
What's the law? – Family violence

Presenter's notes

How to use these notes

Topic: Relationship breakdown, personal safety, violence in the home.

Resources: *What's the law?* free online resource 'Family violence', which contains a photo story, activity sheets and answer sheets.

These notes provide guidelines for a presenter's script and information on how to use these resources when presenting to a community group. The notes include a story summary, questions and answers, key messages, areas for further discussion and referral information.

Preparing to present

It may be useful to read the activity and answer sheets to prepare for your presentation – they may give you ideas for additional questions and activities for your group. It is also a good idea to look at the websites and referral information provided under 'Possible discussion points and referral information' below.

If you need assistance with presentation skills, engagement ideas or coordination support for the group you are preparing for you can contact cle@legalaid.wa.gov.au or (08) 9261 6500.

Introduce yourself and *What's the law?*

Before you begin the presentation, introduce yourself, your role and your organisation.

For example, if you work at Legal Aid WA:

- Legal Aid WA helps the community in many different ways if people have problems with the law. We provide legal education to newly-arrived communities about their rights and responsibilities.

Refer to the *What's the law?* free online resource and its purpose by mentioning these key points:

- We see many different newly-arrived communities get into trouble with the law and often the same legal problems arise. These problems can be avoided if you know some simple information about the law and where to go to for help before your problem becomes serious.
- The photo stories in *What's the law?* have been made to help you learn about the law on thirteen different topics.

Begin with some introductory statements and general questions about the topic:

- Today we are going to show you a photo story about the importance of feeling safe in the home.
- In Australia, the law says everyone has a right to feel safe. Family violence laws in Australia help to protect people like Radha, the character in this story, who are scared that someone in their family might hurt them.

- Family violence can be behaviour by one person in a family towards another which is controlling or makes them feel afraid and unsafe.
- Actions can be physical or they can be emotional or financial.
- A family member's actions may be seen as 'family violence' if they: control money, won't let their family member see friends and family, won't let the family member practise their religion or culture, threaten to hurt the family member, children or someone close to them, make their family member have sex or do other sexual acts or call their family member names.
- What do you think makes a relationship happy and healthy?

Summarise the photo story

- This story is about Radha and how her brother Ram is worried about her safety in the home.
- Ram talks to his friend Nabeeh at a soccer game about how his sister is having problems with her husband.
- Ram tells Nabeeh that his sister's husband hits her and controls the money. Ram says he has told his sister to stay with her husband.
- Nabeeh tells Ram that his sister's husband should not hit her and that he should make sure his sister has a safe place to go.

Ask questions

To strengthen engagement with the photo story and develop the group's legal literacy, ask the following questions before showing the story. This will encourage the group to watch actively and think about key messages.

While you are watching the story, think about the next four questions:

How does Radha's husband make her feel unsafe?

What have Nabeeh and Ram told the women in their lives who have been hit by their husbands?

What does Nabeeh advise Ram to tell his sister?

What can Radha do if she is feeling unsafe?

Show the photo story



Answer the questions

Ask the same key questions after you show the story and allow for discussion to tease out the right answers.

How does Radha's husband make her feel unsafe?

- She feels unsafe as her husband gets angry, throws things and sometimes hits her.
- Radha might also feel worried for her children – they could be in the house when her husband is violent and it is not safe or healthy for the children to see this happening.

- She is also insecure about her financial situation as her husband controls the household money.

What have Nabeeh and Ram told the women in their lives who have been hit by their husbands?

- Nabeeh told his cousin's wife to be a good wife. She stayed with her husband and he continued to hit her.
- Ram has told Radha to do what her husband says and to stay with her husband. He is now worried about her safety.

What does Nabeeh advise Ram to tell his sister?

- Nabeeh wishes he had given his cousin different advice.
- He tells Ram to tell his sister that her husband has no right to hit her and she should leave the house and find a safe place.

What can Radha do if she is feeling unsafe?

- Radha has options to help ensure her safety. She can take action straight away.
- If she is in immediate danger she can call 000 and ask for the police and an interpreter if she needs one. Police in WA may make an on the spot restraining order called a police order in situations of family violence. A police order may be made for up to 72 hours.
- She can call a family violence service such as **Multicultural Women's Advocacy Service** on **(08) 9328 1200** or **(08) 9227 8122** for information and advice about her situation.
- She can talk to friends and family she trusts about her husband's violence and finding a temporary place to stay.
- She can call **Crisis Care** anytime (Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support) on **(08) 9223 1111** or **1800 199 008** for country callers for information and referral to services including information about refuges which provide temporary shelter, protection and support. Crisis Care can be accessed through the translating and interpreting service on **13 14 50**.
- For the longer term, Radha can apply to the Magistrates' Court for a family violence restraining order which stops Radha's husband doing certain things. She can call the **Legal Aid WA Infoline** on **1300 650 579** to see if she can get help with making her application.

Emphasise key messages

- Family violence can be hitting and physical abuse, but it can be anything else that makes you feel unsafe.
- It is your right to feel safe in your family. There is no shame in asking for help and in Australia there are many services to support you.
- If you are scared or worried about your safety, you can call 000 and ask for the police.
- You can also contact **Crisis Care** anytime (Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support) on **(08) 9223 1111** or **1800 199 008** for country callers. Crisis Care can be accessed through the translating and interpreting service on **13 14 50**.
- Call **Legal Aid WA's Infoline** on **1300 650 579** or your community legal centre if you have legal problems or have to go to court.

Further questions and discussion

- Does anyone have any questions?

You are not expected to be a lawyer to use this resource. Many teachers and community workers use this resource successfully. If a participant raises personal legal issues, you can provide referral information. If you are not a lawyer, legal assessment or advice should be referred to **Legal Aid WA Infoline** on **1300 650 579** or the closest community legal centre (<http://www.communitylaw.net/>) or Legal Aid WA office.

Possible discussion points and referral information

Police and immigration status

- Regardless of immigration status, everyone can get help to feel safe. The police will not send someone back to their country if you contact them about family violence.
- Contact **The Humanitarian Group** on **(08) 6148 3600** for assistance with spouse visas where family violence is involved.

Family Relationship Centres

- Family Relationship Centres provide information and confidential assistance for families at all stages in their lives.
- Centres focus on providing family dispute resolution (mediation) to help separating families achieve workable parenting arrangements without going to court.
- Whether you are going through separation, starting a relationship, want to make your relationship stronger, or having relationship difficulties, the centres can help: <http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au/Services/FRC/Pages/default.aspx#w>

Family violence restraining order resources

- Legal Aid WA has information on its website at: www.legalaid.wa.gov.au under Find Legal Answers and Resources to help you understand how to apply for an order and how an order operates.
- An information sheet **About your safety** is also available. This is a guide to help prompt ideas and action if you are at risk of family violence.
- You can download a copy of any information sheet online, get one from any Legal Aid WA office, or call the **Legal Aid WA Infoline** on **1300 650 579** to be sent a copy.

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