

# CDFWR@der



Working to end  
domestic violence;  
Learning from London

Photo courtesy  
Metropolitan Police Service, London

Research summary:  
Heterosexual violence and same-sex partner abuse

Database highlights:  
Same-sex domestic violence

Evidence based practice:  
Sex & Ethics: the sexual ethics education program for young people



# Director's message

CDFVR warmly welcomes the appointment of Karen Struthers MP as Minister for Communities and Housing and Minister for Women in the newly formed Queensland Government.

Karen has been a long term campaigner for policy, legislation and programs to stop domestic and family violence and support women and children who are affected by it. In the mid-1980s, Karen was co-ordinator of Windana Women's Shelter in Brisbane and then Director (and a founding member) of the State-wide Domestic Violence Resource Centre (DVRC) Inc. During that time, and among numerous activities and achievements, Karen was an active member of the Queensland Domestic Violence Action Group, which successfully lobbied for the establishment of the Queensland Domestic Violence Taskforce. The Taskforce report, *Beyond These Walls*, resulted in a watershed of policy and program development and the enactment of the then *Domestic Violence (Family Protection) Act 1989*. Karen also led the successful campaign to amend the Queensland *Criminal Code* to include stalking laws. This was achieved with the support of the Women's Policy Unit, Office of Cabinet in 1992, with Queensland being the first Australian jurisdiction to legislate against stalking. Karen was also a member of the inaugural Queensland Domestic Violence Council and, twenty years later, I will soon have the pleasure of handing over to her the report of the current Ministerial Advisory Council on Domestic and Family Violence.



The former Minister for Communities, Lindy Nelson-Carr was also committed to our cause; we thank for her conviction and support and wish her well in her ongoing work in Parliament for a better, safer world.

At the national level, the National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children provided an advance copy of its plan *Time for Action* to the Minister for the Status of Women, Tanya Plibersek, in mid-March. Minister Plibersek has indicated that she would release the Plan in the near future. While the National Council was due to complete its work on the Plan in December 2008, the Council needed, and took, more time to ensure an appropriately thorough process in developing the Plan.

The National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (the Council) was established in May 2008, fulfilling one of the Australian Government's 2007 election commitments. Established for a term of one year, the Council comprises 11 members from across Australia, collectively representing extensive expertise and networks in the area of domestic and family violence and sexual assault.

In developing its Plan, Council commissioned (through the Department of Families and Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs) a range of research; met with more than 2,000 people across the country; reviewed 370 public submissions; convened six expert round-table forums; delivered presentations to key government and non-government fora; and briefed a number of Commonwealth State and Territory ministers, and representatives of the Federal Opposition.

Many of us on the Council have seen the development of the National Plan as a highlight in our years of work toward stopping violence against women. We believe that we have the best chance ever of making a real, lasting difference and we're confident that with the support of the Australian Government and all States and Territories we can do so. I very much look forward to the release of *Time for Action* and a significant reduction in violence against women and their children in Australia.

*Heather Rancarrow*

# Inside this issue

Director's message.....	1
Centre news.....	2
Working to end domestic homicide: Learning from London.....	3
Research summary: Coming forward.....	4
Database highlights: Same-sex/opposite-sex domestic violence.....	9
Service spotlight: CACTUS.....	11
Policy initiatives: The Road Home .....	12
Evidence based practice: Sex and Ethics.....	14
Evidence based practice: Evaluation of 30629QLD course .....	16
Workshops and date claimers .....	18

## Centre news

### New Staff

This quarter CDFVR welcomes two new members to the team: Dr Liane McDermott and Ms Deborah Balmer.

#### *Dr Liane McDermott*

Liane is contributing on a part-time basis in two roles - Education Officer and Senior Research Officer. Her primary research interests include women's health and she has published widely on this topic. Prior to her career in public health research, Liane worked in the community sector managing both health promotion and community development projects. She is a member of the Australian Society of Behavioural Health and Medicine, the Public Health Association of Australia and the Australian Health Promotion Association.



Liane commenced work with CDFVR in February and has already contributed two pieces to this edition of the CDFVRe@der. Liane will also be contributing as a member of the research team for the current CDFVR project on the nature and prevalence of partner abuse of women in Queensland.

#### *Ms Deborah Balmer*



Deborah commenced work with CDFVR on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March and is working 0.8 of the Education Officer position. Deborah's teaching career began in downtown Los Angeles at Fred Jordan Mission, a shelter for the homeless. While living in Los Angeles, she completed her Master's degree with her research focusing on a phonological aspect of English. After teaching at the foundation and university level for a number of years, Deborah worked with another NGO, this time in Delhi, India. Her communications work with ASHA (India) allowed her to be part of an organization making a positive difference to slum dwellers' lives and communities. Deborah has subsequently worked

in curriculum development, teacher professional development, private training organization management, and educational resource development for the school sector. Most recently Deborah has been working in Qatar on a government school assessment project.

# Learning from London

## Working to end domestic homicide

By Heather Nancarrow, Director, CDFVR

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of December more than 70 people attended CDFVR's Distinguished Visitor's Forum "Working to end domestic homicide: Learning from London".



There were four presentations, followed by an open forum to explore the implications for policy initiatives such as the Queensland Government's strategy to target domestic and family violence 2009 – 2013.

The forum's subtitle highlighted the opportunity we had to hear of the successful approach taken by London Metropolitan Police Service, under the leadership of Detective Superintendent Gerry Campbell, New Scotland Yard. The approach has led to a substantial reduction of domestic homicides, as a percentage of all homicides in London, as well as reducing serious assaults and grievous bodily harm.

### Learning from London

We were privileged to have Detective Superintendent Gerry Campbell in person to present the London Domestic Violence Strategy. The strategy is centrally driven and locally delivered, supported by policing and performance plans, and public protection groups. Internally, the strategy is communicated by highlighting that every 'domestic' is a potential homicide, and externally through a mass social marketing campaign that warns abusers 'your partner's silence no longer protects you' (see front cover this edition for an example of the campaign).

The strategy is underpinned by a simple yet powerful philosophy – doing nothing is not an option. Within

the approach, holding abusers accountable for their actions and adopting a pro-active multi-agency approach to violence prevention and reduction are national priorities. The approach is essentially a strong pro-arrest approach.

When asked about the percentage of dual arrests, or arrests involving women who use violence in self-defence and as a survival strategy, Detective Inspector Campbell replied that thorough investigation, risk assessment and evidenced-based policing ensures that the predominant aggressor is arrested and this involves very few women.

Key principles of the London Domestic Violence Strategy are:

- Victim support – keeping victims safe
- Put the focus back onto the perpetrator
- Leadership and accountability
- Effective systems and processes
- Effective partnership and information sharing and
- Coordinated responses and a 'can do' attitude.

The strategy utilises a domestic violence risk assessment model called SPECSS+, which recognises core risk factors and significant (plus) risk factors, including a history of stalking; mental health issues; credible threats to kill; use of weapons; alcohol/substance misuse; abuse of children or pets; suicidal/homicidal tendencies; jealous, controlling behaviour; and strangulation/choking.

There are three risk management fora to support the strategy, including the Multi-Agency Risk Management Conference (MARAC), which manages the high to very high risk domestic violence cases. The MARAC combines up-to-date risk information with a timely assessment of a victim's needs and links those directly to the provision of appropriate services for all involved: the victim, children and the perpetrator. The aims of the MARAC include constructing and implementing a risk management plan, reducing repeat victimisation, and improving agency accountability.

Detective Superintendent Campbell continually emphasised the need for inter-agency communication (including information sharing), co-operation and collaboration as critical to achieving a reduction in the prevalence of domestic violence, including domestic homicide.

*Here's news for domestic violence abusers: your partner's silence no longer protects you.*

# Research summary

## Coming forward: The underreporting of heterosexist violence and same-sex partner abuse in Victoria

William Leonard, Anne Mitchell, Marian Pitts, Sunil Patel, Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, La Trobe University

Summary by Liane McDermott, Education Officer, CDFVR

Coming Forward was commissioned in response to the need for increased reporting of heterosexist violence and same-sex partner abuse. It is based on the principles of equality and justice and recognizes the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual and transgender (GLBT) people to live their lives as they see fit, free from the threat and actuality of violence, harassment and discrimination.

### Background

Higher than average levels of violence, harassment and discrimination are experienced by GLBT people, with these levels remaining constant over the past 10 years (Hillier et al, 2005). Rates of partner abuse, however, are reported to be similar within same-sex and heterosexual relationships (McClennan, 2005), although many GLBT people under-report incidents

**In same sex relationships, abusers often control their partners by the threat of 'outing', i.e., divulging their partner's sexual orientation to family, friends, employers or the community in order to refrain their partner from reporting abuse and forcing them to remain in that relationship (Aulivola, 2004).**

of same-sex partner abuse and heterosexist violence. The limited Australian research on this underreporting (Attorney General's Department of NSW, 2003; Farrell & Somali, 2006) concurs with findings in the UK: the majority of lesbian and gay people believe that the police cannot and will not take homophobic crime seriously (Dick, 2008) and many fear the reaction of the police to their sexuality (Blackburn & Loveday, 2004).

Heterosexist violence and same-sex partner abuse are inextricably linked through the everyday existence of heterosexism in society. In same-sex relationships, abusers often control their partners by the threat of 'outing', i.e., divulging their partner's sexual orientation to family, friends, employers or the community in order to refrain their partner from reporting abuse and forcing them to remain in that relationship (Aulivola, 2004). Without heterosexism, the threat of 'outing', or not being taken seriously or being discriminated against about the abuse would have no power.

Very few domestic violence and sexual assault services provide expert assistance to the victims of same-sex partner abuse, and mainstream services have struggled to address the specific needs of GLBT people. Efforts to engage government and mainstream organisations in developing GLBT-sensitive services and interventions have been hindered by the lack of data on the incidence, effects and underlying causes of heterosexist violence and same-sex partner abuse among GLBT people. In an endeavour to address these needs, the Coming Forward project aimed to "provide a more accurate picture of the extent and nature of both heterosexist violence and same-sex partner abuse in Victoria and GLBT people's experiences dealing with the criminal justice system and allied health and community agencies" (Leonard et al, 2008:3).

The report identifies barriers to GLBT people reporting and seeking assistance following incidents of heterosexist violence or same-sex partner abuse, and concludes with recommendations aimed at (Leonard et al, 2008:3):

- Combating heterosexism and promoting sexual orientation and gender identity diversity
- Increasing GLBT people's reporting of heterosexist violence and same-sex partner abuse
- Increasing GLBT people's access to and use of the criminal justice system and allied health and community agencies, and
- Assisting those organisations that have responsibility for dealing with the victims of violence and partner abuse, including the police and courts, to develop GLBT-sensitive protocols and procedures.

The term *heterosexism* is used in the report to describe the "complex social and psychological processes underpinning violence and discrimination against not only gay men, lesbians and bisexuals, but also against transsexuals and transgender people" (Leonard et al, 2008:4). *Heterosexist* abuse includes both sexual orientation and gender identity violence and discrimination while *homophobic* abuse refers, more narrowly, to violence directed against same-sex attracted and bisexual people.

The report also expands the definition of violence from incidents of physical and sexual assault to the everyday abuse or harassment and vilification directed at GLBT people. In doing so, it encompasses institutional violence, which refers to the ways in which the beliefs, policies and practices of particular organisations devalue and marginalize GLBT people. The report argues that it is this everyday culture of heterosexist harassment that provides the fuel for more violent acts of physical and sexual abuse.

## The study

The study (funded by the Victoria Law Foundation and managed through Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria with the assistance of Victoria Police) was publicised via email, radio and promotional materials through a range of GLBT community and professional networks, domestic and family violence agencies and a number of government and non-government organisations.

An online survey was used, with the questionnaire including quantitative and qualitative questions relating to the following:

- Experiences of heterosexist violence and same-sex partner abuse
- Service access and quality when reporting incidents of abuse and pursuing cases through the criminal justice system
- Knowledge and use of Victoria Police Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers (GLLOs)
- Barriers and 'incentives' to their reporting and seeking assistance following an incident of heterosexist violence or same-sex partner abuse.

**Lesbians were more likely than gay men to report having been in an abusive same-sex relationship.**

Respondents were excluded if they were non-Victorian residents or aged under 14 years.

## Respondents

A total of 390 eligible respondents (aged 14 to 65 years) successfully completed the survey from September 2007 to February 2008. The mean age was 36 years. Nearly 3% identified as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and 12% reported having one or more disabilities. The majority of respondents (40%) lived in inner city Melbourne, while 27% lived in the suburbs and the remaining 33% lived across regional and rural Victoria. Nearly 61% of respondents were male, 35% female and 4% transgender. Just over half (51%) of respondents were in a same-sex relationship and 16% had children. Over 57% of respondents identified as 'gay', the majority of whom were men (95%). One quarter identified as 'lesbian

(97% female), 9% as bisexual, 4% as heterosexual/straight and 4% as other.

## Key findings (Leonard et al, 2008:4-6)

### Heterosexist violence and same-sex partner abuse

#### Incidence

The threat and actuality of heterosexist violence is common for GLBT Victorians.

- Nearly **one in seven** GLBT respondents report living in fear of heterosexist violence.
- Nearly **85%** of GLBT respondents have been subject to heterosexist violence or harassment in their lifetimes.
- **Seven in ten** GLBT respondents have been subject to heterosexist violence while alone in the past two years; **eight in ten** have experienced heterosexist violence as part of a same-sex couple or group in the past two years.
- **One in four** GLBT respondents have been subject to physical violence or the threat of physical violence over the past two years.
- In **85%** of cases, violence and harassment were preceded or accompanied by heterosexist language.
- Approximately **one in twenty** GLBT respondents have been subject to sexual assault over the past two years.

The incidence of abuse within same-sex relationships was found to be similar to that reported in heterosexual relationships.

- Just under **one third** of GLBT respondents have been in a same-sex relationship where they were subject to abuse by their partner.
- **Seventy-eight per cent** of the abuse was psychological and **58%** involved physical abuse or being hit.
- **Lesbians** were more likely than gay men to report having been in an abusive same-sex relationship (41% and 28% respectively).

#### Where, when and by whom?

Heterosexist violence can occur anywhere and at anytime. Respondents reported significant levels of violence across metropolitan, rural and regional

Victoria. Much of the violence is random and committed by strangers. However, GLBT people are also subject to relatively high levels of heterosexual violence at home and at work.

- Nearly **half** of reported incidents of heterosexist violence occurred in inner city Melbourne, with 14% spread across rural and regional Victoria.
- **One in three** incidents of heterosexist violence occurred on the street.
- **Thirteen per cent** of violence against GLBT people occurred in their own home and **10%** at work.
- In **70%** of cases the perpetrator was a stranger or had no prior relationship to the victim.
- **Sixty five percent** of respondents reported that multiple offenders were involved.

### *Hidden consequences*

A large percentage of GLBT people hide their sexual orientation or gender identity or modify their behaviour in public to minimise the risk of being subjected to heterosexist violence.

- Approximately **45%** of GLBT respondents *occasionally* hide their sexual orientation or gender identity at community events or while accessing services.
- **One in three** GLBT respondents *usually* hide their sexual orientation or gender identity at religious events and **one in five** when in public and at work.
- **Sixty per cent** of GLBT young people aged 14 to 24 years hide their sexual orientation or gender identity from family and **70%** when attending an educational institution.
- A number of GLBT respondents wrote of monitoring their dress, behaviour and public displays of affection with their partner or friends for fear of violence and abuse.
- **Eleven per cent** of GLBT respondents reported that over the past two years a family member, child or friend had been subject to abuse because of their association with them as a GLBT person.

### *Reporting and seeking assistance*

One of the major barriers to GLBT respondents reporting or seeking assistance for acts of heterosexist violence or same-sex partner abuse is

the belief that they will not be taken seriously. At the same time a large number of respondents believe that reporting will lead to further abuse from service providers. A majority of GLBT respondents strongly believe that mainstream police cannot and will not take heterosexist violence and harassment seriously. However, respondents reported high levels of satisfaction with the services and support provided by the Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers (GLLOs).

- **Seven out of ten** GLBT respondents did not report their most recent experience of heterosexist violence or harassment to police while 60% did not report that experience to anyone.
- Only **40%** of GLBT respondents who reported their most recent experience of heterosexist violence or harassment to mainstream police found the police to be supportive and the service they provided valuable.
- **Seventy-five per cent** of victims of heterosexist violence who accessed the GLLOs found them to be supportive, while nearly **63%** found the service they provided to be valuable.
- Only **6%** of GLBT people who reported same-sex partner abuse to police were referred to advice or support services.

### *Increased reporting*

Nearly **70%** of participants provided written responses to questions asking them about the barriers that prevented them from reporting or seeking assistance following incidents of heterosexist violence or same-sex partner abuse and what could be done to increase the likelihood of their reporting or seeking assistance in the future.

- **One in four** respondents would be more likely to report or seek assistance following an incident of heterosexist violence or same-sex partner abuse if they believed their complaint would be taken seriously. This was the major barrier to GLBT people reporting or seeking assistance. Respondents believed this indifference came from community attitudes to service provision and the attitudes of individual service providers.
- **One in seven** respondents advocated for anti-heterosexist social and legislative reforms including mainstream public education campaigns and legislation prohibiting not only heterosexist violence but also heterosexist harassment and vilification.
- Nearly **one in five** GLBT respondents suggested improving service access and quality as a way of increasing their likelihood of reporting

**60% of GLBT young people aged 14-24 years hide their sexual orientation or gender identity from family and 70% when attending an educational institution.**

with the majority of responses targeting mainstream police. Improvements included:

- GLBT-sensitivity and awareness training for mainstream services
- Increased provision of GLBT-specific services
- Increasing the number of and access to the GLLOs, particularly outside police stations, and
- Improved reporting mechanisms and confidentiality.

## Recommendations

In conclusion, the report made the following recommendations (Leonard et al, 2008:63-66) aimed at challenging heterosexism and its effects, and at increasing GLBT people's reporting of heterosexual violence and same-sex partner abuse.

### 1. *Challenging heterosexism and promoting sexual orientation and gender identify diversity*

The report demonstrates that the actuality and threat of violence are part of GLBT Victorian's day-to-day lives. Individual acts of heterosexual violence may occur anywhere and at any time, ranging from verbal abuse, harassment and personal insult to physical injury and sexual assault. These individual acts are supported by the institutionalisation of discriminatory beliefs, policies and practices. They contribute to heterosexual prejudice and in so doing are part of the social machinery that sustains as it justifies the continued abuse of GLBT people. The following reforms were recommended.

#### *Legislative reforms*

- The development and implementation of legal provisions against heterosexual violence, harassment and vilification
- The full legal recognition of GLBT individuals, same-sex couples and non-hetero-normative families
- The removal of exemptions from anti-discrimination legislation that allow discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

#### *Social reforms*

- The development and implementation of government-funded campaigns that aim to increase the GLBT community's capacity to deal with the threat and effects of heterosexual violence
- The development, implementation and evaluation of government-funded campaigns challenging heterosexism and homophobia run in partnership with GLBT community organizations and other

relevant agencies. These should include:

- Broad-based public campaigns, and
- Initiatives targeting those groups most likely to engage in heterosexual violence (for example, young men)
- The development of government-funded initiatives aimed at challenging institutionalized heterosexism and its effects. These should include:
  - Ongoing development and implementation of school-based policy, resources and training that challenge heterosexism and homophobia, and
  - Sponsoring a human rights dialogue between faith-based and GLBT organisations to address the social effects of religious intolerance and discrimination against GLBT people.

### 2. *Capacity building*

In response to respondents' beliefs of the failure of mainstream services to deal with the needs of victims of heterosexual violence and same-sex partner abuse, the following recommendations were made to improve service access and quality.

#### *Inclusive policy*

- The inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity as part of anti-discrimination, social inclusion and diversity policies at all levels of government, Victoria Police and publicly-funded agencies that provide services to the victims of violence, and domestic and sexual abuse
- The inclusion of policy provisions that make it mandatory for relevant services to address the needs of victims of heterosexual violence and same-sex partner abuse
- The provision of information and training for senior policy makers and heads of organisations on heterosexual violence and its effects and GLBT-sensitive models of service delivery and practice.

#### *GLBT-sensitive mainstream service delivery*

- In consultation with GLBT organisations, the development of best practice GLBT-guidelines and processes of service accreditation, and community listings of GLBT-accredited service providers
- The provision of government-funded resources and personnel to ensure that services can meet the needs of their GLBT clients in a timely and appropriate manner

- In consultation with GLBT organisations, the development and implementation of GLBT-sensitivity training and the development of information, resources and appropriate referrals
- The provision of in-service training of all staff on heterosexism and its effects, on GLBT issues and GLBT-sensitive practice and service delivery.

#### *GLBT specialist services*

- The development of GLBT-specific services where appropriate.

### **3. Improved reporting**

A number of changes to current reporting mechanisms and practices were suggested by respondents, all of which rely on Victoria Police taking a lead role, working in partnership with government and GLBT community organisations where appropriate.

- The development of a Victoria Police communication strategy to encourage increased reporting of heterosexist violence and same-sex partner abuse. This could include:
  - Greater use of web-based resources and GLBT sites, and
  - Initiatives targeting GLBT young people
- Increasing access to GLLOs outside formal police settings including at GLBT organisations and community events
- The development of diversity and GLBT-sensitivity training for all police personnel (see Recommendation 2 above)
- The diversification of mechanisms for reporting heterosexist violence and same-sex partner abuse including anonymous online reporting for

incident data collection

- The development of police information and referral protocols for victims of heterosexist violence and same-sex partner abuse.

### **4. Research**

There is a pressing need for improved and ongoing information and data on the incidence of different types of heterosexist violence including non-physical forms of abuse. At the same time, little is known of GLBT people's experiences of pursuing cases of heterosexist violence and same-sex partner abuse through the courts.

- The development and implementation of improved data collection on the incidence and types of heterosexist violence experienced by GLBT Victorians - this may include a partnership between Victoria Police and GLBT community organisations to provide alternative, community-based options for data collection (and reporting).
- The development of government-funded research targeting cases of heterosexist violence and same-sex partner abuse that have gone through the courts - the project would gather information on complainants' experiences of taking cases through the criminal justice system with a view to improving the quality of services provided
- The development of research looking at how heterosexism intersects with other forms of identity-based discrimination including race, ethnicity and disability
- The monitoring and evaluation of data collection and of anti-heterosexist campaigns to determine whether they are leading to an improved reporting of and a reduction in heterosexist violence and same-sex partner abuse.

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The 6<sup>th</sup> annual Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum *The big picture – Putting the pieces together*, will be held at the Mackay Entertainment Centre, Alfred Street, Mackay on May 11, 12 and 13.

This year's Forum will have a strong focus on healing, leadership and community information sharing. Speakers from across Australia include: Kerrie Tim, Indigenous Leadership and Engagement, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; June Oscar, Fitzroy Crossing; Pat Anderson, Chair Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health and co-author of *Little Children are Sacred* report; and Professor Chris Cunneen, NewSouth Global Chair in Criminology, UNSW.

In response to last year's Forum survey CDFVR, together with its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reference group, has added an optional third day of skills development workshops. The two workshops, Help Ease Life's Parenting Pressure (H.E.L.P.P.) program and Red Dust Healing, will be presented on day three for an additional cost of \$80.

As in previous years, the Forum dinner and karaoke will run until midnight on the first night, May 11. Sonya at Grinders Catering has developed a mouthwatering three-course menu, so get ready for a great celebration! An additional draw card this year is dinner speaker Professor Steve Larkin, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Indigenous Leadership, from Charles Darwin University.

Forum registrations close on April 27. Numbers are limited to 150, so register early to avoid disappointment. If you have any queries about the Forum please contact Annie Webster on (07) 49407838 or email [a.webster@cqu.edu.au](mailto:a.webster@cqu.edu.au). Further information is available on the enclosed Re@der insert.

## Database highlights

**Domestic and Family Violence Database Summary: Experience of domestic and family violence among clients in same-sex relationships compared to those in opposite-sex relationships**  
By Liane McDermott, Education Officer, CDFVR

### Background

In 2003, the coverage of Queensland's Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989 was broadened to include a range of relationships. The Act now provides for court-ordered Domestic Violence Protection Orders for 'spousal' and intimate personal relationships for persons in same-sex relationships.

Same-sex domestic and family violence refers to violence within same-sex relationships as well as violence experienced by either gay men or lesbian women. Transgender and bisexual people may also experience domestic and family violence in same-sex or opposite-sex (heterosexual) relationships.

As highlighted in the Research Summary on heterosexist violence and same-sex partner abuse (see page 4 in this edition of the CDFVRe@der),

rates of partner abuse among same-sex and opposite-sex relationships appear to be similar. Here we examine the new client matters for people who are in a same-sex relationship recorded in CDFVR's Domestic and Family Violence Database, and provide some comparisons with data recorded for new clients who are in an opposite-sex relationship. The CDFVR database includes data provided by 29 domestic and family violence support services across Queensland, some of which provide services for both victims of violence and those who use violence. The data do not represent the incidence of domestic and family violence in Queensland, but they do provide some insights into the nature of domestic and family violence for new client matters recorded in the database.

### Same-sex and opposite-sex relationships

During the period 3 October 2003 to 31 December 2008, a total of 142 559 new client matters were recorded in the Domestic and Family Violence Database. Of these, 1007 (0.7%) new clients reported being in a same-sex relationship (either spousal or an intimate personal relationship), and 83.8% (n=119 519) were in an opposite-sex relationship.

The majority of clients who reported being in a same-sex relationship were female (71.4%), with 27.7% identifying as male and 0.9% as transgender. For clients who reported being in an opposite-sex relationship, the majority were female (81.6%), followed by males (17.8%) and transgender persons (0.1%).

The most commonly reported reason for the same-sex client's contact to the service (or the client's situation) was that they were experiencing violence in their current relationship (51.8%). This was followed by experiencing violence from a past relationship (21.3%), using violence in a current relationship (13.1%), having previously experienced violence in a relationship (8.8%) and having used violence in a relationship or using violence in a past relationship (2.8% and 2.1%, respectively). Experiencing violence in a current relationship (56.9%) or from a past relationship (18.7%) were also the most commonly reported reasons for seeking help among clients who were in an opposite-sex relationship.

Among clients in same-sex relationships, those experiencing violence in their current relationship (n=509) were mostly seeking court support (42.0%), followed by crisis intervention (27.7%) and counseling (23.0%). For those experiencing violence from a past relationship, most were seeking court support (58.4%), followed by crisis intervention (26.2%). Similarly, opposite-sex clients experiencing violence in either a current or past relationship were mostly seeking court support, crisis intervention or counselling.

### Reporting of violence to police

The following Tables 1 and 2 compare the reporting of domestic or family violence to police for clients in same-sex relationships and clients in opposite-sex relationships. As only nine clients who reported being in a same-sex relationship identified as transgender, we have excluded transgender persons due to the small numbers.

**Table 1: Same-sex relationships: Reports to Police by Client Gender (column percent)**

	Female		Male		Total	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	373	55.1	167	64.0	540	57.6
No	221	32.6	72	27.6	293	31.2
Unknown	83	12.3	22	8.4	105	11.2
<b>Total</b>	677		261		938	

Table 1 shows the percentage of domestic/family violence reported to police by client gender for clients in same-sex relationships. Males (64.0%) more commonly reported violence to police compared to females in same-sex relationships (55.1%).

**Table 2: Opposite-sex relationships: Reports to Police by Client Gender (column per cent)**

	Female		Male		Total	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	53219	56.5	12030	58.7	65249	56.9
No	28791	30.6	5967	29.1	34758	30.3
Unknown	12210	13.0	2496	12.2	14706	12.8
<b>Total</b>	94220		20493		114713	

Table 2 shows the percentage of domestic/family violence reported to police by client gender for clients in opposite-sex relationships. The percentage of males (58.7%) and females (56.5%) reporting violence to police was similar, although slightly higher for males.

Overall, the total percentage of reporting domestic or family violence to police was similar (approximately 57%) between clients in same-sex relationships and clients in opposite-sex relationships.

# Service spotlight

## Communication and Alternative Coping Techniques Under Stress (CACTUS)

By Heather Nancarrow, Director, CDFVR



As we know, the devastating impacts of domestic and family violence are numerous and can be long-term, particularly for women's health and well-being, and that of their children. Women develop a range of communication strategies and coping techniques in order to physically and mentally survive violence. For some women, survival strategies may include adopting an unassertive stance to avoid conflict of any kind, 'escaping' through inappropriate use of alcohol or other substances, or adopting an aggressive communication style which reflects the behaviour that had successfully controlled them when they were in an abusive relationship.

These behaviours impact on women's interactions within the family and the broader community (including supporting and negotiating school and sporting activities), and can limit their ability to sustain or build a stable social network. They have particular relevance for the women's children, who can suffer directly, as well as indirectly, from these behaviours. Conflict avoidance can mean children are not set, or required to abide by, reasonable boundaries, which can lead to adolescent-to-parent abuse, truancy and other behavioural issues in children and young people. Substance abuse and aggressive behaviour can directly put children's health and well-being at risk.

Once such survival strategies are established in a woman's routine pattern of behaviour, they will not necessarily end when their abusive relationship ends. Many women in these situations will need support to develop new ways of communicating and coping with stress, appropriate to their new contexts.

To address this need, the Cairns Regional Domestic Violence Service has commenced Communication and Alternative Coping Techniques Under Stress (CACTUS), an innovative program for women who have left violent relationships and are struggling with inappropriate communication styles and coping patterns. Amanda Lee-Ross, Manager of the Cairns Regional Domestic Violence Service, says

*"CACTUS is a skills-based group therapy program that responds to an increasing need for support for women who resist violence perpetrated against them, only to find themselves subject to action taken by the man who perpetrated violence against them, the police or the Department of Child Safety".*

The aim of CACTUS is to provide women with coping techniques and communication skills to deal with the aftermath of victimisation. Specifically, the objectives of CACTUS are to:

- Educate women on domestic violence
- Clarify for women the traumatic effects domestic violence has on victims
- Assist women in understanding that unhelpful coping patterns, aggressive behaviours and inappropriate communication styles developed in the 'DV world' are often triggered in the 'Now World' when under stress, or when threat is perceived
- Assist women in gaining, or regaining, skills that will enable them to utilise helpful coping techniques and appropriate communication styles when under stress or perceived threat

The first program commenced on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2009 with six participants and a further two groups begin on 15<sup>th</sup> July and 7<sup>th</sup> October 2009. Women can self-refer or be referred by other agencies including various government departments and community-based organisations.

For further details contact Sandi, CACTUS facilitator  
Cairns Regional Domestic Violence Service  
Tel: 07 4033 6100  
Email: [iprworker@dvcairns.org](mailto:iprworker@dvcairns.org)

# Policy initiatives

## Policy initiative: The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness.

By Heather Nancarrow, Director, CDFVR

Domestic violence has many devastating impacts on women and their children, including, for many, homelessness. Not only are they then without the comforts of a home environment, but the state of homelessness, itself, has various repercussions. These include disconnection with informal social networks; disruption of education, training and employment; negative effects on health and well-being; and an increased risk for continued or cyclic experiences of homelessness.

### The White Paper on Homelessness

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of December 2008 the White Paper on Homelessness, *The Road Home*, was launched by the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, and the Federal Minister for Housing, Tanya Plibersek. The White Paper outlines a plan for reducing homelessness in Australia by 2020, with specific goals to halve overall homelessness, and provide accommodation to all 'rough sleepers' who seek it.



Front cover of *The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness*

*The Road Home* sets out the policy underpinning the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA). The NAHA replaces the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) as the major response to homelessness in Australia and the source of funding for refuges, shelters, and safe houses for women and children escaping domestic and family violence. The NAHA “will deliver more longer-term housing for Australians who are homeless, more public and community housing and build and renew run down and overcrowded housing for Indigenous Australians living in remote areas” (*The Road Home* 2008, p.iii). Legislation underpinning the national response to homelessness will set standards to deliver the best quality services possible, guaranteeing that people who are homeless will be treated with dignity and respect, and receive quality services.

Under the NAHA, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) approved \$1.2 billion, as a first step, for the implementation of the first five years of *The Road Home*, which adds to the \$6.1 billion already approved for the NAHA. Of the \$1.2 billion, \$800 million is to be delivered through the National Partnership on Homelessness, and the remainder through the National Partnership on Social Housing.

*The Road Home* acknowledges that homelessness “has many drivers and causes, including the shortage of affordable housing, long term unemployment, mental health issues, substance abuse and family and relationship breakdown” (Ibid, p.viii) and that among women, “domestic and family violence is the main reason for seeking help from specialist homelessness services” (Ibid). Escaping violence is the reason for 55 per cent of women with children, and 37 per cent of young single women, who seek specialist homelessness services.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in urban and remote communities cited domestic and family violence as the most common reason for seeking SAAP services. *The Road Home* also acknowledges that children in the homelessness service system who have been exposed to domestic violence need specialist assistance to help them deal with the traumas of homelessness and violence, and to get them back to school and recreational activities.

Three key strategies provide the policy framework. The first strategy is *turning off the tap* by ensuring early intervention for those at risk of homelessness; and that people do not exit hospitals, child protection and correctional facilities, for example, into homelessness. The second strategy is *improving and expanding services* to ensure all relevant services are connected and responsive and that they achieve sustainable housing, improve economic and social participation and end homelessness for their clients. The third strategy is *breaking the homelessness cycle* by ensuring that people who become homeless will move quickly through the crisis system to stable housing with the support they need to prevent homelessness recurring.

## Domestic and family violence specific strategy

While all actions within these strategies are likely to be relevant to women escaping domestic violence, and their children, *The Road Home* includes a specific focus on enabling women to remain in their own homes, with the perpetrator of violence being removed, where it is safe and desirable for her to do so. This initiative builds on existing models in some jurisdictions, and provides for expanded models of integrated support.



Image from *The Road Home*, Chapter one.

Based on evidence of best practice approaches, the new or expanded service models will feature:

- Specialist workers to carefully assess the safety and support needs for women and children to stay in their own homes
- Brokerage funds that could be used to stabilise housing or increase home security for women and children, for example by installing deadlocks, screen doors, security lighting and home alarms, or by providing short-term rental subsidies or mortgage top ups, and
- Integrated criminal justice, health and community service policies and protocols to support women and their children

These expanded models of integrated support are to be provided under the National Partnership on Homelessness, and will be delivered by state and territory governments in partnership with not-for-profit providers.

The approach recognises “these measures are only appropriate for women and children where a thorough, professional risk assessment indicates this is a safe option...” and that crisis accommodation “remains an integral part of the national homelessness response” (Ibid p.34).

## Implementation and governance

A Council on Homelessness, appointed by the Prime Minister, will drive the homelessness agenda and

monitor the achievement of the goals and targets set out in the White Paper by 2013 and 2020. The Council’s work will be guided by principles established by the Social Inclusion Board and it will report annually to the Prime Minister. The COAG Reform Council will monitor progress against the outcomes and performance indicators in the NAHA.

The Australian Government will also establish the Bea Miles Foundation to encourage and harness business and corporate sector efforts to reduce homelessness. Many characteristics of the experience of homelessness are represented in Bea’s story, including family conflict or violence, mental illness, and vulnerability to incarceration.

As told through the Waverley Library (2008), Bea was born in Sydney in 1902, educated at a private girls’ school and graduated with Honours in English. She held radical views on freedom and sexuality. Her relationship with her father was characterized by violence, which she was able to escape with an inheritance from her grandmother. While studying medicine at University Bea fell ill with encephalitis, and some believe that she suffered long-term mental illness as a result of this disease, with her behaviour becoming increasingly eccentric.

In response to ongoing family conflict over her lifestyle and her ideas of sexual ‘freedom’, her father had her committed to the Hospital for the Insane, Gladesville in 1923. She remained incarcerated until media publicity led to her release two years later. Bea was constantly harassed by police and claimed to have been falsely convicted 195 times, and convicted fairly 100 times.

## Conclusion

While *The Road Home* sets out the policy to reduce homelessness in Australia, it is now up to those with a role in its implementation to achieve the promise it holds. The major role to be played is that of the States and Territories, in collaboration with the not-for-profit sector. We must ensure that the way that the policy is implemented is consistent with the principle of prioritizing the safety and wellbeing of women and their children.

## References

Department of Families, Housing, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs 2008, *The Road Home: a National Approach to Reducing Homelessness*, Canberra

Waverly Library 2008, Local history fact sheets, *Bea (Bee) Miles’ Bondi*, viewed 27 February 2009, <http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/library/localstudies/historical/miles.htm>

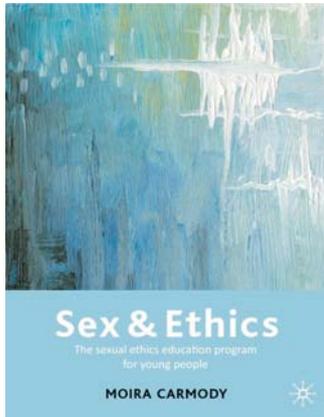
# Evidence based practice

## Sex & Ethics: the sexual ethics education program for young people (2009)

Moira Carmody (PhD)<sup>1</sup>

Summarised by Deborah Balmer, Education Officer, CDFVR

*Sex & Ethics: the sexual ethics education program for young people* is a result of a three year empirical research project into sexuality and sexual assault prevention. The research, led by Associate Professor Moira Carmody, was conducted in two stages. The first stage was to provide an evidenced-based foundation for the development of a violence prevention education



program, using a sexual ethics approach. It began in 2006 and involved in-depth interviews with 56 culturally and sexually diverse men and women aged 16-25 years from three regional and three metropolitan areas in New South Wales. The results of this foundational research are published as *Sex & Ethics: young people and ethical sex* which accompanies the education program.

The second stage of the research involved running a pilot of the education program that was developed from the results of the foundational research and evaluating its potential for the prevention of unwanted, coerced or pressured sex. The pilot education program was run over a six week period involving three hours per week. Participants in the pilot program had not participated in the foundational research. Carmody's (2009b, p.17) evaluation found that "young people made significant improvements over the life of the group in their ability to negotiate sex and their increased knowledge of sexual assault and they demonstrated a strong uptake of using ethical bystander skills." These changes, which were statistically significant over the time the group met, were still in evidence six months later. The published program, *Sex & Ethics: the sexual ethics education program for young people* is an iteration of the pilot program.

The education program is theoretically informed by the work of feminist post-structuralist theorists such as Jana Sawicki and the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault, especially his "notion of mutuality, the constant state of reflection and renegotiation that we need to assess and rework where we are in relation to living an ethical life" (Carmody 2009b, p.5).

<sup>1</sup>Moira Carmody (PhD) is Associate Professor at the Social Justice and Social Change Research Centre at the University of Western Sydney, Australia. She has worked for over 25 years in the field of sexual violence prevention as a sexual assault counsellor and coordinator, community educator, policy advisor at the state and federal level, and researcher and educator.

## The Ethical Framework

The essential tenet of the program is the use of an ethical framework which is about the 'process of decision-making and is not about prescribing what any person should think or do in any given situation' (Carmody 2009b, p.7). In week two, the education program presents the ethical framework, and in ensuing weeks uses numerous activities to apply the framework to real-life situations taken from the foundational research. As confidence builds, the framework is subsequently applied to the participant's own life.

The sexual ethics framework (Carmody 2009b, p5) has four interconnected steps.

1. **Caring for myself** - is this what I want, am I safe?
2. **Being aware of the other person's needs** – how do I know what they want?
3. **Negotiating and asking** – exploring what both people want, and
4. **Reflecting** during and after the sexual encounter – what happened, who did what, or how could it be different?

The program is designed to be run by two educators. Carmody is adamant that educators running the program must adhere to its 14 key values and must have the relevant knowledge and skills. A check list is provided which recommends that educators work along-side a complementary educator, to overcome any such deficit.

## Organization & Group Structure

Making allowances for different cultural groups and faith-based communities, Carmody recommends concurrently running two single-gender groups of twelve, and bringing them together for the final session for joint reflection. She also provides guidance on issues of location, participant recruitment, consent to participate, and evaluation. Educators/coordinators are encouraged to contact Carmody for more detail on evaluation tools.

## Course Progression

The course uses a variety of activities and approaches to achieve the learning goals including:

role-play, pair-work, whole-group, case studies, brainstorming, identifying, and questioning, with the notion of reflection being a central theme. Reflection is deliberately practised in every session as well as assigned for homework. Questions used in the program range from lower to higher-order. A synopsis of each week's learning goals follows.

### **Week 1 *Getting to know each other: how we learn about sexuality and gender***

**Learning Goals:** Beliefs, values and ideas about sexuality and relationships are diverse and there are many different views held by young people (2009b, p. 19).

Participants are encouraged to develop skills of ethical reflection and be able to demonstrate understanding of the influences that shape their sense of self, and views on sexuality and relationships as well as clarify attitudes and values as related to sexuality.

### **Week 2 *What are sexual ethics?***

**Learning Goals:** How do we work out what feels like the right decision in any situation involving sexual intimacy (2009b, p. 41)?

The sexual ethics framework is introduced with participants having to demonstrate an understanding of the framework and the influences on their decision-making, including friendships, age, gender, culture and experience. Interaction with the framework includes guided discussion, role-play, and case study (using real evidence from research) to practise application of the sexual ethics framework.

### **Week 3 *Understanding other people's desires and needs***

**Learning Goals:** Deciding to be sexual with someone for the first time or with someone you know well involves more than physical attraction (2009b, p. 59).

Verbal and non-verbal communication, gender differences, expectations of sexual intimacy, different attitudes to sex, romance, love, alcohol, drugs and sexual negotiation are some of the areas addressed.

In reflecting on non-verbal communication for example, the focus is informed by research: "We know from research that most people, especially young men, rarely speak during the process of getting to sex and often over-interpret non-verbal messages given by women. They often don't 'read' non-verbal cues accurately or ethically, and therefore assume consent from non-verbal communication" (Carmody, 2009a, p. 62).

### **Week 4 *Ethical Consent***

**Learning Goal:** Every sexual encounter

invites ethical exploration to maximise pleasure and minimise danger (2009b, p. 73).

Participants are guided to consider what sexual consent and sexual assault are. The sexual ethics framework persists through all of these activities with guidance given on questions to ask in giving and obtaining consent and an examination of ethical negotiation and consent.

### **Week 5 *Is this relationship working for me?***

**Learning Goal:** Sex in relationships can change over time and we need skills to navigate these changes (2009b, p. 95).

This session guides participants to reflect on the differing desires and needs within sex in relationships. One case study focuses on giving participants the experience of communicating with their partner when that sex is unsatisfying. Carmody found in the pilot program that this activity drew attention to the difficulties of talking about what actually occurs during sex. The case study used in this activity involves two characters with intentionally unclear genders. The other case studies involve skill development for an abusive relationship and ending a relationship ethically.

### **Week 6 *Standing up against sexual violence***

**Learning Goal:** Preventing sexual assault is everyone's responsibility. We can do our bit for friends and others (2009b, p. 111).

In this session, the death of Dianne Brimble is used as a case study to develop participants' skills and knowledge of being an ethical bystander. Diane was found naked and dead on a cruise ship in September 2002. She died from a mix of alcohol and the drug GHB or fantasy. The man charged over her death is yet to come to trial. The case study is a chilling introduction to matters involved in being an ethical bystander.

While young people are the primary audience for this evidenced-based violence prevention program, its ethical framework and learning outcomes have relevance for sexually active people of all ages. Additionally, its attention to violence prevention, particularly in regard to the ethical bystander, is relevant to everyone.

Sex & Ethics is available from Palgrave Macmillan publishers. The book and the program can be purchased separately or together. The pack of both (ISBN: 9781420256116) is priced at \$79.95 (RRP).

### **References**

Carmody, M 2009a, Sex & ethics: young people and ethical sex, Palgrave Macmillan, South Yarra.  
Carmody, M 2009b Sex & ethics: the sexual ethics education program for young people, Palgrave Macmillan, South Yarra.

# Evidence based practice

## Evaluation of Course in Responding to Domestic and Family Violence (30629QLD)

By Annie Webster, Education Project Officer, CDFVR

On November 27, 2008, after three years of hard work and negotiations, the pilot *Course in Responding to Domestic and Family Violence (30629QLD)* was completed, with 24 graduates the first to have achieved their nationally recognised qualification. The pilot process and a summary of the evaluation results are presented here.

### Background

In August 2005, CDFVR commenced the development of a comprehensive, appropriately accredited training course. The course was to increase knowledge and skills for front-line workers in a range of government and non-government agencies who come into contact with women affected by domestic and family violence. These objectives responded directly to training needs identified in various state-wide reports since the late 1980s.

After extensive research and consultation, the *Course in Responding to Domestic and Family Violence (30629QLD)* was finalized and subsequently approved for accreditation on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2006. The Course is comprised of three units of competency. Unit 1: *Recognise and Respond to Domestic and Family Violence* is a pre-existing unit of competency from the Community Services Training Package (CHC02). Unit 2: *Referring Appropriately and Effectively in Response to Domestic and Family Violence* and Unit 3: *Reflecting on Work Practice When Responding to Domestic and Family Violence* were both developed by CDFVR, in collaboration with a statewide Training Advisory Committee and a Course Development Advisory Committee. Each unit of competency notionally requires 60 hours of training, including 3 days of trainer supervised learning.

Following accreditation, a set of course materials (A Trainer's Guide and a Learner Guide for each of the three units of competency) was produced; and an agreement was made with the Queensland Centre for Training Materials, Department of Education and Training for distribution of the training course and its accompanying resources.

In June 2008, CDFVR met with the Queensland Health and Community Services Workforce Council, which agreed to form a partnership with CDFVR to deliver the course as a pilot through its Integrated Skills Development (ISD) Strategy. Betty Taylor, training consultant and long-term domestic violence advocate, was engaged to deliver the training in Brisbane.

The course was scheduled to be delivered over nine days commencing on August 26<sup>th</sup> and concluding on November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Each unit of competency was delivered over three days with a gap between each unit to enable

participants to complete and submit their assessments. The availability of the pilot course was advertised across the State.

A total of 26 participants enrolled and completed the pilot course. Twenty-one of the participants were from South East Queensland, two from Central West Queensland and the remainder from North Queensland, Far North Queensland and the Mackay – Whitsundays, with one participant from each of those three regions.

Just under half (46%) of the participants were domestic violence service providers, seven (26.9%) were from 'other' organisations (homelessness, youth support services, Department of Child Safety, Queensland Health and Queensland Police Service); with the remaining 26.9 per cent made up of three 'general' community service providers (11.5%) and four Indigenous service providers.

The nine days of training utilized several training mediums. These included role-plays, simulations, small group discussions, video and DVD presentations, workshops, PowerPoint information and guest speakers from specific work areas.

### The evaluation process

For the purpose of the course pilot and evaluation, the course objectives were summarised as being to:

- Increase knowledge and skills
- Provide knowledge and skills relevant to various work roles
- Convey course content and assessment in plain language and concepts and
- Address learning needs.

The evaluation was conducted using two methods: a survey for each unit of competency, completed by participants at the conclusion of each respective unit; and a focus group conducted after completion of the entire course, to enable an overall snapshot of opinions on whether the course had met its objectives.



## Survey and results

The evaluation survey was divided into four key parts: 1) to gather demographic information about the participants; 2) to measure the extent to which the pilot course had met its summary objectives; 3) to measure the usefulness of the learning materials that accompany the course, and the course content; and 4) to measure the effectiveness, or quality, of the course delivery. Importantly, the surveys for Unit 2 and Unit 3, asked about the application of the previous Unit in the participants' workplace.

Twenty-five participants responded to the first survey, 26 to the second and 24 to the third.

Over 90 percent of participants in each of the three units of competency reported increased knowledge and skills as a result of completing the course: 96 percent in Unit 1; and 92 percent in Units 2 and 3.

At least 95 percent of participants, in each case, felt that the three units of competency were relevant to their work role; and 100 percent reported that the training content was easy to understand. These results were reinforced by 96 percent of participants indicating that they would recommend the course to their colleagues.

Unit 1 and Unit 3 of the course reportedly met the learning needs of 96 percent of participants and Unit 2 met the learning needs of 85 percent. Ninety six percent of participants reported that they had used knowledge acquired in Unit 1 in their work, while 100 percent had been able to apply the knowledge acquired from Unit 2.

Ninety six percent of participants found the course materials helpful or very helpful in consolidating their learning and 96 percent thought the guide informed their assessment tasks.

## Focus group and results

In the post-course focus group, there was a general sense that all of the units complemented each other and contributed to the overall outcome of increased knowledge. Pressed to choose one unit only, more than half of the participants (54%) identified Unit 3 *Reflecting on Work Practice when Responding to Domestic and Family Violence*. Unit 3 identifies the skills and knowledge required to recognise and respond to the impacts of values and attitudes upon work practice. It also identifies the skills and knowledge needed to recognise and respond to the indicators of stress and vicarious trauma and to identify and access worker self care support strategies when working with clients experiencing domestic and family violence.

All participants reported increased confidence in assessing women's needs and facilitating access to relevant services; and all reported increased knowledge and understanding of issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women living in rural and remote areas, and the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Focus-group participants unanimously recommended the course for experienced workers and that it be compulsory for new workers.

## Conclusion

As expected, the majority of course participants were based in Brisbane, although participants also came from Central, North and Far North Queensland, and represented diverse roles in responding to domestic and family violence.

The evaluation results indicate that the course was very well targeted in providing knowledge needed to recognise and respond to domestic and family violence, including effective referral and self-care. The vast majority of participants reported increased knowledge as a result of each unit of competency; that each unit was relevant to their role in responding to domestic and family violence; and that they were able to use what they had learned in their work roles.

In addition to well-targeted content, the pilot course evaluation illustrated that the course delivery methods, assessment, and the course materials also met participants' needs.

Overall the evaluation results validate the course content, method of delivery and learner guides. Participant feedback during the training itself, however, resulted in a few minor amendments to the delivery and the learner guides.

The delivery of the course, through a continuing partnership between CDFVR and the Queensland Health and Community Services Workforce Council, through its ISD Strategy, is now underway in Mackay and Townsville. The course is also being delivered through the South-West Queensland ISD Network, with Units 1, 2 and 3 being delivered in St George, Roma and Charleville, respectively.

We look forward to the continuing roll-out of training across the State, providing enhanced responses to women affected by domestic and family violence and increased inter-agency coordination towards achieving safety for women and their children.

A full copy of the evaluation report is available at <http://www.noviolence.com.au/public/30629qld/evalreport.pdf>.

# Workshops, conferences and date claimers

14 April 2009

Loss and Grief through Child Abuse and Domestic Violence, Canberra, ACT

<http://www.acwa.asn.au/rescheduled.php?recid=1510>

29 April 2009

Domestic Violence-the Impact on Children, Rooty Hill, NSW

[http://www.acwa.asn.au/find\\_this\\_course\\_single.php?recid=1547](http://www.acwa.asn.au/find_this_course_single.php?recid=1547)

1 May 2009

Working with Women affected by Domestic Violence: A Strengths-based, Safety-focused Approach, NSW

[http://www.aasw.asn.au/about/branches/nsw\\_files/WorkingwithWomenAffectedbyDomesticViolence010509.pdf](http://www.aasw.asn.au/about/branches/nsw_files/WorkingwithWomenAffectedbyDomesticViolence010509.pdf)

4-6 May 2009

VIth African Regional Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

<http://www.anppcan-eth.org.et/>

6-8 May 2009

Outside in: Community Responses to Complex and Diverse Needs, Sydney, NSW

[http://www.nada.org.au/downloads/Latest\\_News/2009Call\\_for\\_Abstracts.pdf](http://www.nada.org.au/downloads/Latest_News/2009Call_for_Abstracts.pdf)

6-7 May 2009

Counselling Children Who have been Abused, Sydney, NSW

[http://www.acwa.asn.au/find\\_this\\_course\\_single.php?recid=1485](http://www.acwa.asn.au/find_this_course_single.php?recid=1485)

7-8 May 2009

Maximising Parent Strengths, Dubbo, NSW

[http://www.acwa.asn.au/find\\_this\\_course\\_single.php?recid=1417](http://www.acwa.asn.au/find_this_course_single.php?recid=1417)

11-13 May 2009

CDFVR Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum, Mackay Entertainment Centre, Mackay, QLD

Email: [a.webster@cqu.edu.au](mailto:a.webster@cqu.edu.au)

13 May 2009

CDFVR Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum Workshops

Morning session - Help Ease Life's Parenting Pressure (H.E.L.P.P)

Afternoon session - Red Dust Healing.

Mackay, QLD

Email: [a.webster@cqu.edu.au](mailto:a.webster@cqu.edu.au)

17 May 2009

Keeping Safe in Rural and Remote Australia - What Does This Mean? - A symposium for female

professionals working in rural and remote Australia  
Cairns Convention Centre

<http://10thnrhc.ruralhealth.org.au/program/?IntContentId=90&IntCatId=4#2>

18-20 May 2009

2009 Anaheim International Conference on Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence & Stalking Anaheim, USA

<http://www.evawintl.org/conferences.aspx>

2-4 June 2009

The National Summit on the Intersection of Domestic Violence and Child Welfare, Wyoming, USA

[http://www.naccchildlaw.org/events/event\\_details.asp?id=43831](http://www.naccchildlaw.org/events/event_details.asp?id=43831)

4 June 2009

CDFVR Distinguished Visitor Seminar  
Associate Professor Heather Douglas.

Breaches of Domestic Violence Orders: The Criminal Justice Process

Email: [enquiries@noviolence.com.au](mailto:enquiries@noviolence.com.au)

15-18 June 2009

11th European Conference on Traumatic Stress  
Oslo, Norway

[http://www.nkvts.no/Konferanser/ECots/FirstInvitation\\_ECOTS\\_2009005.pdf](http://www.nkvts.no/Konferanser/ECots/FirstInvitation_ECOTS_2009005.pdf)

7-10 September 2009

Children and the Law: International Approaches to Children and their Vulnerabilities

Prato, Tuscany

<http://www.med.monash.edu.au/socialwork/conference09/>

13-16 September 2009

BASPCAN 7th National Congress - Changing Landscapes, Emerging Challenges: Contemporary Issues in Safeguarding Children and Young People  
Swansea, Wales, UK

<http://www.baspcan.org.uk/congress.html>

28-30 October 2009

Victorian Offender Treatment Association 2009  
Conference

Melbourne, VIC

<http://www.vota.org.au/conference09/conference.html>

15-18 November 2009

2009 ISPCAN Asia Pacific Regional Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect

Perth, WA

<http://www.ispcan.org/ConferencesSupportedByISPCAN.htm>

We encourage readers to contribute to the CDFVRe@der. If you have any information or articles you wish to publish, please contact Centre staff.

### **HAVE YOUR CONTACT DETAILS CHANGED?**

We have become aware that some recipients of the CDFVRe@der have relocated or changed contact details, including email address. To enable us to update our records and ensure that you receive our quarterly publication, please contact us at the listed phone, fax or email address with your change of details. Please be assured that the Centre does not release your details to any third parties without your permission.

If you would like to be included on, or removed from, the Centre's mailing list, please ring us on (07) 4940 7834.



## Contact Us

Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research  
CQUniversity Mackay  
P.O. Box 5606  
Mackay MC Qld 4741

Tel: 07 4940 7834

Fax: 07 4940 7839

Email: [enquiries@noviolence.com.au](mailto:enquiries@noviolence.com.au)  
[www.noviolence.com.au](http://www.noviolence.com.au)

## Staff

Heather Nancarrow	Director
Marilyn Ingham	Administration Officer
Clinton Rawsthorne	Multimedia Officer
Annie Webster	Education Project Officer
Deborah Balmer	Education Officer
Liane McDermott	Education/Senior Research Officer

The Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research (CDFVRe) is located within the Centre for Social Science Research, in the Faculty of Sciences, Engineering and Health at CQUniversity. It is physically located at CQUniversity's Mackay Campus, and is a key research group within CQUniversity's Healthy Communities Research Flagship.

CDFVRe receives triennial funding from the Queensland Department of Communities to undertake research, evaluation, sector development and community engagement on issues pertaining to the prevention of domestic and family violence in Queensland.

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