



Co-ordinated Community Response to Domestic and Family Violence Mackay

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESPONSE GROUP

E-BULLETIN

JULY 2012

Welcome to our first bulletin which is designed to tell you about the progress made in growing a co-ordinated community response to domestic and family violence in Mackay.

Since September 2010 a group of us have worked together, first with a survey to verify the need, then with planning and actions to implement strategies that will encourage co-operation between organisation and workers. In November 2011 we invited people from as many organisations as we could find contacts for, to come to a meeting where we explained the process and the advantages of working together, for our respective service users.

Our model is based on that used by the Gold Coast DV Prevention Centre. Betty Taylor, who previously managed the Gold Coast DV service, came to Mackay in March to discuss with us how they achieved their integrated response. Their aims - to enhance the safety of women and their children; to hold perpetrators accountable, and to provide a multi agency response, resulted in the formation of several sub groups. After discussion at the public meeting, we decided to do the same. We started sub-groups concerned with children, with women, with men, with the legal process and one to work on policies and procedures. We also set up a steering committee to ensure the process continued, with input from each of the sub-groups.

Since then, the sub-groups have met regularly to work on projects and issues of importance to them. For instance, the men's sub-group's first area of concern was a men's perpetrator program. Discussion showed that it would take some time to fund, staff and monitor such a program, so they started with a smaller project of supplying information to respondents at the local DV court.

One benefit of the sub-group model is that of information sharing. The "If Only" perpetrator program run by Centacare is currently being delivered, and the women's sub group has highlighted the crisis in finding accommodation for women leaving DFV situations. The Policy and Procedures group has written templates for Memoranda of Understanding, and to date these have been agreed with police and with the "If Only" program.

Betty returned to Mackay earlier this year to conduct accredited units of training to those interested in working with people affected by DV. These were "Recognise and Respond appropriately to DFV", "Work with Users of Violence to Effect Change", and "Provide Crisis Intervention to support those Experiencing DFV".

Our next tasks include evaluating what we have done so far, and how this has been beneficial to the community. We are still working on expanding the scope of services involved in the response, and this bulletin is designed to inform and encourage other areas within the community and statutory agencies to be a part of this response.

For more information, or to link in to any of these subgroups,

ring DVRS on 4957 3888, or email us at admin@domesticviolenceservice.com.au

