Welcome to Issue 11 of The Family and Domestic Violence Newsletter.

In this edition we provide information on the ANROWS paper, Seeking help for domestic violence - Exploring rural women’s coping experiences. This paper examines the experiences of women seeking help for domestic and family violence who live in regional, rural, and remote areas in Australia, including WA.

The FDV newsletter also highlights domestic violence as a workplace issue, including the new policy Family and Domestic Violence – Paid Leave and Workplace Support. There are many things that you can do to raise awareness of FDV in your workplace or amongst your family and friends. You can download resources from the Family and domestic violence toolbox on the Women’s Health Strategy and Programs website. White Ribbon Australia also has many ideas and resources on their website.

Next month is White Ribbon Day (25 November). In 1999, the United Nations General Assembly declared November 25 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, with the white ribbon becoming the symbol for the day. The significance of the date came from the brutal assassination of the three political activist Mirabel sisters (Dominican Republic) in 1960 on orders of Dominican ruler Rafael Trujillo.

Did you know?

In Australia, the combined health, administration and social welfare costs of violence against women have been estimated to be $21.7 billion a year, with projections suggesting that if no further action is taken to prevent violence against women, costs will accumulate to $323.4 billion over a thirty year period from 2014-15 to 2044-45.


** Trigger warning – This publication contains articles and images relating to the subject of family and domestic violence which may be distressing for some readers. **
Is the term ‘domestic violence’ a universally understood term?
Dr Carol Kaplanian, Women’s Health Strategy and Programs

In the last few years, an overwhelming amount of literature and research has been conducted on the issues of family and domestic violence (FDV). It can be acknowledged that FDV is a global issue that cuts across culture, religion, ethnicity, skin colour and migration status. However, as professionals, we can often forget that our perception and understanding of what FDV is can be very different to those we work with. In this case, I am specifically referring to the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse community (CaLD). What we do know is that domestic violence occurs at the same rate, if not higher in the CaLD community (Vaughan et al. 2015). In 2015, ANROWS published a study on FDV in the immigrant community. They acknowledged that there are notably few studies that specifically examined the prevalence of family violence against immigrant and refugee women, with very little to no evidence available. We do have to ask ourselves why that may be. It is not because it happens at a lesser rate, but the reality lies in the notion surrounding perception and knowledge on what family and domestic violence is. We simply cannot ignore the fact that culture plays an integral role in shifting and/or stagnating people’s perception around certain world views.

In many cultures around the world, FDV is not seen in the same light as we perceive it here in Australia. In 2009, Fisher noted that there is reluctance among immigrant and refugee women to conceptualise family violence in ways that emphasise aggression. In many cultures, family violence may only be perceived as physical without encapsulating any other forms of abuse. For example, in research undertaken with West African women now living in Australia, Ogunsiji et al. (2012) reported participants’ descriptions of family violence focused mainly on physical abuse. Controlling behaviours, financial and verbal abuse were not even recognised as family violence, with sexual violence in an intimate partner relationship not mentioned at all. In her research, Fisher (2013) illustrated that according to some women from the African community, ‘discipline’ was viewed as men’s duty towards children, and in some cases, their wives as well.

It is very important to keep in mind that as professionals, it is our duty to be able to convey information and knowledge about what constitutes domestic violence to the clients/patients we work with. This needs to be done in a culturally sensitive manner by taking into considerations the difference in their world view. Education often empowers women by giving them and expanding their pool of choice in what they can do during difficult times. Education often provides hope; hope that there is a different world view, that their reality is not the only truth.

References:


Did you know?

According to UN Women, every 10 minutes somewhere in the world, an adolescent girl dies as a result of violence.

https://unwomen.org.au/our-work/focus-areas/eliminating-violence-against-women/
Premier’s Circular 2017/07: Family and Domestic Violence - Paid Leave and Workplace Support

Premier’s Circular 2017/07: Family and Domestic Violence – Paid Leave and Workplace Support has now been released and is available [here](#).

This circular provides information regarding the State Government’s commitment to providing workplace support measures to employees in situations of family and domestic violence through the introduction of an additional paid leave entitlement for all employees, including casuals. An employee experiencing family and domestic violence will have access to 10 non-accumulative days per year of paid family and domestic violence leave in addition to their existing leave entitlements. Implementation guidelines to assist agencies will be issued by the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (Labour Relations).

If you have an enquiry regarding Premier’s Circulars in general, please email [PremiersCirculars@dpc.wa.gov.au](mailto:PremiersCirculars@dpc.wa.gov.au)

Seeking help for domestic violence: Exploring rural women’s coping experiences

This report presents the results of a qualitative study examining the experiences of women seeking help for domestic and family violence who live in regional, rural, and remote areas in Australia (South Australia and Western Australia). The full report can be found [here](#).

The key findings of the report include:

- Most women explained they were not negatively affected by geographical isolation; that is, they did not see physical distance as a barrier to accessing services.
- Geographical isolation was only a factor for women who lived on isolated properties outside the regional centre.
- Geographical isolation was a key issue for managers and practitioners, as it significantly shaped specialist domestic and family violence agency responses and work contexts.
- There is little or no help for men who use violence in regional, rural, and remote places outside a police or court response.

**Implications for policy and practice:**

Services embedded in their local community contexts are more likely to be successful, with services operating with the hub-and-spoke model being effective in assisting women living in isolated places.

A number of findings from this project are relevant to clinical practice. These include women’s common experiences of:

- extended periods of coping with violence through various active strategies such as placating and trying to help their partner prior to their own help-seeking;
- shame and embarrassment over being a victim of abuse or a partner of someone engaging in illegal activities, that delays seeking help;
- Aboriginal women’s dignity and pride being associated with being able to keep their children safe and rely on families;
- Aboriginal women using temporary stays at refuges as a way of staying safe; and
- significant social isolation, which affected help-seeking more than physical distance from local communities.
Domestic and Family Violence- a workplace issue

Domestic and family violence is a workplace issue. Having domestic/family violence as a new protected attribute in anti-discrimination legislation can provide another avenue of protection for victims and survivors who experience discrimination, as well as lead to improved measures for addressing domestic/family violence.

Elizabeth Broderick, Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission

Workplaces can play their part in ending violence against women and supporting those women experiencing or escaping violence. The workplace may provide women experiencing domestic violence, abuse or control a space or network away from the abuser. It is important that the workplace’s understands violence against women so that these women can maintain their work and so that workplace strategies/information can help people access the support they need.¹

There are a range of actions workplaces can take to ensure that they are providing adequate support for victims and survivors including;

- the role of leaders
- establishing clear policies and procedures
- making provisions for leave or flexible work arrangements
- establishing clear roles and responsibilities and build capacity
- implementing awareness raising and education programs
- ensuring adequate support is provided for affected employees.

More information can be found here.

New Resources

Domestic Violence Orders (National Recognition) Bill 2017

In August 2017 the Attorney General introduced into Parliament the Domestic Violence Orders (National Recognition) Bill 2017. More detail can be found here.

Know your A-Z poster- Our Watch

Our watch has developed a new set of resources in partnership with the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria. The poster offers 26 ways everybody can help challenge harmful stereotypes, promote respect and prevent violence. The poster can be found here.

National Commonwealth Bank DV Emergency Assistance Program

CommBank customers can access the Domestic & Family Violence Emergency Assistance Package to support individuals and families leaving a domestic or family violence situation. This includes situations of financial abuse. Key points are as follows:

- Commonwealth Bank DV Emergency assistance National Package and 24/7 Counselling Line with qualified trauma specialist counsellors (who are also linked with 1800RESPECT)
- Counsellors will complete risk assessment and safety planning, refer to other services as needed.
- All customers and employees 16+ of the Commonwealth Bank are eligible (no exclusion criteria). All BankWest employees are eligible, consideration for customers of Bankwest to apply.
- Program specifically aimed at people escaping Domestic Violence / leaving relationship however this is not an exclusion criteria
- All information is confidential, no identifying details are stored/shared under Commonwealth Bank

For more information please visit the website.

In the news

Rights of Children must trump violent parents. 28th September 2017. The Age.

How technology can be used to safeguard against domestic violence. 26 September 2017. ABC News.

Training

October 17th
8.30 – 16.00
Preventing Violence Against Women: a focus on CaLD community.

November 7th
9.00 – 12.00
Family and Domestic Violence – The Legal Stuff You Need To Know
Presented by Domestic Violence Legal Unit.

About this newsletter

Who can contribute?
This newsletter was predominantly created to share information about policy updates, training, research, and community events and activities among professionals working in the Western Australian Department of Health, including metropolitan and regional health services.

In the interests of information-sharing, submission of articles and other relevant content are invited from external agencies, including those from the non-government sector and other Australian states. Please note, however, that Women’s Health Strategy and Programs reserves the right to maintain editorial control, including the ability to decide the final content to be published and/or making editorial changes to content submitted.

If you would like more information about the submission process, please contact Women’s Health Strategy and Programs as indicated below.

Contact information
This newsletter was produced by the Women’s Health Strategy and Programs, Women and Newborn Health Service, Department of Health WA.

Please direct any queries via the following:

   Email: whcsp@health.wa.gov.au  
   Phone: (08) 6458 1795  

Accessibility
This newsletter has been designed in a printable format and is circulated to a distribution list via email. Following distribution, it will be made available at www.wnhs.health.wa.gov.au/whcsp.php. Upon request, the newsletter can be made available in alternative formats for a person with a disability.

Copyright
Copyright to this material is vested in the State of Western Australia unless otherwise indicated. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced or re-used for any purposes whatsoever without written permission of the State of Western Australia.
© Department of Health 2016

Disclaimer
The information presented in this newsletter is provided in good faith as a public service. The accuracy of any statements made is not guaranteed and it is the responsibility of readers to make their own enquiries as to the accuracy, currency or appropriateness of any information or advice provided. Liability for any act or omission occurring in reliance on this document or for any loss, damage or injury occurring as a consequence of such act or omission is expressly disclaimed.