

fact sheet #10. SUPPORTING FAMILIES



Violence can be an intergenerational cycle – in other words, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that lead to violence against women can be passed down from parents to their children.

We know that children learn their attitudes and behaviour from those around them, including their parents, the media and religious and cultural institutions.

Experiencing abuse and neglect as a child is one of the biggest risk factors in becoming a victim or a perpetrator of violence against women later in life¹. Therefore, supporting families and reducing children's exposure to violence can be an effective way of preventing violence against women in the future. This is sometimes referred to as 'breaking the cycle of violence'.

Types of family support programs that have shown promise in the prevention of violence against women include:

- Programs that promote equal and respectful relationships between men and women during the transition to parenthood.
- Parenting education programs that help parents manage their children's behaviour.
- Programs that support families who are vulnerable or likely to experience disadvantage before there are any signs of violence.
- Supporting young people that have experienced child abuse and neglect to reduce the likelihood of them perpetrating or experiencing violence in the future.

CASE STUDY: BABY MAKES THREE

The Baby Makes 3 was a project led by the Whitehorse Community Health Service (Victoria) in partnership with the City of Whitehorse Maternal Child Health Service. The project is an example of promising practice in the emerging field of preventing violence against women. It is a primary prevention program that seeks to stop violence before it happens by promoting equal and respectful relationships between men and women during the transition to parenthood.

Baby Makes 3 aimed to increase the capacity of first time parents to build equal and respectful relationships in response to the lifestyle and relationship changes that follow the birth of a child. It also aimed to increase the capacity of health professionals and organisations to promote equal and respectful relationships during the transition to parenthood. A recent program evaluation found it to be effective in achieving these goals.

Find out more about the Baby Makes 3 program by visiting the program website at www.wchs.org.au/services/groups/baby-makes-3

¹ World Health Organisation. (2010)



1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)

A free 24 hour national domestic and family violence and sexual assault counselling service for people who have experienced violence, and for workers supporting them.

CASE STUDY: REMOTE AREA FAMILIES SERVICE

The Remote Area Families Service (RAFS) provides support to families living in rural and remote Queensland and parts of the Northern Territory. The aim of the service is to meet the needs of families living in isolated areas, particularly focusing on early childhood development, as many rural and remote families cannot access mainstream early childhood services.

RAFS is an innovative, flexible program that is tailored to the specific needs of rural dwelling families. Travelling across large distances (a combined 160,000 km every year!), the program's dedicated staff make home visits to isolated families, provide advice and support in the area of early childhood development, bring local families together by organising playgroups and offer guidance on a range of family-related matters.

You can learn more about the RAFS program by visiting the website of the auspicing agency, Frontier Services at www.frontierservices.org

RECOMMENDED READING



Title Tools for Change. A New Way of Working with Families and Carers
Author Network of Drug and Alcohol Agencies (NADA)
Link www.nada.org.au/resources/nadapublications/resourcestoolkits/familycarertoolkit



Title Family and Relationship Services Australia Resource Directory
Author Family and Relationship Services Australia
Link www.frsa.org.au/site/Resource_Directory.php



Title Renovate Your Relationship Booklet
Author Relationships Australia Victoria and MensLine
Link www.relationships.org.au/relationship-advice/publications



Title Through Young Black Eyes – Family Violence Toolkit
Author Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)
Link Available for purchase online at www.snaicc.asn.au/tools-resources

NOTES



This is 10 in a series of 15 fact sheets to help communities stop violence against women before it happens. Download the full set at www.nrwn.org.au