



McAuley Community
Services for Women
a ministry of the Sisters of Mercy

Family Violence - The Facts

Family Violence Protection Act 2008

Family violence is behaviour by a person towards a family member that is: physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically, economically abusive; threatening, coercive;

in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to feel fear for the safety or wellbeing;

by a person that causes a child to hear or witness, or otherwise be exposed to the effects of, behaviour referred to above.

One in three women had experienced physical violence since the age of 15. (The Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Survey 2005)

This very confronting statement is much more than a statistic; this is the life experience of one in three women in our community. McAuley Community Services for Women provides crisis accommodation, as well advocating on behalf of women. Family Violence knows no boundaries; it effects women regardless of culture, age and socio-economic situation. In 2008 -09, the **Mercy Care Program** supported over 460 women; 23% of the women were aged under 25 years; 39% were aged 26-35 years and 57% were from CALD backgrounds including those recently arrived under a spousal visa.

While it is not appropriate to reveal details of the women it is important to acknowledge the severe trauma, physical injuries, emotional scarring and financial and social isolation to which many women are subjected. Also of note is the number of women who are soon to give birth to a child or as a result of trauma have recently miscarried. The Mercy Care Program provides much more than can ever be revealed via statistics and always endeavours to provide the women and accompanying children with the best care within the parameters of its mission.

More family violence facts:

<http://www.women.vic.gov.au/web12/owpmain.nsf/headingpagesdisplay/family+violencefamily+violence+the+facts>

Leaving Family Violence

Living in a situation of Family Violence or fear of Family Violence is incredibly stressful. It can be difficult to maintain one's usual support systems, think logically or make necessary decisions. The Mercy Care Program assists women to prepare a Safety Plan in case they experience Family Violence in the future times. It can be very difficult to decide or to actually leave an abusive situation. When considering leaving, it is helpful to consider important items to take when escaping to a safe place.

For more information on leaving a violent relationship:

http://www.chatfirst.com.au/parents/04_6_leaving.php