



La Trobe Rural Health School
Rural Department of Community Health

**NATIONAL AND LOCAL FAMILY VIOLENCE
INITIATIVES FORUM 27/11/18**

February 2019

**National and Local Family
Violence Initiatives Forum**

ENQUIRIES

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Table of contents

Introduction	3
Acknowledgements	3
Schedule for the Forum	4
Feedback from the World Cafe	7
Next Steps arising from World Café discussions	7
Implications for Social Work at La Trobe Albury/Wodonga	9
Appendix 1. A summary of survey feedback	10

INTRODUCTION

This report provides the findings emerging from the National and Local Family Violence Initiatives Forum held at the Albury Wodonga campus. Firstly, this report revisits the day, before outlining the key points arising from both the World Café discussions and the feedback. The report concludes with ideas for future events.

As part of the 16 days of activism to end Family Violence, Social Work at the La Trobe Albury Wodonga campus facilitated a Family Violence Forum on Tuesday 27th November 2018. The forum was an educative event that focussed on the links between national and local work to end violence against women and their children. The audience of 82 was comprised of La Trobe alumni, social workers from the field, associated professionals including teachers and police, current students and community members. The forum provided opportunities for engaging with work undertaken in the family violence space at both the national and local levels. It also provided opportunity for group discussions about salient points from the presentations. The event attracted AASW CPD points - four CPD hours Category 2: Skills and Knowledge – Presentations.

Acknowledgements

Social Work at La Trobe Albury Wodonga wishes to acknowledge all of the presenters and their agencies for supporting this event. Special thanks to Alison Maclean for her role as rapporteur. We also acknowledge the financial support provided by La Trobe Rural Health School and La Trobe Alumni Association. We thank the Albury/Wodonga campus, particularly Ms Rachael Puddaphatt, Senior Engagement Coordinator, at Albury Wodonga campus for her contribution to making the day a success.

Schedule for the Forum

The following section acts as an aide memoire for the reader by providing an outline of the day including the themes, presenters and their topics.

Keynote Speaker - Ms Christine Craik National President AASW

Key focus areas of the presentation were:

- The importance of statistics, facts and language
- National Initiatives such as contributions to Federal Government 10 year plan (with work about to start on the 4th Action plan), establishment of ANROWS, Our Watch and VIC - RCFV 10 year plan (establishment of FSV 2016 & Respect 2018).
- AASW work –presentations to hearings & work on recommendations and submissions including to the Fair work Amendment (Family and Domestic Violence Leave) Bill and to the national redress scheme for victims of institutionalised child sexual abuse as well as continuing analysis of the Federal budget with a section on how this pertains to FV.



Christine delivering her presentation

Focus on Research

Dr Kirsty Forsdike Lecturer La Trobe Business School and Chair of La Trobe Violence Against Women Research Network (LAVAWN)

The presentation focussed on What LAVAWN does, its members and projects including those from Rural LAVAWN such as—An investigation of violence against young women in the Bendigo area

Leesa Hooker, Research Fellow, Judith Lumley Centre, Paulina Billet, Jacqui Theobald, Karen Anderson, Dona Martin and Paula Baron

as well as current research exploring aspects of Criminology and Law such as:

- Jury decision making and jury directions in rape trials
- Exploring the way that consent is theorised in the popular imagination

Ms Rachael Mackay Women's Health Goulburn North East

Key elements of this presentation 'Australian research on family violence after disaster: Influencing emergency management policy and practice' were:

- (1) Australian research on family violence after natural disaster - gendered impacts
Men and relationships after Black Saturday.
- (2) Influencing emergency management policy and practice
Development of training packages and resources.

Focus on Response

Ms Kerry Burns CEO Centre Against Violence

Case Study Integrated Family Violence and Sexual Assault Services

This presentation provided a sensitive insight into the multifaceted work done by the Centre of Violence. In addition to providing understanding of the crisis and longer-term holistic support, the presentation highlighted the need for collaborative work within and across agencies.

Ms Kelley Latta and Ms Melissa Habermann-Crowe Albury Wodonga Health

Albury Wodonga Health's approach to Violence, Abuse & Neglect

This presentation firstly provided the rationale for strengthening AW Health's response to family violence before outlining key Violence Abuse & Neglect AWH services including Child and Maternity Services, the Emergency Department and Prevention & Community Development projects such as the Step Out Campaign, Mental Health, AOD & Family Violence Capacity Building project and the Violence Abuse and Neglect Community Team.

Focus on Early Intervention

Ms Mellisa Long, Wodonga Federation of Government Schools and **Ms Stacey Anderson**, Wodonga Primary School

Provided a thorough description of the Respectful Relationships program that is facilitated in local schools, and the meaning of the program for schools and the school community including all staff, students and their families.

Ms Romina Lougoon Community Wellbeing Planning and Projects Officer City of Wodonga

Preventing IPV in Wodonga: A whole of community approach:

Achievements including the formation of the Prevention of IPV Taskforce, developing a Community Action Plan and the Reflect Respect: A Modern Day Guide for Gentlemen initiative, which was a VicHealth Award finalist, were a focus of this presentation. Ongoing work includes continuing to engage key leaders in gender equality and promoting training available and connecting different services/organisations.

BREAK 3.30-4.00PM



Busy Networkers

4.00-5.00PM World Café

Firstly, our rapporteur, Alison captured the key points from each presentation. Secondly, the audience participated in small group conversations that focused on the points arising. Groups considered the meaning of these topics for their workplaces, networks, their practice and communities. Central within these discussions was the question, 'Where to from here?'.

5.00-5.30PM Small groups provided feedback to the broader group.



The World Café

Feedback from the World Café

Approximately half of the 82 attendees participated in the World Café and 31 people completed the feedback survey. The following section provides a brief summary of the next steps arising from the World Café and concludes with an appendix summarising the survey feedback.

Next Steps arising from World Café discussions

Australian Association of Social Workers – Next Steps

1. Continue to advocate across all lifespans
2. Compliance checking intervention orders
3. Mandated men's change programs

Out of this came requests for the AASW to work towards "better trajectory of knowledge and skills", "replicating work across other professions with peak bodies", "training for all family law court staff", "better reporting by police", "education and supervision for social workers" and "a national approach to men's behaviour programs and to managing the waiting lists for programs".

LAVAWN (La Trobe Violence Against Women Network) – Next Steps

1. Suggested future research focus areas: adolescent partner violence, intergenerational violence, teens witnessing family violence.
2. Disseminate research findings through seminars – bring research to life.
3. Decentralise LAVWN. One way to do this might be to transfer pilots to other regions. Another way would be to hold more World Cafes and forums in regional campuses.

Family Violence following disaster – Next Steps

The group provided very specific feedback about this topic as follows:

1. Future research focus areas: drought, farming, gender. Need for increased research partnerships.
2. Educate - WHGNE input around gendered responses into both emergency management plans and local council responses.
3. Community – include questions about personal safety into disaster preparedness.

Recognise that when people attend at community briefings following disasters, they are stressed and responding in different and gendered ways.

Innovative Practice Responses to those experiencing family violence – Next Steps

Feedback included “is daily practice at Centrelink so how to practice can be difficult and challenging”, “family services need to see men and talk about how to be parents, their values and how to pass on positive attributes to children”, and “including children in conversations”.

Next Steps:

1. Change cultural norms
2. Measure efforts and progress
3. Efforts in every sector
4. Developing community skills too
5. Early and pre-early identification of children’s needs
6. Universal early interventions, including a series of questions at intake, and tailored responses
7. Agencies working together (system enablers)

Strengthening responses to family violence in the health system – Next Steps

Practice –

1. Triage to focus on identifying family violence
2. Assessment based on issues

Agency –

1. Knowledge for key players, e.g. in depth, targeted training for GPs, Dr’s.

2. Work towards reducing siloing and losing sight of issues, and increasing awareness of the intersectionality of mental health and family violence.

Community –

1. Visibility – link to networks and other initiatives
2. Information in community about where to get support

Respectful Relationships approach in Government Schools – Next Steps

1. Establish a cross border education program (e.g. Respectful Relationships program in NSW schools)
2. Involve social work support as part of any education program.

Implications for Social Work at La Trobe Albury/Wodonga

Overwhelmingly, the key points arising from the World café point to a need for a community of practice. The intersectionality of family violence and a diverse range of issues calls for a local community of practice to establish and maintain a collaborative inter-agency response to family violence. Social Work at La Trobe can respond in the following ways:

Play a central role in the establishment of a rural social work Alumni chapter based in the Albury Wodonga region.

Continue to facilitate an annual event during the 16 days of activism to end family violence. Our intention is to make cross border challenges and opportunities the focus in 2019.

Explore opportunities to provide professional development to the local social work community.

Act as a conduit to the AASW by feeding back local issues and concerns.

Utilise LAVAWN resources in teaching, e.g. have a speaker at the Family Violence class.

Appendix 1. A summary of survey feedback

Promotion

It appears that the promotional channels worked well, with most hearing about the event via La Trobe Facebook, email and the Social Work Interest Group. One person attended after hearing Ms Christine Craik interviewed on ABC Radio the morning of the event.

Action for 2019: Promote via local radio a week prior to the event.

Venue

Most commented that the venue was appropriate, however some thought that more breaks could be scheduled to avoid becoming uncomfortable in the lecture theatre seats.

Action for 2019: Fewer speakers and schedule regular breaks.

Catering

In sum, attendees thought that the catering was excellent; however a few would have preferred some savoury options at afternoon tea. The lack of soymilk was noted.

Action for 2019: A combination of sweet and savoury options to be provided during the afternoon, with lactose free milk available.

How attending the forum increased knowledge of the Family Violence field of practice

Feedback on this point was very positive as illustrated by comments such as "I have a more national and academic perspective of work in this space. Terrific!" and "Research being done, Council involvement and schools educating young people at grassroots level. Brilliant!".

Themes from the feedback can be summarised as follows:

1. An increased awareness of work done at the local level to address gender inequality,
2. An increased awareness of the many sectors involved in prevention and response.
3. The need for local agencies to work collaboratively.
4. An understanding of academic work such as the LAVWN research network and the relationship between research and practice.
5. Raised awareness of the work of the AASW.

What people found useful about the World Café

Feedback focussed on the benefits of people coming together with a common purpose, and opportunities to consolidate information from the presentations, hear others' perspectives, share information and build knowledge in a collaborative way. Many found the opportunity to network valuable and commented favourably on gaining ideas to take back to their practice and agency as well as the collective commitment to ongoing action.

Only one person did not find the World café useful and would have preferred an overall group discussion to bring things together.

How people intend to use what they learnt in their practice, workplace and community.

Comments suggest that increased networks and connections made on the day will benefit both practitioners and clients. Some intend to share resources and learnings from the event with colleagues whilst others based in NSW intend to research programs such as Respectful Relationships. Comments suggest that other ways the event will influence practice is by "encouraging reflective practice", "changing intake forms to give clients the opportunity to

flag family violence” and through “making referrals to appropriate services”. One attendee’s observation that as a result of the conversations on the day they would be more prepared to call colleagues and seek support suggest an increased awareness that the complexity and multidimensionality of this work has the potential to overwhelm everyone at times. Comments from those who are not practitioners suggest that an increased knowledge of family violence will help them help others who are affected.

Suggestions for Future Events.

Themes from the responses are listed below:

Abuse towards older people.

Family Violence in First Nation communities.

Women with disabilities experience of family violence.

The barriers experienced in the rural context.

Networking

A youth focussed presenter.

Men and masculinity – an event for grandparents, dads and sons.

Learning about the Strategic family Violence Committee.

Overwhelmingly, the strongest interest was in the topic of cross border challenges and opportunities.