

Keeping Ourselves Safe

Years 9–10

Focus area 7

This section of the KOS programme contains one of the following focus areas for students at years 9–10 (ages 13–14):

1. Identifying abuse
2. Recognising and avoiding risk
3. Knowing what to do
4. Getting help
5. Safety in cyberspace
6. Anger and violence
- 7. Breaking the silence about family violence**
8. What I think, what you think

Note: Research suggests that an effective KOS programme should include learning experiences from each of the focus areas.

Focus area 7: Breaking the silence about family violence

Contents

Focus area 7: Breaking the silence about family violence.....	2
Notes for the teacher	2
Curriculum links.....	2
Resources	2
Learning intentions.....	2
Activities	3
Continuum	3
Fact or fiction?.....	3
Case studies	3
Learning journal.....	3
Copysheet: The Facts about Family Violence	4
True or False	4
Copysheet: Case Studies.....	6

Focus area 7: Breaking the silence about family violence

Notes for the teacher

1. Ensure that safety guidelines are in place. All school staff (not just the teachers concerned) must know what to do if a student discloses abuse to them during or after *Keeping Ourselves Safe*. Parents should also be made aware of what to do. See the [Child Protection Guidelines](#).
2. This topic of family violence may be sensitive for some of your students, and needs to be handled with care. It is important that safety guidelines are in place. The teacher should be sensitive to students in the class who may need additional support, or referral to the guidance counsellor.

Students need to be aware that family violence is not gender, culture or income specific. They need to hear that:

- no one deserves to be abused
- no one has to put up with abuse
- abuse is never the victim's fault
- abuse should be reported.

Ensure that students know to whom in the school and community they can report abuse within the family. If the first person doesn't listen, they must go on telling until someone listens and does something to help.

Curriculum links

Key Competencies: Managing self; Relating to others; Participating and contributing

Learning areas: Levels 4–5 Health and Physical Education – Strand A: Personal growth and development, Strand C: Relationships; Interpersonal skills; Strand D: Community resources

Underlying concepts:

- Well-being, Hauora (all aspects) – expressing feelings about abuse and harassment
- Attitudes and values – developing care and concern for other people in their family and community

Resources

Copysheet: **The Facts about Family Violence**

Copysheet: **Case Studies**

This may be a good lesson to invite your School Community Officer to attend.

Learning intentions

At the end of this focus area students will be able to:

- identify types of abuse that happen in families
- explain the cycle of violence
- have strategies to break the cycle of violence.

Activities

Continuum

Read out the following statement.

Family violence can occur in any family regardless of culture, geographic location or economic position.

Ask students to position themselves along a continuum line, one end of which is agree and the other end is disagree. Ask people from different points on the line to justify their position.

Each student now joins up with two people from different places on the line.

Fact or fiction?

Give each group Copysheet: **The Facts about Family Violence**.

The groups discuss each statement and use the information on the copysheet to decide if each statement is Fact or Fiction.

Go over the answers with the class. It is important that the class is quite clear about which are facts and which are not.

Answers: 1 Fact; 2 Fiction; 3 Fact; 4 Fact; 5 Fiction; 6 Fiction.

Case studies

Ask students to form new groups of five to six.

Give each group one of the case studies. They read it and answer the questions written below. The teacher handles the reporting back.

With classes that work faster, all the case studies can be used. With other classes, more than one group can work on the same case study.

Learning journal

Students write individual answers to the following questions in their journals.

- Ask:
- What is the most surprising thing you have learnt about family violence?
 - What advice would you give to a friend who told you violence was happening in their family?
 - Why is it hard to do something to stop abuse?
 - What can stop family violence being passed down the generations?

Copysheet: The Facts about Family Violence

True or False

Read each statement in turn. Discuss in your group and decide if the statement is fact or fiction.

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Family violence is like a spiral – the abuse often becomes more frequent and intense. |
| 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Because your parents are violent doesn't mean that you have to be violent, too. |
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | It is hard for many victims of family abuse to get out of a violent relationship. |
| 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Domestic violence is often about power and control. |
| 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | It is always women who are the victims of family violence. |
| 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> | What happens within the family should stay within the family – it is not a public matter. |

Common forms of violence in the family

- Spouse/partner abuse (violence among adult partners).
- Child abuse/neglect (abuse/neglect of children by an adult).
- Elder abuse/neglect (abuse/neglect of older people aged approximately 65 years and over, by a person with whom they have a relationship of trust).
- Parental abuse (violence perpetrated by a child against their parent).
- Sibling abuse (violence among children in a family).

Why women stay in violent relationships

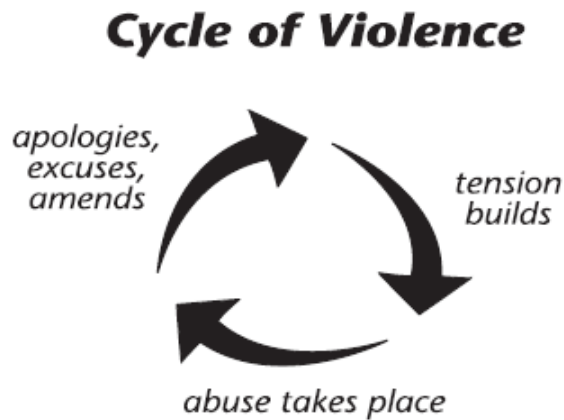
- 'Because I hope he will change. I pray for a miracle.'
- 'I have many doubts and fears of being alone.'
- 'It was my fault. I made him do it.'
- 'Because no-one believes that my relationship is that bad. No-one takes me seriously.'
- 'Because he has threatened to come after me if I leave.'
- 'Because of the huge cost of lawyers.'
- 'I stayed because I love my partner.'
- 'I stayed for the sake of the kids.'
- 'I stayed for fear of rejection and isolation.'
- 'My partner completely demoralised me and took away my self-esteem.'

See <https://womensrefuge.org.nz/WR/Domestic-violence/The-pattern-of-power-and-control.htm>

This shows the ways an abusive member of the family can control the victim.

The cycle of violence

This cycle becomes a spiral as the tension-building period often becomes shorter and more intense, the acute battering becomes more frequent and extreme and, after years of violence, the violent partner may no longer apologise at all.



The violence cycle can be broken

If a child has been part of a violent family, it does not mean that they have to follow the pattern. Those children can learn other ways to behave that do not include violence.

"Learning alternatives to violent behaviour is a very good thing to do. Young people are increasing their chances of a happier and better life. We all make choices about how to deal with situations. We can make the choice not to be violent. There are people who will support and help young people to learn new ways of dealing with problems and difficulties that do not involve violence."

Education programmes for schools can help young people break the violence cycle and form positive relationships with other people. An example is the Police programme "Keeping Ourselves Safe".

The international view

Article 4 of the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women by the General Assembly of The United Nations states: "Violence against women in their own homes is a serious human rights violation. To stop this violence, many different government and social agencies and people of many different organisations will have to work together."

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states: "the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding."

The United Nations Principles for Older Persons (1991) states: "Older people should be able to live in dignity and security and to be free of exploitation and physical or mental abuse."

What the statistics say

According to the New Zealand National Survey of Crime Victims 1996:

- 11.6 % of women interviewed reported that someone had had, or had attempted, sexual intercourse with them against their will
- 1.5% of men interviewed reported that someone had had, or had attempted, sexual intercourse with them against their will
- 15.3% of women who had ever been in a 'partnership' reported some form of partner abuse
- 7.3% of men who had ever been in a 'partnership' reported some form of partner abuse

Children who witness family violence

Children who grow up in violent homes are often just as harmed by witnessing abuse as are children who are directly abused.

Research found that adults who had been hit by their parents, or who had witnessed domestic violence were more likely to be involved in marital aggression themselves.

Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz(1980) found that the rate of domestic violence was dramatically higher for the sons of batterers than for the sons of non-violent fathers.

Witnessing violence in the home can establish a pattern of aggressive behaviour that perpetuates the cycle of abuse. Boys who have witnessed their fathers abusing their mothers were three times more likely to become abusive, and girls who have witnessed their fathers' abuse of their mothers were twice as likely to become abused in their own intimate relationships.

Stopping domestic violence requires that steps be taken to assist children exposed to violence in order to stop the intergenerational cycle.

Copysheet: Case Studies

Laura and her grandmother

Laura Rossetti is 15. She has been brought up by her grandmother since she was 4 years old. They live alone in the grandmother's house. Recently the 72-year-old grandmother went to the Police Station to report that her granddaughter had physically abused her. She had severe bruising to both arms and her back, consistent with having been beaten. She was distressed and frightened.

The Police Youth Aid officer visited the home and spoke to both the granddaughter and the grandmother. A sad story emerged. The grandmother had been very strict with Laura while she was growing up. A strong disciplinarian, she had tried to stop the young girl going out and if she was disobedient would physically punish her. A neighbour reported once seeing the grandmother pulling the granddaughter along the street by her hair. This discipline continued until recently. It appeared that the grandmother has been getting weak and sick as she has got older.

Suddenly Laura realised that she was the stronger of the two and decided that she was going to have the upper hand.

Questions

1. What types of abuse are happening in this family? (Verbal, physical, neglect, sexual?)
2. Who is involved?
3. How are the people involved affected?
4. What do you think the causes of this abuse are?
5. Do you think the abuse will stop now? Why, or why not?

The Rankin family

The Rankin family live in a wealthy suburb in Auckland. Mr Rankin has a well-paid job and is a key member of his local church. The Rankins have been married for 30 years.

In this time Mrs Rankin has never had a job outside the home and has devoted herself to bringing up their six children. She has no money of her own, and over the years has become more and more downtrodden, to the point where she feels she is worthless. While her husband doesn't physically abuse her, he subjects her to harsh verbal and emotional abuse.

Five of the children left home as soon as they legally could.

The two girls were both subjected to sexual abuse, but they talked about it to no one but each other. Mrs Rankin suspected it was happening, but turned a blind eye.

Only 13-year-old Jeff lives at home now. Lately Mr Rankin has had uncontrollable bouts of anger directed towards his son, for no apparent reason. This week when Jeff was five minutes late home his father yelled at him loudly, called him 'thick' and 'useless', and locked him in the laundry for an hour.

Questions

1. What types of abuse are happening in this family? (Verbal, physical, neglect, sexual?)
2. Who is involved?
3. How are the people involved affected?
4. What do you think the causes of this abuse are?
5. Who in the family could do something to get the abuse stopped?
6. What could they do?

Eli and Olaf

Eli Pederson is 72 years old. She lives with Olaf Pederson – her 76-year-old brother. They have lived all their lives in the same house, first with their parents, and then together after their parents died.

Eli has devoted her life to looking after her brother. She cleans the house, does the shopping with the money Olaf gives her (and has to account for every cent afterwards), does the gardening, the washing and all other household tasks. The only time she leaves the house is for the short walk to the shops. She has lost touch with old friends and feels very alone. She is now old and frail. Over the years Olaf has become more and more difficult to live with. He is depressed, spends a lot of time in bed, is hard to communicate with and surly.

He is only happy when he is in the local pub, drinking with his old friends. He drinks too much and gets drunk and belligerent. When he is like that he hits out at Eli, who is totally unable to protect herself. Eli thinks that after last night her wrist may be broken. She is frightened and doesn't know who to turn to.

Questions

1. What types of abuse are happening in this family? (Verbal, physical, neglect, sexual?)
2. Who is involved?
3. How are the people involved affected?
4. What do you think the causes of this abuse are?
5. Who in the family could do something to get the abuse stopped?
6. What could they do?

Susie and Solomon

Susie Laben is in her twenties. She has a good job and lives with her sister and brother-in-law. She has been going out with her boyfriend, Solomon, for three years. Over that time he has become increasingly violent towards her.

However, after he has hit her he always says that he is really sorry, he loves her, and he promises not to do it again. Susie believes him, and because she loves him she forgives him. However, with the support of her sister and brother-in-law she has decided he has done this once too often and she has told him she doesn't want to go out with him anymore.

This is a big step for Susie, as her parents have chosen Solomon as a suitable partner for her.

Solomon is angry. He calls her constantly at work and rings throughout the night. He has been into the house while no one was home and taken some of Susie's things. He is threatening to kill her.

Questions

1. What types of abuse are happening in this family? (Verbal, physical, neglect, sexual?)
2. Who is involved?
3. How are the people involved affected?
4. What do you think the causes of this abuse are?
5. Who in the family could do something to get the abuse stopped?
6. What could they do?

Kate

Kate has been bringing up her three children, Amy aged 8, Sam aged 4 and Michael aged 2, on her own since her husband walked out fifteen months ago.

Things are not easy. Kate can't get a job because childcare would cost her more than she could earn. Money is very tight and Kate finds it hard to pay the rent and still have enough left over for groceries. She doesn't want to ask her parents for help as she thinks they criticise her. Michael was a fretful baby and has learning difficulties. He demands a lot of his mother's time.

Recently Kate has been unable to cope. She is depressed and out of control. Sam is the target for her anger and frustration. She puts him in the dark cupboard under the stairs if he is naughty and often makes him go to bed with no tea.

Largely she ignores Amy and devotes herself to Michael.

Questions

1. What types of abuse are happening in this family? (Verbal, physical, neglect, sexual?)
2. Who is involved?
3. How are the people involved affected?
4. What do you think the causes of this abuse are?
5. Who in the family could do something to get the abuse stopped?
6. What could they do?

The Rezaie family

The Rezaie family have recently arrived to settle in New Zealand. Mr Rezaie was unable to get out of their country, but sent his family to safety. Mrs Rezaie, her 22-year-old son Sam, and three daughters are living in rented accommodation in Auckland.

Sam is the only one working and, while they did manage to bring some money with them, his earnings are keeping that family fed and clothed. Mrs Rezaie has little English and is frightened to go out of the house on her own. The three girls are all at the local primary school. They are learning English and try to be supportive of their mother.

Sam has taken on the role of father figure for the family. His mother makes him angry and he resents having little money left over for himself. He regards his mother and his sisters as beneath him and keeps them in their place with harsh verbal put-downs, telling them they are worthless and holding him back. Once or twice he has hit his mother, and she must beg him for money for food or family necessities.

Questions

1. What types of abuse are happening in this family? (Verbal, physical, neglect, sexual?)
2. Who is involved?
3. How are the people involved affected?
4. What do you think the causes of this abuse are?
5. Who in the family could do something to get the abuse stopped?