



'It's not OK' Campaign Community Evaluation Project

CASE STUDY 4: NEW PLYMOUTH

Since 1999, three groups comprising of the Family Violence Focus Group, Taranaki Te Rito Management Group and South Taranaki Family Violence Network have worked throughout Taranaki to raise family violence awareness. The three groups amalgamated in 2008 to form an inclusive and cohesive family violence collaborative, now known as the Taranaki Safe Families Trust. Importantly, while the 'It's not OK' Campaign was identified as vital on a number of levels, the collaboration was acknowledged as providing a long-term strategic and structural support that preceded the Campaign's efforts.

INTERVENTIONS

The following specific Campaign related interventions were developed and implemented in the community.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

Awareness raising – general awareness raising through weekly family violence articles in the local midweek newspaper, expositions, and community days at the local library. In addition, awareness was raised through branding, billboards ("Taranaki where family violence is not OK"), family violence resources and posters.

Targeting employers – dedicated members of the Taranaki Safe Families Trust have targeted local employers and, once engaged, work alongside employers to develop family violence programmes that enable employers to recognise family violence, respond appropriately and refer to the appropriate services. Four large employers, New Plymouth District Council, Fonterra, Sport Taranaki and the YMCA, have participated to date. Integral to the employer programme are the development of champion teams, recognised in each workplace, that provide a named individual(s) to whom those concerned about family violence issues can access. Finally, the programme stresses the need for employers to support those experiencing family violence. This has entailed Collaborative members reviewing existing policy and procedures and advising how these might be amended to better support employees.

Resource development projects – linked to awareness raising, a number of local resources have been developed, responding to local environments and needs. Resources include:

- the development of a family violence directory for local professionals, and,
- a postcard for midwives to distribute to pregnant women, an initiative that acknowledges that family violence can negatively impact on the child's cognitive development.

Sports clubs – the Trust has worked alongside sports clubs to encourage, and in some situations assist with, the development and implementation of non-violence codes of conduct with specific attention to family violence zero tolerance.

IDENTIFIED IMPACTS

Participants stressed that impacts arising out of the Campaign have been incremental and generally occurred on a small scale.

We haven't achieved change yet but we are on the upward curve. (New Plymouth, Social service provider #2)

These changes, however, have been appreciated as they qualitatively demonstrate a major shift in cultural attitudes and behaviours associated with non-violence.

It would be a tragedy if the Campaign stops. It will take another 20 years to get to the top. (New Plymouth, Social service provider #7)

1. Increased awareness

All participants stated that the national 'It's not OK' Campaign has resulted in a high degree of awareness and knowledge of family violence.

There is a huge awareness of family violence now. (New Plymouth, Government agency representative #2)

We have seen awareness of family violence growing incrementally each year. This is definitely because of the Campaign. (New Plymouth, Social service provider #7)

Further, key Campaign messages were reported as having become entrenched. This was evidenced by the use of Campaign messages, as common vernacular, across multiple levels of the community. Multiple reports were provided of adults, students and children using Campaign slogans in reference to violent and / or bullying behaviours. Further, participants provided multiple references to an increased understanding of family violence and an increased incidence of children, families and social service providers engaging in family violence discussions. Importantly, these discussions, increased knowledge and the perceived freedom to discuss family violence were directly linked to the national Campaign and the various complementary local initiatives.

It's more acceptable to participate in something to do with family violence. (New Plymouth, Social service provider #1)

2. Attitude change and increased prosocial behaviours

The Campaign was reported to have provided a vehicle for wide reaching attitude and behaviour change. This was most commonly noted in reference to older people discussing family violence and a readiness for people to acknowledge violence in their own lives.

It's harder for clients to minimise family violence. They are able to identify family violence much more easily now. (New Plymouth, Government agency representative #2)

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Older people are more willing to disclose – realising that it's not OK. (New Plymouth, Social service provider #3)

Further, Women's Refuge reported an increase in self-referrals and, importantly, an increase in the number of women seeking help who were experiencing emotional and psychological abuse. Importantly, less crisis referrals were noted, in this sense abused women were noted as accessing Refuge earlier.

3. Community responsiveness and ownership

Community responsiveness and ownership was as cited as a primary source of evidence that the Campaign has had a major community impact. Responsiveness and ownership were discussed in relation to schools, local central government agencies, a local mayor, employers and sporting organisations who had participated in the Campaign. For example, Work and Income and Child, Youth and Family (CYF) employees wore 'It's not OK' T-shirts at dedicated time periods during the month. A local Mayor, who featured on a billboard, was described as having had a wide community impact. Finally, local sports clubs had implemented non-violence policies.

We have featured local ambassadors on some of the resources. People in the community have been more likely to reflect on the Campaign messaging when they see locals on the billboards. For example, we used one of the district's Mayors on a billboard. This was really successful as he was recognised by everyone in the community. (New Plymouth, Government agency representative #2)

4. Statutory intervention

Police participants reported increased family violence notifications, lower thresholds for the reporting family violence related behaviours (an increase in minor offences being reported) and an increase in those coming forward with a first time notification. Further, an increase in strangers reporting a family violence incident was noted.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Participants were asked to identify critical success factors integral to the local Campaign's success. Critical success factors included: the importance of having a dedicated coordinator, leadership, the national 'It's not OK' Campaign and the support provided by the national 'It's not OK' Campaign team.

1. Dedicated coordinator

The Taranaki Safe Families Trust Coordinator's role, with a single preventative Campaign focus, was identified as critical to the Campaign's success as the Coordinator was able to solely focus on community engagement, planning and local Campaign implementation. This was especially discussed in relation to the first Coordinator who was reported as instrumental to driving the local Campaign.

2. Leadership

Two levels of leadership were identified. At a foundational level the Taranaki Safe Families Collaborative provided an important level of governance and support for the development and implementation of the local Campaign. The Collaborative's diverse membership enabled planning and support across a wide section of government agencies and social service providers. Also of importance, the Collaborative's membership, comprising representatives from North and South Taranaki, ensured the unique needs of the various communities were integrated into Campaign planning. On a second level, the initial Taranaki Safe Families Trust Coordinator was regarded as have driven local initiatives, providing much needed coordination, community consultation and energy across the initiatives.

The Trust has been able to go into communities with which we have knowledge and connections to engage. This ignited the Campaign. (New Plymouth, Social service provider #7)

3. The national 'It's not OK' Campaign

The national 'It's not OK' Campaign was described as providing a vital framework to guide the area's family violence prevention and intervention strategies. The Campaign's longer-term focus was also appreciated as consistent messaging has acted as a constant reminder and resulted in family violence being at the forefront of prevention efforts and community cognisance.

The national Campaign has provided consistent reminders about family violence. Its strategy has meant that the messages aren't lost. They haven't become background noise. (New Plymouth, Social service provider #1)

Importantly, the Campaign was cited as providing a terms of reference for the community upon which family violence prevention efforts could be developed.

The national Campaign has given us direction. (New Plymouth, Social service provider #2)

We were struggling to get a higher profile but the Campaign has given our work validity. (New Plymouth, Social service provider #3)

The national Campaign has put the wheels on the bus. (New Plymouth, Social service provider #4)

We were able to have one combined message for the whole of Taranaki. (New Plymouth, Government agency representative #1)

The Campaign was reported to have been embraced nationally and locally because of the clarity and tone of the Campaign messaging. Further, Campaign resources were highly appreciated as they removed burden from communities to develop their own resources whilst providing an opportunity to provide a local stamp on the national Campaign merchandise and resources. Enabling Campaign resources to be 'locally owned' was regarded as hugely successful as communities were encouraged to develop their own non-violence, Campaign-related strategies.

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*The Campaign has been fantastic in supporting us to develop our own initiatives.
(New Plymouth, Social service provider #5)*

We haven't had to reinvent the wheel. (New Plymouth, Social service provider #2)

*The resources are amazing. Clear and simple language that are localised. (New Plymouth,
Social service provider #2)*

4. Support provided by the national 'It's not OK' team

The Campaign team was lauded for their provision of advice and support. Especially appreciated was the provision of strategic advice and the focus the Campaign team brought to local initiatives. The team was also appreciated for advice and work around ways to ensure consistent Campaign messaging.

The provision of 'It's not OK' Campaign resourcing was highly appreciated. Given low operational budgets, the various initiatives would not have been possible without this support. Further, without funding, opportunities to link local initiatives to the national 'It's not OK' Campaign would have severely hindered audience resonance and uptake. As such, the complementary national and local branding meant that a call to non-violence occurred at a local level.

BARRIERS TO ON-GOING SUCCESS

Insufficient funding was raised as a primary barrier to the Campaign's on-going success. This barrier was understood within an environment of intergenerational violence and family dysfunction that will require long-term support to achieve the required changes. As such, funding was identified as a requirement to the development and implementation of strategies to achieve significant shifts in culture.

Next, a lack of assurance surrounding the Family Violence Coordinator position was raised as a barrier. Intermittent funding was associated with an inability to plan long-term.

Barriers to detecting abuse and changing attitudes and behaviours were discussed in relation to Taranaki's geographic context. Firstly, the province was described as consisting of unique rural and provincial needs. On one level, due to low population density, family violence can go undetected. This was reported to be further exacerbated by a growing number of farm-based residences; whereby families are able to rent affordable accommodation on farming rental properties. Social service providers noted that, in the event of family violence, families are able to easily move to alternative accommodation and therefore manage to evade social service detection and intervention. Next, with the advent of rural school closures, a loss of protective factors associated with communities was reported. Essentially, families are more able to remain anonymous, which in turn can result in a lack of detection and intervention. In addition, rural Taranaki was described as possessing attitudes towards family violence that acted as a barrier to attitude and behaviour change. Most commonly, these attitudes were regarded as patriarchal and restricted family violence as a private family matter.

In rural areas family violence is seen as unsavoury. (New Plymouth, Social service provider #2)

Finally, South Taranaki was described as isolated and lacking social services. A scarcity of adequate referral, support and intervention services was raised as a primary concern. While participants acknowledged that the Campaign has resulted in increased awareness and referrals for support and intervention, the community has struggled to meet these demands due to a lack of services. This was especially frustrating given increased family violence notifications have not coincided with increased service-related funding.

There are not enough services. (New Plymouth, unanimous group comment, community stakeholder workshop #1)

Specifically, the need for a local safe house and timely access to alcohol and other drug (AOD) related services were raised.



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