

Relationships Australia

NEW SOUTH WALES

**Media release
White Ribbon Day
25 November 2010**

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Relationships Australia Encourages Communities to Speak Up About Domestic Violence

As part of White Ribbon Day today, Relationships Australia is strongly encouraging people to speak up and take action on domestic violence. The goal of White Ribbon Day is to make violence against women a thing of the past.

"The days of friends and neighbours closing the door and shutting the windows on domestic violence are well and truly over," Anne Hollonds, Psychologist and Relationships Australia NSW CEO said. "Today far more people are aware of the need for everyone in our community to be safe from violence and they are taking action to make that happen."

"We are strongly encouraging people to continue that action and call the local police; contact the Domestic Violence Line for advice; offer to help women, men or children who may be experiencing abusive relationships or contact Relationships Australia for counselling and support," Anne Hollonds said. "We are especially concerned about the impact on children who experience violence at home."

Relationships Australia provides a unique program for men who have been violent against their female partners, as part of our Family Safety Program. The Family Safety Program includes counselling and courses for men and women who have used or experienced violence in their relationships. The program also offers help for children who have lived in a violent household.

Men who have been part of the Family Safety Program have said:

"The group showed me that anger was a natural feeling, though what I do with it is up to me." Scott, 25 years old.

"Since being part of the group I'm taking more responsibility for how I think, feel and behave. The group discussions with the other men really helped." Frank, 47 years old.

"Until I did the course I wasn't aware what a mongrel I was becoming... I was very hostile, very jumpy, very aggro. I didn't realise my kids were scared of me. The course really helped." Sam, 52 years old.

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Individual, Couple & Family Counselling, Relationships & Parenting Courses, Post Separation Services, Children's Contact Services, Family Relationship Centres, Adolescent Services, Family & Workplace Mediation
Corporate & Business Consultancy, Professional Training & Consultation

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Women who have been part of the Family Safety Program have said:

"Some of what the kids said was news to me." Susan, 35 years old

"I feel like I have more control over my life." Kara, 44 years old

"We really are OK as a family." Sabine, 24 years old.

Children who have been part of the Family Safety Program have said:

"It took all my bad feelings away." Claire, 11 years old.

"Playing at home is different now, we are all more gentle with each other." Callam, 13 years old.

"I really liked going to the group. Mum is happier now, so I'm happier too." Joshua, eight years old.

This year the White Ribbon Campaign is calling on all Aussie Men to take the oath and 'Swear' - never to commit, excuse, or remain silent about violence against women. One in three women in Australia experience violence or abuse in their lifetime. Aussie men can demonstrate their support of the White Ribbon campaign by visiting www.myoath.com.au to take positive action to create change.

To find out more about the Relationships Australia Family Safety Program call 1300 364 277 or visit www.nsw.relationships.com.au.

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NSW Domestic Violence Line: 1800 656 463

About the White Ribbon Foundation:

The White Ribbon Foundation of Australia aims to prevent violence against women by changing community attitudes and behaviour. For more information visit: <http://www.whiteribbonday.org.au>

About Relationships Australia NSW

Relationships Australia services include counselling for individuals couples and families (face-to-face, telephone and online); parenting and relationship education; support for families going through separation; specialist services for people who have been in care, refugee families and Aboriginal communities; workplace counselling and training; employee assistance programs and consultancy for companies; and training for family support professionals. Relationships Australia NSW is part of a national network of over 200 centres.

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