



**Domestic & Family Violence  
Prevention Month  
1st - 31st May 2007**

**Newsletter**  
Issue 5, April 2007

Domestic & Family Violence Prevention Month is an opportunity for everyone to raise awareness about domestic and family violence in the community. This year the Queensland Government have decided to keep the theme:

**‘Domestic and Family Violence -  
See the signs. Be the solution.’**

This campaign encourages men to recognise the warning signs of domestic and family violence — such as controlling what their partner wears, who she sees, where she goes, how much she spends — and to seek advice. Mensline on 1800 600 636 (9am to midnight, seven days a week) offers assistance to men in relation to domestic and family violence matters.

CRDVS, in collaboration with local community services, has the following program of activities throughout May. Please contact Jan or Sandi at CRDVS for details about any of these events: email office@dvcairns.org or telephone 4040 6100

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**Come along to these events during  
Domestic & Family Violence Prevention Month, May 2007**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Location</u>
2nd May	Remembrance Day Ceremony 5.30pm - 6.30pm	Mondo Café Bar and Grill, Hilton Hotel, Cairns
4th May	D & FV Month Breakfast & Seminar (by invitation only)	Cairns
4th May	Risk & Safety Management Workshop for Domestic Violence 9.30am - 4.30pm Cost \$20	Cairns City Library
9th May	D & FV Information Stall 10am - 4pm	Raintrees Shopping Centre
16th May	D & FV Information Stall 10am - 4pm	Mt Sheridan Plaza Shopping Centre
18th May	WuChopperen Family Fun Day	WuChopperen Health Service, Moignard Street, Manunda
25th May	D & FV Information Stall 10am - 4pm	Stocklands Shopping Centre
30th May	D & FV Information Stall 10am - 4pm	Smithfield Shopping Centre

## The potential impact of the Amendments to the Family Law Act and consent for specialised child counselling services

Our service, like many of you reading this article, has a strong commitment to the physical and emotional safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We firmly uphold the belief that clients (be they adult or children) have the right to be safe, treated with respect and dealt with confidentially (although limits may apply). Safety and confidentiality are extremely important issues when responding to children and young people affected by domestic and family violence (D&FV). A breach of confidentiality can potentially jeopardize the safety of clients, their family or associates and/or members of staff. A child or young person that does not feel safe within the counselling environment will be less likely to open up and truly express what they have gone through.

As well as this, our experience also tells us that the parent who uses violence is often unwilling to allow counselling to take place at a specialist DV service as they often deny their violence took place at all or do not accept responsibility for the violence. Allowing counselling would, by default, 'prove' they were domestically violent. For these reasons specialist services dealing with D&FV usually have a policy of only getting permission to counsel from the non-violent parent.

The amended Family Law Act now holds that there is a presumption of shared parental responsibility and recently there has been an increase in the number of children wishing to attend our service with consent orders in place stating that both parents have equal shared responsibility for 'major long-term health issues'. We sought advice and was informed that 'counselling' would be included in this category and that only obtaining consent from one parent would be placing that parent in danger of being breached in the Family Court. This was a concern for us as we did not wish to unwittingly place our clients in breach of their consent orders. Even more worrying is the possible impact on children and young people being able to access a timely, appropriate and safe counselling service should they wish to receive it.

We took our concerns to Women's Legal Aid (WLA) who confirmed the following points for us:

If there is no court order in place and the parents are not going through the court process, either parent can take a child to counselling and only one has to give permission;

If a court order is in place but it is 'silent' about parental responsibility then the legislation says it is a joint responsibility and will need both parent's permission;

If a court order is in place and written as joint responsibility in the order, then services need both parent's permission;

If there is no court order but court proceedings are in progress, then the new legislation comes into effect and both parent's permission is required.

WLA also recommended that if a client has concerns about abuse or violence it should be raised in the court material and have relevant orders and parties agree to where the counselling takes place. Parents/Solicitors can also write a letter to the other parent/solicitor saying that the child needs counselling. WLA recommends that the client should seek legal advice if unsure of parental responsibility.

Given the concerns already mentioned above and that there are safety issues around requiring permission from a perpetrating parent, this really brings home the responsibility of programs working with violent parents to work around this issue and the issue of responsible parenting.

In any event, shared parental responsibility will have an increasing impact on services providing child counselling where currently only one parent needs to give permission. For some services it may be a simple policy change that will not affect their way of working too much. For others, there may be significant impacts including the loss of clients being able to access the service because violent parents are unwilling to accept their violence and allow counselling at a specialist service. This is a serious matter and one which needs to be discussed at all levels: individual, service sector and government.

**Amanda Lee-Ross**

**Coordinator, CRDVS**

**Secretary, QDVSN**

\* Our service is seeking further advice regarding parental consent as there seems to be some disagreement between legal practitioners - hardly surprising given that the amendments are relatively new. We will endeavour to keep you up to date with any information we receive, however, concerned services should seek their own legal advice on this matter.

## **Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month Remembrance Day Candle Lighting Ceremony**



5.30pm – 6.30pm 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2007

Mondo Café Bar and Grill,  
Cairns Hilton Hotel



Domestic and Family Violence takes a devastating toll on Queenslanders' lives. In the nine years from Jan 1994 to Dec 2002, the Queensland Police Service recorded 154 cases of homicide related to spousal domestic violence. The victims included 6 children.

### **Please join us to**

-  Light a candle to remember those who have died, and the loved ones left behind because of domestic and family violence.
-  Light a candle to say as a community that we absolutely commit to working to ensure that no more precious lives are lost.

For more information call Amanda or Sandi on (07) 4040 6100

## Community Education

### CRDVS Calendar of Training for 2007

Dates 2007	Times	Training	Open to	Venue
8th June	9.30—4.00pm	Responding to Domestic & Family Violence Cost \$20	Service Providers & Voluntary Workers	Cairns City Library
15th June	9.30am—2.30pm	Reaching Out Cost \$20	Community Members	Cairns City Library
13th July	9.30am —12.30pm	Children & Domestic Violence Cost \$10	Service Providers & Voluntary Workers	Cairns City Library
September	To be confirmed	Responding to Domestic & Family Violence Cost \$20	Service Providers , Voluntary Workers & Community Members	Venue in Mossman to be confirmed
19th October	10.30am-3.30pm	Responding to Domestic & Family Violence Cost \$20	Service Providers , Voluntary Workers & Community Members	Good Counsel Parish Centre Innisfail
2nd November	10.00am - 1.00pm	Children & Domestic Violence Cost \$10	Service Providers , Voluntary Workers & Community Members	Good Counsel Parish Centre Innisfail

Contact CRDVS about these training events | email [office@dvcairns.org](mailto:office@dvcairns.org) | telephone 4040 6100

**Cairns Regional Domestic Violence Service regularly conducts education and training sessions for students in schools in Cairns and surrounding areas. This article has been contributed by Year 12 Legal Studies Students at Gordonvale High School.**

On Friday, 16 March 2007, the Year 12 Legal Studies class from Gordonvale State High School attended an all day excursion in the Cairns CBD, visiting various buildings and organisations involved with Family Law issues. The most relevant and interesting of the three venues visited was the Cairns Regional Domestic Violence Service (CRDVS) centre. Despite the daunting security measures and confined elevator, the centre had a comfortable vibe to it. We were greeted by two friendly women – Gill and Sandi – who then showed us into a large meeting room where they explained and discussed information relevant to Domestic Violence (DV). We left the centre having learnt some shocking and revealing statistics in relation to DV. Also we gained

knowledge of what types of activities are classed as DV, community attitudes towards DV, relevant laws, what to do if we know someone in an abusive relationship and what to do if we find ourselves in an abusive relationship. In order to raise awareness about DV in our school, we are in the process of displaying an informative noticeboard with posters, cartoons and information based around the theme 'say no to violence'. Overall, we thoroughly enjoyed our visit to CRDVS – Gill and Sandi organised excellent resources for us to read and keep. We really appreciated their knowledge and valuable discussion.



## What can someone in domestic violence do about it?

- Talk to someone about it
- Get information
- Get yourself support
- Don't blame yourself. No one deserves abuse

# Families & Domestic Violence

“MY CHILD JUST PRETENDS TO SMILE,  
THE VIOLENCE HAS HURT HER TOO.”



Cartoon Source: **SEND VIOLENCE PACKING**  
A Cartoon Storybook by M Ponti & R Edwards, 2004,  
Australian Domestic & Family Violence Clearinghouse

## *When Young People see, hear or experience:*

- Physical Violence*
- Verbal Violence*
- Threatening Behaviour*
- Sexual Violence*

## *It is Normal to feel:*



- Sad*
- Scared*
- Angry*
- Anxious*
- Nervous*
- Confused*
- Worried*

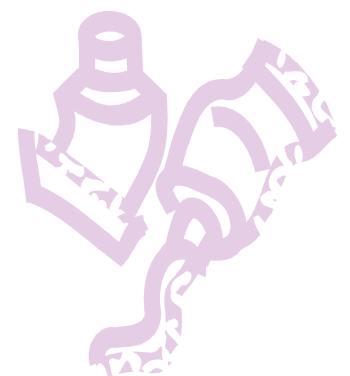
## *How can counselling help?*

*The Child Counsellor at CRDVS provides face to face counselling for children and young people who have been affected by domestic violence. Counselling can assist to alleviate the damaging effects of violence, provide better ways of coping in the future and assist in the development of a positive identity.*



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE is a crime  
 Only u can CONTROL ur anger and make ur family a 'HAPPY FAMILY'  
 Men nor women or anyone else should HIT each other  
 EVERYONE should treat others the way they'd like 2 be treated  
 Sometimes it's hard 2 channel ur ANGER, but that's no excuse for DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
 There is no excuse for ABUSE  
 If u do DOMESTIC VIOLENCE u r BREAKING the LAW  
 CAIRNS REGIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICE can HELP if u r being ABUSED

VALUE another persons RIGHTS as much as ur own  
 If u do DOMESTIC VIOLENCE there WILL be a PENALTY  
 Only u can decide whether u want DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, or if u want 2 have a HEALTHY, HAPPY FAMILY  
 LIVE, LAUGH, LEARN and LOVE but don't do DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
 EVERYONE can HELP put a STOP 2 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
 Never HURT another person on PURPOSE  
 CAIRNS REGIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICE can help put a STOP 2 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
 EVERYONE can HELP STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE





# Cairns Regional Domestic Violence Service

## Services We Provide

**Cairns Regional Domestic Violence Service provides confidential and free services for family members suffering from domestic violence. There are many issues that you can discuss with our staff members such as:**

- Information about your rights and the rights of your children
- Steps that may help you to protect yourself from further domestic violence
- Information and assistance in making an application for a Domestic Violence Protection Order
- Support services that are available through our organisation, including Court support
- Counselling for you or your children to overcome the effects of domestic violence

Our Domestic Violence Workers can also refer you to other support services for financial assistance, crisis accommodation, relationship counselling, legal advice on matters of family law, parenting education and many other issues.

One member of our team is a Child Counsellor, who can provide face to face counselling for children and young people aged 4 to 16 years who are affected by domestic violence.

We can also provide information about programs for perpetrators of domestic violence.

Our service regularly conducts and participates in workshops, seminars, conferences, lectures and training sessions in Cairns and surrounding areas. If you are not sure that we can help with your needs, then please telephone on (07) 4040 6100 and ask us.

We're open Mon-Fri 9am - 5pm



Phone: (07) 4040 6100



Email: office@dvcairns.org



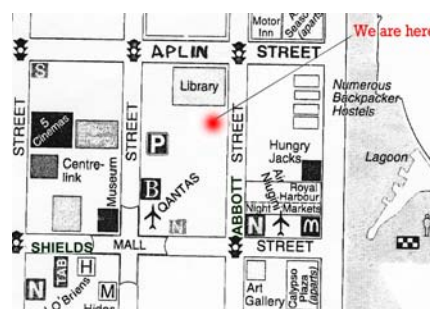
Fax: (07) 4040 6111



CRDVS, PO Box 4601, Cairns 4870



1st Floor  
Suite 7&8  
Placer House  
135 Abbott Street  
Cairns 4870



## Useful contacts

### Telephone Contact Numbers

If you're in immediate danger call the POLICE **000**

If you want to access safe accommodation (refuge for women and children who are in danger), or you need help and support dealing with a violent relationship you can call **dvconnect**, the Queensland 24hr domestic and family violence telephone service on:

**1800 811 811**

Cairns Police 4030 7000

Legal Aid Qld 1300 651 188

**Lifeline Telephone Counselling**  
13 11 14

**Alternatives to Violence**  
A 12 week education course for men  
4050 4955

**dvconnect men's information line**  
1800 600 636

### Websites with information about domestic and family violence

[www.noviolence.com.au/](http://www.noviolence.com.au/)

[www.dvirc.org.au/](http://www.dvirc.org.au/)

[www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au](http://www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au)

[www.ofw.facs.gov.au/](http://www.ofw.facs.gov.au/)

[www.communities.qld.gov.au/violenceprevention](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/violenceprevention) [www.ntv.net.au/](http://www.ntv.net.au/)

**We're on the Web**  
[www.dvcairns.org](http://www.dvcairns.org)

Would you like to subscribe to receive forthcoming issues of the CRDVS newsletter?

Have you an interesting article you'd like to contribute to the next issue of this newsletter?

Please let us know by contacting Gill at CRDVS — Tel: (07) 4040 6100

**Look out for the next issue in October 2007**