

Multi-lingual information

Family Violence is unacceptable in any culture

Family violence is not just physical. It includes different types of abusive and controlling behaviour that can make you and your children feel afraid. Family violence can be perpetrated by any family member including: intimate partners, siblings, sons and daughters, in-laws or same-sex partners.

- Technological abuse**
He always checks my phone messages.
- Financial abuse**
He spends all of our money. Now we don't have enough for bills. He refuses to let me work.
- Verbal abuse**
His family tell me that I'm not a good wife. He uses silence to control and punish me.
- Sexual abuse**
He says it's my duty as a wife.
- Emotional abuse**
He puts me down and calls me names. They play mind games and makes me think I'm crazy.
- Spiritual abuse**
He uses religion to control me. His family disrespect my beliefs.
- Social abuse**
He controls who I see and talk to. His family said I will be deported from Australia if I leave him.

Seeking support will help you keep safe. If you and/or your children are experiencing family violence and are living in fear, it is important to talk to someone. It doesn't mean you have to leave your relationship if you don't want to.

Getting help

The Orange Door is a free service for anyone experiencing family violence. 1800 319 355

Safe Steps can help you explore options to increase your safety including: counselling and legal services, crisis accommodation and organising a safety plan to keep you safe at home. 1800 015 188

If you fear for your safety call the police (000)

iTouch provides culturally sensitive family violence support and legal advice in many languages. 1800 755 988

Rainbow Door provides support, advice and referrals for LGBTIQ+ people. 1800 729 367

Call the free National Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50 and ask them to contact the support service for you.

How to support someone experiencing family violence

Abuse is often hidden, but there are ways to recognise its signs.

Does the person you know:

- show signs of being afraid of their partner or a family member?
- appear anxious to always please their partner?
- appear withdrawn or act 'out of character'?
- struggle financially, socially, emotionally?

Support and respect her choices even if she chooses to stay in the relationship.

Listen and believe them. Let them know that you are there for them.

Reassure her that it's not her fault.

Never ask "why don't you leave?" This is judgemental. They need your trust and support.

Give information about support services and encourage them to seek help.

Make sure she is safe. Ask her: "will you and your children be in danger if you go home?"

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We all have a right to live free from violence in Australia

Feeling safe at home is a human right. If you don't feel safe, it's important to talk to someone you trust or reach out to a service that can help you.

You have a right to:

- Choose if you want to stay or leave your relationship.
- Be protected from violence regardless of your visa status.
- Access an interpreter for free when talking to police and support services.
- Put your children's needs first and ensure they are safe and protected.
- Access financial and material support to help you in times of need.
- Seek a divorce without your husband's approval.

Regardless of your visa status or your situation you and your children have a right to be safe. Support services can help you understand your rights and keep you safe.

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Victorian Legal Aid provides free legal help Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm. 1300 792 367

Whittlesea Community Connections provides free legal help to people in the City of Whittlesea. 9401 6666

Call the free National Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50 and ask them to contact the support service for you.

Are you worried about your relationships?

We can all feel upset or angry with our loved ones sometimes. It's what we do with these feelings that matters. Feeling angry is never an excuse to hurt or control someone.

Have you ever?

- Stopped your partner from working or studying?
- Withheld money from family members?
- Physically hit or threatened to hit your partner and/or children?
- Scared your wife or children by screaming, yelling or threatening them?
- Pressured your partner to do something they don't want to do?
- Told a family member that you will cancel their visa if they don't do what you say?
- Criticised your partner or made her feel bad about herself?

Taking action to change your behaviour can be the most rewarding step to having a loving, safe and respectful relationship with our partner, children and family members.

Getting help

Men's Referral Service provides advice and free counselling. 1300 766 491

Mensline Australia supports men and boys who are dealing with family and relationship problems. 1300 789 978

Call the free National Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50 and ask them to contact the support service for you.



Our work towards women achieving equitable life outcomes and being safe from violence

Safe Journeys Health Justice Partnership

The Safe Journeys Project is a health justice partnership between Whittlesea Maternal and Child Service (MCH) and Whittlesea Community Legal Service (a program of Whittlesea Community Connections (WCC)). The project commenced directly links a FV lawyer and project worker with MCH nurses to provide wrap-around legal support in FV, family law, VOCAT and intervention orders. We will continue to strengthen successful referral pathways and build upon cross-organisational learning that actively works to remove barriers for mothers accessing legal support.

PRAVEENA
(Name changed for privacy)

BACKGROUND

Praveena is from Southeast Asia, in her late 30s and has a 3 year old child. English is the main language spoken at home. Family violence was present from the outset.

Praveena's journey began five months into the relationship when a limited Intervention Order (IVO) was put in place.

She stayed in the relationship because he told her it was her fault, she provoked him. She blamed herself. Her family did not understand due to her cultural background. Praveena felt stuck, isolated and trapped in an abusive relationship.

Praveena fell pregnant during COVID. Straight after falling pregnant, she married her partner – driven more by circumstance than by choice. The violence stopped for a few months. Then she faced significant challenges. She had no local support, her entire family was overseas, and she became increasingly reliant on her husband. After giving birth, he was initially supportive, then the violence resumed. He became increasingly controlling, absent, volatile and threatened to kill her and the baby. Cultural expectations and family pressure made it difficult for her to consider other options. One day he walked out, but the violence and threats continued.

SERVICE & SYSTEM NAVIGATION

Praveena's experience with police was poor. She reported breaches to the police, they were not consistent in updating her on her matter, she was given a wrong hearing date and not informed when a hearing was adjourned. Once, Praveena waited 4 hours with her toddler to give a statement. Overall, she found it difficult to seek police assistance. When Praveena attended one station she was told they could not assist as they did not have a family violence unit. She called another station who told her to go to a station with a family violence unit. She felt passed around like a number and the only way to be taken seriously is when someone kills you. When she was able to seek assistance for an IVO, it took 4 days for the police to serve it because her husband could not be found. During this time Praveena was told the IVO was not yet in place and instructed to stay somewhere safe with the child. On another occasion her husband broke into the house. He told her he knew where she was. It took days for the police to act. An IVO is in place.

Praveena joined healing circles and art therapy sessions which have provided her with a strong peer network.

Praveena received support from The Orange Door and received the Escaping Family Violence Payment to move house.

Praveena is still navigating family law matters and safety risks. She hopes to apply to extend the IVO when it expires and requires further legal help.

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ONGOING JOURNEY TO RECOVERY & EMPOWERMENT

Praveena cannot afford private legal services and is frustrated with system legal costs for the missing middle."

Working Together Project

The Working Together Project is a partnership between WCC, Berry Street, DPV Health, NCASA – Austin Health, Kids First, InTouch, Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights, Arabic Welfare and Indian Care. This project will enhance cultural responsiveness and accessibility for victim survivor multicultural women through improved access to information, workforce and sector capacity and women's independence and sense of safety and stability.

Whittlesea Family Violence Network

The Whittlesea Family Violence Network (WFFVN) is a voluntary alliance of 35+ services, community organisations and government that are committed to the alleviation of family violence in the City of Whittlesea. The WFFVN provides a space for community education and development, coordination of services and building knowledge and capacity of local work force.

If you are interested in learning more or joining the Network please contact May mwin@whittleseacc.org.au

Berry Street Outreach

Berry Street has outreached from WCC for over 10 years building capability of WCC to identify and respond to family violence and to support women victim survivors to connect to specialist family violence services. Berry Street provides secondary consultations to WCC staff and supports community to access family violence services where there are additional barriers.



Family Violence CALD Women's Groups

BUILD FRIENDSHIPS WITH WOMEN IN OUR COMMUNITY

Welcome all women!
أهلا وسهلا بالسيدات

Women in your neighbourhood
Join art classes in Donnybrook
Share lunch in Whittlesea

महिलाओं का स्वागत है
Wominjeka badjurr

Women who share your language and culture
Socialise with Spanish-speaking women
Be crafty with your Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sisters
Get active with women of Palestine

خواتین کو خوش آمدید
¡Bienvenidas damas!

Women who are healing
Move your body and be mindful with mothers recovering from challenges

Connect and join!
Find out more about all these groups and start your friendship journey this week!

Scan the QR code, phone 9401 6666 or visit whittleseacommunityconnections.org.au

Supported by Whittlesea Community Connections - Multicultural Women's Group Grants with philanthropic funding from Sunshine and Crocodiles

Strengthening Family Relationships in Australia

This program embedded essential family violence, gender drivers of violence and Australian law information into AMEP course curriculum ensuring that AMEP students were more aware how to

be safe and thriving in communities in their settlement journey. Professional Development was delivered with AMEP teachers to increase confidence and capability to identify and respond to family violence. 100% of students increased their understanding of family violence and law in Australia as a result of participating in the program.

Strengthening Family Relationships in Australia

Student booklet

CALD Women's Driving Program

The CALD Women's driving program started as a pilot prevention program funded by Eastern Metropolitan Primary Health Network after Victoria Poikce identified a potential suicide cluster among women from South Asian backgrounds in Whittlesea. WCC was a key member of the multiagency working group that EMPHN facilitated - the CrossRoads group which developed a strategy to use the Coroner's Court of Victoria to highlight the issue. Alongside the Court process, we reached out to women and started a multilingual Facebook group and online sessions where women identified learning to drive as a priority. As a result, the program was co-designed with the women and EMPHN funded the pilot.

This pilot matched 20 women of South Asian backgrounds with volunteer mentors to work towards their Victoria Drivers Licence in order to support at-risk women to be more independent, reduce social isolation and improve their ability to build support networks. The program helped to over the barriers for vulnerable women who often cannot achieve the necessary hours and skills required to complete a full driver's licence.

A participant quoted:

"When I passed my test, no one in my family could believe it. My husband didn't want me to learn to drive and still doesn't allow me to drive the family car. He always tells me that I don't know anything; I am incapable. He does not acknowledge my efforts and contributions to the family. Being part of this program has proven to my family and me that I can do it. I now work in a medical institution on casual shifts, collecting money to buy my car. Getting the permit made me feel independent and good about myself again. I am thankful for the driving program. I can now reach many more workplaces easily and prove them wrong - Thank you".

The pilot confirmed the effectiveness of this program in addressing women's social isolation and improving connection to services and the pathways created through being able to drive. WCC has built on the success on learning of the pilot and continues to deliver the program for women in the community.