



STRONGER FAMILIES AND
COMMUNITIES
FORUM
"EMPOWERING FAMILIES
AND COMMUNITIES TO
PREVENT DFV"

25 Aug 2018

Prepared By:
SCH and CLG

**Stronger Families and Communities Forum:
Empowering families and communities to
prevent domestic and family violence**

25 August 2018

Domestic and Family Violence

Time: 9:30 – 3pm

Venue: BMC, Woolloongabba

The Forum attended by 58 participants representing community groups, service providers, and government agencies. Those from community groups represented African, Asian and Middle Eastern backgrounds.

The structure of the Forum included :

- A presentation by Steering Committee(Community conversation report) ;
- Presentation by leaders from the African, Asian and Middle Eastern backgrounds on how traditionally they were addressing domestic violence in their country of origin. Moreover, three case studies presented that highlighted the experience of DFV survivors, as well as developing action planning sessions.

Presentation by Steering Committee

Three Steering Committee members led the presentation.

The first presenter welcoming participants and the panel members on the CLG Chairperson outlined the objectives of the Forum.

Included:

1. Create awareness and a better understanding of DFV in new and emerging communities
2. Create more durable, resilient and healthy communities through the prevention of DFV in communities
3. Increase awareness of service providers like Police, Child Safety, DFV service providers and Justice System around culture, values, and religious beliefs of new and emerging communities around DFV
4. Encourage government agencies and service providers to partner with communities in designing actions plans to address DFV

Furthermore, the presenter discussed the significant work undertaken by members of CLG and SCH lead up to the Forum to provide participants with an overview of the finding of the report.

The second presenter highlighted the findings of the community conversation and the challenges that community members experience about DFV in the Australian context.

Along with other factors related to culture, lack of information has contributed significantly in family breakdowns due to the intervention of law enforcement agencies, such as Police, Courts and Child Safety.

The third presenter discussed the cultural background of new and emerging communities and the role played by friends, extended family members, neighbours, or trusted people such as elders, and community and religious leaders in resolving DFV through mediation/restorative practice. Additionally, the presenter gave an outline of strategies and

ideas that could help in tackling or preventing DFV. Moreover, the presenter highlighted the role that community and religious leaders play in their respective communities here in Australia in addressing family violence.

The panellists invited to participate in a discussion on some of the critical findings of the community conversations.

It included representatives' of:

1. ***QPS- Domestic and Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Unit;***
2. ***Immigrant Women's Support Service.***
3. ***Refugee and Immigrant Legal Services RAILS***
4. ***Team Leader - Continuing Settlement Services Multicultural Australia***

The feedback received from panellists were positive and constructive. The findings did not surprise the panellists. However, they were able to identify the increasing need for community education on what is DFV and what is emotional abuse, in particular at the early stages of settlement. Members of the panel think it would be good for communities to present to service providers about the finding on the report.

They commended the CLG and SCH for undertaking the community conversation around DFV and welcomed the opportunity to be part of the Forum that aimed at empowering families and communities to prevent DFV.

Sharing traditional ways of resolving DFV

There were four presentations regarding the conventional method of addressing domestic violence from African, Asian and Middle Eastern cultural perspective.

The presentations elaborated on how different communities with diverse cultural and religious compositions use to address family matters through mediation.

The presenters discussed the role played by family (e.g. parents, grandparents, extended family members) chiefs or village elders, tribal leaders, religious and community leaders. These mediators involve men as well as women.

The presenters highlighted that "disputants" can present their cases to mediators whom they trust and believe they will keep the matter confidential. Participants reported that the traditional way of addressing family violence or conflict works well in resolving cases. However, if one of the parties involved is not happy with the mediation process, then she/he has a choice to seek for new mediation team to look into the issues of dispute.

Sometimes DFV cases are escalated to authorities to address unresolved matters

through the justice system.

There were common themes that emerged from the presentations despite the diverse religious perspectives, such as Buddhism, Christianity, Hindu, Islam, Sikh.

The opportunity was excellent for the service providers and government agencies to hear from well-respected and articulate community leaders on how communities deal with issues of DFV in their communities.

Presentation of the Case Study

Three case studies shared with participants that illustrated the experience of domestic and family violence survivors.

Action planning sessions:

Participants were divided into four groups to brainstorm ideas and strategies that will help in developing Action Plans. To begin with, the facilitators asked participants to provide their views and a suggestion on how to work together to better:

- educate communities to prevent DFV
- address DFV using culture as a strength,

The outcomes from sessions outlined in the tables below

Proposed ideas to better educate communities to prevent DFV	
Themes	
Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Campaign with consistent messages using:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Seminars- TAFE- Schools- Religious Institutions- Service providers/Brochures- Inviting service providers- Using technology such as videos in various languages, community radio, social Media.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preventing DFV through education- a community campaign

Proposed ideas to better educate communities to prevent DFV	
Themes	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education is vital for prevention - from day 1 when people arrive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - domestic violence needs to be part of settlement education - educate them about a new culture and adopt to unique situation and circumstances
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Message should target those who are receptive, isolated people, and those experiencing language barriers through effective communication and role models.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Catholic Care' – South Sudanese response to FDV one-to-one and small group discussion. Intentionally start in men, then women, build trust - before bringing them together and minimise reactive cultural assumptions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities for men and women to adopt peaceful relationship strategies and cope/address experiences of the past • Good ways of building a family from own cultural perspective; • Methods of making respect during cultural adaption
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify what sort of education each community needs to:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ parents, ○ children - for the young generation to stop cycles of violence, ○ community leaders, to men + women
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine as to why people aren't attending DFV information sessions. E.g. confidentiality
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities for communities to access community spaces and facilities to organise periodic education sessions for their members
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do challenge male dominant 'freedom' not defined in the family - definition limits versus self-responsibility
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategies to work with the whole community - members, family, parents, and community elders. • Need government authorities for communications to support them - protects future children
Info session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible info session and integrate with community events
Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate community leaders (office bearers) about DFV, including priests and religious leaders. • Encourage service providers working with communities to educate them so that communities can make referrals.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community leaders and members need to be given education on how to maintain confidentiality and services. Service Providers need to do this.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • religious institutions to facilitate education sessions

Proposed ideas to better educate communities to prevent DFV	
Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom and collective responsibility concerning the ways people engage in family violence resolution • Creating a position for the community leader as educators in their relevant community groups. • Understand the legacy of cultural history/practice not to educate about violence but the root of assumptions that drive the violence • Men's group, conversation in the community about life challenges and managing change • Self-awareness training meets the root of the problem - root culture and the challenge of habits 'invisible behaviours.'
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider providing accredited training to Elders and community and religious leaders in domestic violence. • train and empower community leaders to deliver information sessions to members • Provide for community leaders and members training courses, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ parenting courses, ○ relationship courses, ○ mediation/conflict resolution courses. • A recognised qualification (IWSS- 2-day course Multicultural DV courses) - this provides tools to identify and respond
Service Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build understanding & trust between service providers & communities • support community leaders to take the role & responsibility of providing information about available services & Service providers
Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear around different state legislation and other parties exploiting the law to have power and control in the situation

Them	Proposed ideas to better address DFV using culture as a strength
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The root of inner dialogues • Emphasis on self-awareness and then laws etc. • De-personalised and in-direct/intentional ways people learn about self/others/collective responsibilities • Find the advantage and disadvantage of previous cultural parallel to learning/develop self-awareness
Recruit BSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit and train bicultural support workers to work in DFV services
Meeting space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist new and emerging communities to have access to community spaces and facilities.
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not losing culture: - Encourage new and emerging communities to maintain their lifestyle, as well as learn and understand other's culture • Understanding/ clarifying 'culture and law' obligation of community leaders and representatives understanding the positives in their learning - community leaders challenging stereotypes (e.g. what is the prevalent understanding of masculinity) • Working with community elders and services to promote/revive culture • Respect - draw on cultural ways of resolving DFV and use elders, but these elders need to be supported by Service providers. • Individual/ collective cultural responses Individual punishment/cooperative learning and community shame • Empower collective 'body-like' societies to understand cultural shifts/changes/responses when establishing their communities in individual-based organisations - finance and support ways for communities to internalise cultural shifts happening in settlement and intergenerational family raising • Draw on culture/religion (whatever is essential of people) using that as a tool to draw up. (Flexibility of approach to a 'consistent' message) • Self-awareness and legacy of cultural behaviours in invisible behaviour of lived experience
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use champions and role models for educating community members • Use culture to bring community and families together to inform and educate them about DFV rather than waiting for problems to emerge/escalate. • Educate communities, in particular leaders on how to solve DFV without exacerbating the situation.

Them	Proposed ideas to better address DFV using culture as a strength
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative reflection - film, theatre, sports. Processes - self-reflective body-based process. Storytelling (relevant narrative) - pause and reflective dialogue. Culturally responsive (in-direct education creatively).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The psychological root of the problem - deconstruct the story
Identify Elders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not to leave DFV up to Community Leaders only. Identify key elders and representatives that are wise to support those experiencing DFV / solve problems. Multiple people across communities in case of conflict of interest. Create a list
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Safe Haven - safe homes for men and women experiencing DFV
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to the Reference group to play their role effectively
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for men, e.g. men's shed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting family values
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide cultural awareness training to police,
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train service providers, including DV, connect, on how to support and work with new and emerging communities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Training opportunities for community leaders to educate their members and other mainstream about their culture and vice Versa.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a conducive atmosphere for families to sit together and solve the problems and if not resolved, take them to another community mediator - women and men in community mediators. It requires training of CL and elders
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training to the traditional mediators, elders, religious leaders and support

Action Plan developed

Action	Goal	Strategy	Outline
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preventing D&FV violence through education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop a community campaign with consistent messaging that reaches many levels of community using multiple strategies – "Domestic Violence its not our Culture!" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campaign would involve simple message with multiple approaches including – use of technology – creation of short videos for different languages and cultures; use of community radio; reinforcement by religious leaders in mosques, churches, temples; information at community events.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sending positive whole of family messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organising family friendly events which engage the whole family and offer support family values of respect and safety for everyone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> holding fun and engaging events which involve the whole family
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowering and preparing Community leaders to enact their role as mediators in ways which are safe for everyone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training for Community Leaders and Elders with culture as a strength 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> working with other service providers to develop and offer training to community leaders which helps to develop frameworks which hold cultural strength alongside understandings of Australian law, risk, confidentiality, conflict resolution. Equipping leaders with a toolkit of skills and resources.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modelling and Encouraging communities to aspire to safety and respect for all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and Developing Champions and Role Models in each community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop process to identify, elect, train and support Community Champions/Role models who will support the prevention of D&FV in their community
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educating CALD communities /creating awareness of D&FV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and Deliver training to community members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designing and delivering culturally appropriate training on D&FV to community members
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing lifeskills to support communities and prevent D&FV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using Indirect strategies eg. Games, movies, exercises, drop in spaces which support community members to develop life skills to prevent the use of violence in dealing with conflict and stresses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forming a focus group to research indirect strategies which support community members to build empathy, develop greater self awareness

7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalise and support Traditional community methods of addressing D&FV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing and supporting women's and men's groups; Training community connectors between law, service providers and community members 	
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage Community leaders/Reps in addressing D&FV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a list of key Elders in Communities supported by Service Providers to carry issues forward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop process to nominate, elect, train and support Community representatives in collaboration with service providers
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educating and equipping communities to better prevent D&FV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating training for community members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating education opportunities in collaboration with Service providers to build relationships which are respectful and which acknowledge both potential of traditional methods and complexity of forced migration experience
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure broad reach of education initiatives across community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and identify ways to increase access to education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exploring multiple approaches to providing access to education and information

Analysis	Issues Identified
<p>Several approaches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct – campaigning, educating, championing messages into the community Partnering and co-designing – utilising current resources and supports to strengthen and develop capacity building for traditional approaches and tailoring approaches around culture Indirect – using a variety of approaches to build broader capacity and lifeskills around gender roles, conflict resolution, intergenerational conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to address issues around understandings of causes of D&FV – ie the need for behavioural and attitudinal changes Balancing strengths of collectivist culture in addressing D&FV Vs need for confidentiality and safety How to engage people in training so that they will attend – ie scholarships, reimbursement, potential employment possibilities Understanding the constraints to people receiving messages – ie isolation, being receptive, language barriers, strongly held beliefs. 1 strategy won't work with all communities eg. In some communities it needs to be someone from outside of the cultural community to deliver the message so that people listen