

**KEEPING KIDS SAFE
AND SECURE**

**FAMILY
VIOLENCE**
IT'S NOT OK

Keeping Kids Safe and Secure

**Take care of our children
Take care of what they hear
Take care of what they see
Take care of what they feel
For how the children grow
So will be the shape of Aotearoa**

Dame Whina Cooper

This is a booklet about supporting parents and whānau to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. It is for the families, whānau, friends, neighbours and workmates of everyone who is raising children in New Zealand.





Family Violence

We all want to help make sure children are loved, well cared for and brought up free from family violence.

Family violence is:


- violence by adults to other adults
- violence by adults to children, and
- violence by children to other children.

Family violence can be physical, sexual or emotional.

It's not only physical violence like slapping, shaking, beating or hitting. It is also:

- throwing things
- constant shouting and swearing
- put-downs
- involving children in sexual activities
- any threatening and controlling behaviour
- all the things that make children frightened or scared.





**“I cover up my eyes
and ears when she
starts yelling -
I pretend I’m
building a wall.”**

eight year old boy

Growing up around violence harms children

It's not just being on the receiving end. It's also seeing it happen to people they love.

“When Daddy hurts Mummy I shake inside and I feel so sick I think I’m going to throw up.”

seven year old girl

Abuse and neglect harms children

It's not just the physical harm. Constant fights and arguments are emotionally damaging for children.

And sibling violence harms children as well

Adults aren't the only ones who hurt children. Siblings who bully others can be violent and emotionally abusive.

“After school my brother and me were always home by ourselves. He made me do everything and if I said no, he smacked me over.”

11 year old boy





“We always have to watch what we say or do or he gets angry.”

10 year old boy

Why is it harmful for children?

Violence makes it harder for children to grow up and lead normal lives – harder for them to make friends, to learn, stay healthy and be happy.

The effects of violence can last a lifetime. The physical scars on the outside may heal - the emotional scars on the inside may not.

“Growing up in that environment made me hyper-alert. I was always on the lookout for trouble - eyes wide, looking around, guard up - because you think you might do something unintentionally to provoke an attack.”

56 year old woman





“I worry and think about the fighting – it makes it hard to concentrate at school.”

11 year old girl



Children need to feel safe...

Violence makes them feel unsafe.


Children need to feel loved...

Violence makes them feel unloved.

Children need to have people they can trust...

Violence makes them mistrust the people they should be able to trust the most.





**“We can hear every
word... we just pretend
to watch TV.”**

12 year old boy

Child abuse and neglect

Parenting can be exciting, rewarding and life changing. It can also be relentless, challenging and stressful.

Common problems, which are not sorted out, can lead to situations where children are harmed, such as:

- conflict between adults
- drug and alcohol abuse
- mental health problems.

These kinds of problems are not limited to anyone in particular – they occur right across society.

And they get worse where there is isolation, stress and lack of support.

Understanding the behaviours and situations that can lead to abuse and neglect can help us stop it from happening.

“I could tell she was really ill. Drunk and ill. I gave her a hug and said, ‘When you’re ready, come and find me’. A few weeks later, she did.”

Nanny, 59





“I could see she was stressed out so I offered to have the kids over to play... it led to us having a good chat.”

Kindy mum, 32

Supporting each other

All of us have opportunities, in our everyday lives, to support parents and families to keep children safe.

When parents are really struggling, or we notice things starting to go wrong, we can help. Keeping children safe and secure is something the whole whānau can be involved in.

It's important, where possible, to help out before things get too serious. Just listening, offering support or helping parents get in touch with, or choose services, can make a huge difference.

**“I knew things weren't right.
I thought she'd be all whakamā
(embarrassed) but once I brought
it up we talked and talked.”**

Workmate of a parent



**“Talking does a
world of good – just
releases the energy,
calms you down.”**

Father, 42

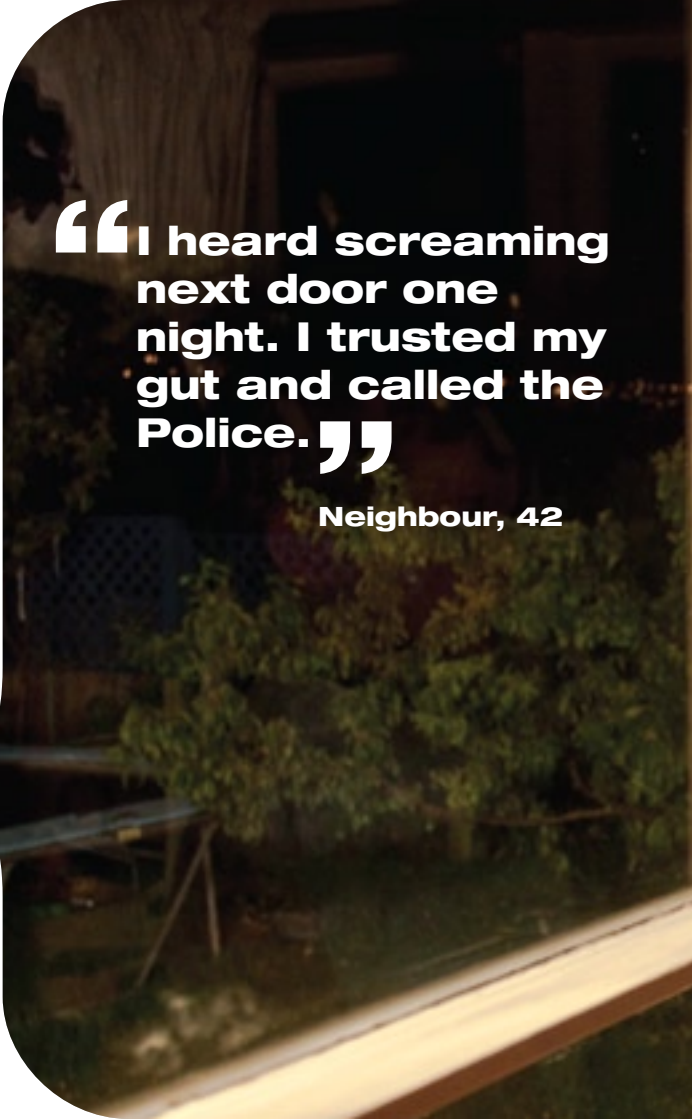


What can we do?

If you're worried about a parent here are some things you can do:

- ask them if they're OK
- listen when they talk about what's happening
- ask them what they would like to do
- offer to provide some practical help like; caring for the children for a couple of hours, picking up the groceries for a housebound mum, cooking a meal for a sick parent...
- encourage them to talk to someone they trust
- put them in touch with the services they need.

These are some of the things we can do to help prevent abuse. If we suspect that abuse is **already happening**, it's important to get help from the Police or Child, Youth and Family.



“I heard screaming next door one night. I trusted my gut and called the Police.”

Neighbour, 42



There's help available

If you're worried about family violence, there are resources and organisations that can provide advice and support.


- Call the Family Violence Information Line on 0800 456 450 to find out about the organisations in your area who can help.
- Visit the website: www.areyouok.org.nz
- If an adult or child is in immediate danger, call the Police on 111.
- If you are concerned about a child's situation, call Child, Youth and Family on 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459).
- If you know an adult who's being abused, offer them support and encouragement to get help.
- For a list of local services, go to www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory/index.jsp

"I knocked on the door and there was no answer. Then I heard noises. Turns out the older one was looking after baby, all by herself. She's too young for that. She's not even six."

Grandfather, 62

"When my Jasmine told me her best friend had been touched up by her uncle, I knew I had to do something."

Mother, 37

A group of people of different ages are playing together outdoors. In the center, a young girl in a pink shirt and dark vest is hanging from a wooden pole with her arms raised. To her left, an older woman with short white hair, wearing a red shirt, is supporting her from below. Behind the girl, an older man with glasses and a light blue shirt is watching. To the right of the girl, a woman with dark hair, wearing a black shirt, is smiling. Further right, a man in a dark blue polo shirt is standing, and next to him is a young boy in a red t-shirt with a blue circular logo and dark shorts. The background shows a grassy area and some trees under bright sunlight.

**Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi,
engari taku toa he toa takitini**

**My strength is not that of one,
but that of many.**

Supporting parents helps to prevent abuse and keep children safe



IT IS **OK** TO HELP

For information and support call the Family Violence Information line on 0800 456 450 or visit www.areyouok.org.nz.

For a list of services in your local area, go to www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory/index.jsp