



'It's not OK' Campaign Community Evaluation Project

CASE STUDY 3: LEVIN

Levin has a longstanding involvement with violence prevention and intervention. The Horowhenua Family Violence Intervention Programmes (HFVIP) was formed in 1998 in response to the dual acknowledgement of a high incidence of family violence in the area and momentum resulting from the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act. Initially, HFVIP members reported feeling isolated in their work. The police were characterised as lacking an in-depth understanding of family violence, which culminated in a less than appropriate level of responsiveness.

In 2006, the Horowhenua Abuse Liaison Team (HALT), operating in Horowhenua and including Levin, Foxton, Shannon and Otaki, was formed in response to a need for interagency collaboration surrounding family violence. The 'It's not OK' Campaign was reported to have solidified HALT's focus and underscored the development of case management and prevention structures.

It wasn't long after the Campaign started that we started to collaborate with the police. (Levin, Social service provider #1)

INTERVENTIONS

The following specific Campaign-related interventions were developed and implemented in the community.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

Awareness raising – branding, billboards (localised with community representatives), logos on sporting uniforms with a specific focus on teams that travel long-distances, Facebook, information through the local newspaper, Pacifica day and youth expo. Importantly the resources were viewed as indispensable. In particular, localised resources were highly valued.

Sport workshops – sporting representatives that received uniforms with the 'It's not OK' logo were required to participate in a workshop facilitated by a local 'It's not OK' champion. The workshop was designed to raise understanding about family violence and ensure representatives understood responsibilities associated with wearing the uniform. Importantly, representatives' guardians attended the workshop and, as such, were regarded as a mechanism to engage local community members as a rippling effect. Effectively, participants became 'It's not OK' champions.

Local business Campaign – businesses in Foxton, Otaki and Levin were enlisted to place Campaign related posters in each of their businesses windows. This presented a sense of a unified approach to non-violence.

We did a Campaign around the central business districts of Otaki, Levin and Foxton. We went into each business and put up posters. It was quite powerful to have posters in almost every business down the street. (Levin, Social service provider #1)

‘How You Can Help’ workshops – workshops with local playcentres and adverts in newspaper for eight weeks. Also have offered the workshop to workplaces.

Sharing stories of change – Vic Tamati and Jude Simpson presented their stories as perpetrators and victims of family violence, respectively. These presentations were regarded as transformational, resulting in a variety of community members identifying with the presenters and seeking assistance, as well as providing a basis to launch the Loves-Me-Not school initiative.

Vic Tamati did a lot of work in the area. His personal approach and sharing his story led to other men acknowledging their histories and being willing to stand up and say that this is what they used to be. (Levin, Social service provider #1)

Loves-Me-Not – the Loves-Me-Not school-based programme was ran in the local high school. The programme focuses on healthy relationships as opposed to unhealthy or controlling ones. The programme is delivered to year 12 students by three facilitators trained by the police. The facilitators comprise a teacher, a police officer and a representative of a non-governmental organisation working in the field of family violence prevention. Loves-Me-Not covers a full school day.

IDENTIFIED IMPACTS

Participants stressed that impacts arising out of the Campaign have been incremental and generally occurred on a small scale. These changes, however, have been appreciated as they qualitatively demonstrate a major shift in cultural attitudes and behaviours associated with non-violence.

1. Increased awareness and message infiltration

All participants stated that the national ‘It’s not OK’ Campaign has resulted in a high degree of awareness and knowledge of family violence.

There has been a shift in the way people view family violence. There has been a positive change. (Levin, Police representative #2)

There has definitely been an increased awareness of family violence. For instance, when we first started handing out White Ribbons in 2004 no one wanted them. Over the last few years’ people actually come up to us at an event and request them. People know what they are for. (Levin, Social service provider #1)

For the majority of people there is an awareness that violence is not OK. (Levin, Social service provider #1)

Locally, numerous examples were provided where the incorporation of ‘It’s not OK’ Campaign branding had resulted in increased awareness.

Putting logos on uniforms has really opened up people’s eyes. Locals would see the logo and ask questions. Yeah, it really raised awareness. (Levin, Police representative #2)

Further, key Campaign messages were reported as having become entrenched. This was evidenced by the use of Campaign messages, as common vernacular, across multiple levels of the community. Multiple reports were provided of players, their families and children using the term 'It's not OK' in reference to violent and / or bullying behaviours.

When we are taking statements it's common for people to say it's not OK. (Levin, Police representative #1)

With the national adverts, 'It's not OK' has gotten into people's vocabulary. (Levin, Social service provider #1)

Further, participants provided multiple references to an increased understanding of family violence and an increased incidence of children, families and social service providers engaging in family violence discussions. Importantly, these discussions, increased knowledge and the perceived freedom to discuss family violence were directly linked to the national Campaign and the various complementary local initiatives.

2. Attitude change and increased prosocial behaviours

The Campaign was reported to have led to decreased incidence of antisocial behaviour and contributed to a number of positive changes in communities and workplaces.

Decreased antisocial behaviour

Multiple reports of reduced antisocial behaviour were provided. These reports generally focused on public behaviour and behaviour in relation to sport related violence.

There has definitely been a change in behaviour. Before the Campaign, if you were walking down the street, you would see people shouting at their partner or kids. People are now aware and you don't see that nearly as often. (Levin, Police representative #2)

People's behaviour on the sidelines has dramatically improved. Now you will hear them challenging one another, "Hey, read your T-shirt", "Hey, it's not OK". (Levin, Police representative #2)

Changes in wider community culture

All participants cited an increased willingness, across all sectors of the community, to discuss family violence.

People are much more aware and comfortable talking about family violence. This has coincided with increases in disclosures. (Levin, Social service provider #1)

The willingness to discuss family violence was linked to a small, but growing, movement of people intervening in family violence situations. Specifically, participants discussed situations where they or another party had intervened in family violence situations.

I'm getting more reports of people in the community taking a stand. For example, there was someone who went to one of the How To Help workshops. She saw a woman being rough

with a child on the street and she went and spoke to one of the NGOs and asked for help. (Levin, Social service provider #2)

3. Community responsiveness and ownership

Community responsiveness and ownership were cited as a primary source of evidence that the Campaign has had a major community impact. Responsiveness and ownership were discussed in relation to Campaign support provided by the Horowhenua District Council, local businesses, schools and individuals within the community. The Council was cited as endorsing the local Campaign, which in turn encouraged other community groups to support the Campaign. Further, the Council supported the Campaign by circumnavigating bureaucratic processes to allow billboards to be erected on Council property. This support was appreciated as participants reported that bureaucratic requirements would have hindered the billboards' erection.

We had the Community Development Manager, of Horowhenua District Council, come and offer support. This involved radio spots, poster printing and speaking to the Mayor on our behalf and inviting him to attend a public family violence meeting. (Levin, Social service provider #1)

Council came to the party and said that they could help. (Levin, Police representative #1)

Recent support from schools was discussed in regards to Horowhenua College having embraced the Loves-Me-Not school-based programme and in regards to an increased willingness for schools to engage with the network.

Schools are more willing to engage with HALT. (Levin, Social service provider #2)

We've had a great response from Loves-Me-Not. We're getting teachers talking about family violence. (Levin, Police representative #1)

Local businesses in Otaki, Levin and Foxton were reported to have supported the Campaign by displaying 'It's not OK' Campaign posters in store windows and by supporting, alongside a number of local individuals, a proposed, but unrealised, local safe house. Importantly, the local newspaper, while initially resistant, was reported to have provided essential Campaign support by publicising events and editorials.

We spoke at one of the business events and we had people in the audience offer to support getting the message out. (Levin, Social service provider #1)

When we were trying to get a safe house we had offers of land, a house, beds and blankets. (Levin, Social service provider #1)

Finally, community ownership was discussed in reference to local employers who had contributed funds to the local initiative and / or had suggested staff attend a local non-violence programme. Of note, staff were informed that they were eligible for paid leave should they choose to attend.

4. Interagency collaboration

The 'It's not OK' Campaign, especially in regards to the various local initiatives, was associated with increased interagency collaboration.

With HALT the agencies are working together and meeting regularly. We know families and information is coming from different agencies. So we are working effectively together. (Levin, Social service provider #1)

5. Statutory intervention

Police participants reported increased family violence notifications, lower thresholds for the reporting family violence related behaviours (an increase in minor offences being reported) and an increase in those coming forward with a first-time notification. Further, an increase in strangers reporting a family violence incident was noted.

Calls for service have gone up from 1000 to 1400. Previously we had no calls from neighbours, now we have neighbours calling in to raise concern about a family. We have family members, like grandparents, coming through the door and asking for help about children who are acting out. I strongly believe that the increased awareness about family violence that the Campaign has provided has led to this increase. (Levin, Police representative #1)

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Participants were asked to identify critical success factors integral to the local Campaign's success. Critical success factors included: local leadership, the national 'It's not OK' Campaign and the national 'It's not OK' Campaign team.

1. Leadership

The success of Levin's 'It's not OK' Campaign was attributed to two tiers of leadership. Firstly, the Mayor's endorsement of the Campaign encouraged local businesses and schools to participate. Further, the Mayor's association with the Campaign helped circumnavigate a number of administrative challenges associated with the erection of billboards. Second, John Battersby, a local police officer, was reported to have provided essential community leadership. Through his leadership initiatives were developed, different groups were consulted and, as a consequence, a community-wide initiative was formed.

John Battersby was passionate. Family violence was his bread and butter. He was a big driver. (Levin, Police representative #2)

2. The national 'It's not OK' Campaign

The national Campaign was regarded as a critical success factor on two levels. Firstly, awareness of the national Campaign provided a shared terms of reference, which facilitated initial engagement and planning discussions.

The national Campaign has opened doors to agencies. It has given us entry conversation with our clients. "Have you heard about 'It's not OK' Campaign?" It's got us entry into Council, Rotary and the Horowhenua Learning Centre. (Levin, Police representative #1)

The Campaign has laid the groundwork and people recognise it. Because of that recognition, the community has embraced local initiatives. It's like, "Oh we are doing a local version of that". (Levin, Social service provider #1)

Next, participants praised the Campaign's strategy to enable responses to be locally developed, providing an opportunity to build upon consistent national messages at a local level. In this sense, the 'It's not OK' Campaign was described as providing a vital framework to guide Levin's non-violence efforts.

It's the background to everything we do. 'It's not OK' has laid a groundwork that we have built upon. It's no longer possible to separate our non-violence work from the Campaign. (Levin, Social service provider #1)

The Campaign has provided a uniting goal. It gave us the ability to do things locally and unite with a common vision. (Levin, Social service provider #2)

The importance of the Campaign can be appreciated within a context of social service providers who, in the main, had historically worked in isolation. The Campaign was the first community-based awareness raising initiative and was regarded as providing a focus linked to a national strategy.

The Campaign gave us the impetus to couple with other organisations around the country. (Levin, Social service provider #1)

Further, Campaign resources were highly appreciated as they removed burden from communities to develop their own resources whilst providing an opportunity to provide a local stamp on the national Campaign resources and merchandise.

From the perspective of men who have been perpetrators of family violence, the role of community champions, such as Vic Tamati, was essential. Hearing accounts of former perpetrators had resulted in attitudinal and behavioural change. This was regarded as essential to the programme's success.

Finally, police participants stressed that the Campaign complemented a shift in police focus to prevention.

Much of our work is about prevention now. So we work with victims to stop them from being re-victimised. 'It's not OK' has been fantastic as it has complemented this change in focus. (Levin, Police representative #1)

3. Support provided by the national 'It's not OK' team

The national Campaign team was lauded for their provision of advice and support. Especially appreciated was the provision of strategic advice and the focus the Campaign team brought to local initiatives. The team was also appreciated for advice and work with local media

representatives who were initially resistant to participating in local Campaign initiatives. Without this support, participants strongly believed the local Campaign would have faltered.

Their advice on media was amazing. The newspaper was being difficult and not getting the information out. One of the national team members spoke to the local newspaper and all of a sudden the block was removed. (Levin, Social service provider #1)

The provision of 'It's not OK' Campaign resourcing was highly appreciated. Given low operational budgets, the various initiatives, and interagency collaborations arising from the local Campaign, would not have been possible without this support. Further, without funding, opportunities to link local initiatives to the national 'It's not OK' Campaign would have severely hindered audience resonance and uptake. As such, the complementary national and local branding meant that a call to non-violence occurred at a local level.

We approached the club and they said, "Awesome, make it happen." We wouldn't have been able to do it without the funding. (Levin, Police representative #2)

Whenever we have had a bigger Campaign we have gone to the national Campaign team for funding. HALT's funding is very low. To do anything that costs money is just not possible without the support of 'It's not OK' Campaign. The costs of the billboards with local people from around the town would have been prohibitive. (Levin, Social service provider #2)

Collaboration has been critical. This wouldn't have been possible without 'It's not OK' funding which has allowed us to work together. We have had to put aside territorial concerns, you know how different organisations engage in patch protection which is often exaggerated when it comes to financial issues, and focus on a common goal. (Levin, Social service provider #2)

BARRIERS TO ON-GOING SUCCESS

Insufficient funding was raised as a primary barrier to the Campaign's on-going success. This barrier was understood within an environment of intergenerational violence and family dysfunction that will require long-term support to achieve the required changes. As such, funding was identified as requirement to the development and implementation strategies to achieve significant shifts in culture.

Next, a lack of assurance surrounding the Family Violence Coordinator position was raised as a barrier. Intermittent funding was associated with an inability to plan long-term.

Finally, a scarcity of adequate referral, support and intervention services was raised as a primary concern. Importantly, participants acknowledged that the Campaign has resulted in increased awareness and referrals for support and intervention. While the Campaign has resulted in increased awareness and referrals for support and intervention, the community has struggled to meet these increased demands. This was especially frustrating given increased family violence notifications have not coincided with increased service related funding. Specifically, the need for a local safe house and timely access to alcohol and other drug (AOD) related services were raised.

Family violence interventions need to strike while the iron is hot. People get less intent to change as time progresses. (Levin, Police representative #1)

We have more women accessing safe house accommodation than ever. (Levin, Family Violence Coordinator)



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