

Speaker's notes

# What's the law – Family violence

## How to use these notes

**Topic:** Relationship breakdown, personal safety, violence in the home.

**Resources:** *What's the law?* education kit 'Family violence', which contains a photo story (on DVD), activity sheets and answer sheets.

These notes provide guidelines for a speaker's script and information on how to use these resources when presenting to a community group. The notes include a story summary, questions and answers, key messages, areas for further discussion and referral information.

## 1. Preparing to present

It may be useful to read the activity and answer sheets to prepare for your presentation - they may give you ideas for additional questions and activities for your group. It is also a good idea to look at the websites and referral information given in section nine of these notes.

If you need assistance with presentation skills, engagement ideas or coordination support for the group you are preparing for you can contact [communitylegaled@legalaid.qld.gov.au](mailto:communitylegaled@legalaid.qld.gov.au) or 3238 3431.

## 2. Introduce yourself and *What's the law?*

Before you begin the presentation, introduce yourself, your role and your organisation.

For example, if you work at Legal Aid Queensland:

- Legal Aid Queensland helps the community in many different ways if people have problems with the law. We provide legal education to newly-arrived communities about their rights and responsibilities.

Refer to the *What's the law?* education kit and its purpose by mentioning these key points:

- We see many different newly-arrived communities get into trouble with the law and often the same legal problems arise. These problems can be avoided if you know some simple information about the law and where to go to for help before your problem becomes serious.
- The photo stories in *What's the law?* have been made to help you learn about the law on ten different topics.

Begin with some introductory statements and general questions about the topic:

- Today we are going to show you a photo story about the importance of feeling safe in the home.
- In Australia, the law says everyone has a right to feel safe. Domestic violence laws in Australia help to protect people who are scared that someone in their family might hurt them, like Radha, the character in this story.
- Family violence is a term to describe behaviour by one person in a family towards another which is controlling or makes them feel afraid and unsafe. It can also be called domestic violence.
- A person can try to control another person through physical action or through emotional or financial actions.
- Examples of family member's actions that may be seen as 'family violence' are where they: control or refuse to give their family members money, won't let their family member see friends and family, won't let the family member practise their religion or culture, threaten to hurt the family member, children or someone close to them, threaten to or do actual harm to a pet, threaten to hurt themselves if a family member doesn't do something, make their family member have sex or do other sexual acts or call their family member names.

- What do you think makes a relationship happy and healthy?

### 3. Summarise the photo story

- This story is about Radha and how her brother Ram is worried about her safety in the home.
- Ram talks to his friend Nabeeh at a soccer game about how his sister is having problems with her husband.
- Ram tells Nabeeh that his sister's husband hits her and controls the money. Ram says he has told his sister to stay with her husband.
- Nabeeh tells Ram that his sister's husband should not hit her and that he should make sure his sister has a safe place to go.

### 4. Ask questions

To strengthen engagement with the photo story and develop the group's legal literacy, ask the following questions before showing the story. This will encourage the group to watch actively and think about key messages.

While you are watching the story, think about the next four questions:

- 1) **How does Radha's husband make her feel unsafe?**
- 2) **What have Nabeeh and Ram told the women in their lives who have been hit by their husbands?**
- 3) **What does Nabeeh advise Ram to tell his sister?**
- 4) **What can Radha do if she is feeling unsafe?**

### 5. Show the photo story



### 6. Answer the questions

Ask the same key questions after you show the story and allow for discussion to tease out the right answers.

#### **How does Radha's husband make her feel unsafe?**

- She feels unsafe as her husband gets angry, throws things and sometimes hits her.
- Radha might also feel worried for her children – they could be in the house when her husband is violent and it is not safe or healthy for the children to see this happening.
- She is also insecure about her financial situation as her husband controls the household money.

#### **What have Nabeeh and Ram told the women in their lives who have been hit by their husbands?**

- Nabeeh told his cousin's wife to be a good wife. She stayed with her husband and he continued to hit her.
- Ram has told Radha to do what her husband says and to stay with her husband. He is now worried about her safety.

#### **What does Nabeeh advise Ram to tell his sister?**

- Nabeeh wishes he had given his cousin different advice.
- He tells Ram to tell his sister that her husband has no right to hit her and she should leave the house and find a safe place.

#### **What can Radha do if she is feeling unsafe?**

- Radha has options to help ensure her safety. She can take action straight away.
- If she is in immediate danger she can call 000 and ask for the police and an interpreter if she needs one.
- She can call a domestic violence service such as DV Connect (1800 811 811) for information and advice about her situation. This service can provide a 'shelter' (a safe place for women with a secret address).

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- She can talk to friends and family she trusts about her husband's violence and finding a temporary place to stay.
  - For the longer term, the police can apply to a magistrates court for a domestic violence order which stops Radha's husband doing certain things.
  - She can talk to Legal Aid Queensland about what to do about her children and what will happen with them and how to keep them safe.

## 7. Emphasise key messages

- Domestic violence can be hitting and physical abuse, but it can be anything else including words that make you feel unsafe.
- It is your right to feel safe in your family. There is no shame in asking for help and in Australia there are many services to support you.
- If you are scared or worried about your safety, you can call 000 and ask for the police.
- You can also contact DV Connect any time on 1800 811 811.
- Call **Legal Aid Queensland** or your **community legal centre** if you have legal problems or have to go to court.

## 8. Further questions and discussion

- Does anyone have any questions?

You are not expected to be a lawyer to use this resource. Many teachers and community workers use this resource successfully. If a participant raises personal legal issues, you can provide referral information. If you are not a lawyer, legal assessment or advice should be referred to **Legal Aid Queensland** on **1300 65 11 88** or the closest **community legal centre**.

## 9. Possible discussion points and referral information

### Police and immigration status

- Regardless of immigration status, everyone can get help to feel safe
- The police will not send someone back to their country if you contact them about family violence
- If someone is in Australia without a visa, they can get immigration advice or referral:  
contact Legal Aid Queensland 1300 65 11 88 or the Refugee and Immigration Legal Service (RAILS)  
3846 3189 [www.rails.org.au](http://www.rails.org.au)

### Family Relationship Centres

- Family Relationship Centres provide information and confidential assistance for families at all stages in their lives.
- Centres focus on providing family dispute resolution (mediation) to help separating families achieve workable parenting arrangements without going to court.
- Whether you are going through separation, starting a relationship, want to make your relationship stronger, or having relationship difficulties, the centres can help [www.familyrelationships.gov.au](http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au)

### Domestic violence publications

- Legal Aid Queensland has a number of booklets and information sheets to help you understand how to apply for an order and how an order operates [www.legalaid.qld.gov.au/publications](http://www.legalaid.qld.gov.au/publications)
- Legal Aid Queensland [translated resources](#)