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**GOOD FOR
STAFF
GOOD FOR
BUSINESS**
”

{
**FAMILY VIOLENCE
HOW EMPLOYERS
CAN HELP**
}

IT IS
OK TO ASK
FOR
HELP

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INTRODUCTION

Employers can play an important part in raising understanding of family violence and providing support for employees affected by it.

Doing something about family violence in your workplace acknowledges that what happens at home can impact at work. It fits in with legal requirements for employers and also acknowledges that when we all work together we can create a safe and productive business environment.

There are many things you can do to help prevent family violence. Most actions are relatively simple and send powerful messages to employees, their families, business partners and the community as a whole.

You can choose the level of your involvement. This can range from simply raising understanding about family violence to supporting local family violence services, training staff or implementing workplace policies.

You can make a difference whether you are one of New Zealand's many small businesses or if you are a larger business with a human resources department.

This resource contains suggestions for action and is accompanied by posters and leaflets that can be ordered or downloaded from www.areyouok.org.nz

We also encourage you to connect with family violence organisations in your area that can assist you – particularly with specialist resources and training packages. Local services are listed on www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory/index.jsp

The 'It's not OK' campaign is part of a co-ordinated approach by the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families to eliminate family violence from New Zealand. The Taskforce includes representatives from Police, Justice, Courts, Health, Women's Affairs, Education, Social Development, Te Puni Kokiri, Pacific Island Affairs as well as the Families Commission, Children's Commissioner, ACC and organisations like Women's Refuge, Jigsaw and Relationship Services.

The campaign seeks to increase the understanding of family violence and encourage violence free behaviour.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thank you to the Tauranga "Family Violence: It's your business" and Christchurch "Igniting Change" projects who provided advice and access to their resources to inform the development of this resource.





FAMILY VIOLENCE IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

1/3

One in three women say they have experienced physical or sexual abuse from a partner.

1/2

Around half of all homicides and violent crime in New Zealand is family violence.

30

On average, 14 women, 6 men and 10 children are killed by a member of their own family every year.

7

Police attend around 200 family violence incidents a day – one every seven minutes.

18%

Police estimate only 18% of family violence incidents is reported.

\$

The cost of family violence to New Zealand was estimated at between \$1.2 and \$5.8 billion in 1994. Businesses were estimated to have lost \$2.9 million in lost working days and productivity alone.

In today's figures that means family violence costs us all up to **\$8 billion** a year.





HOW FAMILY VIOLENCE AFFECTS THE WORKPLACE

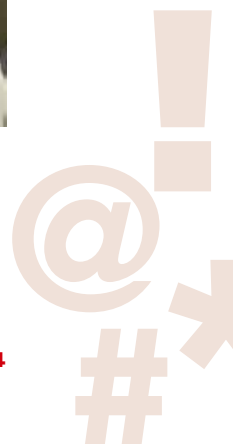
There are many ways family violence affects the safety and productivity of your workplace.

Employees who are victims of family violence may:

- Be distressed, depressed, anxious, distracted and fearful at work
- Need to take time off work to attend court, or seek medical attention, counselling, or other support
- Leave their job because they are hiding from their abuser
- Have a protection order which could have implications for the workplace (e.g. the violent person cannot contact or go to the workplace)
- Have their ability to work sabotaged by the violent person (e.g. through damage to their car so that they are late for work or work brought home may be destroyed)

Employees who are perpetrators of family violence may:

- Pose a risk to the victim's colleagues
- Pose a risk to workers and clients in their own workplace
- Use work time and resources to harass, stalk and monitor their victim (e.g. calling the victim many times a day to control what she is doing)
- Have a protection order against them, which means that they are not allowed access to weapons (guns, knives, etc)
- Need to take time off to attend court or stopping violence programmes.





BENEFITS OF WORKPLACE RESPONSES TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

When you act to prevent family violence or respond to victims or perpetrators you can achieve:

- **Less absenteeism**
fewer days off as a result of injury, illnesses, shame, fear, family disruption, counselling, legal proceedings or imprisonment
- **Lower staff turnover**
staff more likely to stay in employment
- **Greater productivity**
employees are less distracted and stressed, so can contribute more to the business
- **Fewer safety risks**
fewer mistakes or accidents from poor concentration, poor communication or people covering unfamiliar jobs for absent workmates
- **Better morale**
staff feel safe and supported, and are not worried about potential harm to themselves or risk of their job
- **Meet health and safety requirements**
addressing family violence in the workplace meets legal obligations to have systems in place to ensure the health and safety of employees and clients
- **A reputation as a good employer**
retain valued staff and attract quality applicants with an environment that takes employee wellbeing seriously
- **Community recognition**
communities value businesses who get involved to help their own and others.





WHAT IS FAMILY VIOLENCE?

“ Family violence is violence and abuse by one person towards their partner, children, or other family member ”

Family violence includes violence towards:

- married or de-facto partners
- same sex partners
- boy-friends or girl-friends
- children and young people
- siblings
- parents and grandparents
- other family members or people in a close personal relationship.

FAMILY VIOLENCE IS MORE THAN PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Family violence has many forms. It includes:

- **physical abuse** – hitting, punching, slapping, pushing, choking, punching, kicking, burning, stabbing, shooting, and threats to do harm
- **psychological abuse** – threats (to harm, to commit suicide, to report to authorities), harassment, stalking, jealous possessiveness, put-downs, isolation from friends and family, intimidation, verbal abuse, mind-games, humiliation, manipulating children
- **sexual abuse** – rape, coerced sex, unwanted sexual activity, forced pregnancy or abortions, forced involvement in prostitution or pornography
- **financial abuse** – abuser makes all the financial decisions, does not allow victims to buy basic needs, makes victims account for every cent, steals their money, runs up debts in their name, forces them to work, or does not allow them to work when they want to
- **spiritual abuse** – abuser does not allow victim the freedom to follow their own faith or beliefs – all forms of violence attacks victims' soul or spirit.

FAMILY VIOLENCE IS OFTEN HIDDEN

Family violence often happens in the home, or when no one else is around. People who are being abused, and those who commit violence, often feel shame and guilt, and so hide the violence and make excuses. Some violent people can appear charming, polite and loving around other people.

FAMILY VIOLENCE CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE

People of any ethnicity, age, socio-economic group, gender, sexuality, age can experience family violence – it is not limited to any particular group.



FAMILY VIOLENCE IS MORE THAN JUST A ‘BAD RELATIONSHIP’

Often it’s about one person dominating and controlling their family members. The abuser uses intimidation, fear and abuse to maintain that control.

DANGER SIGNS

Separation is the most dangerous time for victims of violence – women and children are particularly at risk from death and serious violence when a relationship is ending.

A victim maybe in danger of being killed or seriously harmed if the abuser:

- Has caused the victim to be very afraid
- Has recently separated from the victim, or a court order has just been issued
- Threatens to kill or commit suicide
- Shows excessively jealous and controlling behaviour
- Is stalking the victim
- Has previously committed family violence (e.g. especially if it is getting more severe or frequent)
- Isolates the victim(s)
- Has aggravating problems (e.g. drug and alcohol misuse, mental health problems)
- Is violent to others (e.g. fights with and intimidates others at work or in public, or harms animals).

FAMILY VIOLENCE HAS SERIOUS EFFECTS

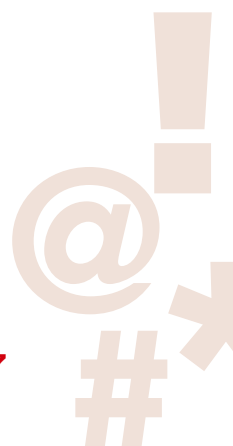
Adult and child victims and family members can be seriously harmed by family violence.

The effects of family violence can be:

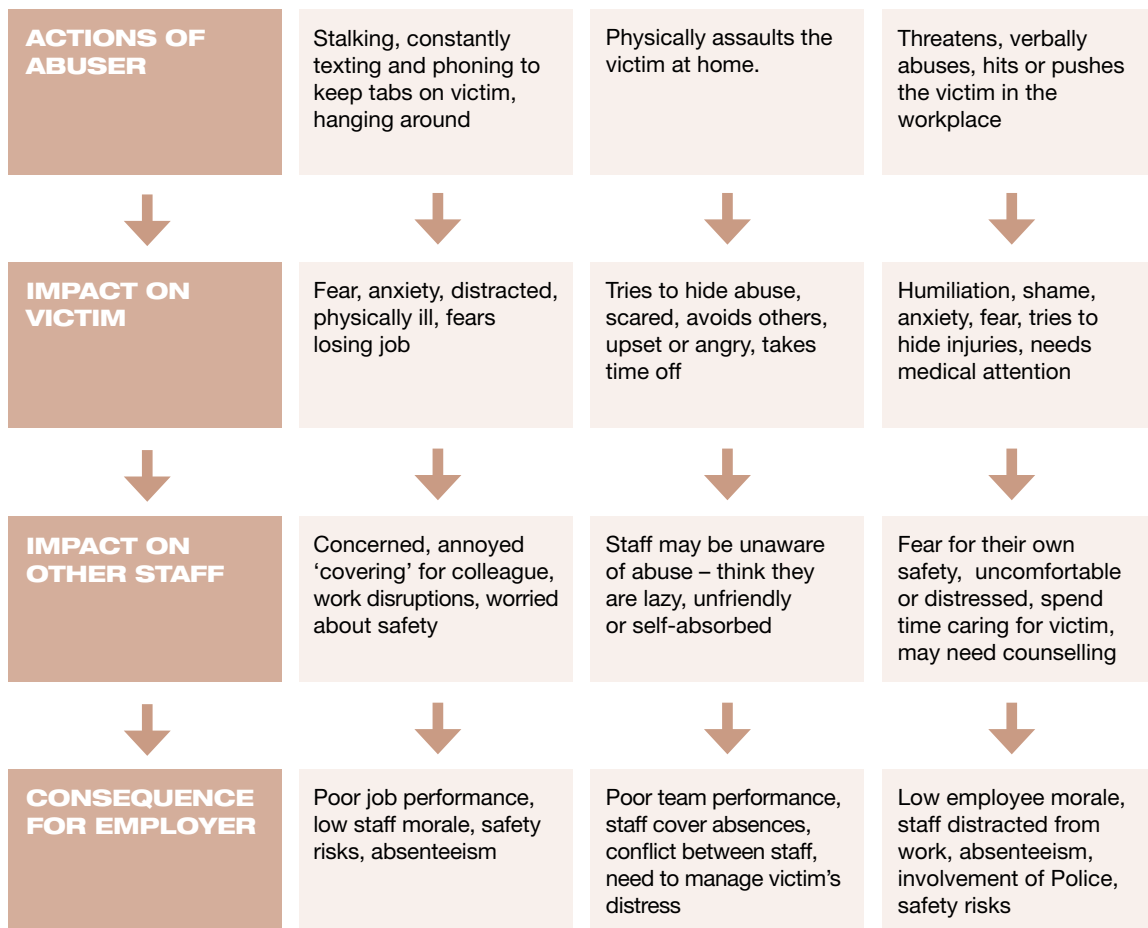
Psychological harm – post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, feeling suicidal, anxiety, sleep and eating disorders, substance abuse, feelings of shame and guilt, loss of self-confidence, confusion, hopelessness, and rage

Physical harm – death, disability, injury, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, self-harm

An Australian study found that violence from partners was the cause of more ill-health and premature death for women between the ages of 15 – 44 than any other well-known risk factors, including high blood pressure, obesity and smoking.



HOW FAMILY VIOLENCE IMPACTS ON THE WORKPLACE





WHAT YOU DO MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Businesses and organisations can take a lead role in bringing about safer communities through workplace action.

No matter how big or small your workplace is there are many things you can do.

Showing that your business supports violence-free families and violence-free workplaces sends a positive message to clients, staff and the community.

Workplaces can also play an important role in assisting victims of violence – the workplace is one place where victims of family violence can safely access information and support. Workplaces do not have to solve the problem – people just need to know how to recognise family violence and how to link in with the specialist services that can help.

Have a look through the following suggestions to see what works for you. You could start small to get a level of comfort with your staff. You could then do more as time and resources allow.

Taking some workplace action towards preventing family violence doesn't have to be a costly exercise for your business, but it can save you money in the long-run by contributing to happier, safer, and more productive staff.

You can help stop family violence by:

- increasing understanding of family violence in your workplace (page 10)
- getting involved with community efforts to prevent family violence (page 11)
- providing staff with information and training (page 12)
- developing workplace policies and procedures (page 13).



1. INCREASE UNDERSTANDING OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

One easy and inexpensive way to get started is to publicise the “It’s not OK” and “It is OK to ask for help” messages from the Campaign for Action on Family Violence

Using the resources developed by the “It’s not OK” campaign you can show that you support safer families and safer communities.

These messages are supported by advertising and local community activities. That means we’re all delivering consistent messages that have a better chance of making a difference.

Your local family violence agencies may also have awareness-raising messages, posters, leaflets and other resources.

You can:

- put the “It’s not OK” logos on your business correspondence, premises and company vehicles
- hang posters up around your workplace
- make booklets and leaflets easily accessible in public spaces around your work – in reception, staff rooms, around sales counters, or place them in more private spaces like staff washrooms
- put the logo and a click through link to www.areyouok.org.nz on your website.
- put ‘It’s not OK / It is OK to ask for help’ messages onto payslips
- remind staff and management of the issue at staff gatherings, in newsletters or other updates to staff and business partners.
- talk to your business, social and sporting networks – see who else can help spread the message.

“It’s not OK” campaign resources are available to order or download at www.areyouok.org.nz/resources



2. GET INVOLVED WITH COMMUNITY EFFORTS

There are many organisations in your area working to end family violence and help those affected by it. Your business can make a difference by assisting these organisations.

You could talk to local service providers like refuges, stopping violence programmes, children's advocacy services, and local family violence networks to ask them what they need.

Family violence services can make good use of any monetary donations, but your support does not have to be "cheque book charity."

There are many ways you can get involved with local services such as:

- donating goods that can help the service or their clients such as appliances, furniture, computers, accommodation, space for pets, books, clothing, food, Christmas presents etc.
- donating services such as IT help, furniture removal or storage, photocopying, printing, gardening etc.
- providing reduced-price goods and services to family violence agencies
- allowing your staff to undertake volunteer work in their paid work time
- assisting with fundraising
- providing mentoring and advice on issues such as human resources, IT, finances, and marketing
- promoting and/or helping to organise local awareness raising activities
- allowing services to use rooms for meetings.

Supporting community efforts to end family violence can be an occasional activity, or your business can work to develop a longer term partnership with a particular family violence organisation in your area.

Genuine partnership between businesses and family violence services can bring about benefits for both partners. For example, you could agree to donate goods and services from your business, and in return receive training on dealing with family violence in the workplace and strategies for keeping staff safe.



3. PROVIDE STAFF WITH INFORMATION AND TRAINING

Providing family violence information and/or training for staff and managers can be an effective way to build a workplace response to family violence.

You can:

- ask a local family violence organisation to come into your workplace to talk about their services, and hold a discussion with staff.
- if you think talking about family violence is an awkward place to start you could arrange for talks around relationship skills or parenting skills that include some information about family violence
- ask your Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) partners about what support they can provide
- organise family violence awareness training for managers, supervisors, human resources staff, health and safety offices, and other staff.

Family violence awareness training will help you:

- get a better understanding of what family violence is, and how to recognise it
- respond to family violence in the workplace, including what to do when staff are affected by family violence
- know what local help and services are available
- create a violence-free workplace and get involved in efforts to prevent family violence in the future.

Local family violence organisations and family violence networks may be able to provide family violence training.

- Auckland based organisation, *shine** provides DVFREE™ a national programme that partners with employers to help managers and workers understand the nature of domestic violence and support employees as soon as they disclose the problems.
<http://www.2shine.org.nz/index.php?section=45>
- many local providers have developed their own business packages around family violence. These include a project with Tauranga's Safe City work and a package developed by Christchurch Women's Refuge as part of its Igniting Change project.

There are also some private family violence training providers.

Local services are listed on www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory/index.jsp

Local family violence networks are listed on <http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/my-community/network-and-service/networks/family-violence-prevention-networks.html>



4. DEVELOP WORKPLACE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Workplace policies and procedures give proactive and practical direction to managers and staff before they are faced with a complex, potentially dangerous situation.

Policies are part of creating a violence-free environment where people's safety and wellbeing are important, and reflect your company's commitment to social responsibility and community involvement.

You might already have an employee health and wellbeing policy, or policies on harassment and bullying. A family violence policy can be easily incorporated into these.

By law you are required to create a safe and secure working environment for employees and others coming into the workplace, and take all reasonable practicable steps to manage hazards and avoid exposing employees to physical injury or psychological harm.

A useful family violence policy will help you identify hazards and potential harm, and set out practical steps for making a safer and more supportive work environment.

In larger organisations, policies are best developed by a team of people from across the workplace (managers, human resources, health and safety, security, unions) as well as staff from local family violence services.

A policy can include:

- an outline of what family violence is
- a statement about the workplace commitment to safety and security, and the unacceptability of family violence
- ways your workplace will promote violence-free families and communities
- how your workplace will respond to concerns around harassment, bullying and family violence
- how you will support people experiencing family violence (such as making safety plans, referring to support agencies, allowing time-off or flexi-time, screening their calls or moving desk or offices to restrict the violent person's access, accompanying them to their car/bus)
- who staff should go to if they are being affected by family violence
- how your workplace will ensure information remains confidential
- how you will address the issue of employees who are violent.

When you have developed the policy:

- talk about it at staff meetings
- ensure your staff induction process covers the policy
- display the policy in a prominent place
- include reference to the policy in employment contracts
- regularly make sure all staff are aware of it.





MAKING A START

- **DISPLAY RESOURCES IN YOUR WORKPLACE.**

You can get posters and booklets free from the It's not OK campaign www.areyouok.org.nz/resources

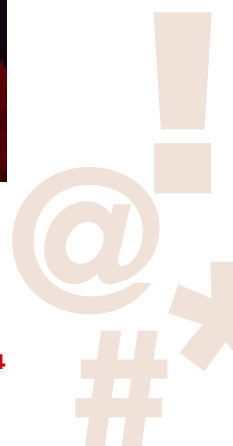
- **TALK TO YOUR LOCAL FAMILY VIOLENCE ORGANISATIONS.**

Many areas also have a family violence network where a range of community and government agencies meet to coordinate their response to family violence. The network coordinator is a source of information, resources and contacts.

- **DISCUSS YOUR PLANS WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS** like your management team, Board, influential staff, unions and possibly key suppliers and customers. Gauge their support and enlist their help. You might be able to create a network of people who will join in together to make things happen in your community.

- **HOLD STAFF MEETINGS AND FOLLOW UP** with a newsletter to explain what you're doing and why. This can be helpful to get people in behind your efforts, and it creates opportunities for discussion.

- **BE READY FOR ANY IMMEDIATE DISCLOSURES** from people affected by family violence. Make sure you have a list of local services that can provide help to your staff, so you know where to refer people. Keep all disclosures confidential. Think about the practical things that you can do straight away to help people experiencing violence, such as allow flexi-time, screen calls or emails, allow them to be located somewhere that's not accessible to members of the public, alert security guards, or escort them to their car.





LEGISLATION

The following is an overview of relevant legislation. You might like to talk to your lawyers or business advisors like your local Chamber of Commerce for more detail.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IN EMPLOYMENT AMENDMENT ACT 2002

Under New Zealand law, employers are required to create a safe and secure working environment for their employees, and take all reasonable practicable steps to manage hazards and avoid exposing employees to unnecessary risk of physical injury or psychological harm.

A person's behaviour is a 'hazard' under the law, if it is a source of harm to themselves or someone else. Harassment, violence and psychological abuse by someone in the workplace are hazards that employees need to be protected from.

The definition of 'harm' in the Act covers physical or mental harm caused by work-related stress.

Employers have no direct control over (nor responsibility for) non-work related stress. However, if an employer knows about non-work sources of stress, steps may need to be taken to prevent harm where the safety of people in the workplace – the employee included – may be an issue.

There is an obligation on the employee to maintain safety and prevent stress, which could mean they notify the employer of any stress, harm and danger they are experiencing.

Employers need to have simple and practical mechanisms in place to assess and deal with employees who are suffering from stress, whatever the source.^[1]

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT 1993

It is against the law for any person to be sexually harassed, or subject to hostility or ridicule because of their race, colour, national or ethnic origins, in such a way that is offensive to the person, and is either repeated or so significant that it has a detrimental effect on their employment.

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS ACT 2000

An employee can take a personal grievance case against their employer if they are sexually or racially harassed by another employee, customer or client, and the employer has had the chance to investigate a complaint, but has not taken any practicable steps to stop the behaviour happening again.

Organisations can be held liable if the harassment takes place during work hours, on work-related activities or at work-related social events.

[1] Some text taken from Healthy Work: Managing Stress in the Workplace, publication of the Department of Labour and OSH available at <http://www.osh.dol.govt.nz/order/catalogue/stress/managestress.pdf>



CRIMES ACT 1961

Most forms of physical and sexual abuse are illegal. Violence by partners and family members is treated the same as violence by strangers. Threats, harassment, stalking, and intimidation may also be crimes covered by the Crimes Act.

Other forms of psychological abuse, such as monitoring someone through constant calls and texts, may only be criminal offences when the person experiencing abuse has a protection order.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT 1995

The Domestic Violence Act enables the Family Court to issue a court order to protect people experiencing violence and abuse. Only people who are in a close personal or domestic relationship with the violent person can obtain a protection order.

The protection order tells the violent person to stop using physical, sexual and psychological abuse. They also have to surrender guns and other weapons to Police.

The order may also have non-contact conditions, which mean the violent person is not allowed to visit, call, email, text, or hang around work or home of the person who has the protection order.

It is a criminal offence if the protection order is breached (i.e. if the person keeps on being violent, or stalks and harasses the victim).

However, someone who has a protection order can allow the violent person to visit or even live in the same house, if they choose. If this happens, the violent person still has to comply with the no-violence conditions of the protection order.

Children under 17 who usually live in the house are automatically protected by the protection order.

BILL OF RIGHTS ACT 1990

The Bill of Rights affirms all people's rights to life and security of person – the right not to be subject to torture and cruel treatment, and the right not to be deprived of life.





FAMILY VIOLENCE HELP

If family violence is affecting someone in your workplace or family, there is support available.

LOCAL FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICES

Services in your area may include:

- Women's Refuges
- shine* – Safer Homes in New Zealand Everyday
- Te Kupenga Whakaoti Mahi Patunga / National Network of Stopping Violence Services
- Relationship Services
- Jigsaw Family Services

In most places there are a range of other family violence services including services for Maori, Pacific peoples and migrants.

Rural areas are covered by their nearest town or city services.

Local services are listed on www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory/index.jsp

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES

Family violence prevention in the workplace can become part of an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

An EAP can offer additional support for those living with family violence and may include counselling, legal, medical, and financial services.

However, it is important to note that not all EAP providers have an understanding of how to recognise and address family violence. Check with your EAP about their skills and knowledge of family violence.

Your EAP needs to clearly state that family violence is included in the EAP policy, so that employees know they can get help.

**BE AWARE OF THE DANGER SIGNS.
TAKE FAMILY VIOLENCE SERIOUSLY**

**DO NOT BE AFRAID TO CALL THE POLICE ON 111
IF ANYONE IS IN DANGER OR WORRIED ABOUT
THEIR IMMEDIATE SAFETY**





RESOURCES

A range of resources are available, free of charge, from the campaign website.
www.areyouok.org.nz/resources

Posters

Order the posters for public areas like reception, sales counters, canteen, staff social areas or more private spaces like staff washrooms.

Booklets

Specialist booklets on family violence, child maltreatment, elder abuse and resources for men can also be ordered.

Logos

Download the logo artwork and use them on your website, intranet, newsletters, advertising, stickers, payroll envelopes, company vehicles, building signage...or wherever you can put it

Staff training

Local services are listed on: www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory/index.jsp or contact the campaign team for information about training.

WANT TO SHARE IDEAS?

Email us at areyouok@msd.govt.nz with your ideas so we can share them with other workplaces.

You can also sign up for our regular newsletter to keep you up to speed on what's happening around New Zealand.



USEFUL WEBSITES

www.areyouok.org.nz

Information about the Its not OK campaign and more workplace resources

www.womensrefuge.org.nz

Information for women and children experiencing violence, and for those who want to help them

www.nnsvs.org.nz

Information on stopping violence programmes

www.2shine.org.nz

Information on shine services and DVFREE™ training

www.eeotrust.org.nz

Information and tools on equal employment opportunity, including a harassment and bullying workplace toolkit (www.eeotrust.org.nz/toolkits/harassment.cfm)

www.osh.govt.nz

Health and safety information including violence at work (www.osh.govt.nz/order/catalogue/pdf/violence.pdf) and managing the risk of workplace violence for healthcare and community service providers

www.hrc.co.nz

Information about human rights including how to have a positive healthy workplace (www.hrc.co.nz/home/hrc/newsandissues/bullyingandsafety.php) and sexual harassment fact sheet (www.hrc.co.nz/hrc_new/hrc/cms/files/documents/10-Jan-2007_13-11-11_Factsheet_08_Sexual_Harassment.doc)

www.beyondbullying.co.nz

Information on workplace bullying

www.nzfvc.org.nz

Information and research on family violence in New Zealand

www.caepv.org

The Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence, USA

www.safehorizon.org/safework

Safe Horizon's Safe Work programme, USA

www.endabuse.org/section/programs/workplace

The Family Violence Prevention Fund: Workplace Programme, USA

http://new.vawnet.org/category/index_pages.php?category_id=324

Collection of resources on domestic violence and employment from USA





New Zealand Government