

MEDIA RELEASE

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Behaviour change the key to preventing family violence

Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV) urges men who have committed family violence to take responsibility for their actions and make genuine attempts to change their behaviour.

Speaking in support of White Ribbon Day, RAV Cranbourne Centre Manager, Mario Avice, says saying sorry is not nearly enough and does not necessarily prevent violence from happening again.

“Changing behaviour is not simply a matter of ‘turning over a new leaf’. Permanent change may arise from men being engaged in taking responsibility for their destructive behavioural patterns and making different choices.”

Mr Avice says family violence is a complex issue. It is not isolated to physical abuse, but covers a range of other behaviours including emotional, verbal and financial abuse. The ‘cycle of violence’ can include long periods of remorse and seemingly good behaviour or ‘honeymoon periods’ before further outbreaks occur.

“Family violence in any form is unacceptable in our community,” he says.

More than 33 per cent of women from a cross-section of socio-economic backgrounds are affected by family violence at some time in their lives. While many suffer in silence, they often do not want their relationship to end, just the violence.

“Living with it is like being on a roller coaster ride, which causes confusion and anxiety and can lead to a range of reactions such as depression, medical disorders and drug and alcohol abuse. Family violence leaves children confused, angry, sad and frightened.”

Mr Avice says RAV encourages men who use family violence – regardless of profile or background – to seek professional help. There are no quick fixes.

“We support men’s behaviour change through group work at our counselling centres in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. RAV also offers a range of services to support the safety of women and children in relationships where violence is present.”

Mr Avice says that left unaddressed, family violence will continue to be responsible for long term family suffering in our communities.

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