

ADVERTISING FEATURE

PUTTING AN END TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Helping men change abusive behaviour

In Australia, family violence contributes more to death, disability and illness in women aged 18 to 44 than any other risk factor.

On average, at least one woman a week is killed by her partner or ex-partner, according to Jacqui Watt, chief executive officer of No to Violence (NTV), the peak body for organisations and individuals working with men to end family violence in Victoria and NSW.

While intervention strategies are vital, NTV wants to stop family violence before it starts.

"Family violence is a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviours that take many different forms," says Watt. "It happens within intimate relationships as well as between family members and is rarely a one-off incident."

"It can affect anyone, regardless of sex, age, race, sexuality, disability, gender identity or lifestyle."

"However, violent behaviour is most frequently used by men as a way to exercise power and control over women and children. A man's use of violence is a choice and men must take responsibility for their behaviour."

"NTV acknowledges that all women, men and children can be adversely affected by family violence; the definition of 'family' including same-sex relationships and mixed or blended families."

For 25 years, NTV has worked to bring



Violent behaviour is used by men to exercise power and control over women and children, says No to Violence CEO Jacqui Watt (pictured, left).



about the changes the community needs to eliminate men's use of family violence, and has been working directly with men to support them to change.

Its Men's Referral Service is a telephone counselling, information and referral service operating in Victoria, NSW and Tasmania; the central point of contact for men taking responsibility for their behaviour, whether their violence is physical, psychological or emotional. The service also receives referrals from police in those states.

"If a man is worried that his behaviour might be affecting his partner, ex-partner, children or another family member in any way, it is the time to take action," says Watt. "We also provide support and referrals for women and men seeking information on behalf of their male partners, friends or family members, and workers in a range of agencies seeking assistance for clients who are men."

Watt says that while NTV welcomes the federal government's commitment to tackling domestic and family violence, without a substantial increase in funding to strengthen and expand depleted programs for men's behaviour change, Australia will continue to

'Working directly with men ... can contribute to the safety of women and children.'

Jacqui Watt, CEO, No to Violence

experience high rates of domestic and family violence.

"We need to start working with the men who choose to use domestic violence, to help them change their beliefs, attitudes and behaviour," she says.

"Evidence shows that working directly with men to change their behaviour can contribute to the safety of women and children. Safety of women and children is at the centre of everything we do."

Last week, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) released research showing concerning gaps about young people's knowledge of domestic violence.

It found young people's understanding of physical domestic violence had improved since the last survey was undertaken in 2013, but that large numbers did not recognise emotional abuse and controlling behaviour as forms of domestic violence.

However, making major inroads requires a "join the dots", whole-of-community approach, not only more money, according to Watt.

"There is no quick-fix to stop family violence. It takes courage from our community to recognise that we need to work with the men who use violence if we are to keep women and children safe."

Ask yourself:

Are you angry and exploding at the people you care about most?

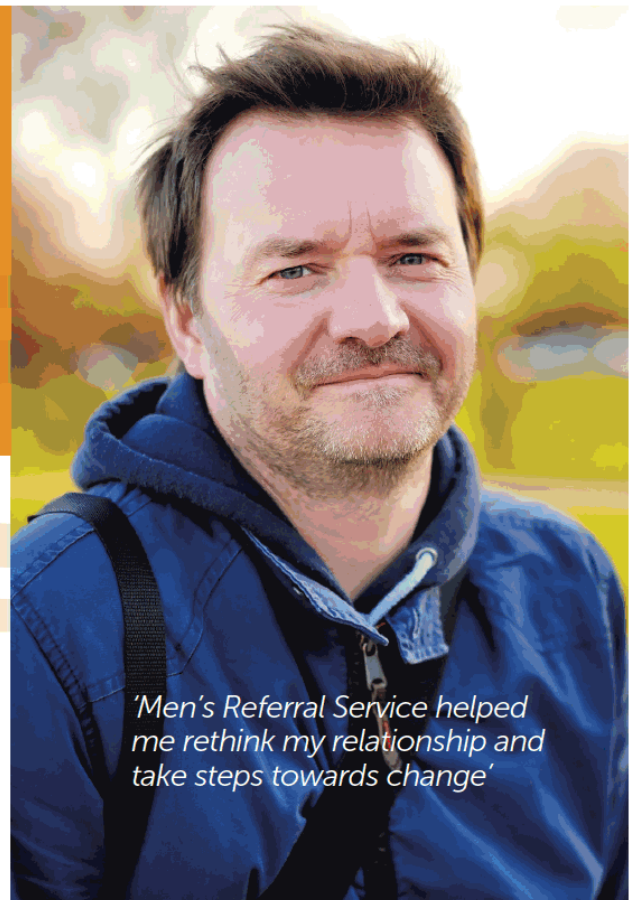
If the answer is **yes**, it's time to give us a call.

The Men's Referral Service is a men's family violence telephone counselling, information and referral service.

When you call the Men's Referral Service:

- > you will talk with a trained counsellor
- > you don't need to give your name
- > you will be treated with respect.

Call **1300 766 491** or head to our website ntv.org.au to chat online.



'Men's Referral Service helped me rethink my relationship and take steps towards change'