

Thursday 11 August 2022

Everyone deserves to be Safe at Home

Family violence continues to be the leading driver of homelessness for women, with long lasting ongoing impacts often experienced. The Centre for Non-Violence has influenced the development of Safe at Home policy and practice and delivery of Safe at Home programs, to increase the safety, stability, and recovery of family violence victim/survivors.

Leaving violence often results in women and children being removed from their homes and disconnected from community and support networks, increasing their ongoing risk of homelessness, poverty, and instability. Safe at Home provides essential services, resources, advocacy, and support for women and children to remain safely and securely within their homes, connected within their community family, friends, schools, education, and employment and perpetrators of violence within view.

Family Safety Victoria has responded to the need for better understanding about whether Safe at Home approaches lead to longer term safety in existing homes, or homes of choice. Funding under the Family Violence Research Program 2021-2024 will allow for a significant research project to examine this as well as other factors impacting on the success of the approach, including economic security, legal, policing, policy, and system responses. A key focus of the research will be developing an informed evidence base and evaluating women's experiences in accessing Personal Safety Initiatives (PSI's) is essential in strengthening system responses and increasing safety and recovery for women and children.

The 'Safe at Home: Experience, Barriers, and Access' (SHEBA) project will create a comprehensive evidence base, to strengthen the Victorian response to family violence, in both policy and practice.

Sector policy and practice experts and women with lived experience of family violence will be invited to participate in the research through interviews. Participants will be asked about the effectiveness of PSIs, and other strategies designed to help women and children stay safely in their homes, and safety and accountability responses when the perpetrator leaves or is removed from the home.

The research will be undertaken ethically, professionally, and sensitively, particularly with women who experience increased marginalisation, complexity and/or risk, being supported during, before and after interviews partner agencies and the research team. The project will also look at the implications of the program in times of disaster and emergencies. Findings from the project will be accessible to those working in the family violence sector.

A broad cross section of expertise will underpin the project, comprising the University of Melbourne, University of NSW, McAuley Community Services for Women, Good Shepherd Family Services, InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence, the Centre for Non-Violence, and the WEAVERs (Women and their children who have Experienced Abuse and Violence: Researchers and advisors).

CNV is excited to be part of this important research initiative in contributing rural and regional women's experiences to the evidence base and strengthening safe and accountable family violence service and system responses.

Yvette Jaczina Executive Manager of Programs and Services said:

"CNV brings to this project the opportunity to amplify the voices of women and children in rural and regional areas and understand what creates safety and security for them".

"CNV has been delivering Safe at Home approaches for many years, including the Personal Safety Initiative. This project gives us the chance to build on our understanding of what is effective and results in long term better outcomes for women and children".

"Safe at Home approaches give the opportunity for women and children remain in a familiar environment, connected to their community, their schools, families, and workplaces, where it is safe to do so. This provides a stronger foundation for a safe and financially secure future".

For further information or media comment, please contact: Yvette Jaczina M: 0447 628 523 or contact 54 30 3000

Support and contact numbers: Centre for Non-Violence covers the Loddon region – which includes the City of Greater Bendigo and the Central Goldfields, Mt Alexander, Macedon Ranges, Loddon, and Campaspe shires. Centre for Non-Violence can be contacted on 1800 884 292 or information, visit: www.cnv.org.au/we-are-here-to-help

**Other supports: Safe Steps 24-hour family violence crisis response 1800 015 188 | Men's Referral Service 1300 766 491
In an emergency, call 000**