

No-one need live in fear

Southern Domestic Violence Action Group

PO Box 437, Noarlunga Centre
Ph: (08) 8384 9555 Fax: (08) 8384 9557

Autumn 2009
Issue 26



Southern Domestic Violence Action Group (SDVAG)

Meets
2nd Wednesday of every month
from
10am – 12:30pm

Next Meeting at
Family & Relationships Centre
38 Beach Rd
Christies Beach
Meet at front reception

(Transport available please book on
8384 9266 – Veronique)

Emergency Numbers

Emergency: 000
Police: 131 444
DV Helpline: 1800 800 098
DV Crisis Service 1300 782 00
Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800
Crisis Care: 131 611

Women's Stories...

WELCOME back to the Southern Domestic Violence Action Group's "No-one Need Live In Fear" newsletter for 2009. The DVAG commenced the year with its first meeting in February followed by a planning meeting in March in which key areas were identified as the focus for 2009.



Art Winner 2005, Google Image

Working parties have now been formed and will be working on the following areas:

- A legal forum to talk about the myths and realities of shared care, the impact on women and children experiencing DV and strategies and support for women and children going through the legal process
- The development and launch of postcards and bookmarks which will provide valuable information about women's and children rights in the family court
- Fundraising for the reprint of the Families and friends booklet
- A DV research working party.
- Changing sporting cultures group

The DVAG will continue to advocate in the area of domestic and family violence through the Week without Violence and the White Ribbon campaign along with other issues that emerge throughout the year. New members are always welcome! To launch the first issue for 2009 we will share some very inspirational stories by women who have experienced domestic violence. These stories were written by women in the Women Write Now group- a creative writing group for women that have experienced DV, run at Noarlunga Health Village. We thank them for sharing their personal experiences with us

FREEDOM

Freedom to choose – all aspects of life
Freedom to be me – strengths and weaknesses
To be encouraged & supported without ridicule or put downs or my efforts sabotaged
Free to have my own friends
To be safe from any forms of violence or aggression
To be respected
For my children to be safe and be allowed to be children
Equal power

Thank you to Amanda Rishworth, MP (Member for Kingston) for contribution in printing this issue.





Women's



Stories...

Today

Today I just feel happy
 Happy to be here
 Happy to be part of today
 Sharing ideas and emotions
 Smiling, laughing, content
 Not crying or sad
 Yes, today I'm happy to be here
 Today I just feel happy

Today I'm free from DV
 No longer trapped
 No shouting, screaming, tantrums
 No walking on eggshells
 No pushing, poking, shaking inside
 ...waiting for what happens next
 Yes, today I'm free from DV, no longer trapped
 Today I'm free from DV

Today I have my freedom
 Peace at last
 I make my own decisions
 I have friends
 I go to the cinema, theatre...make music
 I'm free to have fun; to come home happy
 Yes today I have my freedom, peace at last
 Today I have my freedom

Silence...

The thing I found really difficult in domestic violence was not the threats, the shoving, throwing things, swearing and verbal abuse, it was the silence after any or all of these.

I should give silence a capital letter because it was always a big Silence! It would go on for days. If I said "good morning" – there was no answer. If I said "dinner is served" there was no answer. I was forbidden to answer the phone.

He phoned people he knew and talked loudly for hours, but for me there was not a single word. If I spoke, he looked through me to whatever was behind me. He would talk to my cat, but for me just Silence.

If I called someone on the phone, he was there at the door – listening but he wouldn't speak. If I sought refuge in the radio or TV, he would change the channel and then sit wordlessly daring me to challenge him.

During these Silences he would wake me from sleep over and over again. The longest Big Silence was seven consecutive days. At the end of this time, I would be so grateful that he had spoken to me. The end of the violence of his Big Silence was like a present, followed by the mad desire to say Thank you.

Lorraine



Looking for Support?

Domestic Violence Support Group

Are you in a relationship where you fear for your safety, can't cope, have no freedom and feel as if you're walking on eggshells? Or have you left a relationship like this and you are still feeling shaky?

Date: Thursday 30th April – 2nd July.

Time: 10am – 12.30pm

Where: Southern Women's, Alexander Kelly Drive, Noarlunga Centre.

Childcare available if you book early. Group runs every term so phone 8384 9555 for bookings & details.

Women's Legal Service

Every second Friday by appointment at Southern Women's.

Phone Women's Legal Service on 8231 8929 for appts.



Women Write Now

A creative writing group for women who are in, or have been in a Domestic Violence relationship. No experience necessary...

Each Monday – starts 4th May 2009, 9.30am – 12 noon at the Noarlunga Health Village. Free Childcare available, Phone Megan on 8384 9266.

Child & Adolescent Family Violence &

Abuse – Parent & Carer's Support Group

A free meeting place for parents and carers to talk, find support, information and ideas...

Thursdays 1-2.30 during school term at Pathways Family Centre. 72 Collins Parade, Hackham Ph: 8186 6944



The company of women

Women are fantastic. When my first husband had an affair with my best friend after years of emotional abuse and left our 8 year marriage I fell apart. My world was thrown into chaos and I, a usually intelligent, resourceful and able woman spun out of control. There were three women in my life at this time who were there to be by my side and see me through.

They didn't do anything mind boggling to help me, they were just there, offering me refuge in their homes when my own was the last place I wanted to be. They checked in with phone calls and provided gentle words of wisdom from their own life experiences. They sat with me as I cried and cried. They allowed me to have whatever feelings I did. They gave me practical assistance when I couldn't do it alone.

They took me out when distraction was the only way to leave the pain of my situation. They found ways to make me laugh and also joined in with me in my anger. They were there for the long haul. 10 years has passed and these 3 women are still part of my life. Sometimes we don't see each other for many months but when we reconnect we always start where we left off. There is no awkward silence or feeling of disconnection. The bond is always strong and always present. Today it is I who offers support to one of these women and she has shared with me her gratitude for what my friendship offers her in her moment of pain.

WOMEN ARE FANTASTIC!

Women are generous, they give their support freely. They don't expect anything of you. In my work I see the wonderful ties that women develop and the strength, hope and power they gain from these ties.

Hope ~ Courage ~ Strength ~ Friendship ~ Gratitude ~ Growth ~ Peace ~ Respect

Women's Stories...



What is nonviolence to me?

The main thing for me is peace. Peace from all the abuse in a domestic violence relationship. For 29 years I had been in a DV relationship. I didn't know it at the time. It was a gradual process which escalated til I could not cope, till I was at "breaking point". My analogy was it was like a piece of wood that was being chopped or chiselled away at and there wasn't much left, I was about to break. So I left – my only means of survival, escape.

For me that meant 5 weeks in a women's shelter. Not an ideal place to be; but a sanctuary, a safe haven – PEACE. Yes there was peace! Why? I wasn't being shouted at, put down, having my opinions changed. I wasn't hearing the car pull up in the drive, waiting for him to come through the door, wondering what mood he was going to be in. Was it safe to say anything? Could I say anything? Would he react? How would he react?

Yes, in the women's shelter I was safe – I had PEACE. The other women in the shelter came from all walks of life with various problems of their own. Some like me had domestic violence issues, others mental health issues, drinking or drugs issues to name a few or a combination of the above. The great thing was no one was shouting, swearing, arguing or causing another personal harm. It was peaceful. I had a roof over my head, food on the table. I was grateful. Peace – that's what I had – it was great. Lesley.



DVAG News

Lesbian Domestic Violence Action Group! MEMBERS NEEDED!

The Lesbian DVAG was established to use positive action to raise awareness about issues facing lesbians, their children and networks when abuse is part of their relationship. The LDVAG remains in remission and if you would like to be part of getting it going again, contact Southern Women's on 8384 9555.

Child & Adolescent Family Violence Action Group

NEW MEMBERS NEEDED! 1st Tuesday of every month, 1-3pm, Anglicare, 197 South Rd Morphett Vale, Ph: 8392 3100 for more information.

Southern Domestic Violence Action Group

New members always welcome! We meet on the 2nd Wednesday of every month from 10am – 12.30pm at Family Relationship Centre, 38 Beach Rd, Christies Beach. Come and join us and take action against Domestic and Family Violence! Phone 8384 9555 for further information.

FAMILY COURT POSTCARDS

The SDVAG is developing bookmarks and postcards to provide information about women's and children's rights in the family court. We are seeking feedback and ideas from community members, so if you would like to be involved, please contact Mandy on

8384 9555





Shared Parenting & the Domestic Violence Experience - Myths & Realities under the Family Law Act

The Southern Domestic Violence Action Group is holding a legal forum for community women and workers to talk about the myths and realities of shared parenting laws and the impact on women and children experiencing DV. The forum will explore the shared parenting issues faced by women and children, clarify the family law changes and we will hear from women who have experienced the devastating impact of shared care arrangements after separation from DV. The forum will also offer strategies to support women and children going through the court process and provide valuable resources from a range of services.

Date: Tuesday 28th July 9.30am – 3.30pm. Hopgood Theatre Foyer, Ramsay Place, Noarlunga Centre. For bookings phone Southern Women's on 8384 9555.

LEFT OR RIGHT

I weigh things, I contemplate
Which way do I go, left or right
My head spins, left or right
Which choice, weight up the pros and cons
Seek help, make up your own mind
Take risks
Left or right



Useful Websites

Australian Domestic Violence Clearinghouse
www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au

Domestic Violence Resource Centre
www.dvrc.org.au/links.html

Office for Women
www.pcw.officeforwomen.sa.gov.au

Adolescent Violence
www.eddiegallagher.id.au

Non English Speaking DV Info
www.nesbdvinfo.com.au

Men Stopping Violence
www.whiteribbonday.org.au



For more information please phone 8384 9555. Thank you to the SDVAG newsletter group and to the special women who have shared their stories with us for the benefit of other women experiencing domestic violence.



Star Club

A therapeutic group for kids aged 5-8 years and their mums who have experienced domestic violence and family separation.



Due to low numbers the group will not be offered this term, but should you be interested in finding out about future groups please contact: **Relationships Australia on 8377 5400.**

Membership

ABN: 33 467 685 846

New member Renewal

Membership is renewable annually

Name: _____

Organisation: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Mobile: _____

Email: _____

Email me my newsletters

Confidentiality

I may be contacted by phone

I may be contacted by mail

No contact whatsoever please

Community membership \$5

Organisational membership \$30

Donation \$ _____

Cheques or money orders can be made payable to Southern Domestic Violence Action Group Inc. This form becomes a tax invoice when you make your payment. Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.