



Welcome to the 1st Edition of our new Newsletter!

We are very proud to launch this new publication and look forward to its success! The idea behind this Newsletter is to provide the community with updates about our activities, and inform the community about important events and information regarding family safety, wellbeing and other important issues.

So, who are the Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence?

For the last 15 years JTAFV have strived to raise awareness in the Jewish community about issues such as family violence and sexual assault. JTAFV is comprised of a group of

hardworking volunteers who undertake a broad range of educational campaigns including:

- instructive forums for all sectors of the community as well as educational initiatives using theatre and the arts
- programs in the Jewish schools to promote the recognition of healthy relationships
- facilitated professional workshops for Jewish and mainstream service providers
- worked closely with the Rabbinate, Jewish Care, mainstream service providers and the police to promote family safety in the

Jewish community

- Operation of a confidential telephone support line to provide assistance to anyone from the community with concerns about family violence

To find out more about our work, past and present, please visit our website at: www.jewishtaskforce.com.au and stay tuned to our new Newsletter!

Professor Pelcovitz Forums

In late November JTAFV arranged for the highly esteemed Professor David Pelcovitz to visit Melbourne to facilitate a number of

forums on the topics of child sexual assault and family violence. Professor Pelcovitz is Professor of Education and Psychology at Yeshiva University's Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education. Serving for over two decades as Director of Psychology at New York University, he has consulted extensively with the Jewish community in the United States, Europe and Israel on a wide range of issues facing children and adolescents. He is a leading expert and has published and lectured extensively in family trauma, child abuse, child mental health and parenting, particularly in the way these issues affect the Jewish community.



Also in the Issue:

- JTAFV Support Line
- Have a Chat at Safe Space
- Changes to Domestic Violence Legislation

FUNDRAISING MOVIE NIGHT!

In early March a group of JTAFV volunteers will host a social function and fundraising event to see the film "Confessions of a Shopaholic". For more information please contact Em Lewin on (03) 9527 2530

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We were honored to host such an expert in the field here, and his lectures exceeded expectations!

Professor Pelcovitz facilitated a series of forums to over 1500 people across the Jewish community, both religious and secular, young and old, men and women. Rabbis, teachers, youth leaders and psychologists were amongst the attendees. Professor Pelcovitz talked about issues related to child sexual abuse in a highly culturally and religiously specific manner and generated valuable discussion. The response to these forums was overwhelming, and has highlighted the fact that the Jewish community is committed to speaking out against child sexual abuse.

Professor Pelcovitz discussed topics such as how to identify indicators of abuse, what to do when a perpetrator is suspected in the community and importantly, how to prevent abuse and how to talk to children about abuse.

For those who were unable to attend any of the forums, the audio recording from the Major Community Forum will be uploaded onto our website and accessible to anyone. Please feel free to listen and encourage your network to do so too so that we can all work together to raise awareness about child sexual abuse in our community and help aid its prevention.



If you want to find out more about child sexual abuse, or if you have any concerns at all, please phone the Jewish Taskforce Support Line: (03) 9523 2100

Above: Debbie Weiner, The Honourable Justice Sally Brown, Prof Pelcovitz, Rabbi Ralph Genende at the Major Community Forum.

A recording of the Community Forum will soon be accessible via our website.



JTAFV Support Line

Just over a year ago JTAFV established the Jewish Taskforce Support Line – a free, confidential and anonymous service, providing culturally sensitive support to anyone experiencing family violence, sexual abuse or other relationship issues. This telephone service allows members of the community to reach out for help and understanding without the fear of repercussions. Women, men, children and young people are all invited to

call.

The Support Line is staffed by highly trained, sensitive and non judgmental women from all sectors of our community. These women will listen to, believe and validate callers' experiences in an atmosphere of confidentiality and discretion and they will provide relevant and appropriate information and referrals.

The service is available at the following times:

Mondays, Wednesdays 9am-1pm

Tuesdays, Thursdays 5pm-9pm

We are here..we are listening...we support you.



Have a Chat...

An innovative group of young Taskforce volunteers have come together to brain storm new ways to engage the Jewish community around relationship issues. From this group the idea of *have a chat @ safespace* was born. This service will enable anyone to reach out to highly trained Responders for support by using internet 'chat'. This form of 'live help' will

encourage people to reach out for help in a non-threatening way, where they can remain totally anonymous. The chat program will be available via the Jewish Taskforce website; users will be required to log in, and then may 'chat' to a Responder via the internet. Users will be able to gain information, support, advice and referrals. We are

very excited to launch this new program soon.

Watch this space for updates and the official launch of *have a chat @ safe space!*

Case study—Karen’s story

Please note: this is a fictional story indicative of the types of situations JTAFV handle in the phone room. This is consistent with our policy of strict confidentiality.

A woman named Karen phoned the JTAFV telephone support line to seek help. Karen recently immigrated to Australia and did not have many friends here. Unfortunately, a few months earlier Karen’s husband passed away unexpectedly. Karen was left to care for her 4 children alone.

Karen told the Telephone Responder she was having problems coping and was becoming very depressed.

In addition to this, Karen’s eldest son was verbally abusing her regularly, putting her down and trying to intimidate her. Karen believed this was part of her son’s grieving for his father.

Karen felt at a loss as to what to do regarding her situation. She said she felt desperate and alone.

Karen is a very religious woman and has a strong support network at her congregation. Despite this, she did not feel comfortable talking about her problems to the people she knew at the synagogue because she didn’t want to impose on them.

The Telephone Responder on duty commended Karen for calling, noting that it takes great courage to reach out for help in the way that she did. They discussed a number of

c o p i n g strategies such as ways that Karen could take time to look after herself

“The Responder explained the different stages of grief and the importance of not going through the process alone”

and give herself a proper opportunity to grieve for her deceased husband. The Responder explained the different stages of grief and the importance of not going through the process alone.

Importantly, the Responder discussed ways for Karen to deal with her son and noted that violence by adolescents to-

wards parents is not uncommon and Karen was not alone. The Responder made sure Karen understood that it was not her fault that her son was behaving that way, and that he must take responsibility for his behavior and significantly that it doesn’t mean she is a bad parent.

The Responder made a facilitated referral to a counselor experienced in grief and loss. The Responder was also able to find a local support group for parents with teenagers.

Karen requested that the Responder post her a number of helpful brochures and booklets containing information about some of the issues she was experiencing, because knowledge in itself is very empowering.

Karen thanked the Responder for her assistance and said she felt better just getting those things off her chest. The Responder told Karen she was welcome to phone back again.

What’s New?

Welcomed changes to family violence legislation in Victoria:

The new *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* replaces the *Crimes Family Violence Act* 1987. Significantly the new Act contains a more inclusive definition of family violence including emotional abuse, psychological abuse, economic abuse and abuse of pets in order to coerce or control another family member. Exposing children to family violence is also included in the definition. This recognizes the fact that family violence is broader

than only physical abuse, and that it is harmful for children to witness abuse.

The new Act also includes an expanded purpose which is to:

- (a) Maximise safety for children and adults who have experienced family violence
- (b) Prevent and reduce family violence to the greatest extent possible
- (c) Promote the accountability of perpetrators of family violence for their actions.

Importantly, the Preamble of the Act makes reference to the fact that family violence is a violation of human rights and is contrary to the values of society. The Preamble also acknowledges the harmful

impact family violence has upon children, and the gendered nature of family violence.

The new Act is welcomed as a progressive advancement in law and social policy. The Act promotes justice for victims, deterrence of family violence and sends a strong message that family violence is unacceptable in all communities.

To view the Act go to:

http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/fvpa2008283/

For more information see:

<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/DOJ+Internet/Home/Crime/Family+Violence/>

Useful Contacts:

Women’s Domestic Violence Crisis Service—24 hour assistance: 1800 015 188

Sexual Assault Service : 1800 806 292

Men’s Referral Service: 1800 065 973

Jewish Care: (03) 8517 5999

Want to help?

The Jewish Taskforce reaches out to vulnerable people across the Jewish community who are affected by family violence, sexual assault and other problems.

To make a tax-deductible donation to support our important work,

please call : (03) 9523 6850

or email: admin@jewishtaskforce.org.au

Like to contribute ?

To contribute to our Newsletter, for comments, feedback or more information please call (03) 9523 6850 or email: admin@jewishtaskforce.org.au