

Victorian Safe Communities Network Inc.

Family Violence -
What Role Can Local Communities Play?



What

We

Know



The Health Cost Of Violence: Measuring the burden of disease caused by intimate partner violence. A summary of findings.

Produced by VicHealth and Department of Human Services

- ✦ One in five women report being subjected to violence at some time in their adult life.
- ✦ Intimate partner violence is the leading contributor to death, disability and illness in Victorian women aged 15 - 44.

The kids saw it all. I was grabbed by the hair and he slammed my head into the shed wall. I fell and while I was on the ground he kicked me.



Karen

◆ Victoria Police estimate that they are called in only 20% of incidents.

◆ Intimate partner violence contributes 9% to the total burden of disease in Victorian (15-44) and 3% overall.



What Do We Know About WYNDHAM

How do we know it?



- ✦ Are you Happy at Home identified that Police attended 702 incidents identified as family violence and family disputes (average of 2 each day) in 2001 - 2002
- ✦ In 2001 - 2002 some households had up to 14 re attendances by police for family violence incidents
- ✦ The majority of these were perpetrated by men against women, the second highest number being sons against parents usually the mother.

Mother stated that her ex husband punched her daughter in the head and caused damage in the house. Ex husband stated that he wanted to see the children. Complaints and warrant applied for.

(Police records)



- ✦ The Victorian Family Violence Database shows Wyndham had the highest number of reported incidents of family violence in the WMR in 2000.
- ✦ 45% of families accommodated in the Crisis Family Program at Werribee Support and Housing are women and children escaping violence
- ✦ 24% of referrals from the WMR to the Women's Health West Crisis support program came from Wyndham, yet we are only 14% of the region's population



What Challenges Does All This Bring Locally?



- ✦ *There is serious pressure on existing services in dealing with the impact of violence*
- ✦ *There are limited specific 'family violence services in the area*
- ✦ *The prevalence of violence is at times when services not available ie evenings and weekends*
- ✦ *Funding to services is not keeping pace with growth*
- ✦ *There is a lack of complimentary and specific training for allied health professionals*



Identified

Needs in

Wyndham



- ✦ Increased support to school initiatives/programs that address violence and bullying
- ✦ Localised campaigns to raise awareness that violence is unacceptable
- ✦ An increase in services (both specific and allied) based locally
- ✦ Appropriate and timely professional development for service providers
- ✦ Increased servicing for young people with mental health issues
- ✦ Increased awareness amongst GP's for early identification of risk and knowledge of service system.



Why

Local

Government?



- ◆ All Local Governments are required by legislation to develop a Municipal Public Health Plan each three years
- ◆ Family violence was first identified within this health planning framework in 2001
- ◆ From this and work undertaken by Wyndham Combined Agency Network a sub group of the Wyndham Health Planning Committee was formed



- ✦ Wyndham City Council views family violence as a public health,
- ✦ Since the inception of the Sub Committee and subsequent Action Plan, the Wyndham community has taken a pro active approach to addressing issues of family violence in Wyndham.
- ✦ Within this context Local Government is well placed to support, facilitate and coordinate initiatives and advocacy in relation to this issue.



Safety and security don't just happen: they are the result of collective consensus and public investment. We owe our children - the most valuable citizens in any society - a life free from violence and fear. In order to ensure this, we must become tireless in our efforts not only to attain peace, justice and prosperity for countries but also for communities and members of the same family.

Nelson Mandela 2002



For More Information

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