

Grandparents and Relatives Raising Children Newsletter October 2016

About GRRC

if you're a grandparent or relative who has recently taken on care of a child in an informal arrangement, this program can help you during this time of transition.

We offer:

- Information, advice and support
- Brief intervention
- Referral if required to other support services
- Support groups and information sessions
- Help with initial set up

For more information phone
Mission Australia Gateway on

1800 171 233

Or visit our office at
Level 1, 10 Bayfield Street
Rosny Park

Or contact

Baptcare Gateway

1800 171 233

175 Collins Street
Hobart

Understanding the Impact of Family Violence on Children

Children do not escape family violence unaffected. They are traumatised by the experience. It terrifies them. It destabilises the foundations of their development. It undermines the strengths of their relationships. It can overwhelm them. And most of all, it exposes their little hearts to pain.

Children experience family violence deep in their mind and body. They see it. They often hear it. Their bodies react to it as a threat to their survival. They see

the aftermaths of it. They sense its impact. They watch for it. It forces children to know what can set it off. It teaches them to avoid answering certain questions. It shapes who they can trust - who will hurt them and who might protect them.

Experiences of family violence define what children can say when and to whom. It dictates what they should think. It determines how they should react.

For children, family violence often disconnects them from their family, their community and their place in the world. It disrupts how everything works. It forces their routines to be less certain, less predictable.

In the face of family violence, children need to experience safety. They need to be comforted and reassured. They need their questions answered and their feelings acknowledged and validated. They need the world to feel more consistent. They need their bodies to relax and feel calmer. They need to experience softness in their relationships. Safety and security spreads in concentric circles around children affected by family violence locating the basis of change in their relationships with their mother and siblings, with their father, their extended family, their community and their friends.

Children affected by family violence rely on a team of people around them. It does not matter how much time you have with them for your exchange to be meaningful and potentially helpful. For all these children, your contact with them is an important opportunity for some of their needs to be responded to by a caring adult who notices them. Their experience of you and your reactions will prepare them for their next steps towards healing.

*Australian Childhood Foundation – Safe and Secure

If you would like a copy of the Safe and Secure Booklet please contact Cath or Anna