



# CANTERBURY FAMILY VIOLENCE COLLABORATION

Led by Barnardos with over 40 government and non-governmental organisations supporting

We're a cross-sector community of over 40 organisations and agencies that operate within the wider family violence sector in Canterbury.

Together, we work to reduce the level of family violence in Canterbury and enhance the total response to family violence through innovation and improvement of systems. Our vision is to see a community that values respectful relationships and where families, whānau and individuals do not use physical, sexual or psychological violence.

The earthquakes and their resulting impacts have strongly increased the risk factors fuelling family violence. Immediately following the earthquakes, family violence services reported a dramatic increase in the level of demand and case complexity. In 2012 Canterbury Police investigated over 7,400 incidents involving family violence, an average of 20 per day. Additionally, the earthquakes' long-term psychosocial effects such as post-traumatic stress and increased drug and alcohol consumption are still having a major impact on the community. These extra pressures put added strain on relationships and are known to increase aggression, short temperedness and the frequency and severity of family violence.

Together we work to enact systemic change in five identified strategic priority areas: Youth, Prevention, Staff Learning and Development, Crisis Response and Housing. Working together has emphasised that tackling family violence requires a whole-of-community level response, inclusive of diverse agencies, sectors and population groups and communities.

The vigilance of the Collaboration has empowered us to identify opportunities that emerge in our community and act on solutions together. Some of these include:

- Health and Wellbeing packs for the rebuild workforce, which collated health, mental health and social resources to distribute to incoming families to assist them as they settle in to their new communities.
- The Pacifica Campaign, which involved five Samoan churches taking part in a campaign to say no to violence. Ministers created their own anti-violence messages which we put onto posters for the Ministers to launch in their churches.
- A Champions project, where well-known identities partnered with us in a Canterbury Can Stand Up Against Violence campaign on posters, billboards and bus backs. These champions continue to assist the Collaboration to talk to the community about family violence.
- A Youth Voices project in local high schools to find out about young people's views and knowledge on family violence and what they would like the sector to do in response. As an immediate result of this research we discovered that confidentiality, privacy and trust were major issues and road blocks for young people seeking help. We have run a workshop for school counsellors and youth workers on these issues in response.

The Collaboration was formed as a dynamic entity and will remain so. This means we're constantly reviewing the most relevant priority areas of work needed to address family violence. In the long-term we seek to have made a demonstrated contribution to the Canterbury community's overall recovery. We envision a community where all people are free to be themselves to reach their fullest potential, relationships are peaceful and harmonious, children are nurtured to flourish in safe home environments, diversity is accepted, strengths and successes are celebrated, safe living environments are embraced and people can go to any public space they choose, children can walk to school free from fear of harm, elders are cared for respectfully, workplaces are free of harassment and we value respectful relationships.

<http://www.canterburyfvc.co.nz/>

