

Media release: 29 November 2011

## Structured programs can reduce family violence

A successful Vietnamese-speaking men and family violence group run in Melbourne's northwest region in 2011 could pave the way for future programs that address the needs of culturally diverse communities.

The program was run by Relationships Australia Victoria through its Sunshine Centre, with a grant from the Legal Services Board Grants Program.

The Centre runs entry level, behaviour change and ongoing mentor groups for men who have been violent and controlling towards family members.

It managed the Vietnamese-speaking men and family violence program in partnership with a reference group including Kildonan Uniting Care, Djerriwarrh Health Services, inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence, the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association, the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture, and No to Violence Male Family Violence Prevention Association.

The Vietnamese-speaking group was run over 15 weeks from RAV's Sunshine Centre premises in the Harvester Centre, Devonshire Road. It involved men between the ages of 22 and 43, who were mostly referred by the courts or government agencies. Working with the men's partners was an important element of the program.

Centre Manager, Ms Robyn Mclvor, said an evaluation of the program demonstrated it was possible to run men's behaviour change for specific cultural groups in their own language.

She said there already had been encouragement from referral sources to develop groups for Indian, Arabic-speaking and African men.

"Government bodies that fund family violence work need to recognise that specific language speaking groups would enable men from other cultures to embrace behavioural change and move towards non-violent behaviour."

**Attn editors:** Ms Mclvor will present the findings of the group's evaluation at the Convention Centre, Victoria University, 460 Ballarat Road, Sunshine, on Thursday 1 December at 10am.

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