

No-one need live in fear

Southern Domestic Violence *Action* Group



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Taking and reporting on action against violence is at the heart of the Southern DVAG as the following pages attest....

Issue 30:
Winter 2011



Southern Domestic Violence Action Group (SDVAG)

Meets 2nd Wednesday of every month

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

From 10am – 12:30pm

Welcome to the Winter Issue of the Southern Domestic Violence Action Group's Newsletter!

STOP
VIOLENCE
AGAINST
WOMEN

Inside this issue...

- De-Myth-Defied Art Exhibition
- Reclaiming Safety in the Community
- Writing, Film, Book reviews Stories...
- DVAG News
- Useful websites
- DVAG membership



Strengthening Communities

After months of consultation and conversations with individuals, groups and communities, Strengthening Communities, as part of its' Domestic Violence Myth Buster Sticker Project is proud to invite you to ...

De-MYTH-Defied!



Onkaparinga Collaborative Approach

to the Prevention of Domestic Violence & Indigenous Family Violence

SUPPORTED BY:

ONKAPARINGA



Hackham West Children's Centre
And
O'Sullivan's Beach Children's Centre

COMMUNITY RELATIONS
VIOLENCE

AGATHAS CAFE
Pt Northington

FREERANGE
FUTURE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT
of South Australia
31 1031

Special thanks to the project working party: Southern Women's, Hackham West Children's Centre, Onkaparinga Council, SAPOL, Deb - Community Woman & Ninko... and to all the participants in the focus groups who contributed their voice to this work.

De-Myth-Defied Community Art Exhibition

No-One Need Live In Fear – Winter 2011

Thank you to all who contributed to the issue and Amanda Rishworth, MP (Member for Kingston) for the printing.

Reclaiming Safety



SPH-Southern Women's

RECLAIMING SAFETY GROUP

In term 2, Southern Women's ran an 8 week "Reclaiming Safety Group" in partnership with Yin Personal Safety Solutions for women who have been subjected to violence and abuse. Women were invited to attend if they felt that:

... how you feel within yourself and your everyday life has been affected by your experiences of being subjected to violence or abuse

... have you dealt with the initial crisis and feel like there is still more that you could do to get back to your sense of being in charge of your life

... would you like to have the chance to develop or strengthen skills around claiming space in everyday life.

Following is an excerpt of one of the women participant's story of her experience of the group:

Why every woman should do "Reclaiming Personal Safety"



It is unfortunate but a reality of today that women are targeted both emotionally and physically due to their vulnerabilities. Because of this I feel every woman should do the "Reclaiming Personal Safety" course. Before this course my confidence & self esteem was low, I had trouble saying "No" to people, I wasn't assertive, I felt anxious in large shopping centres and had no sense of self worth.

I was attacked inside a shopping centre by a stranger in full daylight and surrounded by people. Apart from the fact nobody help me, I was also in shock and did not retaliate the way that I would have liked. It's not something you expect to happen in broad daylight with people all around in close proximity. So if it happens you don't always react the way you think you would. I was also shocked at the way the police interviewer handled it by making comments such as, "I should take it as a compliment that he had singled me out" – WHAT, I thought?? I never wanted to be in that situation again feeling helpless and not taken seriously by authorities.

Doing this course at Southern Women's has given me the following skills:

- How to get out of situations using psychology
- How to get out of situations using self protection/defence methods

- How to help others without putting myself at risk
- Choice of when to choose my physical & psychological battles
- Assertiveness
- Walking confidently so you are not singled out
- Protecting my personal space

But this course has taught me so much more about my inner strengths and that you don't need to be physically strong to physically defend yourself. It also highlighted that I have just as many rights as anyone else and that I should not put myself second anymore. Now I say "No" and I Ask for what I want. This has given me a new found confidence and assertiveness which in return has given me a new sense of freedom. I am also no longer anxious in shopping centres.

This is just one little example where in reality this course has effected many areas of my life and will continue to help me. Many thanks to Sharon & Evelyn for the Journey!

De-MYTH-Defied!

Busting the myths around Domestic Violence sticker project. After months of consultation and conversations with individuals, groups and communities, Strengthening Communities planned, developed & held an Art Exhibition showing the creating and the thinking around Domestic Violence and the Myths surrounding it.... Below are some examples of the artwork which were a part of the exhibition. From this, we will be developing a range of Stickers which will challenge some of the myths around Domestic Violence.



In the Community...

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?

During school term: Thursdays 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.**

Southern Domestic Violence Service

Supporting women and children who are living with or escaping DV, with short or medium term supported accommodation. **Ph: 8382 0066**

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 Family Connections. 72 Collins Parade, Hackham Ph: 8186 6944**



No-One Need Live In Fear—The Purple Booklet, Edition 5 2007. Domestic Violence Information & Resources. **Available from Southern Women's on 8384 9555.**

Nurturing Corner...

Looking after yourself....

- Focus on your **breathing**; breathing in, breathing out.....,
- **Flowers**; go outside and choose a nicely scented flower and breathe the fragrance.....



Domestic violence is a leading contributor to homelessness for women & children in Australia. Staying Home Staying Safe is aimed at assisting these families to stay in their own homes instead, by increasing the physical security of their home.



Eligibility:

- Women (with or without children)
- At risk of homelessness
- As a result of domestic violence
- Living in a home that could be made safer by the addition of physical security measures.
- Wanting to live without the violent person.

What we provide:

- Home safety audit
- Security recommendations tailored to the client's situation.
- Brokering the security installations.
- Risk assessment and safety planning
- Linkages to community support services.

Security We May Utilise Includes:

- Duress phones – landline based and mobile
 - Security screens
 - Sensor lights
 - Deadlocks
 - Peepholes
 - Personal alarms

Staying Home Staying Safe is the DV Home Safety Package program of Victim Support Service, funded by the Department of Families and Communities in partnership with the Attorney General's Department. Thanks also to the Commissioner for Victim's Rights for his support.

For more information contact:

Victim Support Service on: 8231 5626

COALITION OF DVAG STATEWIDE CONFERENCE, 2011!

SDVAG is looking for members who want to be part of the organising team for the State Conference next year. Contact Bernie Millburn on 8326 6644



The Verbally Abusive Relationship: How to recognize it and how to respond.

By Patricia Evans Adams Media circa \$20



If you thought that verbal abuse consisted of yelling and screaming at you then Patricia Evans will get you re-thinking about what verbal abuse really is. This book lists 15 categories of ways of speaking that Patricia has identified as verbal abuse. The author recognises how words can perpetuate the "power over", a core issue with those who abuse their loved ones. Some categories are instantly recognisable as abuse, such as name calling, abusive anger and threatening words. But if you didn't know that withholding love and emotional attachment, as evidenced in the behaviour of sulking, is abuse, then this book is for you. By using powerful examples and written in "easy-to-digest" language this book caters to all women, and some men, who often feel confused after a verbal interaction with their partner.

If the following sounds familiar to you, then the Verbally Abusive Relationship is a must read: "Verbal abuse is a kind of battering which doesn't leave evidence. It can be just as painful and recovery can take much longer. The victim of abuse lives in a gradually confusing realm. In public she is with one man, in private he may become another. Subtle diminishing or angry outbursts, cool indifference, or one-upmanship, witty sarcasm or silent withholding, manipulative coercion or unreasonable demands are common occurrence. They are, however, cloaked in a "what's wrong with you, making a big thing out of nothing" attitude & many other forms of denial."

FILM REVIEW : MAD BASTARDS

Brendan Fletcher's debut feature film, with music from the Pigram brothers.



When I went to see this movie all I knew was it was Australian and set in the Kimberley region, so it came as a surprise when I realised it was about men's violence. More specifically absent fathers, violent fathers, and the effect on young men. The actors are indigenous, and I would not presume to comment on indigenous violence, but I believe the film speaks to all men. The violent scenes can be confronting but at times during the film I felt emotionally touched for it found and portrayed the humanness within the characters. Brendan Fletcher did not try to arrive at any simplistic answers to the issues but it is not a bleak film, and left me with a feeling of hope and healing. A thoroughly satisfying film, one I would recommend.
B. Millburn

A Community Woman's writing on Challenging Community Attitudes



So, really, why doesn't she leave?

How many times do we hear this when faced with the story of a woman whose partner treats her bad. What has struck me is the amount of responsibility this question puts on the person who is receiving the abuse. While we ask ourselves, "Why does she put up with it?" or, "Why does she stay?", nobody pays attention to what he is doing. The real question should be, "Why Doesn't HE Leave?" Seriously, why does he stay if he hates his partner so much he has to yell at her, call her names, tell her that he hates her, puts his fist through a wall, throw a piece of furniture, kick the dog, or punch, hit, shove or choke her. Why, on earth, is he still there?

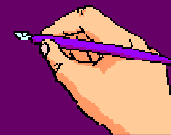
But this question is rarely posed in everyday conversations. We are so busy looking at the responsibility of the woman the question of why he's being abusive is not confronted and analysed. If there are children in the relationship the question "Why does she stay?" has a double burden of responsibility. Not only is the woman viewed negatively for her inaction but she's responsible for someone else's actions towards the children, and she's responsible for stopping it too.

This type of attitude is pervasive throughout our society, even globally. There are a number of dynamics at play, but one I will discuss is enculturation. We are so used to hearing stories and seeing images of men committing violence that we don't naturally think to question it. Everyday in newspapers and on television we are bombarded with stories and images of war which consist of men holding a weapon, or firing off missiles. Then there's gang related shootings, bikie gang violence, public stabbings, armed bank robberies which show images of a cloaked male brandishing a rifle or gun. Images and notions of male violence are on our internet sites, in movies and throughout our video games. Each image and notion is upheld and supported through various mediums which we are exposed to each day. So, when we hear of a story of a friend of a friend who had her arm broken by her husband, we wonder, "Why does she stay?" Not, "Why on earth is he doing that?"

It also works the opposite way as well. TV and newspaper images of women and children distressed, injured or killed when caught in a war zone have become the norm when reports of atrocities reach us. It's as though the casualties of women and children are a trophy image. We've become so used to seeing this that it no longer stirs up our emotions. In other words, we are encultured to accept that men behave violently and that women (and children) will be the casualties. I propose that is why society automatically asks "Why does she stay?", without a second thought. It is because we have been force-fed to believe that the only escape from violence is to run away. And while we're running the question of who is responsible is not given the priority that it should. L. Cresswell



A Community Woman's writing on Domestic Violence...



"The mystery of staying"

As a survivor of a long-term verbally and emotionally abusive marriage, and four years into that survival, I have often asked myself the perplexing question - "Why do I still at times miss the man who inflicted so much emotional pain on me?"

He never hurt me physically in any way, although he did at times smash and destroy our property. Perhaps, I have reasoned, because there were never any physical blows, he was not as 'bad' as those men who beat their wives and girlfriends. Surely my situation was only 'minor' in comparison and therefore more forgivable. Physical harming of another, especially a woman by a man, at one time rated with me as the ultimate extreme on the measuring scale of abuse.

Not so I have come to learn, after much research into this relatively new phenomena. Assault to a woman's emotional and psychological being is, in fact, far more damaging to her than physical blows. You cannot see the wounds. You cannot front up to the Accident and Emergency Department and ask for treatment for your wounded spirit. You carry on with your everyday life, with your unseen wounds open and weeping, and over time they become more and more painful. Your inner reality diminishes as you try harder and harder to keep things sweet between you and your partner. You continue to play your part in the dance of insanity that living with an abusive man is. Strangely though, you hardly realise what is happening. Life becomes all about him.

So back to my original question - "Why when it is all over and he is no longer in my life do I still at times long to be with him, and why do I still feel love for him? The answer lies, I have come to believe, in that crazy, see-saw emotional state in which we spend our lives with controlling, angry men.

If he was constantly behaving as Mr Hyde (the angry, abusive man) no woman would tolerate him for second. Dr Jekyll (the charming, sweet man we fell in love with) has to be around in order to keep the "love" connection intact. Mr Hyde is always so sorry after one of his outbursts. He vows, often with great remorse, that he will never do what he did again. You are such a wonderful woman for putting up with him etc,etc. Once he has gained the control he is after, Dr Jekyll can return. "Love" blooms once again and we as women feel safe, and needed. We love our troubled man and we feel it is up to us to help him to not have to go through another temper tantrum. We will do all we can to prevent it from happening again.

The trap then gets deeper and deeper, and if children are involved it becomes more and more complex. The little ones need both parents involvement in order to be healthy and whole, don't they? How can I subject them to the trauma of a broken home? And so the drama continues.

It is well documented that it is extremely difficult for a woman to leave an abusive relationship. There are various reasons for this, not least of these is the one I have described. I was married for more than three decades.

Between his angry outbursts my husband was funny, affectionate, charming and often seemingly highly concerned about his erratic behaviour. Above all he frequently told me he loved me. I was the embodiment of his "ideal woman". I believed him when he told me how sorry he was for hurting me and our children. However, as we all know actions speak louder than words, and his behaviour often contradicted what came out of his mouth.

I often felt alone and unsupported, unaffirmed, inadequate, crazy, "needy" and dumb. His crumbs of affection were like a gift of precious jewels in an otherwise bleak life. And I believed that somewhere inside him there was a good man trying to get out.

Over the three decades I was with him I became deeply bonded with my abuser. It became my life quest to help him heal. My brain is wired to remember the good times, the nice man. Even though at the end of our marriage he blamed me for all our problems within it I still fight at times the desire to reconnect with him. We still have unfinished business between us but I have come to understand that it is nobody's business but his. His anger belongs to him. Knowing this keeps me where I need to be - away from him.

Myth: A woman can easily leave a violent relationship.

FACT: A woman doesn't easily leave a relationship when:

+She loves him +There are children who love him + She feels she shouldn't deprive the child(ren) of their father + There's nowhere safe to go + She thinks she'll be all alone + She believes she won't be able to cope on her own + She knows he'll follow her & maybe hurt her & the kids.



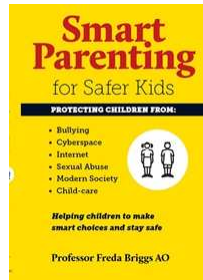


“Smart Parenting for Safer Kids” by Professor Freda Briggs AO. A new book “helping children to make smart choices and stay safe!” The memory of sexual abuse in childhood never leaves its victims. Likewise, the memory of bullying never goes away. Advances in technology are making our children more vulnerable to both. Professor Briggs, an expert in child protection, draws on a lifetime of research and practical experience to assist with today’s parenting issues.

In Smart Parenting for Safer Kids parents will learn to:

- +Recognise the dangers to children in modern Western society
- + Build stronger kids & help them make smart choices
- + Choose safe, high-quality childcare & child minders
- + Safeguard children in potentially dangerous situations, including bullying, cyberspace & the internet
- + Protect against child sexual abuse
- + Parent through adolescence
- + Choose safe student exchanges.

Smart Parenting for Safer Kids will be available for sale in the Relationships Australia Bookshop. www.rabooks.com.au



WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!!!

The **Child & Adolescent Family Violence Action Group** and the **Parent & Carer’s Support Group** have been experiencing a decline in numbers both of community members and agency representatives. These two very important groups need the support of agency staff and community members to keep going! If you can help out, please contact Rob at Woodcroft Community Centre on 83840072 Or email: : robswa@onkaparinga.sa.gov.au

Child & Adolescent Family Violence Action Group

1st Tuesday of alternate even months Anglicare, from 1pm -3pm at 197 South Rd Morphett Vale, Ph: **8392 3100** for more information.

Action Groups!

The **Lesbian Domestic Violence Action Group** is looking for members! Women who are interested can contact Sharon or Violet at Southern Women’s for more information. Ph: 8384 9555

The Lesbian DVAG was established to use positive action to raise awareness about issues facing lesbians, their children & networks, when abuse is part of their relationship.



Thank you to the SDVAG for contributions to this newsletter. For more information or to provide feedback please phone 8384 9555



Emergency Numbers

- Emergency: 000
- Police: 131 444
- DV Helpline: 1800 800 098
- DV Crisis Service : 1300 782 200
- Crisis Care weekends, nights: 131 611
- Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800
- Crisis Care: 131 611
- Child & Youth Health Parent Helpline: 8303 1555

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.