



THE WAY FORWARD TO HARMONY

A FOCUS ON FAMILY VIOLENCE IN THE INDIAN COMMUNITY SETTLED IN VICTORIA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Oorja Foundation Inc. would like to acknowledge that this forum was held on the traditional land of the Gunung-Willam-Balluk people.

We recognise the strength, resilience and capacity of Aboriginal people in this land.

The Oorja Foundation Inc. would like to thank all those who took part in this forum and would also like to extend their gratitude to the event partners for their support.

This report was compiled by Ajit Singh Chauhan and Sukhjot Kaur Khalsa.

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"Empowering the community to sustain harmony, culture and equality amongst generations in a healthy environment"

The Oorja Foundation Inc. is formulated to work on social issues and maintain cultural coherence among migrants from South Asian backgrounds.

Our key action areas include:

- Working with family issues such as domestic violence, inter generational conflicts, drug and alcohol related issues.
- Developing, maintaining and preserving cultural values among migrants.
- Educating the local and migrant community to live in a healthy and sustainable environment.
- Promoting equality in community whilst combating racism and discrimination.
- Fostering a world without violence.



Mayor of Hume City - Adem Atamaca, Nayana Bhandari, VMC Chair - Chin Tan, Ajit Singh Chauhan

CHAIRMAN'S FORWARD

I am very thankful to the Australian community who are very privileged to have a beautiful country and ongoing economic growth. However, its fastest growing population is an indication of flaws in its social development. More and more settlers are coming to this country every year pursuing a bright future. Unfortunately they are not able to cope with the culture shock and waves of community development. Migrant communities, being a minority community, have it hard to grow in a culturally diverse country.

In addition there are challenges such as economic instability and language barriers. However, some of these issues are cancerous, growing very swiftly amongst the newly arrived communities such as the Punjabi community. One of these issues is the increase of family violence.

It's hard to believe that families from educated backgrounds aren't coping with the stress of social isolation and distance relationships with extended families. Most of the migrants from Punjab have either been international students or skilled migrants. After their settlement in Australia, many young skilled Australians often have their marriages arranged in India or Australia. In saying this, there are many who chose not to have an arranged marriage.

Traditionally men are the breadwinners of the family and women are housewives. But in a progressive country like Australia it's often not the case. Both individuals have full-time jobs and share housework duties. Some men may expect their wife to do both or keeping women suppressed and limit her as a housewife. This suppression and unwanted expectations, gender inequality leads to conflict within the couple. Due to shame factor of society, it's often barred to discuss the conflict outside household. Volcanic eruption under the deep seas one day explodes and causes major damage to the surrounding. Similarly suppression of conflict and suppression of feelings leads to mental distress, often results anger in men and depression in women.

In most cases, parents visiting the young family changes the dynamics of the household. For three months or so during the course of parents staying with the family, it can be dramatic change in behavior of husband/partner. Expectations from wife/partner are now to listen from everyone. Leads to conflict in the family settings.

There are many more reasons such as substance abuse, unsolicited relationships, economical loss, depression, loss of family members, etc. leads to family violence. The Way Forward to Harmony Forum not only explains it further but also gives insights provided by professionals working in the community sector.

I sincerely thank the working committee behind the Forum and participants. I look forward to work with you guys to develop a strong framework to tackle the issue of violence in family.

Thank you.



Mr Ajit Singh Chauhan

Chairman/Founder

Oorja Foundation

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR OF HUME

As Mayor of Hume City Council, I am proud of Council's commitment to join with the community to help prevent domestic violence, and promote healthy family relationships.

Oorja Foundation Inc. in partnership with Hume City Council, Dianella Health, Victoria Police, Broadmeadows Community Legal Service and Dhoom films has organised this forum to showcase the need and urgency to collectively take action on family violence.

Unfortunately, Hume has the highest rate of family violence reported in the North West Metropolitan Region, with 56 incidents reported to police each week in 2013/14. And that is only the incidents that have been reported – I imagine the number is much higher than this.

Seventy-five percent of victims are female, with 73% of these women aged between 15 and 44 years. There is also a high rate of children being present at and witnessing these crimes: in 2013/14 there were 1,077 reported incidents where children were present (this is 37% of the total reported incidents). And that's why it's so important that we're all here today.

Hume City Council supports Oorja Foundation through our community grants program. The Community Grants Program funded 122 diverse community groups or organisations last year and it is through this program that Council can in partnership, offer programs and events that are responsive to the needs of the community.

This project is critical, as it engages and creates awareness and discussion around healthy relationships and connects Hume's large Punjabi community to support services for victims of domestic violence. The project also has had development support from the Hume City Council White Ribbon Team and the Hume Gender Equity Project.

Because every man, woman and child has the right to feel safe in everything they do.

It is important that all Australians have healthy and respectful relationships with all women they come across in their lives, and the wider community.

We all need to help raise awareness about this issue. I believe there is no better way to do that than by sharing our stories with our colleagues, friends, family members and the wider community.

And what better way to do this than through film! The screening of *Bride of Broken Dreams* is a significant initiative aiming to raise awareness and prevent violence against women.

Thank you.



Cr. Adem Atmaca
Mayor of Hume

MESSAGE FROM THE VICTORIAN MULTICULTURAL COMMISSION

I wish to thank the Oorja Foundation, in particular its founders Ms Bhandari and Mr Chauhan for organizing tonight's forum and for inviting me to be part of the proceedings. I also wish to express my appreciation to the partners and supporters of this event, Hume City Council, Dianelle Health, Victoria Police, Broadmeadows Community Legal Service and Dhoom films for their contributions. The message and theme of this event is 'The Way to Harmony in Family'. There is no dispute that a harmonious family makes for a harmonious community. Family violence, particularly violence against women and children, anywhere and around the world, is a serious abuse and violence of human rights, and a grave injustice experienced by women and children. I wish to make it clear from the outset that family violence, in any form, in whatever cultural or communal context, whether against women, children or anyone, is unacceptable, repugnant and must be rejected. Every week in Australia, a woman is killed by her current or former partner. Family violence is the leading cause of death and disability in Victorian women under 45 years of age. In 2013-14, there were 65,393 family incidents reported to the Victoria Police, a rise of 83% since 2009-10. A third of all police work, family violence costs our economy over \$3 billion dollars. In the course of any open and honest discussions on family violence, there will be occasions, where views will be offered and expressed, to consider and address all possible explanations or attributions for the causes or reasons for the occurrence and existence of family violence. There will be attempts, and reasonably so, to seek to understand this complex issue by peering into behavioural, psychological, neurological, sociological, environmental, cultural, religious and a range of other possible explanations and a combination of any of these factors to try to comprehend and find solutions to this scourge on our community. But in the end there is no room for any excuse or mitigation for the occurrence and existence of any instance of family violence. Family violence is a highly complex issue but the result and impact of its effect on families and the community is clear and simple to comprehend and appreciate.



Which is why, communities across this state have involved themselves intimately and personally to attempt to do something to find ways to deal with this problem, if not, then at least, to seek to understand why it is occurring and what appears to be with increasing dominance within their neighbourhood, their circles of friends, their community and for some even their own families. Many communities, from across many cultural groups, have taken this initiative and are at the forefront of engagement, dialogues and actions to deal with this issue. This evening's forum is such a place where this community seeks to approach this problem by inviting experts and public discussions on this issue. Again, I wish to thank and applaud the organizers for their active participation and involvement. I, too, seek to understand more about this issue as you do, in the hope of finding some answers that would help to reduce the incidence of family violence in our community. We share a collective responsibility and ownership of the problem because it involves us all. The Victorian government has established a Royal Commission into family violence.

We encourage you to consider how you could be involved by making appropriate submissions to the Royal Commission. The VMC will have direct input into the Royal Commission. The Commission's Term's of Reference refer to how the issue impacts on culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The VMC will run a series of forums with women from these communities and report to the Royal Commission on the outcomes of these forums. From my own experience it is apparent that while family violence is a general problem occurring within our communities, there are issues around cultures and perhaps even around religions, of diverse groups that may have some effects and impacts on the nature, occurrences and incidents of some family violence. It is hoped that the Royal Commission in its findings may produce and shed some light on this possible connection. I am also aware that there appears to be a higher incidence of reported and known level of family violence cases among members of some groups and that members of the Indian community have in recent times experiences a relatively high proportion of cases of fatal family violence incidents. Again, further research and the outcome of the Royal Commission inquiry may offer a clearer understanding about the occurrence of family violence within some communities.

A few weeks ago I had the sad occasion to meet Mr Godara, the father of Deepshika Godara Beniwal, who was tragically killed in December last year at the hands of her husband who tragically was also killed. Mr Godara travelled from India to participate in a family violence forum which was also organized by women in the Indian community. I applaud Mr Godara's commitment and courage in his action to contribute to the battle against family violence and offered out condolences to him and his family. It is likely that for some community groups, cultural and perhaps religious factors may be a contributing basis for the occurrence of family violence within those communities. If cultural issues play a role or have some causative role in the attitudes and behaviour of perpetrators of family violence or in a family situation giving rise to family violence then it is critical that we also seek to explore solutions that may be more particularly culturally relevant and appropriate. That may better lead us to changes in the attitudes and behaviours by people within that particular cultural group. On a personal note, before I conclude, the single most difficult area that defies my own understanding and appreciated of family violence is the quandary why is it that a member of a family would knowingly or otherwise, deliberately inflict pain and suffering on other members of their family, people that they love or care for or that they once loved or cared about and which they in some form continue to seek to engage in an element of intimacy with. Most violence committed against others in our society is done criminally and wantonly and in most cases against strangers who have no significant degree of intimacy or personal affinity to the offenders. This is where the betrayal in a family violence situation seems most cruel and brutal because it is carried out against those the perpetrator is perceived to have a duty and role to protect and keep safe and who has a high degree of intimacy with those the hurt and violence is directed against. It goes against our moral instinct that you do not hurt those you love and care for. This goes to the the question, why do men, generally, in the cases of family violence end up hurting their family, their loved ones so badly? What possesses them to do this? I welcome the opportunity in forums such as today's to have some light cast on the situation confronting women and at this particular forum the situation confronting women in the Indian community who are experiencing violence in their own homes. We all have a part to play in addressing the scourge of family violence and the Indian community is certainly playing a major role in this process. his should be a source of great pride and encouragement for the Indian community here is Vicoria. I thank each of you where for your participation and for your care and concern.

STATISTICS

Family violence is prevalent in the Victorian community.

- A woman is killed in Australia almost every week by a partner or ex-partner. (AIC, 2007/2008)
- More than one in three Australian women (34%) who have had an intimate partner, have experienced violence from a partner or ex-partner. (Mouzos&Makkai, 2004)
- In a report released by the Sentencing Advisory Council (2013) shows an increase of 72.8% in reports of family violence incidents to Victoria Police between 2004 and 2012.
- In Victoria, the number of family incident reports submitted by police rose from 50,382 to 60,829 in 2012/13 (Victoria Police 2012/13).

Family violence has a significant impact on the health of the Victorian community.

- Intimate partner violence is responsible for more ill-health and premature death in Victorian women under the age of 45 than of any other well-known risk factors, including high blood pressure, obesity and smoking. 59% of the health impact experience by women is anxiety and depression. (The Health Costs of Violence)

Family violence is expensive.

- Violence against women and their children cost the Australian economy \$14.7 billion in 2013. (The Cost of Violence Against Women, KPMG, 2013)
- Violence against women and children cost the Victorian economy \$3.4 billion IN 2009. (National Council to reduce Violence Against Women and their Children, 2009)

To prevent family violence, we need to change attitudes.

- At an individual level, the most consistent predictor of the use of violence among men is their agreement with sexist, patriarchal, and/or sexually hostile attitudes. (VicHealth, 2010a)
- More than half of people believe that a woman could leave a violent relationship if she really wanted to. (VicHealth, 2010d)

DV Vic aims to reduce the severity of these statistics by building healthier and safer communities where women and children can live free from violence.

<http://www.dvvic.org.au/index.php/understanding-family-violence/key-statistics.html>



Background

Coming from an Indian origin I was upset with the rise in cases of domestic violence specifically in the Australian-Indian community.

Being aware of cultural restrictions and social barriers on Indian women, I was looking for some ways which can fill the gap and break the silence of women victimised by domestic violence.

Whilst brainstorming and researching for almost 8 months, I started scriptwriting in 2013 and was able to conceive a movie with real life victims of domestic violence. Saahil Luthra from Dhoom Films volunteered his time by producing, directing and editing the film.

- Nayana Bhandari

Synopsis

An urge for equality

Every week two women get killed in Australia. In the first three months of 2015 sixteen women lost their lives in a silent war happening in every neighbourhood house. Currently, a woman as a wife is being tortured, traumatised, and harassed by her husband or ex-partner.

Brides of broken dreams is an effort, an urge, a necessity which encapsulates a very distinct storyline of three Punjabi women which suffered from domestic violence in their married relationships.

This movie reflects the crisis of a woman as a newly arrived migrant, an expecting mother, and a dedicated wife who are bounded by the cultural barriers to go through domestic violence in their households.

Brides of Broken Dreams documents real life stories of victims describing their plea to raise awareness of this issue for the most vital human right - equality.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Inspector Lisa Hardeman
Victoria Police Force



Dr Santokh Singh
GP, Sunbury



Flora Culpan
Commumnity Legal Education Co-ordinator
Broadmeadows Community Legal Centre (BCLC)



Monique Toohey
Psychologist, Trainer, Vocal Social
Entrepreneur, Published Author



Senior Constable Ash Dixit
Community Liaison Officer
Victoria Police Force





**Q1) What has your engagement with family violence in the Indian community been?
Do you have current statistics of cases of domestic violence?**

Flora Culpan:

BCLS is a free community legal service for people who live in the Hume area and our lawyers deal with a number of general legal issues. We also have a specialist FV lawyer so most of the clients we have seen in relation to FV from the Indian community have been through our intervention order service at the Broadmeadows Court.

It is an issue for us as to why the community has not been accessing our service about family violence matters beforehand and this is why our service and the Hume family and Domestic Violence Network are working with the Oorja Foundation to find ways to improve the community's understanding of the legal system and also what services are available to them.

The FV incidents reported to the police last year were over 1500; the Legal Service saw over 500 non police matters and on top of that there are many people who go to Court for Intervention Orders without accessing police or legal advice. The numbers are high but they are most likely even higher when you consider that not all FV incidents are reported.

So having forums like this that engage with the community are really important. It helps to raise awareness and an understanding that we all have a responsibility and a right to be safe in our community and in particular in our homes as an absolute priority.



Q2) What sort of mental, psychological, physical effects does domestic violence have on women and children? What are the effects of these on the family dynamic and community as a whole? What impact does domestic violence have on our social and economic well-being?

Monique Toohey:

We can't summarize the negative affects and trauma of domestic violence as the impact can last a lifetime. The amount of individuals that visit psychologists with domestic violence claims has increased in the last three years and is continuing to increase. I deal with clients at all different stages of where they are in their relationships; some are stuck in DV relationships.

Some are bound there by psychological and cultural scripts saying that they can't leave. So they sit on the fence: weighing up the significance of their decisions and the affects these decisions will have on their families and community.

The psychological affects on women are cognitive. They can't concentrate, can't remember things, are irritable with their children, constantly in a negative mood, and their expectations of marriage are gone down the drain. Domestic violence can be defined as physical and emotional manipulation. Therefore difficult for women to see. The emotional manipulation, such as criticism and blame, is even more traumatic than physical. You can't see the bruises of its manipulation.

Counselling and connections to family and good friends is very important for these victims. Women in relationships: when they are sitting inside hiding for so long their body reacts stereotypically to trauma. They experience depression, anxiety, panic attacks, vigilance, they're walking on egg shells, and are constantly predicting their partner's next possible impulse and attack. Women out of relationships experience post-traumatic stress disorder which takes years to overcome. I have seen people over sixty times where they are still recovering and not going back to relationship systems. However that many sessions can't be funded for every individual. If they don't get a high level of support it makes them vulnerable.

Those sitting in violence for so long creates a certain level of disharmony in family and impacts the victim's lifetime and her future relationships. In addition, it affects the type of relationships her children have. Many children from DV homes experience anxiety disorders and are taught that the world is not a safe place to live.

With regards to family structures, people don't go into a marriage wanting it to break down. Moreover, women have to make a decision to leave a relationship.

DV is controlling and interferes with everyday life: victims lose their jobs and pull out of their studies due to them taking an extended amount of sick leave, lack of concentration, and their abusive partners stalking them at work/education institution. Victims are put in a difficult position as they lose financial independence.

With the right type of support victims do recover. Victims learn about toxic and dysfunctional relationships and what relationships they want in the future. We need to support them to demonstrate what a healthy relationship looks like and foster an environment which can aid them to develop fundamental skills.

Q3) Why do women keep silent? Why do women withdraw police complaints? Is it the 'shame' factor? How can we work together by eliminating notions of 'shame' from Indian vocabulary and creating a safe space in which women/children are able to speak up? How do we dispel the stigma that keeps women ashamed and silent?

Ash Dixit:

The main reasons behind the silence is:

- The fear of the unknown;
- Migrating to a new country and being dependant upon her husband;
- No social connections coupled with poor English language skills;
- Not sure who to go to for advice as she only knows her husband and no one else;
- Fear to approach the police as in India the police aren't approachable or friendly so people are hesitant and don't see the police as helpful. (We are trying to break that barrier and encourage people to come to us for assistance.)

The 'shame' factor:

- Separation or divorce is a taboo in Indian culture.
- It's more difficult for a female than a male to leave a relationship.
- Indian women try to work it out hoping things will change however statistics prove that once the violence begins, it is difficult to stop.

Education is the best way to go about handling this issue:

- Word of mouth
- Promoting anti-violence campaigns at festivals
- Media (both online and print)

Q4) Women from non-English speaking backgrounds are among the highest-risk groups and experience more violence because of these vulnerabilities. What support services are currently available to those from CaLD backgrounds who suffer from abuse/violence?

Lisa Hardeman:

- Berry Street Family Violence Services – integrated referral service for Victoria Police in this local area. They have multilingual and culturally diverse Case Support Workers who will utilise interpreter services.
- Safe Steps – 24/7 response to all victims of FV including CaLD and will engage the services of interpreters to assist with gathering important information.
- In Touch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence – working with CaLD victims in collaboration with local communities and ethnic organisations.
- 1800RESPECT – National Sexual Assault, domestic Family violence Counselling Service.
- W.I.R.E. – Women’s Information and Referral Exchange Service.
- W.I.S.H.I.N. – Women’s information Support and Housing in the North.
- Mary Anderson Family Violence Service – emergency accommodation and support to “Stay safe at home” programs.
- Court Support Workers and interpreters at all Family Violence Magistrates Courts hearings.
- The use of Multi-Cultural Liaison Officers, New and Emerging Community Liaison Officers, and Community Liaison Officers by Victoria Police to assist with the education and reassurance for members of CaLD communities to better understand FV laws in Victoria.

We have come a long way in how we deal with family violence but there is still a long way to go. The government has announced a Royal Commission into FV. This will be an opportunity to really examine the system, see where the gaps are, and to develop better ways of dealing with and, more importantly, preventing FV.

Police and courts have taken a stronger stand and people are being sent to prison for breaching IVOs but that on its own is not enough. Ultimately, it is us as individuals and as a community to make a difference and I have no doubt that it will take a generational change for family violence to not be the social problem that it currently is.

Educating children and young people about respectful relationships is important and is happening in many schools.

If we are to keep women and children safe then we have to speak out. The ‘shame’ factor in our society should not be the shame of family breakdown and what other people will think. The ‘shame’ should be that we make excuses and condone this behaviour by allowing it to continue. I have recently read the story of an Indian woman that was murdered by her husband. There was an intervention order. If the people involved with perpetrator had said that this behaviour must stop instead of believing that it was his right as a husband to control and discipline his wife, then the question is – would this woman still be alive now?

Q5) What current policies/laws are in place to respond to domestic violence?

Lisa Hardeman:

- Victoria Police operate within the guidelines of the Victoria Police Code of Practice for the Investigation of Family Violence to enable operational police members to assess the risk of FV, manage the FV risk and mitigate further FV being perpetrated.
- It is a public document that was developed to provide a community accepted standard for the provision of a police response when dealing with FV.
- The reporting of FV is structured to allow for a comprehensive risk assessment of a FV incident by the attending police.
- Police adhere to the Code of Practice along with the legislative requirements of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008.
- The FVPA 2008 allows for police to make applications for Intervention Orders on behalf of victims of FV.
- Police can now also issue FVSN 24hrs a day 7 days a week.
- Police can refer both a victim and perpetrator of FV to a FV support service to seek assistance with their situation.
- There are mandatory reporting requirements when children have been directly victimised by FV.

Q6) How can we keep women and children safe from violent repeat offenders when current sentencing trends don't seem to deter?

Flora Culpan:

Family Violence Act 2008 legislation has made a difference how legal systems deal with FV. There has been continual changes however we still have a long way to go.

FV Royal Commission has gaps in the system where we can further improve current situation. Policies in courts are taking stronger stands however that in itself is not enough.

Ultimately, it is up to us as individuals and as a community, to educate young people and teach them about respectful relationships. We need to break the patriarchal system and if we're to keep women and children safe, we need to know the services that are around us. When we hear a family friend is going through FV, where can we send them?

With regards to the 'shame' factor. Whilst the Indian community thinks it's shameful to be divorcees, in actuality it's shameful for this to be happening in our community. We need to shift the shame from the women for not being the "good wife" to shifting the blame and saying "no we don't accept family violence".

Q7) What are the ways to establish early intervention?

Dr Santokh Singh: to encourage people to report and seek help at the first instance instead of waiting till it's too late is very important. There are a lot of referral services available.

Monique Toohey: As a community we need to have conversations with young people and our families as what we want relationships to look like. Most young people haven't had significant relationships and we haven't primed with them the knowledge so we can't assume they will come up with the answers on their own.

If we are lacking skills to be able to solve problems, negotiate cultural scripts (usually learnt from our parents) within relationships that feed into what a relationship/marriage should look like and sometimes that's not healthy. We need to as a society be educating people with skills training as relationship education has been put on the backbench.

If we want to start a dialogue of how we want our relationships to work, we need to start with young people. We also need to provide this training to parents and support them to have these conversations as well.



GROUP DISCUSSION

After the panel discussion, participants were invited to discuss the following questions and their responses have been recorded below. The participants ranged from members of the Indian community to representatives from various organisations involved in the community development sector.

Q1) What is your understanding of family violence?

"I was a child of family violence and other types of abuse myself. Therefore, I know exactly the destructive emotions that penetrate a person with a trauma background like violence. It is a very uncomfortable, sickening feeling of anger, self hate, blame and fear. Violence to me can be both physical and emotional."

"Non-discriminatory – effects everyone."

"Multi dimensional – sexual and physical is insidious."

"It is insidious and hidden."

"Often people don't realise they are in toxic unhealthy relationships."

"It is communicated badly in the media eg: blaming the victim."

"For some, we haven't had to deal with it a lot."

"All types of faiths may be part of the problem eg: male/female dominance."

"FV = mental (cultural), physical, emotional (spiritual), financial."

"Sexual, physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual – with sexual, physical as insidious when there is FEAR in a relationship."

"Fear cannot be described in the law. FV is an infringement of human rights."

"Persuasive behaviours that are normalised within the private space inflicting violence/trauma within intimate relationships of many forms."



How does it affect your role as a professional/community member/legal worker/govt. official?

"My understanding of violence is that it is often hidden in my community. As a direct worker (a Maternity and Child Health MCH Nurse) I am aware of DV within my clients and often have to wait a long time for direct change."

"To challenge the patriarchal system (reflect)."

"Pushes us to empower women, promote equality (doing this to the best of our ability) and have lots of community conversations."

"Structures of organisations where rules call for equality can help with the problem of inequality. Change has to happen within. You need to have women in leadership in any culture – to give the right signals."

"Huge impact on children, we see this in our work. They are always on high alert and anxious."

"How does it affect us? Emotionally taxing. We become desensitised."

"Being conscious of the presence and signs of FV allows you to try to recognise FV in your role and provide support/referral."

"To provide appropriate services. To be sensitive to cultural diversity. To stop the continuing ideas of male dominance and power."

Q2) What barriers do victims of FV face when seeking help? What barriers do you face as a professional/community member/legal worker/govt. official whilst tackling the issue of family violence?

"I am studying a Diploma of Community Services (Case Management) and I am keen to make my career towards counselling or psychology. Therefore, I haven't experienced barriers yet. Having said that, I still have quite a good idea on how people that went/go through family violence feel. The main barrier is for them to speak up and reveal this torture. How far you can go to help someone?"

"Boundaries: where and when can we go? What can we say?"

"Availability of resources and services – are these suitable to our clients?"

"Alienating people."

"Victims having a stigma against police."

"Economic issue."

"Secrecy and shame."

"Fear of damaging relationship."

"Isolation, shame."

"Lack understanding of impact FV and barriers faced by women."

"Knowledge of support services, accurate referrals and effective communication to share that information."



"Not being aware of what support is available, constraints on the service sector."

"Lack of support to enable raising awareness, significant lack of support for men, restricted opportunities."

"Young men: wrong role models? (How does a sector in a growing community address this?)"

"Non-discriminatory (family violence)."

"Happens anywhere and everywhere."

"It's where you work, among friends – becomes professionally and personally very confronting, knowing your role is to speak out."

"We implement extended leave for family violence (in the workplace)."

"Cultural context of women – patriarchal society."

Fear of reporting – interventions order is scary for women because of social setting.

Denial - refusal to accept help.

Men being present during consultations (or M.I.L.).

Women not prepared to join in local activities (eg mothers groups).

Damaging relationships with victims to the point where you are "shut out" and can no longer help if you report or take action.

Not understanding different cultures and different languages."

"Cultural communities not trusting us, or knowing about the services."

"Availability of resources."

"People not wanting to be involved."

"(Some) women of colour feel threatened by police to begin with – approaching authorities can be so challenging."

Q3) How do you approach these barriers?

"In my opinion and as a future case manager I would definitely (after suspecting there could be family violence) show my client photos of videos that would make them reveal/disclose this issue so that I can address it."

"Letting victims know about what support services are available."

"Recognising your own boundaries."

"Long term relationship-building with victims."

"Gentle approach, non-assertive."

"Reframe the language of the information. Share competence training with colleagues."

What you are doing at the moment to address these barriers?

"Embracing equality generally."

"Normalising the sort of DV conversations which need to happen."

"I attend many events like this to raise awareness and to network."

"Community forums."

"Women advocacy group."

"Asking questions all the time. Allowing time to talk. Being aware that "keeping the baby quiet" is a warning to me."

"My agency is learning cultural competency."

Q4) How can you work together with other stakeholders to improve the situation for victims of family violence/the issue at large?

"As a future case manager/counsellor, I would definitely encourage to have/hold sessions that would show stories of victims of family violence and talk about that women and children will have all the support, whether its financially or emotionally, they need to get through the first period of their single life after separation and that it would be the right decision to take."

"Have networks."

"Develop great working relationships."



Recommendations

"Working towards gender equality."

"Teaching men to respect women."

"Communication and negotiation skills in schools."

"Normalise these conversations amongst peers."

"Embrace a culture of equality."

"Funding towards prevention."

"Refer to services available."



What are some recommendations you would suggest to improving the current methods, services, facilities and resources?

"Address why men perpetrate violence – as individuals, not just what women can do about it."

"Review where money is spent."

"Keeping people in jail VS early intervention."

"Putting considerable money into schools programs:

- *Negotiation skills*
- *Respectful relationships*
- *Communication skills*
- *Conflict resolution"*

What would you need personally to improve your role as a professional/community member/legal worker/govt. official? E.g. resources?

"Difficult with a large practice – I finish at 5:30 – no one is available to talk then. I am not available to talk during the day as I am overloaded with appointments. What I need for one person, who works directly with DV, to be available within short notice – not wasting time of months on end."

"Build trust"

"Reach out."

Recommendations

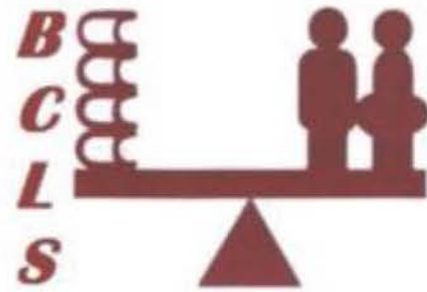
- There needs to be more funding for The Oorja Foundation so they can expand the work that they are doing in the community. From initiatives that are crossing the generational bridge by challenging the community to addressing the cultural issues and attitudes towards family violence, The Oorja Foundation requires funds.
- Establish a network of Indian doctors to have professional development on family violence which will in turn assist their work with clients in addressing health issues related to family violence and the impact of this on families involved and the community.
- Funding allocated for the development of resources through music, the arts or film to assist in creating awareness of the issue of family violence within the Indian community.
- Other issues that we need to consider include: Information to International Students/Department of Immigration - how they deal with family violence matters.
- Most of the Indian community settled in Victoria migrated to Australia under the student or skilled migrant stream and never sought assistance from social support service providers. Currently the Indian community is disadvantaged as it has limited, or in some cases, no access to support services. Therefore, it is necessary that the government should provide streamlined settlement support funding targeted towards the Indian community.
- Education programs, that explore healthy and respectful relationships, to be integrated into school classrooms.
- Community run organisations to be provided with an opportunity for training and professional development courses for those who are currently working with victims or perpetrators of family violence.



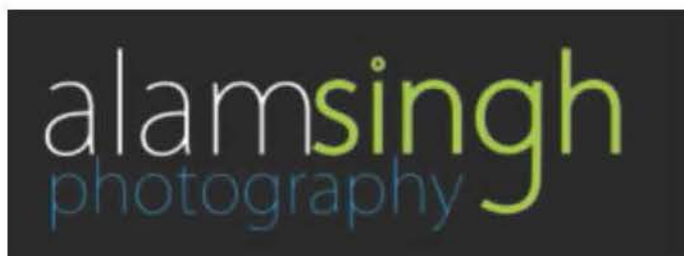


- Volunteering and sharing hobbies like gardening, evening walks and other healthy activities to be promoted in the Indian community.
- Oorja Foundation recognises the importance to work with all tiers of government in an all of community in addressing family violence. Thus it is recommended that appropriate sources of funding are made available to enable local communities such as ours to develop and implement local solutions, such as the 2015/16 State Government allocation towards addressing family violence.
- Oorja Foundation wishes to continue the positive outcomes we have received from Hume City Council Grant of \$5000, however additional funding will be required to continue our work with those affected by Family Violence.
- Educational organisations are often in touch with those students affected by Family Violence (first point of call) therefore it is recommended that such organisations develop special programs to support and refer students to appropriate service providers.
- Encourage the availability of community meeting spaces in order that communities can connect and where prevention programs can be undertaken.
- Culturally appropriate process and resources to work around preventing violence against women as well as to respond to the experience of violence in the context of culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

EVENT PARTNERS



Official Photographer



Official Catering





*Never inflict violence on a woman
 No matter how much you think she deserves it
 No matter how she cunningly provokes your anger
 Just to get some energy from you
 Just to get you to gaze or even glare into her eyes
 So she can feel like she at least, still exists
 Beyond the cups of coffee she perfectly brews
 to gain your affection*

- Extract from the poem 'Amnesia' by Ee'da Brahim

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