

Wednesday, 10 May 2017

Queensland families to benefit from a first in domestic violence law training

In a Queensland first, families who have experienced domestic violence will soon benefit from family, domestic violence and child protection law workshops for refuge workers.

The 'Advocating Accurately' two day workshop aims to give workers in family and domestic violence refuges an understanding of legal issues that will enable them to better help families at refuges navigate the complex family and domestic violence legal system.

According to **yourtown's** Specialist Accommodation Manager Ann Chandra, refuge workers play a key role in supporting women and their families who arrive at a refuge not only overwhelmed and traumatised by their situation, but with no idea of how to deal with legal issues they now face.

"Refuge workers are often the first point of contact that women experiencing domestic violence will speak to regarding legal concerns," Ms Chandra said.

"**yourtown** with the Combined Women's Refuge Group (CWRG) identified a need to better equip workers with the information needed to accurately respond to what is obviously a very complex and worrying issue for those who come to the refuge for help.

"While it's recognised that workers are not legal experts, the newly created 'Advocating Accurately' workshop will enable refuge workers to give their clients the crucial support needed to help them understand and manage legal issues."

Research conducted by the Specialist Homeless Service Data Collection, Child Protection Australia and Price Waterhouse Coopers shows domestic or family violence against women is the single largest driver of homelessness for women, a common factor in child protection notifications and results in a police call-out on average once every two minutes across the country.

The workshop will be delivered by representatives from the Women's Legal Service, Queensland, along with other legal experts. Topics covered will include Court processes, explanations of domestic violence orders, intersection of family law, along with immigration law and domestic violence, property settlements and domestic and family violence and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Funded by the Queensland Community Foundation, the workshop will take place from 9-10 May at the Beenleigh Police Citizens Youth Club, Queensland.

yourtown operates a family violence refuge in Southeast Queensland (SEQ) which provides short-term accommodation and support to women and their children who have been affected by domestic and family violence (DFV).

If you or anyone you know is experiencing domestic or family violence, contact DV Connect 1800 811 811, 1800 RESPECT or Parentline (QLD & NT) 1300 30 1300.

If you are concerned about someone you know who may be experiencing domestic or family violence 1800 RESPECT and DV connect have a raft of resources available to assist in identify the signs and advice on how best to support them.

Signs include:

- They seem afraid of their partner
- They are very anxious to please them
- They often talk about their partner being jealous or bad tempered
- They seem anxious or no longer trust their own judgement
- They become isolated from friends or family

How to support someone experiencing domestic or family violence:

- Listen without interruption or judgement
- Focus on support without telling them what to do
- Take concerns seriously and help explore options
- Don't minimise the behaviour or say anything that can make it sound like they are to blame
- Respect their decisions, even if you don't agree with them and do not make decisions without their permission

For more information:

1800 RESPECT website: <https://www.1800respect.org.au/>

DV Connect website: <http://www.dvconnect.org/>

ENDS

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ABOUT yourtown

yourtown is a charity with services young people can access to find jobs, learn skills, become great parents and live safer, happier lives. For over 55 years, we've been tackling the issues impacting young people in Australia - like mental health and unemployment, and taking on issues like family and domestic violence. See www.yourtown.com.au for more about **yourtown**.