

MEDIA RELEASE

2 May 2024

Focus on kids to end generational family violence

The Centre welcomes the Federal Government's focus on addressing online harm as a tactic to end gendered and family violence but says it's just part of the solution and frontline service funding is essential to embedding respectful relationship education in communities.

Centre CEO Deb Tsorbaris says it is a tragedy that women continue to be hurt and murdered in our country and horrific that children bear witness to acts of violence and misogyny at home, in their communities, and online.

Children and young people are being bombarded online with pornography, violent and harmful content, and misogynist attitudes that perpetuate gender division and shape their attitudes to relationships.

“A child's worldview is shaped by the violence they see, hear and experience each day in their homes and online. This becomes their norm, and parents face a huge battle in trying to monitor, unpack and shape their understanding of the content they are exposed to.”

The [Australian Child Maltreatment Study](#) data revealed 43.8 percent of 16–24-year-olds had been exposed to domestic violence, while across the entire population, almost 30 percent of Australians reported exposure to domestic violence as a child.

“The best solution is working with kids to create generational change. We can't end violence without understanding and responding to the profound impact family violence has on children's perception and understanding of the world,” she says.

She says we need better data on the experiences of children and young people and the Centre has long advocated for mandatory reporting of children experiencing family violence.

“Women coming into our services, escaping violence, are asking for help for their children, and it's time to listen to these mothers and respond to what they need.

“Their children have witnessed violence and often experienced harm themselves. Their mothers want to find support for them and know they are breaking these cycles of violence within their families,” says Ms Tsorbaris.

Monash University's research into [the experiences of children and young people](#) seeking help has shown responses are not adequate and highlights the gaps in service provision but also the opportunities for improving current practice.

“Research shows the need for targeted, evidence-based services for children and families that provide the right intervention for children at the right time. There are some outstanding services already in Victoria who work with children who use violence and have been exposed

to violence. We need family violence and child, youth and family services to work together to understand what's working and to scale that. This would be a significant step towards ending intergeneration violence and other harms perpetrated against women," she said.

ENDS.

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact

Louise Johnson

0400 241 179

louise.johnson@cfecfw.asn.au

About the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare

The Centre is Victoria's peak body for child and family services. For over 100 years, the Centre has advocated for the rights and wellbeing of children, young people, and families in Victoria, ensuring their right to be heard, to be safe, to access education and to remain connected to family, community and culture. Visit www.cfecfw.asn.au for more information.