



# Domestic Violence Kills

# Newsletter

Issue 9, April 2009

One of the biggest problems facing the prevention of Domestic Violence is minimizing. So often we hear 'it's just a domestic', 'he didn't mean to', 'it was just a tap' and other dismissive statements that skirt around the truly serious nature of Domestic Violence, Domestic Violence kills.

According to the Australian Institute of Criminology National Homicide Monitoring Program there are 70-80 Intimate Partner Homicides in Australia every year. Some of these make the news, we're shocked, and we wonder how such a thing could happen. The media assails us with terms such as 'devoted family man', 'loved too much', 'just snapped' all of which over shadow the often long years of abuse and control that formed the centre of these relationships. In the entertainment industry there's a saying that it takes years of struggle to become an overnight success. Domestic Violence is similar, it takes years of practiced control to just snap.

So often in cases of Domestic Violence there is a tendency to blame the victims. We believe that it's partially their fault for staying after all if it was us we'd just leave. There are so many different factors that we ignore in believing this but the factor most pertinent to Intimate Partner Homicide is that research has shown that separation and/or attempting to leave are often key factors in Intimate Partner Homicides. The perpetrator fearing loss of control takes extreme steps to ensure that his property cannot exist independent of him. The threat 'if you leave I'll kill you' for many women living in Domestic Violence is a very real possibility that they do not want to chance.

It's not always the partner that becomes the primary victim in Domestic Related Homicide. Sometimes they are left to suffer the consequences of 'their' actions. In 2003 Ingrid Poulson arrived home from reporting an AVO breach and rape by her estranged husband to find that he had murdered her father and children. Although she had feared for her own safety she never believed he would have harmed the children.

This is not an isolated incident, filicide has become one more weapon in the arsenal of the perpetrator. Victims are told 'if you leave me, that'll be you' as they watch reports of children being murdered.

Incidents of filicide and intimate partner homicide are often accompanied by the perpetrator's own suicide or attempted suicide. Although at a distance a perpetrator's suicide may seem to solve all the victims problems it must be remembered that losing a loved one is always a tragedy no matter what their past behaviour has been. Taking others with them only compounds this sense of loss.

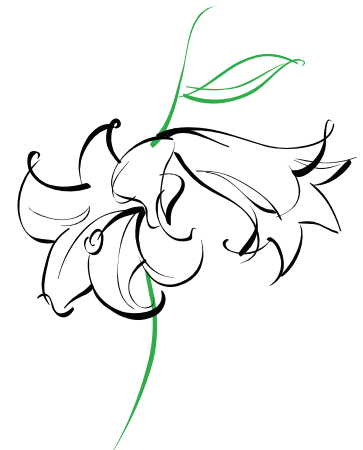
Studies being done in the Netherlands suggest that the Homicide-suicide dynamic consist of three types. In type one the homicide is the key event, the suicide follows because of either the perpetrator's dependence on the victim to feel whole or unwillingness to face the consequences of their action.

In type two the suicide is the key event. The homicide is a way of tying up loose ends such as when a parent may be concerned about what would happen to their child after their death.

The third type is particularly interesting in that the perpetrator does not really differentiate themselves from the victims. They see the victim as an extension of themselves and the homicide-suicide as a total solution allowing them to be whole. Although this type is rare it's problematic in that it is difficult to predict and therefore difficult to prevent

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## DV Kills

Finally perpetrators of Domestic Violence have also fallen victim to Domestic Homicide. Years of abuse, frustration and seemingly little alternative take its toll on victims of Domestic Violence. Escalating abuse and fear for her life or her children's have driven some victims to extreme measures. Late last year Australian Story's *Til Death Us Do Part*, told the story of Catherine Smith. The mother of six suffered 30 years of abuse at the hands of her husband, Kevin Smith. During the 30 years she was shot at, strangled, raped and physically tortured. The police attended several incidents, one in which Kevin even managed to get hold of the officers gun, and yet he was never charged. Catherine made several attempts to leave but each time he would stalk the refugees and get her back. When her children were grown she was finally able to escape by going underground. Unable to find Catherine, Kevin turned his attention to their children, stalking them, forcing them to spend their savings to flee him. It was this kind of relentless hunting that finally drove Catherine to purchase a gun and take matters into her own hands. Fortunately for Kevin, she was unable to pull the trigger but others have not been so lucky.

Domestic Violence is a very serious issue, it drives people to extremes, destroys families and kills. On Wednesday the 6th of May Candle Lighting Ceremonies will be held around Queensland to remember those who have lost their lives to Domestic Violence. Please join with us to make a stand against this senseless waste

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

5.30pm – 6.30pm 6th May 2009

Mondo Café Bar and Grill, Cairns



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 (07) 4033 6100

# **I Got Flowers Today**

**I got flowers today**

**It wasn't my birthday or any other special day.**

**Last night we had a fight and he hit me,**

**But I know he is sorry**

**Cause I got flowers today**

**I got flowers today**

**It wasn't our anniversary or any other special day.**

**Last night he threw me against the wall and started to choke me,**

**But I know he's sorry,**

**Cause I got flowers today**

**I got Flowers today**

**It wasn't mother's day or any other special day.**

**I was so swollen and bruised I was ashamed to answer the door**

**But I know he is sorry,**

**Cause I got flowers today**

**If I leave him where will I go?**

**What about money? What about my kids?**

**It's getting worse every time but I'm afraid to leave.**

**But I know he's sorry**

**Cause I got flowers today**

**I got flowers today my family and friends filed by to see me**

**Asking why I never left him,**

**If only I had the strength and courage to, but I didn't**

**So I got flowers today**

# Help for Men

## GF4M—Go Forward for Men

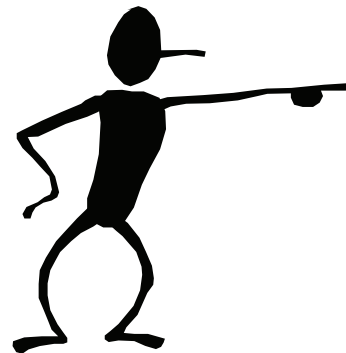
The Go Forward for Men (GF4M) Program provided by Relationship Australia's (RA) Manunda venue is a service for men for whom Domestic and Family Violence is an issue.

The GF4M program has key components to its practice, including a Stopping Violence in the Home Program, community education for promoting a greater awareness about domestic and family violence, being part of a coordinated network approach to support people affected by DV and to end the practice, court and fax back support, individual counselling, and general service information and referral. The GF4M program is presently working in Cairns, Innisfail and Mossman, with options to engage Port Douglas and the Tablelands communities.

Presently the GF4M team is trialling a men's behaviour change program titled "No To Abuse" (N2A) which uses a narrative approach with men using abuse and violence in their relationships.

As a group based approach, the N2A runs for 12 weeks and incorporates a range of strategies. Some key points are shown below.

- Has two intake and assessment sessions with men prior to group work
- Facilitators meet with men during and after group meetings
- Offers post group support options
- A Women's Advocate role is available
- Joint male/female group facilitation
- Men sign a contract to attend group work
- Mandated and self referral participants are engaged



RA believes the N2A program differs from traditional styled behavioural change programs in that it asks men to investigate their use of DV from their own views, perspectives and stories. These assessments are acknowledged as real to the men but are challenged with a view that men's self exploration of their experiences can facilitate new ideas and change. As a model for working with men the N2A hypothesis is suggesting men talking about and challenging themselves on their own views, perceptions, stories and behaviour can be engaged more freely, if the process is not limited by directive styles of group processes, that undermine adult learning concepts.

The N2A will be evaluated and its hypothesis tested by RA who are committed to ensuring best practice principles for working with men are upheld. However the evaluation can not predict and guarantee changed behaviour. The N2A program is about having another option for working with men, and RA will accept and welcome challenges from all interested parties about the program content and its perceived radical direction.

The GF4M team at Manunda is committed to working with men who use abuse and violence in their relationships to end these practices. The GF4M program is also committed to ensuring its work with men never compromises the safety of women and children or any other person affected by abuse and violence.

For further information about the N2A program please contact the GF4M team on email- [gf4m@relateqld.com.au](mailto:gf4m@relateqld.com.au)

Keith Jones N2A Facilitator

## Alternatives to Violence: A Course for Men

The Lifeline Community Care Cairns course 'Alternatives to Violence' (ATV) is a ten week course held over two and a half hours each week for men wanting to change their aggressive behaviour. The course is designed for the participants to achieve that goal. We use a Cognitive behavioural approach that encompasses a cognitive-relaxation coping skills method and cognitive restructuring. The course emphasises the learning of empathy and communication skills. Skills on how to recognise when they are getting angry, methods to head off that anger and ways to channel their feelings into more constructive activities are an integral part of the ATV course. Building and mending healthier relationships that replace the unhealthy relationships that existed before doing ATV course.

## Help for Men

Participants are often self-referred and we have some clients who are mandated to attend and are referred from Probation and Parole or the Department of Child Safety.

Participants tell of a myriad of reasons why they choose to complete the course. For example;

“to gain a better understanding of myself, my thought patterns and when things are going astray and change some of my patterns for a more positive outcome”,

“to learn ways of not allowing the anger to build up to the point where I’m losing it”,

“to be able to acknowledge and be aware of the first signs of anger and then deal with it appropriately, without it escalating”.

Feedback from participants who complete the course is overwhelmingly positive with clients saying that the course overall was very helpful. Comments on the feedback sheets include:

“This was a very helpful Course”

“I never thought I would be able to see it through”

“The course leaders were fantastic and really encouraged my change”

“All the sessions were good”

Observers are invited to attend ATV. They provide a community perspective to the course for accountability and transparency of service delivery, valuable information and insights and observers often report that the experience was interesting and useful and many positive benefits for the ATV Course participants and facilitators

Interviews are conducted prior to the men joining the course. These interviews serve two purposes; to measure responsibility and motivation to change.

ATV is held three times a year on a Tuesday. For 2009; 2<sup>nd</sup> June at 6pm and 6<sup>th</sup> October. For more information call 40504955

Ailsa Rayner, ATV facilitator

## Response-based Intervention

*In November 2008, I attended a five-day workshop titled ‘Innovative Responses to Family Violence: Working with Offenders, Victims and Children’, in Sydney. The training event was run by Aspirations Consultancy, based in WA. There were three guest presenters. Adriana Uken from California delivered material on solution-focused group work with domestic violence offenders. Andrew Turnell, a family therapist and child protection consultant from Perth, WA, outlined a framework for safety planning with child clients and their families. Allan Wade, a private practitioner from Vancouver BC, focused on response-based therapy with victims; he also highlighted the significance of language and professional discourse, in descriptions of violent acts and explanations of causes. In this short review, I have chosen to focus on Allan Wade’s presentation, as the material fits well with the work that we do at CRDVS.*

Allan Wade has developed a response-based intervention approach in collaboration with two Canadian colleagues, Nick Todd and Linda Coates. Allan explained that his work is largely influenced by Feminist, Human Rights and Narrative Therapy ideas and practice principles. He is a very engaging presenter, and invited “questions, comments, insults” from the audience on a regular basis! An in-depth summary of the practice principles is beyond the scope of this article, but interested readers are encouraged to access Allan’s website at: [www.yaletownfamilytherapy.com/therapeutic/dailyschedule.php#allanwadehandouts](http://www.yaletownfamilytherapy.com/therapeutic/dailyschedule.php#allanwadehandouts)

Using Response-Based interviewing, the counsellor can assist the client to identify the various ways in which they have responded to acts of violence and abuse against them. This differs from an effects-based intervention framework, which positions the client as a passive agent in the face of violence. A typical effects-based question is “How did that make you feel?” The counsellor is inadvertently sending the client a message about what sort of response is expected, e.g. “afraid”/ “helpless”/“worthless”. Another example is “How did that affect you?” Essentially, the counsellor is encouraging,

## Response-based Intervention

even demanding, a response that is negative and/or self-deprecating. An example of a response-based question stem is “What did you do when x said that?” The question provides scope for a wide range of different responses. even silence can be a meaningful act.

Central to response-based practice is the idea that victims of violence and oppression engage in ongoing acts of resistance. By processing their own experiences of violence and abuse, and identifying the means used to (i) maximise safety and (ii) preserve personal dignity, the client may feel better-equipped to deal with challenging situations. Weaver and colleagues (2005/2007), p. 24) note that one female client’s response was “I knew I was not weak”. Allan argues that the language of the helping profession and the judicial system tends not to recognise the significance of resistant behaviour. Worse, language used often serves to collude with the accounts of perpetrators. Therefore, the response based practitioner also seeks to be informed about the intricacies of language, with a view to assisting clients to identify and challenge various forms of misrepresentation.

On a handout titled ‘An Interactional and Discursive View of Violence and Resistance’ (Coates, Todd, and Wade, 2000) the following guiding principles for response-based practice are listed:

1. **Social Conduct is Responsive:** Individuals respond to social context, the immediate situation, and micro-interactional events and orient to one another as social agents with the capacity to choose.
2. **Dignity is Central to Social Life:** Social interaction is organised largely around the preserving of dignity. Even inadvertent slights can be met with intense responses. All forms of violence are affronts to dignity, but not all affronts to dignity take the form of violence.
3. **Violent Acts are Social and Unilateral:** Violent acts are *social*, in that they occur in specific interactions and involve at least two people, and *unilateral* in that they entail actions by one individual against the will and well-being of another.
4. **Violence is Deliberate:** Perpetrators of violence anticipate resistance from victims and take specific steps to conceal and suppress it. Virtually all forms of violence and systems of oppression entail strategies designed to suppress resistance.
5. **Resistance is Ever-Present:** Individuals respond and resist violence and other forms of oppression. However, open defiance is the least common form of resistance (Scott, 1990). In extreme circumstances, resistance may be realized solely in the privacy of the mind/spirit.

As Allan pointed out, the ideas of the response-based framework are not “rocket science”. However, it does appear to be a practice that genuinely accords clients “expert” status, in their situations. The principles also refrain from mutualising violence, which is very significant. Allan spoke at length about the persistence of victim-blaming accounts, in police reports and in courtrooms. Often, far more questions are asked of the victim than the perpetrator, with the implication that the victim did something to bring about the violence against them. Working with response based ideas, the counsellor can assist the client to navigate the legal system more effectively and to oppose any attempts to mutualise violent acts.

Working in the DV sector, with all of its challenges and systemic frustrations, can be disheartening at times. I found this section of the Innovative Responses workshop to be very invigorating, and I recommend response-based ideas to anyone with a strong social justice orientation. Please feel free to send any feedback on this article (i.e. *Questions? Comments? Insults?!*) to [courtsupport@dvcairns.org](mailto:courtsupport@dvcairns.org)

Best wishes

Alexis

### References:

Coates, L., Todd, N., & Wade, A. (2000). Workshop handout: ‘An Interactional and Discursive View of Violence and Resistance’.

Weaver, J., Todd, N., Ogden, C., & Craik, L. (2005/2007). *Honouring resistance: How women resist abuse in intimate relationships*. Published by Calgary Women’s Emergency Shelter, Alberta, CA. \* Note: Handbook is available as a PDF document; email requests can be sent to [info@cwes.ca](mailto:info@cwes.ca)

## Indigenous Cadetship

Hi my name is Kali. I am an indigenous lady currently doing 21 weeks work placement at CRDVS. I am studying Cert III in Community Services Work with aims to continue the education until I gain my Diploma. My goals are: qualifications, permanent full time work, sharing 'cultural knowledge' and assisting in 'closing the gap', helping my people adjust to the 21<sup>st</sup> century yet maintaining their cultural integrity.

I have been blessed with this opportunity thanks to the Cairns branch of Act for Kids, Indigenous Workforce Strategy Cadetship Program. As one of 12 indigenous Cadets in their program. I intend to make the most of this chance.

I am in my 4<sup>th</sup> week at CRDVS and loving it! The knowledge and skills I have picked up being around such strong yet patient women is amazing. It is also rolling over into my personal life-giving me the skills to deal with situations.

On a different note, I am a survivor of DV/FV. I have seen women in my family die because of DV. I strongly believe in recognition, admission and healing as ways to help our community overcome these issues. I believe I am one of many who take this responsibility and I am proud to do so.

This is my journey, this is my dreaming.

If you or someone you know is interested in participating in this program please contact ACT for Kids on 4033 5800



## DV Month Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Location</u>
1st May	D & FV Month Breakfast and Seminar 7am additional tickets \$20	Rydges Esplanade Resort, Cairns
6th May	Remembrance Day Ceremony	Mondo Café Bar and Grill, Hilton Hotel, Cairns
22nd May	WuChopperen Family Fun Day	WuChopperen Health Service, Moignard Street, Manunda
27th May	CRDVS Open Afternoon	CRDVS, Rm 19, 600 Bruce Highway, Woree

### Moving On

#### A Group for Women Who Have Experienced Abusive Relationships

The Womens Centre Cairns offer this group in partnership with The Cairns Regional Domestic Violence Service. The group aims to assist women to understand their own experiences of violence and abuse, rebuild their lives, and celebrate their achievements and strengths.

The group runs 4 times a year during school terms, 3 hours a week for 8 weeks.

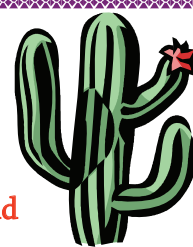
For further inquiries and bookings please contact

12 Scott St, Cairns 4870,  
Email: [wirc@wirc.org.au](mailto:wirc@wirc.org.au)

Ph: (07) 4051 9366



Communication and  
Alternative Coping  
Techniques Under Stress



CACTUS is a skills-based group therapy program for women who have developed aggressive behaviours and unhelpful coping patterns after surviving an abusive intimate relationship.

**To register your interest or if you require further information, please contact Sandi on 40336100**



# 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) 4033 6100 and ask us.

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



Phone: (07) 4033 6100



Email: office@dvcairns.org



Fax: (07) 4033 5863



CRDVS, PO Box 12103, Cairns 4870

Room 19  
600 Bruce Highway  
Woree 4868  
(Behind Calanna Pharmacy)



## 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

Lifeline Telephone Counselling  
13 11 14

#### **Alternatives to Violence**

A 12 week education course for men  
4050 4955

#### **Go Forward For Men**

A service for men to help men overcome domestic and family violence behaviours  
1300 364 277

**dvconnect Men's Information Line**  
1800 600 636

**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 about domestic or family violence you'd like to contribute to the next issue of this newsletter?

Please let us know by contacting Bernadette at CRDVS — Tel: (07) 4033 6100

**Look out for the next  
issue in  
Oct 2009**

### **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)