

IMPACT REPORT

MARCH 2025

Safety and Wellbeing of Women and their Children in Eastern Suburbs and Beaches

Demand has been consistent across the year with approximately 20 enquiries per month involving women seeking support for themselves and their children as a result of violence and coercion in their home.

Experience of abuse has been compacted with overall feelings of unsafety occurring from other social phenomena:

- ~ Mental health impacts for themselves and their children from mass violence at Westfield Bondi Junction .
- ~ Impact of events in Gaza and Ukraine and/or debates around these wars and racism and religious & identity intolerance.

Saturation in the media promoting new coercive control laws has given women hope of justice for victimisation and abuse, at times resulting in despair if support not readily available or there is insignificant evidence to enable police and courts to act.



Bondi Beach Cottage

► Our clients are reporting:

- Being turned away from multiple services because they are full;
- There is not enough evidence of coercion to get a conviction for domestic violence;
- Some report an improved response from policing when reporting violence;
- Stalking.

► We are noticing:

- Presentation of older women and women being abused in later stage marriages;
- Women unable to attend counselling because of childcare responsibilities, especially during holiday periods when there is an overall increase in violence to women;
- Women re-presenting to services multiple times as they have not recovered from earlier trauma.

► Issues for Women in our Area That Need to be Addressed:

- Women who are living with adolescents who use violence in the home.
- Children who are being coerced by the user of violence.



WHAT WE ARE ALREADY DOING



So far this year we have:

- Helped over 142 women escape and recover from violence, including 1,514 occasions of service and 356 hours of counselling;
- Offered free EMDR* to women impacted by violence who need to recover – thus preventing ongoing and future victimisation for the client and her children;
- Provided acute stress syndrome stabilisation interventions to address intense somatic symptoms that emerge following a recent traumatic experience, eg Bondi Junction mass violence incident;
- Offered free advice to allied and non-allied professionals to ensure women receive the best advice from the first person they tell;
- Provided 152hrs of free childcare to women who need to attend counselling or other wellbeing appointments, including return to work activities;
- Trained social work students in best practice response to domestic and family violence including emerging Social Workers;
- Increased workforce capacity in local areas by spearheading training of 40 local allied professionals in Safe & Together Model;
- Established a communities of practice with all local DFV counsellors to resource them and to help address work force burn out, moral injury, vicarious trauma which all result in work force incapacity;
- Supported the functioning of the local services network.

Feedback:

- *“Helped me function at much higher level without PTSD triggers - Thank you.”*
- *“Getting child care was one of the most important parts of establishing safety for me and my child. Once I had some time to think, I was able to look toward problem solving and attending to my health.”*
- *“[Counsellor] was so professional, warm and caring and I felt genuinely cared for and supported. The EMDR was really valuable in reprocessing some of the trauma and her expertise in helping me deal with mini crises also so valuable to me and my children.”*

Service Gaps: - Unfortunately, we continue to experience gaps between our service demand and our funding. We have reduced our services by 16 hrs/week.
- If we had a wish, it would be for \$26k to introduce a quality clinical model to respond to women living with children using and affected by violence. This is specialist work that requires specialist practice.