issues around access to services; and outcomes.

US Department of Justice & US Department of Health and Human Services 2011, *Evidence-based practices for children exposed to violence: a selection from federal databases*, US Department of Justice Washington, DC

Summarising findings from a review of United States research studies and program evaluations, this report identifies more than fifty evidence-based or promising practices in interventions for children affected by domestic violence. The report includes a matrix outlining details for each program, a glossary of terms and a brief summary of service characteristics.

POLICY

Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs 2010, *Indigenous Family Safety Agenda*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra

The Indigenous Family Safety Agenda outlines part of the Australian Government's work to reduce Indigenous family violence, in partnership with Indigenous leaders and communities. There are four priority action areas targeting: alcohol abuse, police protection, working with strong local leaders and coordinating support services.

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recent additions to the good practice database

Details about the following projects and services can be viewed through the Clearinghouse Good Practice Database at: www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au/good_practice.html

AVERT Family Violence training package

The AVERT Family Violence training package is a multi-disciplinary training resource that has been designed for a range of professionals who work in the family law system. AVERT aims to provide workers within the family law system with a sound and practical understanding of family violence and a stronger capacity for multi-disciplinary collaboration through greater understanding and recognition of the professional roles and their functions. The various training programs outlined in the package range from a number of two-hour seminars up to a five-day intensive workshop, aligned to nationally recognised competencies. The package provides a wide range of educational materials that can be 'mixed and matched' according to specific professional requirements.

Domestic Violence Workplace Rights and Entitlements Project

The Domestic Violence Workplace Rights and Entitlements Project is an innovative project which aims to identify and address the effects of domestic violence on women's employment and financial security. The project has produced resources and fact sheets for women in the workplace and their employers and has lobbied extensively for workplace entitlements for workers experiencing domestic violence. A number of model clauses in enterprise agreements have been facilitated through the project, which has worked extensively with trade unions, employers and the Australian Council of Trade Unions. The project is managed by the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, with funding from the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

KidsXpress

KidsXpress is an expressive therapy group which uses music art and drama therapies to provide children with healthy coping mechanisms and enhance their positive life skills. The program is designed for children between the ages of four and fourteen, who have been impacted by trauma. KidsXpress is located in Moore Park, Sydney. The KidsXpress program is free of charge to families and is typically a ten-week program that coincides with the New South Wales school term. KidsXpress is the first centre worldwide that uniquely integrates art, drama and music therapies to provide a service for such a diverse range of children in need.

Northern Crisis Advocacy Response Service

The Northern Crisis Advocacy Response Service (NCARS) provides a twenty-four-hour, seven-days-a-week, face-to-face crisis response to women experiencing family violence. NCARS was developed by a network of services in the Northern region of Melbourne to enhance the integration of the family violence service system and to provide better counselling, information, support and advocacy services. The NCARS model mobilises the family violence service response system (including police and – potentially – others, such as health services) to support women in a consistent and coordinated way. Importantly, it also enables women to take the time to fully explore the range of legal and other options available to them.

Wrapped in Angels

Wrapped in Angels is a resource developed to assist workers to undertake 'angel blanket' therapy work with children and adults who have experienced trauma. Wrapped in Angels utilises a trauma and resilience framework that enables individuals to tap into their own existing strengths and safety nets. Participants in the program each make their own blanket, which they design after identifying their personal resilience factors. The resource provides guidelines and practice aids to use. Wrapped in Angels training is also available for counsellors and therapists.

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Research papers

Reports

- Sety M 2011, *The impact of domestic violence on children: a literature review*, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse & Benevolent Society, NSW, Sydney
www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au/research_reports.htm

Research and Practice Briefs

- Braaf R 2011, *Preventing domestic violence death – is sexual assault a risk factor?*, Research and Practice Brief 1
www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au/researchandpractice.htm

Stakeholder Papers

- Howard J 2011, *Adolescent violence in the home – the missing link in family violence prevention and response*, Stakeholder Paper 11
www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au/stakeholder_papers.htm

Other resources

Fast Facts

- Campbell R 2011, *The impact of domestic violence on children and infants*, Fast Facts 4
www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au/fast_facts.htm

Submissions

- Submission to the Australian Law Reform Commission's Family Violence and Commonwealth Laws Inquiry
www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au/submissions.htm

Financial security information resource

- 2011, 'Getting your finances back on track', Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, Sydney
http://www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au/financial_security.htm

Web pages

- *Domestic Violence Deaths: Risk, Responsibility and Review* forum podcasts
- *Intimate Partner Sexual Violence: Best Practice Responses* forum and training podcasts
www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au/conference_proceedings.htm

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