



CULTURE NO EXCUSE FOR ABUSE



SHAKTI



IT IS
OK TO ASK
FOR HELP



**Men's violence
against women is
unacceptable, no
matter where you
are and where you
come from.**

WELCOME

**Family violence can affect anyone.
It happens in every community.**

This booklet can help you if you are worried about yourself, your family, someone you know, or your community.

It is important we nurture our own cultural identities. But it is not OK to use our culture as an excuse for violence in our families.

This booklet is the first to be developed by Shakti with the It's not OK Campaign to look at the specific issues facing ethnic communities in New Zealand.

It describes family violence and gives ideas about things we can all do to stop family violence.



Shakti works with Asian, African and Middle Eastern communities in New Zealand. Established in 1995, they provide culturally-competent domestic violence services and promote the rights of ethnic women and children.

WHAT IS FAMILY VIOLENCE?

A healthy family is supportive, trusting and safe.
No one should be scared by someone in their family.

Family violence is:

- Partner abuse
- Child abuse and neglect
- Elder abuse and neglect
- Dating violence
- Violence in other family relationships



**Children are
always harmed
by violence, even
when it doesn't
happen in front
of them.**





We all need
to respect
each other



FAMILY VIOLENCE CAN BE:

Psychological:

threats, name calling, jealousy, put downs, smashing things, stalking, controlling what someone does, says and wears, forced marriage/child marriage, not letting someone see or contact their family or friends, screening someone's mail, their texts or phone calls, not letting someone go out alone or to school, university or work, threats to deport someone

Physical:

hitting, kicking, biting, pushing, strangulation, using weapons, throwing acid, female genital mutilation, being restrained

Sexual:

rape or any forced sexual activity, marital rape, unwanted touching, any sexual activity with someone under 16 years old

Neglect:

not providing food, shelter, heating or clothing, leaving children home alone, not getting medical attention or social services

Financial:

taking someone's money, running up debts in their name, checking all receipts, pressuring someone to sign official papers (eg wills, immigration papers), dowry abuse

Spiritual:

stopping someone from expressing their spiritual or religious beliefs, forcing someone to go to church/temple/mosque, insulting or making fun of their beliefs or culture, forcing someone to eat food they don't want to or wear something they don't want to

**FAMILY
VIOLENCE
IS A CRIME IN
NEW ZEALAND**

Family violence is a serious issue in New Zealand, but people want that to change.

The law says family violence can be physical, sexual, psychological, including threats and damage to property, and financial abuse.

Nobody has the right to physically hurt another person. This includes children.

Nobody is allowed to have sexual contact with another person without that person's permission. Any sexual contact with someone under 16 years old is a crime.

It is illegal to marry if you are under 16 years old. It is illegal to force someone to marry.

Nobody has the right to use intimidation or threats to control another person.

The law protects people in many relationships including married couples, couples in civil unions, gay and lesbian couples, ex-partners, boyfriends and girlfriends, children and young people, flatmates and other people who share accommodation.

Police and other agencies take family violence seriously. They have people who can help. They can arrange for interpreters who speak your language. You do not have to leave your family to get help.



**We need
to value each
other, no matter
which country
we come from.**

CULTURE IS NO EXCUSE FOR ABUSE

Here are some things people say to excuse violence:

- You have brought shame on our family.
- You have breached the honour of our family.
- Young people should obey their elders.
- You are too much like a New Zealander. You must respect the old ways.
- This is just the way we do things.
- All women/men/children in our culture must do this.

Wherever family violence happens, people have found ways to excuse it. But family violence is not OK in any culture.



**“There are good
cultural values but
they can be twisted.”**



Don't let anyone
take away your
sense of dignity and
freedom to express
who you want
to be.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

We want all families to be safe and happy. If someone is in danger, call 111 for the Police, even if you are not sure.

IF YOU ARE LIVING WITH ABUSE

It is not your fault. You do not need to feel ashamed or embarrassed. Help is available.

There are things you can do to make it safer for yourself and your family.

Everyone can learn to express and manage their feelings without hurting others. There are services all over New Zealand that can help your family relationships be healthy and safe.

Talk to people you trust and ask for help. You could tell a friend, family member, workmate, teacher or carer, employer, health worker or a family violence helping service.

Help is free and confidential and you can call a helpline or service without giving your name. You can ask to speak to a woman doctor or Police officer.

Find out what services are available on page 18.

It is OK to ask for help.

IF YOU ARE USING VIOLENCE

Everyone can learn to express and manage their feelings without hurting others.

Help is available for people who want to stop using violence or abuse.

To find out what services are available, go to page 18.

IF YOU WANT TO HELP SOMEONE ELSE

If you know someone who is experiencing family violence, there is no shame in helping them.

You can:

- Tell them violence in the family is not OK, but it's OK to ask for help
- Talk about the services available and how to contact them
- Support and encourage them to contact the services.

What you do and say can make a difference.

Things to try: listening, talking about violence and abuse, practical help, looking after children, being there, getting information.

If children are being hurt they need adults to help them. Don't be afraid to offend an adult to keep a child safe.

Adults living with violence need support to make decisions in their own time when they are ready. It is important to go at their pace. Change can take a long time. Don't give up.





Things
can get
better



IF YOU WANT CHANGE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

If we are to stop family violence, we all need to take action – including making it OK to talk about it. We need community and faith leaders of all cultures to lead the way. Each community knows what will work for them. Towns, neighbourhoods, workplaces, schools, neighbourhoods, faiths and sports clubs all over New Zealand are taking action to prevent family violence and to promote safe and healthy families.

You can:

- Collect information on family violence and distribute it
- Ask men to speak out against family violence
- Invite someone to speak to your group
- Ask for training on family violence
- Put information in your newsletters or on your community noticeboard
- Create posters for displays
- Make up your own slogans and put them on your letterhead
- Have a “safer families” stall at a family fun day or open day
- Find out what helping services are available

CONTACTS

AND MORE INFORMATION

If you need support, advice or if you need to talk to someone, these organisations can help you:

In an emergency call Police on **111**

Established since 1995, Shakti provides services for women, children, youth and families of Asian, African and Middle Eastern origin
0800 742 584 (0800 SHAKTI)
24-hour crisis line

Women's Refuge **0800 733 843**

The Ministry for Vulnerable Children
Oranga Tamariki
0508 326 459

It's not OK Information Line
0800 456 450

HELP sexual abuse services
09 623 1700

Find out more at:

www.shakti.org.nz

www.areyouok.org.nz





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ISBN: 978-0-947513-15-3