

Riverland Domestic Violence Action Group Inc.

P.O. Box 370

Berri 5343

Newsletter 1

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Welcome to the inaugural half yearly newsletter from the Riverland Domestic Violence Action Group. (D.V.A.G.)

The Riverland Domestic Violence Group meets monthly normally on the first Thursday 1.00 p.m. at the Berri Police Station.

The RDVAG is comprised of representatives from:

- ✚ Police
131444
- ✚ Riverland Domestic Violence Unit
85822100
- ✚ S.A. Housing Trust
131299
- ✚ Centrelink
131021
- ✚ Victim Support Service
85824122
- ✚ Relationships Australia
85824122
- ✚ Berri Community Corrections
85952366
- ✚ Options Coordinations
85822400
- ✚ RivSkills
85822188
- ✚ Salvation Army
85823182
- ✚ CAMHS
85824290
- ✚ Womens Health
85880400



The aims and objectives of the Riverland DVAG are:

- ✚ To encourage cooperation and coordination between agencies/departments/individuals in their response to domestic violence.
- ✚ Education of the community about domestic violence.
- ✚ Identify resources available in the area.
- ✚ Facilitate the development of relevant skills for individuals involved in response to domestic violence.
- ✚ Lobby for legislation and social policy changes for the protection of victims of domestic violence.

DVAG 2004

What has DVAG achieved in the last year?

During 2004 DVAG run a media campaign "Domestic Violence Hurts Kids Too." The campaign was funded by Riverland Women's Health. This involved TV and radio commercials,

posters and drink coaster were also distributed throughout the Riverland. The campaign ran from June to September 2004, coinciding with the Federal DV campaign.

WEEK WITHOUT VIOLENCE

DVAG participated in the "Week without Violence" from October 20th which consisted of a display from agencies in the Riverland Plaza.

SERVICE PROVIDERS

Police

S/Const Oehme is the Riverland Domestic Violence Officer stationed within Riverland CIB. S/Const Oehme has conducted training with all members of Riverland Police. Patrols are required to submit a police report after attending a domestic disturbance. S/Const Oehme will then make follow up contact with victims referring them to appropriate agencies, advising them on police charges, restraint orders and police issues regarding family court matters.

Riverland Domestic Violence Unit

The RDVU provides:
Accommodation and support for women and children experiencing domestic violence. Also support for women not needing accommodation, counselling & referrals to other agencies.
Outreach services to Riverland Region incorporating "Phoenix Network" web cams so you can talk to the RDVU without travel.
They are located at Pinnaroo Hospital, Swan Reach Area School, Brown's Well Area School, Waikerie Community Centre, Renmark Paringa Community Centre and Loxcare.

RELATIONSHIPS AUSTRALIA

Relationships Australia is a national organisation that offers counseling and resources to individuals, couples and families to help enhance and support relationships. The Berri office provides

- + Confidential Counseling,
- + Mediation,
- + Primary Dispute Resolution,
- + Family Violence Prevention,
- + Gambling Rehabilitation (Free)
- + Rural & Remote Telephone Counseling.
- + Drought Counselling (Free)
- + Victim Support Services (Free)

Relationships Australia can provide support to couples and individuals who experience or commit violence and abuse in relationships and are looking for new non-violent and respectful ways of relating. For more information or to book an appointment with a qualified therapist, call our Berri office on 8582 4122 or freecall: 1800 182 325.

SALVATION ARMY

The Salvation Army Community Services operates a Supported Accommodation program for families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The accommodation provided is transitional and there are a limited number of properties. They have no Emergency Accommodation. The Salvation Army also operates a Personal Support Programme. Referrals are made through Centrelink and support is offered to people with high needs to enable them to re-enter the workforce.

ENCLOSED PETITION

The petition enclosed is seeking a safe centre for access visits for children in the Riverland please return the petitions to address on the bottom by the end of July.

CAMHS

The Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) is a counselling and therapy service that assists children, young people and their families to find solutions to a wide range their emotional, behavioural, psychiatric and family relationship problems. One of these problems is the effect on children being exposed to domestic violence.

Children who are exposed to domestic violence may be affected in many ways, including:

- ✚ feeling angry, fearful, or depressed;
- ✚ having physical reactions such as stomach cramps, headaches, sleeping and eating difficulties and frequent illnesses;
- ✚ poor school performance and difficulties relating to peers;
- ✚ more behavioral problems, such as aggressive behavior and running away from home;
- ✚ using violence as a way to solve their own relationship problems later in life.

These are expected reactions following exposure to domestic violence, and are not in themselves indicators that children need professional intervention. The most important therapeutic step in helping children affected by domestic violence is one that parents can take. This is ensuring children are no longer exposed to the violence!

If the above reactions continue, then you may like to discuss this with a CAMHS therapist.

Referrals to CAMHS come from families themselves, doctors, schools and other community agencies. CAMHS can be contacted on 85824290.

BERRI COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

Berri Community Correctional Centre is involved in administering the supervision of offenders on various orders imposed by the courts and the Parole Board within the Riverland area. Its roles include giving professional advice to courts on the background of offenders, possible sanctioning options and ensuring that offenders are provided with opportunities to address their offending behavior. There are various therapeutic intervention programs that are delivered on a regular basis to address offence related issues involving substance abuse, anger management, victim awareness and domestic violence. Berri Community Correction Centre in conjunction with Relationships Australia is currently involved in the delivery of a 12 week Stopping Violence therapeutic program for men, which examines and addresses the use of domestic violence and the effects of this on their partners and associated family members. It is anticipated that future programs will be delivered also involving mandated and non-mandated clients from within the Riverland community.

MANDATED REPORTING

CHILD ABUSE REPORT LINE 131478

Under the Child Protection Act the following persons **ARE** obliged by law to report if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child has been maltreated, neglected or a victim of sexual abuse. { We also encourage agencies to report incidents where children have witnessed DV as this is a form of abuse }

Mandated Reporters

- ✚ Doctor
- ✚ Dentist
- ✚ Nurse
- ✚ Chemist
- ✚ Police Officer
- ✚ Probation Officer
- ✚ Social Worker
- ✚ Teacher
- ✚ Teacher's aide
- ✚ Kindergarten Teacher

Any employee or **VOLUNTEER** at any agency that provides health, wealth, educational, child care or any services for children.

Any person may notify any instance of suspected or known abuse BUT the people listed above MUST notify. Failing to do may lead to the person being charged and fined.

POLICE ISSUES

Police receive a lot of queries from victims and agency workers relating to assault charges, restraint orders, bail conditions and family court issues. A lot of the queries relate to changing restraint order/bail conditions.

If an offender is arrested for offences he can be released on bail conditions these may include conditions not to contact the victim or attend at his/her home address. These are official orders and must be obeyed by all parties at all times. Only the offender can apply to the police station or court to change these conditions not the victim. The victim will be contacted by the police prior to the conditions being changed.

A restraint order is made by the court and can have similar conditions again all parties are obliged to obey these orders, if they are breached the offender will be charged. Victim's need to be aware if they encourage or participate in a breach of the order they

will also be charged along with the offender.

To vary any conditions of a restraint order another application has to be made to the court, this process can take several weeks.

If a victim does not want to proceed with any police charges then they need to make an appointment to see S/Const Oehme. Women will be offered counselling at the Domestic Violence Unit then the Officer in Charge of the Riverland will decide if charges do not proceed.

Police will endeavour to take **positive police action** when attending all domestic disputes.

TRAINING

Police along with CYFS will be conducting training at the Berri Hotel on Thursday 16th June 2005 9.30-4.00 pm.

All service providers are invited to attend.

The following issues will be covered.

Mandated Reporting of child abuse

Investigating Child Abuse
Information on assaults
restraining orders bail conditions
etc for domestic violence
situations.

Booking are required Please ring
S/C Francine Oehme Riverland
CIB 85952014