



Catholic Social Services Victoria

...building a more just and compassionate society

Dear friends

Resource Kit on Domestic and Family Violence

Domestic violence is a crisis in Australia – on average, one woman dies each week as a result of family violence. It is estimated that one in four children experience the fear and distress of witnessing their mother being abused.

In addition to physical violence, domestic and family violence can also be emotional, financial or spiritual. The roots are abuse of power and the control of one person by another.

Overwhelmingly the victims of family violence are women and children.

The Victorian Family Violence Royal Commission highlighted the important role faith communities can play in the lives of Victorians affected by this violence.

The Church is responding to this challenge. The Bishops of Victoria, in October 2016, urged the Catholic community to play a part in preventing and responding to family violence.

In addition to the text of the Bishops' statement, this Resource Kit contains additional material to assist you and your Parish or organisation in responding to those who seek assistance, and playing a role in prevention. The posters can be used to alert parishioners to the issue – placing one inside women's toilets is one way of making the information accessible.

The key messages in responding to victims are ***sensitivity*** and ***confidentiality***. We do not advise you to counsel or attempt to mediate. An appropriate response is to listen and refer the person to a professional service. You will find sheets in this Kit that explain this approach more fully, and contain numbers for referral.

In the coming months we will provide information about training programs available to parishes and organisations. The material in this kit and other information will be maintained at www.css.org.au/domestic-violence, and a regular update will also be circulated to parishes.

If you would like further information about this project or any of the materials, please contact Helen Burt – helenburt@css.org.au

Yours sincerely

Denis Fitzgerald
Executive Director, Catholic Social Services Victoria
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If you or someone you know has experienced family violence please contact the number 1800 respect. It is a 24-hour telephone and online counseling service. If you or someone else are in a immediate danger, contact 000.