

Raising awareness

November 25 marks both White Ribbon Day and the first day in the 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women.

The aim of these days is to raise community consciousness about domestic violence and violence against women. These campaigns also inform and educate women about domestic violence, and the services that can assist and support them if they are living with domestic violence. It may also, at times, give a voice to women who might not ordinarily have one.

Domestic violence is any type of abusive behaviour by one person that attempts to gain and maintain control and/or power over the other. Statistically, domestic violence is most often perpetrated by men against

women, yet it can involve same sex couples, and people in other forms of relationships i.e. child/parent, siblings and non blood relations etc.

Domestic violence can take many forms including physical assault, sexual assault, emotional and verbal abuse, spiritual abuse, social control and financial control. Not all domestic violence is physical, and the effects of emotional and verbal abuse on women and children is often profound and deep. Women often talk about living their lives 'walking on eggshells' with little or no power and control in their own lives. In terms of physical violence, it is estimated that around 50 per cent of all assaults reported to police are domestic violence assaults. And yet is common

knowledge that most domestic violence goes unreported.

As a community, we need to be aware of domestic violence and the often devastating effects it can have on women and children. We must say no to violence. If you are experiencing any form of physical violence, coercion or control in your life, you don't need to put up with it, there are services and supports in the Blue Mountains that can assist and support you to move forward in your life.

If you need assistance with ADVOs, domestic violence advocacy, assistance at court or referral to other support services, please contact the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service at The Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal centre on 4782-4155.

Safety of children

The Blue Mountains Women's Health Centre sees many women who have been, or are being, abused and assaulted by their partners or ex-partners.

They may attend for counselling, in a crisis, or for a medical appointment due to injuries sustained in a physical or sexual assault.

While these women are the centre's clients, the community needs to remain alert to the effects the violent behaviour is having on their children. Often, women will remain living with a violent partner because of the children; because they love their dad. However, women will also make the decision to separate because of the children; because of the effects his violence is having on them.

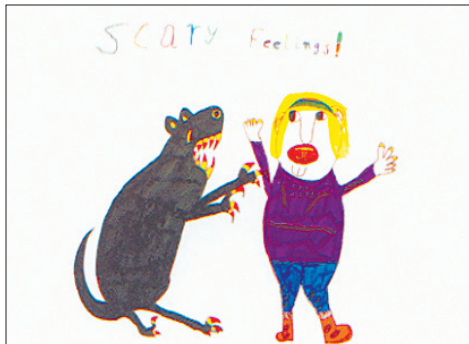
Children don't have to 'witness' domestic violence to be affected by it. Women will routinely work hard to protect their children from direct and indirect abuse. Nevertheless, children can be victims of emotional and psychological trauma by living in a climate of fear and intimidation. Even tiny babies are alert to tension and fear in their mothers.

Some of the effects on children and young people of being exposed to domestic violence are anxiety, sleep problems, avoidance, speech problems, aggression, school difficulties, decreased self-confidence and running away or homelessness.

This is why the centre's focus is on the safety of women and their children. Their emotional safety is just as important as their physical safety. Emotional scars take longer to heal. The centre calls on legal and community resources and is able to concentrate on safety planning as well as healing from the effects of the abuse. Adults and children can have amazing resilience and strength in the face of violence and can move forward in their lives with timely understanding, protection and support.



A happy house: Jane, nine-years-old, drew a picture of the ideal home for her. In this place, she would be cared for and supported. Nothing bad could happen to her. Jane had watched her mother beaten by her father and hospitalised on three separate occasions. A happy house is a safe one. Source: Australian Childhood Foundation collection.



Scary feelings: Mitchell witnessed long-term domestic violence between his parents. He continues to be afraid of his father's return to the family. Mitchell's explanation about his drawing is that "sometimes I have been scared that I will get hurt by a monster just like the person in the drawing". This art work arose out of the Australian Childhood Foundation's work with abused children.

BLUE MOUNTAINS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FORUM

Integrating Services for DV Response

This forum will focus on developing a more integrated response and greater collaboration between local organisations, with the aim of improving outcomes and service for those impacted by Domestic and Family Violence.

DATE: Tuesday 25th November
TIME: 9am - 1pm

VENUE: Katoomba Youth Hostel
207 Katoomba St, Katoomba

Ph 4782 9158 to register

Morning tea provided

AN INITIATIVE OF THE COALITION AGAINST VIOLENCE AND ABUSE CAVA

The 1 x 10 ad
BM1613094 for
BLACKHEATH
AREA NEIGH-
BOURHOOD CE is
missing.

 **Rotary shares:**
Fellowship and fun
Central Blue Mountains: 4757 4695



is a service that supports children and families connect to their community.

Contact Lyn 4758 6811 to find out more. Services auspiced by MOCS.

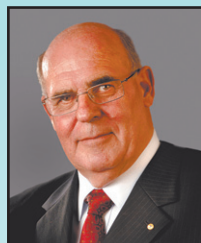
- > Blue Mountains Occasional Child Care Services (BMOCCS) 0412 932 801
 - > Mountains Mobile Minders (MMM) 4758 6833
 - > Parenting Young 4758 6844
 - > Mid Mountains Happenings Project (formerly Hazo Happenings) 4758 6811
- PROUD SUPPORTER OF WHITE RIBBON DAY**



Blue Mountains Family Support Service

says
"NO"

to violence against women, girls & families.



Phil Koperberg

Member for Blue Mountains

Proud to support
"WHITE RIBBON DAY"

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Springwood

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Fax: 4751-1245

bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au



Supports White Ribbon Day 2008

Violence is a crime and benefits no-one. Let's all speak up and act for safe & respectful relationships

Phone 4782 1117

Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre
Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service

Supporting 16 Days of Activism and White Ribbon Day 2008

Working together to eliminate violence against women and children in our community

For free legal advice and domestic violence advocacy call 4782-4155 or 1300 363-967



BOB DEBUS MP

Federal Member for Macquarie & White Ribbon Day Ambassador

Proud to support this great initiative

Ph 1300 550 605

Level 1, 98 Bathurst Road, Katoomba

email: bob.debus.mp@aph.gov.au

Blue Mountains Women's Health Centre supports the 16 Days of Action Against Violence towards Women and Girls

"Women's health provided by women for women"

We provide counselling, women's health clinics, groups and complementary health therapies.



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS NEVER OK!

For more information call us on 4782-5133